

The Raskin PPV Running Diary: Hopkins vs. Dawson (Part I)

Written by Eric Raskin

Tuesday, 18 October 2011 10:03



To a man, everyone in the boxing community agreed from the start: Bernard Hopkins vs. Chad Dawson shouldn't have been on pay-per-view. But it was. There's no undoing it. There's no getting your \$60 back (though surely some of you will write angry letters to Golden Boy and Gary Shaw and try). The damage is done, so let's try to look for silver linings. Here's one: If it hadn't been on pay-per-view, you wouldn't have the pleasure right now of reading one of my world-famous pay-per-view running diary columns! And these things are basically a \$60 value that you're getting for free, right? (Okay, maybe that's a stretch. Do I hear five dollars? Two bucks? A nickel?)

In any case, I watched Saturday's PPV with my usual cohorts. We had a small crew, but it was an all-star, no-fat collection of boxing writers: me, former Ring magazine editor-in-chief and future Boxing Hall of Famer Nigel Collins, the host with the most (and podcast co-host with the co-most) Bill Dettloff, and Bill's dog, Duva. At 91 years of age in dog years, Duva is officially the oldest Duva in boxing, beating out Lou by two years. However, if it turns out Lou Duva is actually a shar pei, as many boxing insiders have long suspected, then he's 623 in dog years

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and still can claim seniority.

But enough talk about canines. When they make a mess, all you need is a plastic bag to clean it up. The mess made by the Hopkins-Dawson PPV will be considerably more complicated to dispose of. Let the healing process begin with a two-part running diary (we'll go up through the end of the undercard today, then deal with the main event and the post-main-event extracurriculars tomorrow):

9:05 p.m. EST: Usually in these running diaries I mock Dettloff for his late arrivals, but since he's hosting, I steal his trademark move and knock on the door five minutes after the start of the broadcast. I hate to deprive running-diary readers of a description of those first five minutes, so let's assume I missed Jim Lampley using the words "cogitative" and "superannuated" and Emanuel Steward busting out the phrase "the best I've ever saw" twice.

9:09: The big favorite in the opening bout, Paulie Malignaggi, gets wobbled by a right hand from unknown Orlando Lora in the first round. Gale Van Hoy makes it a 10-3 round in Lora's favor.

9:31: One of Lora's cornermen has thick wads of what appears to be gauze and tape wrapped around his first two fingers, making them look somewhat like white corndogs. Bill comments, "I thought that was something out of Bernard Hopkins' wife's bedroom drawer." (If you don't get that joke, it must mean you're wasting your life away not listening to Ring Theory. But you can enjoy a three-minute free preview of the October 4 episode at the following link, then that joke will make sense: <http://tinyurl.com/3rdrwt4>.)

9:32: Harold Lederman delivers his first, "I gotta tell you something, Jim" of the evening. Now it's officially an HBO Pay-Per-View event. For what it's worth, Harold has Malignaggi up 5-1 through six rounds.

9:39: CompuBox stats show that Lora has landed in single digits in seven of the first eight rounds, while Malignaggi has landed more than 20 punches in seven of eight rounds. Moments later, Lampley calls out, "hard right hand by Malignaggi," leading me to wonder: Should anyone ever call any punch Malignaggi lands "hard"?

9:41: An interesting conversation develops between Steward and Max Kellerman about whether punching to the body does more damage to fragile hands than punching to the head, and the gentlemen in the Dettloff living room all agree, Max is off-base on this one with his assessment that it's safer to go downstairs. Lampley weighs in by comparing hitting a man's elbow to punching a doorknob. Interestingly, Antonio Margarito once loaded his elbows with actual doorknobs for a fight.

9:46: Bill is talking about how much bigger Malignaggi is looking these days as a welterweight and shares his theory that "every boxer is on steroids." (Note: The opinions of Mr. Dettloff do not reflect those of the author of this article or of anyone else associated with TheSweetScience.com. In fact, we suspect Mr. Dettloff made this statement while roid raging himself.)

