

KIMBALL RINGSIDE: Bute Deposits Miranda On Rue Queer

Written by George Kimball
Friday, 16 April 2010 19:00

Nothing about Lucian Bute's showing at the Bell Centre Saturday night will discourage the notion that the world's best practicing 168-pounder is not to be found among the seven names who have thus far made up Showtime's so-called Super Six.

The undefeated Romanian émigré was embraced by the Quebecois as one of their own even when his performances were, shall we say, spotty (see Bute-Librado Andrade I), but like aging wine, Bute would seem to be improving at the age of 30, and you might say that the HBO people are embracing him as one of their own too. Fighting for the network for the second straight time since being frozen out of Showtime's World Boxing Classic, Bute elevated his game yet again in dominating onetime divisional tough guy Edison Miranda for the bit under eight minutes it lasted, scoring a third-round TKO over a man who had extended Super Six betting favorite Andre Ward the distance in his next-to-last outing.

Bute insisted that he wasn't trying to make a statement, though he surely did by giving Miranda a worse thumping than of his previous tormentors (Arthur Abraham, twice, Kelly Pavlik, and Ward) had managed. Bute not only out-jabbed El Pantera, landing 24 to Miranda's 11, he out-landed him at better than a 2-1 ratio in power punches as well – including the perfectly timed, perfectly delivered left uppercut with which the southpaw champion left his foe for dead in the third round, much to the delight of the more than 13,000 who packed the Home of Les Habs Saturday night.

(Although Miranda struggled to his feet, he was plainly out for a stroll along Rue Queer at this point, and referee Ernie Sharif took him into custody at 1:27 of the round.)

New trainer Joe Goossen had promised an improved and more disciplined version of Miranda in Montreal, but if that illusion didn't unravel the first time he got hit, it had disappeared forever by the end of the first, when, several seconds after the bell had ended the round, Miranda chased after Bute and punched the back of his head as he walked back toward his own corner.

Sharif appeared tempted to take a point, but in the end bought Miranda's explanation that the crowd noise had drowned out the bell. But Bute clearly heard it, and so did the referee. Exactly why else he thought Bute would have been strolling away with his back turned remained unexplained.

Bute was the stalker from the outset, but even as he fired right-left combinations at Miranda, he was warily eyeing Pantera's right, which the Colombian tried to counter off Bute's jab on several occasions.

By the third Miranda had reverted to form. Less than a minute into the round he stood in mid-ring, where in response to a Bute body shot he pounded on his abs, daring Bute to go to the body again.

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Bute, evincing mild amusement, then lashed out with a lefthand lead of his own that send a corona of perspiration from Miranda's head. Shaken, Miranda lowered his head and charged at Bute in an attempt to land a punch of his own, but didn't get within a foot of him. Instead, he would shortly discover, he might as well have offered up his head on a silver platter.

Bute, who could scarcely believe his own good fortune when he saw Miranda come hurtling through the air like a batting-practice pitch, slammed home a left uppercut and then merely stepped out of the way to watch the resultant belly landing. As HBO's Max Kellerman pointed out, it was a bit like watching Thomas Hearns' stunning 1984 knockout of Roberto Duran.

For Bute, now 26-0, it was the fifth defense of the IBF title he picked up after it had been vacated by Joe Calzaghe three years ago. Miranda's loss leaves his overall mark at 33-5 and his future decidedly murky.

Where does Bute go from here? When the possibility of a bout against Bernard Hopkins was mentioned, Bute allowed that he wouldn't mind that at all.

(Pavlik's name came up in the same discussion, but that was rendered moot an hour or so later in Atlantic City – and while Sergio Martinez did not find the leap from 154 to 160 disorienting, a move to 168 would probably be asking a bit too much of the Argentine-born, Barcelona-based Martinez.

What was left unsaid, of course, was that B-Hop, or just about every other credible foe you could name, would have to be willing to come to the Bell Center, the site of 12 of Bute's last 13 outings should they still want a piece of him after Saturday night. Put it this way: Bute is't going to budge from his place -- and you can't exactly blame him for that.

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Dionisio Miranda, unrelated to Edison but a fellow Colombian who describes himself as "Mister Nacaut, solidified his grip on the moniker when he was KO'd for the third time in his last four fights, this time by the relatively light-punching Renan St.-Juste, a 38 year-old fixture on Quebecois undercards. St.-Juste, now 22-1-1, was handily leading on the scorecards when he broke the fight wide open in the ninth round, catching Miranda with a left that catapulted him from the center of the ring to the blue corner, and by the time Miranda stopped his backward flight he looked up to see another left coming at his head.

Although he managed to beat Michael Griffin's count, Miranda was staggering around in the corner on legs to unsteady that the referee took him into custody at 1:27 of the stanza.

Miranda, knocked out by Roman Karmazin in one IBF eliminator earlier this year (after being KO'd by Giovanni Lorenzo in yet another IBF eliminator in Newark in February of '09), saw his record drop to 21-4-1.

St. Jerome 122-pounder Sebastian Gauthier (18-2) won a unanimous decision over game but outclassed Newfoundlander Jason Hayward (6-9-1) in their 8-round prelim. Gathier scored the only knockdown when he drove Hayward to the canvas with an accumulation of punches, the last of them a body shot, although in truth Hayward seemed happy enough to take refuge at that

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point, and was sufficiently revived by Alain Villeneuve's mandatory eight count that he was still battling at the end. Judge Jean (no relation) Gauthier scored it an 80-72 shutout, while Pasquale Procopio and Richard De Carufel returned 79-72 scorecards.

Pier-Olivier Cote, a popular lightweight from Quebec City, remained unbeaten at 11-0 after flooring Mexico City journeyman Hugo Pacheco (6-13) three times in the third round, the last triggering referee Emile Bolen's intervention at 1:02 of the round.

Chicoutimi (Quebec) light-heavy Francy N'Tetu decked Halifax-based journeyman Juan Sanchez (3-6-2) in the first round and then coasted to a unanimous decision that made him 3-for-3 as a pro. All three judges (Procopio, Claude Paquette, and Gauthier) scored it 40-35.

Forget Forget: Imported from the Dominican Republic at what was presumably some expense in order to improve the record of unbeaten local Nathalie Forget, featherweight Dominga Oliva instead bloodied the nose of the Montreal lass on the way to posting a unanimous decision (60-54 Pacquette, 59-55 Richard De Carufel, 58-56 Gathier). Oliva is now 8-5-1, Forget 2-1.

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BELL CENTRE

Montreal, Canada

April 17, 2010

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Lucian Bute, 167 ¼, Galati, Romania TKO'd Edison Miranda, 167, Buenaventura, Colombia (3) (Retains IBF title)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Francy N'Tetu, 172, Chicoutimi, Quebec Dec. Juan Sanchez, 171 ¼, Halifax, N.S. (4)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS Renan St.-Juste, 159 1/4, Rependtigny, Quebec TKO'd Dionisio Miranda, 159 ¾, Barranquilla, Columbia (9) (Retains NABA title, wins WBC Continental Americas title)

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Pier-Olivier Cote, 134 ¾, Quebec City, Que . TKO'd Hugo Pacheco, 133 ½, Mexico City, Mex. (3)

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Dominga Olivo, 124 ½, Santo Domingo, D.R. dec Nathalie Forget, 122 ¾, Montreal (6)

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Sebastien Gauthier, 121 ½, St. Jerome, Que. Dec, Jason Hayward, 121 ½, St. John's, Newfoundland (8)