

Sadam Ali Wins at Barclays Center

Written by Chris Wheat

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Boxing returned to Brooklyn Monday night when Golden Boy Promotions presented a seven bout card at the Barclays Center's Cushman/Wakefield Theater, televised by Fox Sports 1.

The main event paired Brooklyn's own Sadam Ali, recently signed to a promotional deal by Golden Boy, and Catskill, NY's Jay Krupp in an eight round welterweight contest.

Ali had to fight off Krupp's charges, and heavy left hook, but once he settled into a rhythm with his jab, he was able to properly exhibit his skills edge. After eight rounds, the judges gave Ali, who scored two knockdowns, the win, by scores of 79-72, 78-71, and 77-72.

The Theater, for those wondering, is simply the main arena, with partitions and draperies put up to shrink capacity.

Ali (17-0, 10 KO) was coming of a twelve month layoff when the bell sounded for round one.

Always a fluid boxer, Ali used his jab early to help establish a rhythm. Krupp (17-6, 8 KO) was not intimidated by his opponent or the big stage surroundings as he wobbled Ali early in the round with a right hand, and dropped him with a left as the bell sounded to end the round. Ali (146 lbs) gave Krupp (146 lbs) a smile and nod of acknowledgment as he headed back to his corner.

Ali used the second round to continue to try and establish a groove and Krupp pressed the action.

In the third round Ali tightened up his defense to ward off Krupp's left hand and put Krupp down

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with a strong overhand right. After beating the count, Krupp was continually tagged by Ali's combinations.

The fourth frame found Ali using his jab with great effectiveness. He often doubled the jab, used it upstairs and downstairs, and hooked off the jab. The tough and determined Krupp kept coming but seemed to be losing steam as Ali began to take control of the fight.

In the fifth and sixth rounds the action dropped off a bit as Ali, a member of the 2008 U.S. Olympic team, used his superior boxing skills to launch a variety of combinations at Krupp. In the sixth an Ali right hand buckled Krupp, but the game fighter refused to go down.

Krupp took the fight to Ali at the start of the seventh, but could not mount a successful offense. Ali taunted Krupp by sticking out his tongue and doing a little shuffle. Krupp answered with a shuffle of his own.

In the final stanza Ali again knocked Krupp down with a right hand with thirty seconds left in the round. Krupp survived the count and the two boxers waged a furious back and forth over the final ten seconds before the bell sounded to end the contest.

In the co-feature Michael Perez (19-1-2, 10 KO) of Newark, NJ faced Miguel Zuniga (13-2, 8 KO) of San Diego in a ten round battle for the vacant WBA FeddeLatin super lightweight title.

In round one, Perez immediately introduced himself by landing a left hook to the side of Zuniga's face. A sharp boxer, Perez used movement and multiple combinations to establish an early presence.

The second and third frames saw both boxers engage in back and forth action with Perez landing the bigger shots. Zuniga, originally from Tijuana, Mexico, showed he was not going anywhere even as Perez landed a powerful combination to end the third round.

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In the fourth and fifth Perez stepped up his attack and began landing four and five punch combinations. At one point he landed a series of rapid fire machine gun lefts that thudded against his opponent's head. Zuniga found success when he was able to get inside and land some hard counter shots. The Mexican was a tough customer, but Perez was clearly in control. He continued to tattoo Zuniga with punches.

Zuniga found some success in the sixth frame. Although Perez was boxing beautifully and landing combinations, Zuniga landed two strong right hands followed by an uppercut that snapped Perez's head back.

In the seventh round both fighters pressed the action and continued back and forth exchanges that had the audience cheering in appreciation. A small cut was opened under Perez's left eye. It was unclear if the cut resulted from a punch or a clash of heads.

In the eighth stanza the crowd continued to show their appreciation for the action taking place inside the ring. Zuniga continued to show what a tough customer he was by getting inside and landing shots. Perez continued to use good lateral movement and flashed multi-punch combinations.

The final two frames showcased exciting back and forth exchanges with Zuniga using body punches to mount an attack and Perez answering with thudding lefts and rights.

Perez had gained a hard fought control of the fight and the judges agreed with scores of 99-91 (twice), and 96-94.

Former Olympian, and Staten Island native, Marcus Browne (7-0, 6 KO) won a unanimous decision victory in an ugly eight round light heavyweight bout against Lamont Williams (5-2-1, 2 KO) of Gardena, Ca.

The talent that Browne undeniably possesses was diluted in a fight that saw both fighters clinching and mauling throughout. Browne had a point taken away in the fifth round for using his head, although he had also done that in the second round, but escaped the referee's detection.

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He also rubbed his glove in Williams face during a clinch.

Some boxing did take place in spite of the roughhouse antics and Browne was the superior fighter. Williams posed a difficult test for Browne and Browne may have become frustrated when he realized his opponent was planning to stay the distance.

The judges awarded Browne the decision with scores of 79-72 (twice), and 76-75.

The third bout of the evening was a four round featherweight tilt between Claude Staten Jr. (1-0-1) of Brooklyn and Derrick Bivins (1-1-2) of Philadelphia.

Both fighters engaged in a chess match for most of the four round distance.

In the first round both boxers used the three minutes to feel each other out. There was a lot of feinting as each tried to find a home for their punches.

In the remaining three frames movement interspersed with combinations filled the time and the judges saw it 40-36 for Bivins and 38-38 twice for a majority draw.

D'Mitrius Ballard (3-0, 2 KO) brought a big left hand with him from Maryland when he squared off with Lekan Byfield (3-6-2), of Tarrytown, NY, in a four round super middleweight contest.

Byfield started the proceedings by jumping on Ballard and trapping him against the ropes. Although he was throwing punches, the referee warned Byfield about using his head. Ballard regained his composure and hurt Byfield with a left hand. Ballard finished the round strongly.

In the second and third rounds Ballard established control by way of his jackhammer left hand. He moved Byfield backward and around the ring by repeatedly landing his big punch. Byfield

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fought back, but did not have enough to make a dent.

The fourth and final round showcased an interesting moment when each fighter turned the other around in the corner a few times in succession, resulting in what resembled an awkward dance movement.

Ballard scored a unanimous decision with scores of 40-36 across the board.

In the evening's opening bout Jamel Herring (5-0, 3 KO), of Coram, NY, overcame a quiet first round to overwhelm Justin Robbins (2-4, 1 KO), of Springfield, IL, to earn a TKO victory. Robbins was unable to continue after three rounds of a scheduled six round super lightweight contest.

The announced attendance for the evening was 3,059.

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