

Bracero Gets Another Win As Broadway Boxing Headliner

Written by Adam Berlin

Thursday, 10 February 2011 01:51



NEW YORK --- Lou DiBella doesn't claim to have originated the concept, but over the years he has fine-tuned the formula to the point that the term "Broadway Boxing" conjures up its own specific image – that of club fights before a lively and emotionally-invested audience whose members have been lured by the inclusion of one of their own, be he (or she) a representative of an ethnic strain or a neighborhood or, sometimes, a boxing gym.

The presence of one such constituency had already been guaranteed by the inclusion in of the energetic (and undefeated) Gabriel (Tito) Bracero, a self-described "Nuyorican" from the Sunset Park section of Brooklyn in Wednesday night's main event. In lieu of the traditional villain's black hat, Bracero's opponent, one Christopher Fernandez of Salt Lake City, entered the ring in a feathered war bonnet that made him look like an understudy in some road company production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest."

Competitive bouts are also a frequent hallmark of Broadway Boxing shows, but DiBella's matchmakers aren't so committed to that principle that they'd chance getting a sure-fire ticket-seller like Bracero beat on a cold night in February. The 34 year-old Fernandez came to New York having lost four of his previous five fights, and the only thing more certain than the eventual verdict in this one was that it was bound to last the distance. Bracero, now 14-0, has stopped just one opponent in a pro career that goes back to 2001, with time off for good behavior.

The inevitable result was that a couple of hundred Bracero fans clad in matching red t-shirts (what other color would Tito's army wear?) spent eight rounds yelling themselves hoarse while their man racked up another shutout victory.

Bracero Gets Another Win As Broadway Boxing Headliner

Written by Adam Berlin

Thursday, 10 February 2011 01:51

Fernandez might not have stood a chance from the moment he signed the contract, but he was experienced enough to avoid doing anything silly that might have encouraged Bracero to double his career knockout total. Tito, however, might have gotten more exercise, and less resistance, from a speed bag. Apart from a mysterious sixth-round one-point deduction from referee Arthur Mercante Jr. (whose semaphore suggested that Fernandez might have been guilty of either nudging his opponent or playing a sour note on a fiddle), matters proceeded as expected right up until the final minute, when Fernandez threw caution to the wind and tried to mix it up for the first time all night. Bracero had to celebrate with his face bloodied by a cut near his right eye. At that point whether it was caused by a clash of heads or a stray punch was somewhat immaterial.

Judges Julie Lederman and John McKaie both scored the bout 80-71, as did the Sweet Science. Steve Weisfeld (79-72) somehow found it in his heart to reward Fernandez, now 19-11-1, with a round.

The undercard featured a couple of upsets, and in truth there should probably have been a third. Ray Smith, an opponent imported from Arkansas for unbeaten Maryland light-heavyweight Mark Tucker, deserved no worse than a draw, but despite rocking Tucker several times and beating him to the punch throughout the second, third, and fourth rounds, emerged on the wrong end of a unanimous decision in which the 59-55 cards of Lederman, McKaie, and Waleska Roldan concurred. Tucker, who will presumably retain his WBO top-ten rating as a result of the verdict, is now 15-0, Smith 9-5.

Capt. Boyd Melson, a West Point graduate whose rooting section included a uniformed contingent from the Corps of Cadets, improved to 2-0 and for the second time in as many pro fights announced that he was donating his purse to stem cell research. It's hard to know how this grand gesture might have gone over had Melson lost to Californian Marquis Bruce (0-1-1), and as it was he barely squeaked by with a majority decision. McKaie and Roldan saw it 39-37; McKaie 38-38.

Bronx junior middleweight Steve Martinez, extended the distance for the first time in his career on a December Broadway Boxing card, did his best to atone by stopping California foe Ishwar Amador in the first round to run his pro mark to 8-0. Amador fell to 11-9.

