

Zab Judah BARELY Escapes Jersey With A Win Over Solid Lucas Matthyse

Written by Michael Woods

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That noise you heard Sunday morning, around 1:15 AM, if you live in the Tri State area, was a sigh of relief from Main Events and Team Judah when they heard their guy Zab escaped with a split decision win from Lucas Matthyse in the main event of an HBO card from the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey on Saturday night.

The scores for a fight which started off free of drama but ramped up hard when Judah was knocked down in the tenth, were: 114-113 for Judah from Joe Pasquale, 114-113 Matthyse from Waleska Roldan and from 114-113 Judah from Hilton Whitaker.

Judah (age 33; 39-6 with 27 KOs entering; ex junior welter and welter champ; from Brooklyn, living in Las Vegas) weighed 139 pounds on Friday, and Matthyse (age 28; 27-0 with 25 KOs; from Argentina) was 140 pounds.

In the first, Zab worked the jab, scrutinized Matt, who tried to land a power right. Judah landed the two notable power shots in the round. We heard that Judah admitted in the fighter meeting that hed trained two weeks for Carlos Baldomir, in 2006, when he dropped his welter title in a nasty shocker. But his body looked in fighting trim on this night.

Zabs dad Yoel, his trainer, dismissed Matthyse as a Golden Gloves level talent after the first.

In the second, we heard analyst Roy Jones recommend that Judah take his time, let Matthyse enter uncharted territory, the later rounds, after Max Kellerman said hed hope that Zab would turn up the volume. There were some scattered boos in the Pru at the pace of the clash. Judah was basically taking his time, not taking unnecessary chances, not looking to blow his golden opportunity if he were to win.

In the third, we saw Matthyse light on his feet, not the sort of style we expected from a bomber type. He hit with some left hooks, but a left uppercut from Judah scored more loudly. Some blood appeared on Zabs left cheekbone, after a butt.

In the fourth, blood appeared on Judahs left eye. His foe certainly didnt look overmatched, out of place, at all. But Judah inched closer, and tried to land with more authority with his jab.

In the fifth, Judah picked it up a notch. He threw two rather than one, inched closer still to the underdog.

In the sixth, we saw that Matt looked to have ample gas in the tank. He moved smartly, and again, not at all out of place against the experienced hitter. Just get them points in. Youre doing great, Zabs dad told him after the round. But was taking body shots...

In the seventh, we saw another tight round. The crowd wasnt too happy. Dont worry about it. Eff em, said Yoel Judah as Zab took a seat, and noted the boos. Matt after the round said he

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had cramps in his legs.

In the eighth, the referee Earl Brown warned Matt for a head butt. But Zab didnt lose his composure, as he sometimes has in the past.

In the ninth, Matt held and hit. Was he trying to provoke Judah? He charged harder at Judah and was having some luck landing.

In the tenth, a hard right put Zab down, at the 2:00 mark. It was a straight shot, brushing against Zabs glove, and caught Zab backing up. He was up at four, with clear eyes. A left hook buzzed him again. Judah made it out of the round, maybe just barely.

In the 11th, Judah was getting hunted. He hit the deck again, but it was off a push, no extra point. Zabs legs were jellied but he stayed afloat til the end of the round. He needed to clinch repeatedly to do so, however. Hey, you want this fight? his dad asked. Yes, Zab said, with gusto. Why you keep going to the ropes? his dad said.

In the 12th, Zab came out looking fired up. But he was running, looking to not get hit, doing his Travolta imitation, stayin alive. Zab actually had a nice stretch in the middle of the round before the dog beared his fangs again. Wed go to the cards.

Zab said after that he expected a hard scrap, knew that Matt had heavy hands. He told Max Kellerman when he watched the knockdown that, Things happen. God is great, he brought me from the bottom brought me back to the top, thats all I can say.

Most impressive on this night was Judahs will to finish the fight. Jim Lampley and Roy Jones agreed that Judah didnt show that hes ready to take over at 140.

Next for Judah? Maybe a scrap with Kaiser Mbuza, for a vacant crown.

In the TV opener, Robert Guerrero (now 28-1-1) got it done against Vicente Escobedo (22-3), taking a unanimous decision over ten rounds in a lightweight tangle. The Ghost scored knockdowns in the third and the sixth, and exited with a 100-88, 98-90, 96-92 margin. Hell have to heal up after breaking his left hand. Esco got a win, of sorts, when his lady accepted his marriage proposal in the ring after the beatdown.

SPEEDBAG Lampley joshed with Roy Jones, when the subject of head butts came up. Lamps asked RJJ if he ever felt like hed been butted deliberately. In my last fight, he said, chuckling. Oh you mean by Bernard? I dont want to talk about it, Roy said, and chuckled again. You probably texted each other earlier, Lampley said.