

## Holt Gets Nod Over Sub Hopkins In AC

Written by Michael Woods

Saturday, 13 December 2008 19:00

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His manager was pinched on a coke bust and his opponent dropped out a week before his scrap. You must give Kendall Holt points for going with the flow, and staying focused in his bout with Demetrius Hopkins at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City in New Jersey on Saturday night. Hopkins too must get props for stepping in on short notice, and cutting down from welter to junior welterweight. But that aside, it was a bit of a ho hum affair in AC, as the styles of the two men combined for a drama-free interlude that sometimes looked like a sparring sesh. After 12 rounds, the Jerseyite Holt, who does deserve some good news after all, had his hand raised, and was informed he'd be holding on to his WBO crown.

Judge Alan Rubenstein saw it 116-112 (Holt), Luis Rivera had it 117-111 (Holt) while Julie Lederman turned in a bit of an oddball card 115-113 (for Hopkins). Her tally wasn't from Mars, though. She simply told you that she respects the possibility of a man doing more than his foe even though he spent most of his time in retreat.

Holt's road to this fight was an impediment filled path. His original foe Ricardo Torres pulled out last Saturday, saying he had a virus, and wouldn't be able to make weight. The rumor mill is running OT speculating on whether that explanation holds water. How overweight was he? What sort of virus could he not kick in a week? Then, Holt's manager/cornerman Henry Cortes was charged with cocaine distribution. Holt himself had more than dabbled in that biz as a teen, so it came as a shocking disappointment that the seeming straight arrow Cortes—who must be seen as innocent until proven otherwise—could be involved in such a shortcut to riches. Viewers wondered if his head would be screwed on straight after all the chaos and drama. They also wondered if he could add another scalp to his resume, after handing David Diaz and Isaac Hlatshwayo their first pro losses.

In the first, Holt was in forward mode. Hopkins backed up, but countered well. Nobody stood head and shoulders above. In the second, DHop got going with a stiffer jab, and Holt looked to land his heavier right. He didn't jab enough for his corner's liking. They clanged heads, but no one got cut, luckily. In the third, Hopkins stepped it up, with a couple heavy one-tvos. Then Holt did too, with some neat body work. In the fourth, Demetrius moved well, but he got his trainer angry by clowning and smiling during the round. He landed a long straight right that maybe gave him the frame. In the fifth, Holt started getting frustrated that Hopkins didn't want to engage much.

In the sixth, the men clinched more and more. Rather than stick and move, Hopkins kept his ground more, but then hugged. In the seventh, both men opened up more. But Hopkins wasn't in 'take the title' mode, and he needed to step it up to get it done. In the eighth, Hopkins ran too much early, then got the jab going. But overall, his style wasn't pleasing the fans or, my guess would be, the judges. In round nine, we saw Holt land a filthy right hand to the gut. There was too much 'one and done' from Hopkins. In the 10th, Holt was the aggressor, though neither man was in Fight of the Year gear. In the 11th, the action was more tepid than you'd like, considering that it wasn't clear who had the lead. There were some power tossed laid out, but both guys can slip slickly, so no one landed a game changer. In the 12th, Holt danced more, figuring he held

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the lead. We'd go to the cards.

Holt will now fight a title consolidation special against Timothy Bradley, the WBC supreme being.

Holt was truly looking forward to breaking a tie with Torres. They tangled in Sept. 2007, and Holt felt he got jobbed by a hometown special in Torres' native Colombia. He got the short end of a TKO11 call. It looked like Torres had his number when he knocked him down twice in the first round of their July 2008 redo, but Holt roared back and stooped the Colombian with two minutes elapsed in the most insane round of the year, grabbing the WBO 140 pound crown. Instead, he had to deal with a switch in style, in the form of the more technically sound, slick Hopkins. In addition, these two had a history—as prospects early in their career, Hopkins slugged Holt and cut him, during an out of the ring faceoff. The cops came, but no charges were filed.

Bernard's nephew Demetrius (28-0-1; age 28), who last fought 13 months ago, weighed 140 pounds while the 27-year-old Holt (24-2) was also 140.

Yuri Foreman showed he's another league than Irishman James Moore in the Showtime TV opener. His hands and his feet gave Moore trouble from the staredown on. Both fighters are based in New York.

The judges spoke after ten rounds, and the result wasn't up for debate. The NAVF junior middleweight champ Foreman got the nod, by scores of 99-90, 100-90, 99-91. The crowd mixed boos with cheers after the scrap. They would have liked Foreman to try and close the show in a more emphatic fashion, but that isn't his style.

Moore (age 30) plodded after Yuri, not entirely surprising for those who saw him lose a pre-step-up fight to 9-2 Gabriel Rosado in June. He ate straight rights, repeatedly, and trainer Lennox Blackmoore told him, "You gotta work more!" after the fourth. His effort was not to be questioned by his genetics..well, he worked with the tools afforded to him at birth, and they were what they were. And he knew it coming in; they'd sparred a good 60 rounds over the years, and the Belarus-born Foreman won the vast majority of rounds handily.

The WBA's No. 4 ranked 154 pounder Foreman (age 28) switches directions well. He circles left, then right; a pursuer has a hard time getting a bead on him because he isn't predictable. His power, though, is middlin', so when he meets someone who can match him in the feet department, he will taste loss.

Foreman clocked Moore in the left ear in the eighth, and made him drop his mouthpiece. His left eye was cut from a butt in the ninth, and he looked demoralized after.

The 27-0 victor made Moore 16-2.