

Litzau Gets The W On Wednesday Night Fights

Written by Michael Woods

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Ex Marine Johnnie Edwards had the crowd in his corner at New River Air Station in Jacksonville, North Carolina on Wednesday night. But a crowd can't do the fighting for you, and in the end, talent won out, as Jason Litzau shrugged off a slow start and exited enemy territory with a unanimous decision victory. The special Wednesday night broadcast was part of ESPN's weeklong salute to veterans.

Edwards (129 pounds; four time Armed Forces champ; 15-5-1; from South Carolina) was stationed at New River for eight years, so the fans were geared to see an upset special. Litzau (130 pounds; 26-2; from Minnesota) drew some respectful clapping when he was announced. "The American Boy" picked up the NABF super featherweight crown, and is still looking to regain the momentum he enjoyed before being stopped in the eighth by Robert Guerrero in their Feb. 2008 bout.

In the first, the rangier Litzau showed that he wanted to dictate distance against the runtier Edwards, who didn't get caught up in the vibe and come out crazy. But Litzau looked tentative, and he heard it from his corner after the first. He stepped it up in the second, somewhat, but Edwards switched lefty to righty, and his awkwardness put off the Minnesotan. But Litzau got untracked, and warmed up as the rounds progressed. Edwards, meanwhile, resorted to holding excessively. He rocked Edwards some in the fifth, but he himself tasted leather, and there was blood running from his nose and from a mystery cut on his left brow. Edwards looked to simply finish on his feet by the later innings. The six inch height and nine inch reach deficiency was too much to overcome. To the dismay of the servicemen and women in attendance, Edwards got the short end of it when the scores were announced: scores were 97-93, 98-91, 99-91, for Litzau.

Teddy Atlas spoke to the vets, and viewers, in center ring and thanked the vets for their service. Departing from the norm, Atlas then gave his scouting report on the main event. I must say, I much enjoyed this tiny switch in format.

Frankie Figueroa (20-3-1) met Rashad Holloway (11-1-2) from Ohio met in a welterweight battle. A Wild Card fighter, Holloway sparred Manny Pacquiao to ready Pacman for Oscar De La Hoya. Frankie was sparring Cotto a few weeks ago, and the Bronx resident was looking to get back on track after being kayoed earlier in the year by Randall Bailey. Holloway had the height and reach advantage, but Frankie was more inclined to press forward. The fight didn't feature a great rhythm--the fighters tied each other up too much. Rashad was too much 'one and done' and generally doesn't exhibit a 'ready to rumble' streak. The judges tallied the cards, and gave it to...nobody... the cards read Figgy 58-56, Rashad 58-56 and 57-57, a draw.

Two bouts featuring non-professional servicemen started off the combat portion of the show. In the pro opener, Yaundale Evans from Ohio (4-0) took out Jason Rorie (5-6-2) from North Carolina in a lightweight scrap. Rorie is as green as grass, but has hand speed and natural power. But his lack of experience showed, as the lefty calmly looked for the right shot, at the

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right time. Rorie went down with a minute to go, but smothered Evans the rest of the way and made it to the second. Rorie hit the mat just before the end of the second, but bless the kid, he came to earn to his pay. A right uppercut was the last whack after a flurry, and it was a shame, since Rorie had a nice round. Rorie did quite well to finish the fight, and he didn't end up the victor, as Evans grabbed a UD4.