

## Halloween Came Early As Hopkins Dominates Murat

Written by Bernard Fernandez  
Sunday, 27 October 2013 03:28

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ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. – The calendar said that Halloween wasn't for another five days. But the calendar was wrong.

Halloween, in all its guises, was on display here Saturday night in Boardwalk Hall, to the delight and, occasionally, befuddlement of 6,324 on-site fight fans and a Showtime television audience. There were masks, the distribution of candy and all manner of tricks and treats, most of which were furnished by IBF light heavyweight champion Bernard Hopkins' dominating, unanimous decision over German challenger Karo Murat.

Hopkins (54-6-2, 32 KOs), who turns 49 on Jan. 15, might not have scored a knockout since he took out Oscar De La Hoya in nine rounds on Sept. 18, 2004, a drought of over nine years and 14 fights. But the ageless wonder – who, in keeping with his newly adopted ring persona as “The Alien,” wore a green extra-terrestrial mask into the ring – did all he could to put the rugged but stylistically ragged Murat (25-2-1, 12 KOs) down and out. The scorecards – judges Julie Lederman and Joseph Pasquale had Hopkins winning huge, by identical 119-108 margins, with Benoit Rousset not far behind at 117-110 – was reflective of the punch statistics, which showed Hopkins landing 247 of 565 (including 184 of 373 power shots) to just 147 of 486 for Murat. It was easily the most energetic performance turned in by Hopkins in years.

“Who said that Bernard Hopkins fights were boring?” Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer asked, rhetorically, at the postfight press conference. “This was one of the most entertaining fights I've seen.”

For that matter, the other two televised bouts also provided nice bang for the paying customers' buck, with a little bit of controversy tossed in for good measure. WBO middleweight titlist Peter “Kid Chocolate” Quillin (30-0, 22 KOs) scored an 11<sup>th</sup>-round stoppage of game challenger Gabriel Rosado (21-7, 13 KOs) when referee Allen Huggins, acting on the recommendation of

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ring physician Blair Bergen, determined that a cut over Rosado's left eye was too severe for him to continue. Quillin, as per his custom, celebrated his victory by tossed cellophane-wrapped chocolates to the crowd.

But Rosado and his trainer, Billy Briscoe, vigorously protested not only the way the fight ended, but the scorecards that showed him trailing by wide margins of 90-80, 89-81 and 87-83. The consensus among those in the press section was that the fight was much closer than that.

"This is b.s.!" Rosado yelled. "This is a championship fight!"

Heavyweight Deontay Wilder (30-0, 30 KOs) wasn't in a championship fight – not unless you put much credence in the WBC Continental Americas belt he was defending against a clearly overmatched Nicolai Firtha (21-11-1, 8 KOs), who went down three times in all before referee Lindsay Page stepped in to wave the bout off in the fourth round. Still, 30 consecutive knockouts is no small feat, even if Firtha's rough edges made the brawling Murat seem like Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Schaefer, who promotes Wilder, said he anticipates that WBC heavyweight champion Vitali Klitschko, who has announced his intention to run for the presidency of his native Ukraine, to retire soon, which could mean that championship going vacant and a possible matchup of Wilder and Bermane Stiverne.

Wilder's expected rout of Firtha and Quillin's semi-disputed disposal of Rosado were nice preliminaries, but it was the re-emergence of Hopkins as something other than a cautious technician that raised at least a few eyebrows.

This Hopkins met Murat's headlong rushes with return fire, landing with right-hand leads as he sought to fulfill his vow to once again end a fight inside the distance. It was a step back in time for Hopkins, who allowed that "I just know if you duck more than you take, you can count your money later on."

Hopkins ducked often enough to emerge relatively unscathed – his face was unmarked at the

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final bell – but he mixed his typically superb defense with flashes of the offense that marked his rise to the middleweight championship 18½ years earlier. Then again, Murat sort of forced the issue with his bully-boy tactics that prompted referee Steve Smoger to dock him a penalty point in the seventh round for hitting on the break. That was one of only several fouls, blatant or borderline, committed by Murat, an 8-1 underdog.

“I was a little taken back by some of the tactics,” Hopkins’ trainer, Naazim Richardson, said “I’m not whining, I’m not crying, but I’m really getting tired of the fact that people feel they can come in and do what they want to my athlete because they say (Hopkins) is a dirty fighter. But he’s never been disqualified, he doesn’t have (many) points taken from him.”

What really irked Richardson was when Murat tossed Hopkins to the canvas in the sixth round, then continued to throw punches at him, drawing a warning from Smoger.

“There are rules, but when you’re in that ring, you’re fighting,” Hopkins said. “It’s a fight. I don’t think (Murat) did it on purpose. I guess he thought if he roughed me up, he could get an advantage somehow. It didn’t bother me. You’re only wrong if you get caught. This is boxing.”

It really must not have bothered Hopkins that much, because when he had a bleeding Murat in trouble in the eighth round, he retreated to Murat’s corner and began talking to the German’s handlers.

So, what was the gist of Hopkins’ message?

“I was trying to negotiate with them to stop the damn fight,” Hopkins explained. “The guy was bleeding and taking a lot of punishment. Listen, Steve Smoger is one of the best referees. Steve Smoger will let the fight happen. I said, ‘Steve, won’t you stop it?’ He wouldn’t listen. So I looked at the corner and said, ‘Look, your guy is getting all cut up. I’m just going to keep beating him. And it’s going to get ugly.’ But they wouldn’t listen.”

