Written by Michael Woods
Saturday, 05 January 2013 00:16

Arash Usmanee took on Rances Barthelemy on the 2013 Friday Night Fights season debut main event, and I am pretty sure got himself a semi permament gig on the series, with his effort, which screamed effort and a willingness to please. Barthlemey started off strong and felt like he was in the driver's seat, but Usmanee got lubed up, and got to work. He pulled away from round three or four on...but didn't get the love from the judges, who scored for Barthelemy, by scores of 115-113, 116-112, 116-112.

Upon hearing the news, Bart dropped to his knees, and thanked the powers that be. "Whoa," said Joe Tessitore. "Hometown!"

The Magic City Casino was the venue where Usmanee felt that same sting, that same stupefication so many valiant battlers feel every year.

Teddy Atlas went ballistic. "It might be a new year but the same old bad judging...It's either incompetence or it's corruption," he thundered. "That is disgraceful! Happy new year to you same old disgraceful judges. Happy new year!"

Usmanee went 282-1,088, to 238-824 for the "winner."

Atlas saw it 117-111 for the "loser," a fine card in my eyes.

I guess the record will read that Barthelemy rises to 18-0, while Usmanee goes to 20-1...but most know better.

The lightweight scrap took place in Miami, with the Canada-based Usmanee eating a some solid body shots in round one. The Cuban dropped his hands, went lefty, and got cocky towards the end of the first. His jab was popping on the shorter Usmanee. The smaller man didn't fold though; he looked to bang to the body himself, but his low hands left him open, too open, too often, through three. He moved his head and torso and legs enough to keep him from getting cracked clean too often, however. Bart can be a wild swinger, whose balance is sometimes off a bit. He squared up in the fourth and fifth, and didn't jab like he did earlier.

The Cuban heard it between rounds and came out jabbing. He then abandoned that plan. Usmanee got into a flow, got confident and sent the message to the judges that he wanted it more, appearing to work harder, and having the edge in volume. Usmanee, born in Afghanistan, recalled that the two men had sparred but said that was years ago, and that he'd grown since then. In round nine, Bart had more mustard on his shots. In the tenth, Usmanee suffered a cut, on the bridge of his nose. They rumbled in 11 and 12, with Bart eating clean rights. Usmanee worked harder, had more gas left and took it on my card.