Long Beach (N.Y.) light-heavy Seanie Monaghan, who came within an eyelash of his first defeat on that same December card, brings his own portable Irish-American gallery nearly the size of Bracero's, and his battle with Yonkers' Angel Gonzalez was an all-out war for the three rounds it lasted. Both men disdain anything resembling traditional defense, and for nine minutes they took turns battering the snot out of one another. Whenever one appeared to punch himself out, the other would take up the cudgel and whale away. Eventually something had to give, and in this case it was Gonzalez, who at the end of the third collapsed into his seat so hard he nearly broke the corner stool. This evidence of fatigue did not escape the attention of the ringside physician, who duly advised referee Wayne Kelly to stop the bout. Monaghan is now 5-0, while Gonzalez, later heard complaining that he had been the victim of a "conspiracy," dropped to 2-4.

Brooklyn flyweight Keisher McLeod-Wells, the receptionist at Gleason's Gym in her day job,

Bracero Gets Another Win As Broadway Boxing Headliner

Written by Adam Berlin

Thursday, 10 February 2011 01:51

improved to 4-1 by outpointing her California opponent Melissa McMorrow (4-1-3) in an entertaining four-rounder, while Quincy (Mass.) lightweight Ryan Kielczewski stretched his pro mark to 9-0 with a lopsided win over Minnesotan Wilshaun Boxley (6-8-1). Boxley started well, but by the last round looked like a man praying for the final bell as he reeled from Kielczewski's relentless onslaught.

Deano (Bad News) Burrell, one-half of a pair of identical twins from London who flew across the pond to embark on his professional career in New Jersey last November, was matched against an opponent who had never won a fight – until Wednesday night. Sidell Blocker of Pleasanton, N.J. carried the evening on the cards of all three judges (Steve Weisfeld and Lederman 38-37, McKaie 37-26) to break his maiden and is now 1-3-1. Bad News (does that make twin Scotty “Good News”) is 1-1.

If nothing else, the opening bout of the evening demonstrated that Sampson Lewkowicz doesn't always have the Midas touch. The advisor to middleweight champion Sergio Martinez (Martinez was in attendance to watch the pro debut of his new stablemate) had persuaded DiBella to invest in a promotional contract with El Paso (Tex.) lightweight Allen Benitez. Martinez' trainer Gabriel Sarmiento worked Benitez' corner in tandem with venerable New York cut-man Jimmy Glenn in what appears to have been a pretty expensive pro debut. New Jerseyite Joseliz Cepeda ran his own record to 2-2 with a unanimous decision over the highly-touted Texan. Roldan and Weisfeld viewed it 39-27, McKaie 40-36.

* * *

Broadway Boxing

At B.B. King's Blues Club, New York

February 9, 2011

WELTERWEIGHTS: Gabriel Bracero, 142, Brooklyn, N.Y. dec. Chris Fernandez, 140 ½, Salt Lake City, Utah (8)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Mark Tucker, 174, Eldersburg, Md. dec. Ray Smith, 176, Fort Smith, Ark. (6)

Seanie Monaghan, 176, Long Beach, N.Y. TKO'd Angel Gonzalez, 176 ½, Yonkers, N.Y. (3)

JUNIOR MIDDLES: Steven Martinez, 153 ¼, Bronx, N.Y. TKO'd Ishwar Amador, 153 ½, Mira Loma, Calif. (1)

Boyd Melson, 153 ½, White Plains, N.Y. dec. Marquise Bruce, 153 ½, Los Angeles, Calif. (4)

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Sidell Blocker, 133, Pleasantville, N.J. dec. Deano Burrell, 131 ¼, London, England (4)

Ryan Kielczewski, 131 ¼, Quincy, Mass. dec. Wilshaun Boxley, 132, Coon Rapid, Minn. (6)

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Joseliz Cepeda, 127, Newark, N.J. dec. Allan Benitez, 126 ¼, El Paso,

Bracero Gets Another Win As Broadway Boxing Headliner

Written by Adam Berlin

Thursday, 10 February 2011 01:51

Tex. (4)

FLYWEIGHTS: Keisher McLeod-Wells, 107 ½, Brooklyn, N.Y. dec. Melissa McMorrow, 108, San Carlos, Calif. (4)

[Comment on this article](#)