That could be because Murat’s cornermen don’t speak English, but then much is frequently lost in translation when it comes to boxing.

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Aside from his determination to get back to knocking someone out, why had Hopkins gone, um, old school? Why had he taken it to the street?

“I’m a Philly fighter,” he said. “If I got to be a dog, if I got to bite down, I can rumble. I can sit I can sit in that pocket.

“You seen four or five different styles from me tonight. You didn’t see one thing, and that confused Karo Murat. My hand speed ... he was shocked. My counterpunching ... he was shocked. My sudden power ... I’m not the biggest puncher, but I can get your attention.”

Who next gets Hopkins’ attention remains to be seen. Schaefer said that “Obviously, we want a big fight. There’s some big names out there. We’ll do whatever we can to get the biggest possible fight.”

And the biggest name belongs to a little guy, Floyd Mayweather Jr., who is a natural 147-pounder at this stage of his career. Hopkins came in at 172½ against Murat, a gap seemingly too wide to bridge. But Hopkins said that, with enough time to prepare, he could again pare down to 160, a presumably doable weight should Mayweather, the consensus pound-for-pound best fighter in the world, opt to beef up a bit.

“Floyd is approaching a 50 number,” Schaefer said of Mayweather, who is 45-0. “And Bernard is approaching a 50 number. That sort of gets my promotional juices going.”

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**amayseng says:**

Hopkins is a few months shy of being 49 years old.

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This guy is SPECIAL, there is no other way to describe him. I know Murat is not an elite fighter but Hopkins clearly won the type of fight which was not what a 48 year old would favor, wrestling, clinching, being pushed around, falling to the canvas and being hit with two shots while on the mat (how was murat not penalized). being hit in the break around at least ten different times. Murat is a punk and has no composure.

This was a physical physical encounter, not one where hopkins stayed at distance and conserved energy with a pot shot here or there. this was a grueling physical battle.

Hopkins is a master craftsman and an ATG.

I want him to retire on top and ride off, wonder who will be next

### **teaser says:**

how many elite boxers have you seen trying to fight after 40 yrs old and get beat up by someone like Murat? ...just about everyone ...Hopkins is truly special and an inspiration ...kudos to him and hope he lands that big fight

### **Radam G says:**

A whole lot, Teaser. The difference is that B-Hop's age has always been known. And he could not and cannot deduce it. Boxing history used to punish oldies boldies goldies for being ancient by ignoring them and discriminating against.

It is no longer out the door for being a bit aged. Forty anything is nowadays accepted like being in your roaring 20s. Holla!

### **Radam G says:**

Wow! If B-Hop -- "The Alien" -- is not the 2013 Fighter of The Year, the game's so-called themselves experts and authorities need their @sses STRAIGHT-UP kicked!

How are you gonna √ob B-Hop outta it again. Only in seedy, shady boksing can a near-49-year-old man whup young arse and not even be considered for the best top gun of that sport.

Haters could not rise to B-Hop's co√ones on elevators. Give the man his cred. And quit being like a collected, tiny d\*\*\*head.

No matter what any fighter does for the rest of this year, B-Hop deserves FOTY by every legit boxing authority. Holla!

### **Bernie Campbell says:**

No big deal, Murat showed the world hes got the right stuff! Iraq! Hopkins is currently on the

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Chitlin Circuit! or Barnstorming, AKA Playing out his hand! Bernie should retire! Like Hopkins, like K Bros, like Martinez?, Manny still! Rios! Holt!, Alexander, Ortiz, the Possibilities are numerous!

### **brownsugar says:**

I'm not too much of a Bhop fan ... Maybe because I still remember the fights he basically stunk out with Jones and Calzaghe.

But you're wrong Bernie, Bhop is on nobodies chitlin circuit. He may have started there but as part of the management and shareholder of one of the most successful boxing promoters in the business its obvious he has risen far past the point from where he began.

I may not like him that much but I respect him as a person and as a boxer.

His day of retirement will eventually come.....as will his day of induction into the HOF.

### **Bernie Campbell says:**

You talk sh... Brown sugar! Guy has always picked and choosed who he would fight and where! Start out in Rejavk for example! Clownie wouldnt have a prayer if he had an opportunity! If you are a promoter, you got a piece! Its obvious and logical! Wheres your shackel idiot! Or are you in the cheap seats! Bottom line he is on the circuit! If he wasnt theyd put em up against Bute, Ward, Kessler, Froch, Librado Andraede, etc etc! Try again and speak in English!

### **Radam G says:**

C'mon, B-Camp! You are being a "friscoe!" Hehehehehehe! Holla!

### **brownsugar says:**

[QUOTE=Bernie Campbell;39267]You talk sh... Brown sugar! Guy has always picked and choosed who he would fight and where! Start out in Rejavk for example! Clownie wouldnt have a prayer if he had an opportunity! If you are a promoter, you got a piece! Its obvious and logical! Wheres your shackel idiot! Or are you in the cheap seats! Bottom line he is on the circuit! If he wasnt theyd put em up against Bute, Ward, Kessler, Froch, Librado Andraede, etc etc! Try again and speak in English![/QUOTE]

Don't try to make it personal Bernie.... Stinking Thinking doesn't move me. And neither does the rambling insults of a man who could have been born a genius if it weren't for the missing chromasome.

If you have a logical argument let's hear it. Otherwise your rant carries no weight.

BHop has earned his place in history...that's indisputable.