

Friday Night Fights Report; Dirrell Shines In Studio, Teddy Likes Khan Tonight

Written by Michael Woods
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Julio Diaz talked all the right talk coming in to the main event at Buffalo Bills Casino in Primm, Nevada on ESPN's Friday Night Fights. He said in recent years he hadn't been eating, sleeping and breathing boxing. But he rectified his lack of respect for boxing, and did the extra roadwork, and put in the extra prep, he said, before his fight with Hermann Ngoudjo. That's what he said before, but viewers didn't know if this was a fading vet trying to bolster his confidence or the real deal. Not until a few rounds passed, and Diaz's crispness shone. He showed a veteran savvy, and a youthful zestfulness, with constant, intelligent movement, in taking a unanimous decision over ten rounds, by scores of 97-93, 97-93, 99-91, over the more muscled but less ring-smart Ngoudjo.

The Cameroonian Ngoudjo (18-3 entering; age 30; living in Quebec) was 140 pounds, while Diaz (from CA; age 30; two-time IBF lightweight champ; 36-6 entering) was also 140 pounds.

Diaz looked a little more peppy than he has of late. He maybe realized that his window of opportunity is drifting southward in a big way. Ngoudjo ate lots of body shots from Diaz, no stranger to inside warfare. Smart move, as Hermann wears the earmuffs, so his sides are open for business. Diaz tried to stick and jet, and looked pretty light on his fight through four. Joe Tessitore smartly pointed out that Hermann's cup slid up to his ribs during the fifth, giving him extra protection from a Diaz right to the body. Judges aren't usually keen on one-and-done types, unless the one is a chin smasher, which Ngoudjo isn't. Diaz found his range on the left hook in the sixth, his best round, in which he had the Quebecer backing up. Ngoudjo had to clinch in the ninth.

Dominic Salcido (17-2 entering; from CA; started 16-0, been kayoed two of last three outings) beat Guillermo Sanchez (11-0-1 entering; from PR, living in Buffalo) in the TV opener. In this lightweight scrap, Salcido got buzzed bad in the fourth. A left hand rung the Salcido bell, bigtime, but he got his senses back. The lefty Sanchez fought with more aggression because he knew Salcido has an iffy chin. But there was too much clowning from Sanchez, and the judges noticed: they scored it 77-75, 78-74, 77-75.

Andre Dirrell sat in studio with Brian Kenny. He's slated to fight Andre Ward next, but first Ward has to fight Allan Green, so Dirrell might be off til the fall.

Dirrell, you'll remember, drew Cintron-type flak in some circles, as some folks thought he was faking when Arthur Abraham cracked him on the jab after he slipped to the canvas on a wet spot. Not me...he got clipped hard, and I think it is a bold stance, in a bad way, for anyone to point a finger at the Detroit slickee as a malingerer. Kermit, man, I still shake my head on that deal. Commenters have acted as attorneys, prosecuting the Puerto Rican/Pennsylvanian, and bringing up his history of flaky moves. Don't know the real deal on that, and guess what? We never will...Replays can make it look like Kermit went through the ropes with some WWE style finnessin, or not...Teddy Atlas insinuated that Cintron spit the bit. He may have propelled himself out of that ring, the analyst said. Why, Atlas wondered, did he seemingly protest that he

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wanted to continue only after being strapped into the gurney? Dirrell said he thinks Williams wouldve been pulling away by the eighth or ninth round.

Dirrell touted Paulie Malignaggi over Amir Khan on Saturday night (HBO 9:45 PM Eastern), saying Khan has hid in the UK too long. Dan Rafael of ESPN said he loves the 140 pound division, a deep division with young future stars. Atlas, who prefaced by saying Paulie is one of his favorite people in boxing, but Khan will be tough for him. Maybe Khans visa woes, and his on-the-road status might bring him down, could hurt him, but his jab, movement and right hand should give the Brit the nod. Dirrell was refreshingly bold with his predictions; he said Art Abraham will likely KO Carl Froch in that Euro Super Six showdown. Dirrell likes Floyd over Manny if the PED hurdle is jumped. HBO dumped Lennox Lewis, they could do a lot worse than Dirrell when and if theyre hiring. Hell, Woods wouldve flattened the learning curve as compared to LL if given the chance...not to kick the big guy when hes down, yall know I kicked his analysis skills all the way through...

For some reason, Atlas has a new pet peeve: too many people in fighters corners. Wonder what the backstory is on that beef?