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In an ugly fight that was still more exciting than their first one seventeen years ago, Bernard Hopkins and Roy Jones came full circle last Saturday night. Hopkins won a 12-round unanimous decision over Roy Jones to even the score with his long time rival. The judges saw the fight 118-109 and 117-110 twice. I scored it 118-110.

During their first fight in 1993, Jones was the more advanced fighter and their style clash didn't provide for an entertaining fight between them. Fast forward to 2010 and put them in the ring again to face each other and it is Jones who, despite being four years younger than Hopkins, fights like the older man. Add to that the same style clash, and the only memorable moments about the fight were the fouls, punches to the back of the head by both fighters, topped off with the Hopkins one-two, followed by his head. In some spots it looked like the Three Stooges, minus one.

Hopkins said before the fight that he was going to try and make it a street fight, and he did - sort of. Bernard tried to move out of his style, but he doesn't have the pop in his punches to do what he tried to do. So instead of fighting with somewhat reckless abandon, he tried to maul Jones in spurts and work the edge of the Marquis of Queensberry rule book. And he succeeded in doing that.

What we saw in Hopkins-Jones II was a battle between a 45 year old counter-puncher who doesn't like to lead and a 41 year old who used to be a fast handed boxer and who could really put his punches together in succession. This past weekend, not only were both Hopkins and Jones fighting with diminished skills, each was confronted by a fighter whose style really bothered him. Add to that for either to really have a chance to hurt the other, they basically had to leap from what they normally do stylistically and take a chance, fully aware that the guy in front of them has seen it all and is still capable of making them look wild and amateurish. And the thought of that had them fighting like fencers and playing tag for gaps of the fight.

At this stage of his career, Roy Jones is vulnerable to an aggressive fighter who can punch and who lets his hands go freely. Hopkins is not aggressive by nature, isn't a big puncher, and also doesn't throw a lot of punches. So is it hard to see why Jones remained on his feet for the entire 12 rounds? No.

On the other hand, Hopkins at age 45 is vulnerable to hand and foot speed, and also to fighters who are busy and maintain a high workrate from bell-to-bell. Well, Jones no longer has any legs, his one time brilliant speed is no longer there, and it's an effort for him to put any semblance of tactical combinations together. Thus Hopkins was never really touched or in trouble once during the bout.

When you combine the above factors, you get what we saw on April 3rd: Hopkins fighting like a bully in spurts, trying to open Jones up to fight. The problem was Bernard isn't a big enough puncher to rattle even a diminished Roy, so Jones just covered up or tried to con Hopkins into

not really pushing the fight, and he did have some moderate success in doing that.

Roy's problem was he couldn't get off enough during the fight, and that afforded Hopkins the chance to basically control it by jabbing to Jones' stomach and chest as he inched forward looking to land his right hand over the top or around to the body. On some occasions Hopkins used his left hook to Jones' body and then tried to follow it up with his right hand. Sometimes he had success and other times he missed as Roy slipped away. The difference in the fight was Hopkins was letting his hands go and looking to make it a fight in spots. Jones just kept waiting for the perfect opening that never came.

It'll be said over and over this week that the fight was terrible and both guys stunk the place out because of their age. Certainly there's a good bit of truth in that thought. But the bigger factor is Bernard Hopkins and Roy Jones bring out the worst of each other stylistically. They delivered a snooze fest when they were in their twenties and another one in their forties, albeit the rematch had slightly more drama because of the fouls, theatrics, and occasional outbreaks of fighting and exchanges.

At their best they're evenly matched, and provide each other fits stylistically. Hopkins defense and sound fundamentals nullify Roy's physical brilliance. On the other hand Roy's speed and ability to put blazing combinations together are enough to keep Bernard from really pushing the issue. Therefore they have to resort to things they don't normally have to in the hope of trying to get the other out of their game - but each is too good to be fooled or tricked. Roy is a bigger puncher, but Bernard has a cast-iron chin so he's not going anywhere. Jones' chin isn't on the level of Hopkins', but it's not vulnerable because Bernard isn't a big enough puncher to get him out. And that's what leads them to resort to gimmicks and trickery when they fight.

Hopkins got his wish and settled the score with Jones. However, Jones showed even at the end of his career he matches up with, and will always give Hopkins trouble. Basically, Jones won the first meeting before they fully flowered as fighters. Hopkins won the rematch when both were on the decline because he evolved more as a fighter and endured less punishment during his career.

Seeing these two greats fight twice was probably more than enough. In 24 rounds neither of them proved superior to the other. Hopefully Roy will realize that he's reached the end of the road, and will now understand that he should retire with his health, wealth, and respect. As to Hopkins, he's fighting with house money and still remains a threat to the best the light heavyweight division has to offer because of his experience and toughness.

It's doubtful Hopkins will retire without trying to land a fight with WBA heavyweight title holder David Haye. Bernard knows he's playing with house money, and even if he was knocked out by Haye in the first round at age 45, it wouldn't tarnish his legacy a bit. And if I were David Haye, I'd give Hopkins a shot at the heavyweight title because it would be for big money. Plus, after he dispatches Hopkins, there will still be a fight in waiting with either Wladimir or Vitali Klitschko.

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