

## Hopkins' Draw Versus Pascal Was Blessing In Disguise

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Wednesday, 09 February 2011 16:47

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The February 9th edition of the Montrealgazette.com is reporting that the rematch between WBC light heavyweight title holder Jean Pascal 26-1-1 (16) and former middleweight/light heavyweight champ Bernard Hopkins 51-5-2 (32) is expected to take place on May 21, 2011 in Quebec City, the site of their controversial first fight. Pascal held on to his title on Dec. 18 when the 12-round bout with Hopkins was scored a majority draw.

Early in the bout the 28 year-old Pascal scored two knockdowns over the 46 year-old Hopkins, and then proceeded to be taken to boxing school by the skillful and savvy vet over the last two thirds of the fight. Pascal may have held onto his title with the draw verdict, but inside it must feel like a loss to him, and that's certainly how a majority of the boxing public sees the fight. Although to Pascal's credit, he is only the second fighter to have Hopkins down since Segundo Mercado dropped Bernard twice in their first fight, back in December of 1994. But maybe it's a bad thing to drop Hopkins because he gets up and finishes the fight strong, at least that's been the case in the two fights in which he's been down.

Watching Hopkins fight and seeing the way he's managed his career has been a thing of beauty and I'm still convinced it's under-appreciated by a lot of boxing observers and fans today. Here's just another example of Hopkins understanding the sport and matchups. Remember how for the better part of a year the undefeated and quick handed Chad Dawson was issuing challenges to Bernard? And Hopkins, who we know can make whatever fight he wants, obliged Chad on Friday Nite Fights and in the media, but never put the wheels in motion to make the fight a reality. Why? Because Hopkins is no dummy and fully understood that Dawson's youth, reach, speed and combination punching would provide him many obstacles and stumbling blocks that he's no longer capable of addressing.

The best thing that happened for Hopkins and opened up a new path for him to add to his legacy was Jean Pascal upsetting Dawson last year. Based on Pascal's convincing win over Dawson, Jean became the new force in the light heavyweight division. And guess what, that didn't escape Hopkins, who knew he matched up well with Pascal, who is a strong and hard punching fighter who lacks experience on the big stage.

Let me be clear, Pascal is not a lumbering fighter. He possesses very fast hands and feet. It's important to note that Pascal has no idea of how to use his speed, and because of that, when facing someone like Hopkins, the speed does him virtually no good (except in terms of getting in a couple of quick lucky shots in early, which Bernard was then able to deal with for the rest of the fight.) Hopkins probably figured based on his uninspiring 12-round decision over Roy Jones in his last fight, Pascal would jump at the chance to retire the living legend, and he did. And therefore Hopkins scored a default victory over Dawson by beating the fighter who beat him, at least in the eyes of the public.

In order for Pascal to fight Hopkins again, Chad Dawson, who was supposed to fight Pascal next, had to be taken care of. Now it looks as though Dawson will fight on the undercard of

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Pascal-Hopkins II, with him being guaranteed a shot at the winner for the title in his next fight. So in hindsight, the fight being scored a draw was the best thing that could've happened for Hopkins. Now, he can fight a rematch with a fighter he believes he owns psychologically and has already defeated in the eyes of the public, as opposed to having to defend the title against the fighter with the more difficult style in Dawson.

At one time it was the more rugged and physical fighters like Robert Allen, Antwun Echols and Segundo Mercado who gave Hopkins the most trouble. However, that's no longer the case. The younger and less experienced Hopkins was more willing to engage and never wanted it to appear to the fans that there was an opponent who he had trepidation about when it came to trading and straight up fighting. The older and more experienced version of Hopkins doesn't care about that. He'll talk a mean game at the press conference, but once in the ring he'll box and try to take them into the later rounds and open up when he thinks it's safe.

At this time in his career, Hopkins sees everything and fighters his size who rely on their strength and power as their means to beat him are dependent upon landing a lottery punch in order to have a shot at winning the fight. If you look at his career over the last five plus years, it's the quicker and busier fighters like Jermain Taylor and Joe Calzaghe who give him more problems. And that's why he shied away from facing Dawson. In Pascal, Hopkins is facing a strong fighter who will only look to take his head off the way Antonio Tarver and Kelly Pavlik tried to. Pascal got lucky and caught Hopkins early in the fight and I suspect he'll spend a lot of time looking to score that third knockdown in their rematch. And while he's looking for that, Hopkins will probably be banking rounds on his way to a non-controversial decision victory.

Early prediction on the fight and the aftermath: Hopkins will beat Pascal to win the WBC light heavyweight title, and then say he has bigger things than Chad Dawson on his plate and relinquish the title. Immediately afterward he'll lobby for a fight with David Haye or perhaps maybe one of the upper-tier cruiserweights. Yes, if Hopkins gets by Pascal, it's doubtful we'll see him fight Dawson.

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**brownsugar says:**

the article is spot on. Can Bhop continue to dodge that bullet called age?

**FighterforJC says:**

I love how the Mayweather-lover in Frank Lotierzo shines through in this article. Hopkins has a "default win" over Dawson because Hopkins beat the man who beat Dawson? LOLLLL. I guess that goes along the lines of Mayweather having a default win over Pacquiao because he beat the man who gave Pacquiao such a hard time. LOL. By the same logic Pacquiao has an even

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bigger default win over Mayweather because he spanked and stopped DLH, who many felt beat Mayweather.

### **mortcola says:**

...default victory is not meant as a real victory. F-Lo is clearly saying that B-Hop earned the symbolic victory by beating the guy who beat the guy, but without having to actually beat the guy (Dawson), because he wouldn't be able to. There is no analogy to Mayweather here, nor is one intended.

### **FighterforJC says:**

As far as intentions go, I guess that's subject to interpretation!

### **brownsugar says:**

Not trying to be funny but did you actually read the post before you commented FighterforJC?

### **FighterforJC says:**

I guess that depends on which post you're talking about.

### **Isaiah says:**

Let's "default win" this place up! Ricky Hatton gave hell to Floyd Mayweather Jr. for about 6 rounds and with the help of ref Joe Cortez of course. Hatton couldn't give hell to Manny Pacquiao for 6 seconds. Whoops! Looks like another "default win" for the Pacman! Ricky Hatton beat Jose Luis Castillo who arguably beat Floyd Mayweather Jr so therefore, Ricky got robbed against Floyd, right? Ricky Hatton beat Kostya Tszyu who beat Zab Judah therefore, Hatton has a "default win" over Judah to. Man, Ricky's a bad man! LOL! Floyd is actually not human but a giant, bald, talking, feather fisted, yellow backed chicken and sometimes Manny has trouble from his prize chickens in putting it in a fight so therefore, Floyd has a "default win" over Manny. CLUCK, CLUCK, CLUCK! Oh, here's something I don't even need a "default win" for! Bernard Hopkins will beatdown BOTH Pascal and Dawson and you can take that to the bank! Old man's still got it!