

Donaire, Bradley: Two Roads, One Star

Written by Ron Borges

Tuesday, 01 March 2011 13:21



There may be many ways to skin a cat but these days there seems to be only one way to become a boxing superstar, as Tim Bradley is beginning to understand.

If Willie Pep were fighting today (not to compare one of the sport's greatest pure boxers to Tim Bradley, by the way) boxing fans would not be lining up to watch him or writing checks to cable networks to buy him on pay-per-view. They'd be booing him for inaction.

That is how the game, or at least the perception of the game, has changed over the years. While boxing may still call itself "The Sweet Science" it pays most often today for guys who swing ax handles.

In his own way Bradley was as dominating in his recent dismantlement of WBC junior welterweight champion Devon Alexander as Nonito Donaire was in his one-punch knockout of unified bantamweight titleholder Fernando Montiel, yet Donaire became an instant star with one left hook while Bradley remains in boxing's shadows despite landing nearly 100 of them to the face and body of an undefeated champion for 10 one-sided rounds.

Bradley (27-0, 11 KO) methodically broke down Alexander, who many believed had superior speed, by first tearing at his body before later moving to his head. During the course of this beat down, Bradley took away Alexander's spirit, breaking his mind before finally breaking a hole over his right eye with an inadvertent head butt.

At that point Alexander (21-1, 13 KO) completely unraveled. Overwhelmed by the relentless pressure Bradley had been putting on him, he quit. It was a classic case of a mentally stronger fighter taking away the physical advantages of an opponent and thereby breaking him down mentally round by round. It was, frankly, a boxing masterpiece.

Yet when it was over no one was calling for Bradley's ascension to the top of the pound-for-pound ratings and debate over whether or not he should be in line to fight Manny Pacquiao – which was rampant before the fight – all but ceased.

"I was faster," Bradley said. "If that's the best in the world then that's weak. He was jumping in. He just didn't want to get hit with the big shot."

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Because of that he didn't land one but he peppered Alexander with a multitude of small ones, including 98 power shots and 39 jabs. What they combined to do was break young Alexander both psychologically and physically.

There is a subtlety to that kind of work inside a boxing ring which eludes most fans and nearly all television executives. Once there was a time when that kind of skill would be widely admired. He would be seen as a fistic surgeon, a technically dominating force.

Today the boxing world and the real world are more fast-paced. There is little room for, or understanding of, subtleties either outside the ropes or inside them. Knockouts and the men who deliver them have always been the driving force in boxing because this is, after all, the hurt business and nothing hurts more than a concussive shot to the mandible.

What's changed is the make-up of fight fans, who for the most part are people who look at Donaire's one-punch knockout of Montiel as not only the primary validation of greatness but the only one.

Donaire's concussive powers were already well known, as were Montiel's. It seemed assured one of them would not have to work a full shift and that turned out to be Donaire (26-1, 18 KO), who wobbled Montiel in the first round and sent him crumbling to the floor in the second. Although Montiel's body got up, his mind was still on the floor and so the fight was stopped at 2:25 of the second round. It was, to be sure, a marvelous execution.

"I hit him with a left hook, looked down and saw him twitching," Donaire said. "I knew the fight was over then."

What he also knew was with that one punch he had pushed his way into the pound-for-pound debate in a way Bradley had not. Although few would argue that anyone but Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather, Jr. are some form of 1-2 in that discussion, Donaire catapulted himself toward the top while Bradley failed to move the needle.

Donaire immediately became the best bantamweight in the world and one of the sport's most explosive performers. Bradley, on the other hand, was immediately seen as having to face England's Amir Khan, a power puncher of note himself, to further establish his 140-pound bonafides with the paying public.

That is the nature of boxing in the 21st Century. If you possess concussive power you can quickly enter the public's collective consciousness. If you don't, you're Timothy Bradley, a dominating performer in a way too few people understand.

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FighterforJC says:

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Boring is as boring does. Tim Bradley is a cross between John Ruiz and Hopkins, and I don't mean to say that in a positive way. As boring as Mayweather is and Pernell Whitaker was, they really figured out their opponents and dissected them over the course of many rounds. Bradley just frustrates the heck out of his opponents with his ruggedness without actually beating them up. He wins by not allowing his opponents to do their thing while he himself does only slightly more than his opponents. Bradley is boxing's version of MMA's "lay and pray" tactics.