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9:48: After a reasonably entertaining 10th round that features the first real two-way slugging of the otherwise forgettable fight, Lederman announces his final scorecard, pausing momentarily to sneeze. I've often wondered why we don't witness more live on-air sneezing. I feel like by the law of averages, at least once a week a SportsCenter anchor should sneeze while reading the teleprompter. It never seems to happen, though. There must be some sort of physiological explanation for how the human body repels the urge to sneeze in high-pressure situations.

9:49: Michael Buffer announces Malignaggi as the unanimous decision winner. I'm as excited for the prospect of Malignaggi vs. Devon Alexander as I was before the fight—which is to say, not at all. Ken Hershman's first order of business at HBO: Just say no to Malignaggi vs. Alexander.

9:54: With Danny Garcia and Kendall Holt making their way to the ring, the conversation turns to the Ring Theory "Quick Picks" points at stake. My once-imposing lead of eight points over Dettloff has been whittled to just two, and I picked Holt to win this one by knockout (I let an actual coin flip make that decision for me), whereas Bill needs Garcia by decision. If indeed Garcia wins by decision, the Quick Picks score will be tied. High drama in suburban Allentown, Pennsylvania.

9:55: Buffer announces that this fight card is "presented by Ripley's Believe It Or Not, proudly freaking out families for 90 years." Resisting ... urge ... to ... make ... plastic ... surgery ... joke ...

9:59: The Staples Center crowd gives us our first loud "ooooh" of the evening after Holt lands a short right hand to the chin in the opening round. Little do I realize this will be about as close as I'm going to come to any Quick Picks points.

10:00: I notice that Manny Pacquiao is seated directly behind Richard Schaefer at ringside. My source seated nearby texts me a transcript of the conversation. Pacquiao: "My English is really coming along, I wrote an entire three-sentence email in English yesterday and there were only two grammatical mistakes." Schaefer: "Impressive. Would you like a job as editor of The Ring magazine?"

10:02: We get our first Emanuel Steward "crispier" declaration of the show. If it wasn't officially an HBO Pay-Per-View before, it definitely is now.

10:06: Garcia is really beginning to do some damage against Holt in round three. He's also doing damage to my Quick Picks hopes. That's what I get for picking against the Philly fighter. I should know by now that bad things NEVER happen in Philadelphia sports.

10:14: Duva the dog assumes a suggestive position on the floor, flat on his back, all four legs pointing toward the sky, nether regions exposed. "He looks like he's been KO'd," Nigel offers. It could be worse. We could be looking at Lou Duva in this position.

10:24: Ref Jack Reiss asks Holt and Garcia to punch their way out of a clinch, rather than officiously breaking them up the instant they draw close to one another. I like this Reiss fella.

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10:26: Holt enjoys a very strong seventh round, but Lederman gives it to Garcia anyway, seemingly a case of Harold being in cruise-control mode. Bill's expert analysis as a biased observer rooting for Garcia: "I love Harold Lederman. Impeccable."

10:28: We have ourselves a little Mayweather Moment, as Garcia throws a punch when Holt isn't ready; fortunately, Holt isn't hurt. Reiss stops the action to warn the fighters to keep it clean, and Dettloff goes nuts, yelling that the ref should stay out of it and let the fighters display a little anger and throw punches if they feel like it. Oh well, I still like ya, Jack.

10:32: Holt lands a half-decent punch. I overreact, startling Duva out of his rigor mortis pose.

10:40: Garcia has Holt wobbling all over the place in the 11th round, and I'm now resigned to rooting for Garcia to knock Holt out so that Bill only gets one point in our picks competition. I'm rooting for anything, really, that will prevent the official result from being a Garcia decision win. I'm not above rooting for a Fan Man incident.

10:46: In his new segment in which he profiles the ringside judges, Lederman tells us that Wayne Hedgpeth, usually a referee (you may remember him recently stopping the Saul Alvarez-Alfonso Gomez fight a couple of punches early), has been called into judging action as a last-minute sub. This information proves meaningful when we learn that Hedgpeth scored the fight 115-113 for Holt in a bout in which it seemed fairly obvious that Garcia won at least eight rounds. If Ivan Goldman was still a boxing writer, Hedgpeth would definitely be getting a Magoo Award.

10:57: Jorge Linares and Antonio DeMarco are in the ring for the final undercard bout, and with Linares wearing pink gloves, Lampley speaks about breast-cancer awareness and how both Golden Boy and Shaw are supporting the cause. Everyone in the room makes their own Shaw/mammogram joke.

11:00: Nigel begins sharing stories about former Ring editor Nat Loubet (one of the guys behind the 1970s ratings scandal), including one that saw Loubet shoot a prisoner of war in the stomach and another that explains how Nat nearly lost an ear playing football. Loubet also met Presidents Kennedy and Nixon, ran all the way across the country, and impregnated Jenny Gump.

11:06: Linares lands a ridiculously fast uppercut from about two feet farther away than you should ever throw an uppercut, prompting Lamps to declare, "That was sick!" With Linares in total control early, this is threatening to be one of the least compelling PPV undercards in history.

11:11: It's Dettloff's favorite part of every PPV broadcast, the ref giving prefight instructions in the dressing room! Currently, Pat Russell is in Dawson's dressing room. I'm not quite sure how this developed, but we all soon end up engaged in a discussion about the fact that boxing writer Tom Hauser wears his coat like a cape.

11:18: Linares-DeMarco is turning into a hell of a fight in the sixth round, with DeMarco coming

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on and Linares bleeding profusely from a cut on the bridge of his nose. I love how DeMarco yells, “Woo!” every time he gets hit. He’s behind in the fight, but starting to win the mental war.

11:19: Ref Russell is in Hopkins’ dressing room, explaining the rules. I’m going to go out on a limb and say Bernard knows the rules of boxing by now. (Unless there’s a rule about losing by TKO when you get thrown to the canvas and separate your shoulder. Oops, am I getting ahead of myself?)

11:27: Linares sustains a second bad cut, this one over the right eye. Soon thereafter, Kellerman comments, “The fight would feel a lot different had Linares’ face not fallen apart.” The once-handsome Venezuelan is about 75 percent of the way to looking like Gus Fring.

11:32: Nigel observes how when Linares’ cutman applies pressure to the eye, blood spurts from the cut on his nose. I’m not a doctor, but I think this sequence of events is coincidental.

11:38: In a thrilling, high-drama 11th round, DeMarco is landing one flush shot after another, and the ghoulishly bloody Linares is starting to look like he wants out. Ref Raul Caiz Sr. obliges and stops it with 28 seconds remaining in the round. I honestly can’t remember ever seeing that much blood pouring off a fighter’s face.

11:42: Buffer does one of my least favorite Buffer things, editorializing as he announces the result: “We’ve just seen one of the greatest displays of courage in the ring.” I’m not even sure if he’s talking about DeMarco or Linares. In any case, it was a stirring victory for DeMarco, the kind of fight that makes the price of the show worthwhile no matter what happens in the main event. (Or so I think at the time.)

11:47: With Hopkins-Dawson moments away, we’re shown highlights of Dewey Bozella’s undercard fight. I mention this strictly so that I can link to my Grantland feature from last week about Bozella and Hopkins (<http://tinyurl.com/3cjgxne>). Enjoy.

11:50: Amir Khan, tweeting about his stablemate Linares, uses the word “wiv” instead of “with.” And wiv that, I conclude Part I of the PPV running diary. Check back tomorrow for Part II—or as I like to think of it, “the part every boxing fan on the planet wishes never happened.”

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Radam G says:

Awesome copy, babbbeeee! Holla!

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