Isaiah says:

What's funny is how the editor must have been trying so hard to find an interesting picture to show of the Bradley/Alexander bout and the best that could be shown there was of Tim barley grazing Devon's nose. Oh, how can we contain the excitement? Yes, truly Nonito Donaire has earned a bump up on everyone's list by just blowing through a huge threat like Montiel the way he did, but Nonito's overall body of work just shouldn't be enough to grab him the #2 spot on the pound for pound rankings. A fair placement would be at #3 behind someone by the name of Sergio Martinez who has been putting in some serious work the last couple of years. Man, can some more people give Sergio some proper respect, please? If you must, keep Manny Pacquiao at the #1 slot, but give Sergio the credit he deserves for his level of competition and realizing that Nonito's 1 good night isn't enough for him to go to #2. So, it's #1 Manny, #2 Sergio, #3 Nonito, #4 Floyd Mayweather (dropping in the ratings for being inactive, whom I would have removed already if it was up to me, but I'm being fair and playing the wait to see if there's a fight scheduled within a year of his last fight as if I was working for the Ring Magazine game because I'm a fair man and don't just take him out of the rankings for being a cherry picking, inactive coward...). After that, I figure it's about anyone's guess who belongs on the list.

Radam G says:

Bradley is a media doll. They luv this C+ fighter, who apparently gets away with bowling his noggin in opponents' mugs, as if the white in their eyes and on their grills are bowling pins. Kapow! Blood all over the eye whites and white teeth mean a spare or strike for him. Danggit! But in the sweet science, da sucka suppose to be gettin down with sparring and striking with his mitts, not da bronze-colored superDOME! Bradley is the greatest bowlers of our days with the meanest bowling ball -- his big-arse HEAD!

IMHO, bradley didn't methodically break down Alexander or his last seven opponent. With his big-arse noggin, he busted Devon's chops up and made new eye opens over da top of [the not yet] great one's orbitals. Maybe three dome blasts were "inadvertent head butts," but nine was straight-up old school tricks of the trade. When Bradley said that he was a "throwback old-school fighter," I laughed my arse off until I hollered at videos of his last seven bouts.

Bradley would make late heavyweight pretender -- I mean contender -- Jim Flynn look like a FUDGING SAINT. Holla at Youtube and see how old-school Flynn was butting Jack Johnson a 102 years ago until a REAL REFEREE told him to cut out da Bradley boneheaded so-called "incidental" crap. When da sucka Flynn kept doing it, referee Smith let the sheriff enter the ring and award JJ the bout. What is wrong with so many of the referees officiating da DOME BLASTER's bouts? Maybe da suckas are in on betting fixed fights and are getting paying off. I

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bet "Firm, but Fair" Cortez, Tony Weeks, Kenny B, Pat Russell and Larry Cole, just to name a few, would not let Bradley get away with his tricking and head flicking.

Bradley and Team Bradley moan and groan and claim that people are unfair to him, because the butting is happening because he is so short. YUP! BULL! He was a short amateur and didn't do that after the ref warned him. Sweet Pea Whitaker, Buddy McGirt, Hector "Macho Time" Camacho, Julio Cesar Chavez, Robert Duran, Willie Pep, Mike Tyson, Tommy Burn, Jess Willard, Flash Elorde, and Marvelous Marvin Hagler were short, but did not "inadvertently" violate the Queenberry's Rule for 29 TIMES in seven bouts and directly tricks of the trade violate it 58 times. WHAT DA DOUBLE FUDGE! No boxer is nowhere close to being a superstar if he is so clumsy that he inadvertently or intentionally butt his opponents 87 times in seven bouts. [Count that jive for yourself.] When it comes to boxing, Bradley has no large following because the fans are not standing in a line to see one pugilist psyched out because his eye whites and white grill look like bowling pins to a weak media-doll pugilist using his DOME like an angry bowling ball. Nonito Donairey prospers because of his sweet science beauty of using those mitts and thinking with that noggin, not crashing it into chops and eye orbitals. Bradley is no near the orbit of greatness that the "Filipino Flash" is coming into. Holla!

brownsugar says:

I like Bradley, he's a fresh face that exudes confidence and a willingness to compete.. he'll fight anybody anytime,.. whether he's good enough or not... he's willing to take the risks. What's not to luv? ...His A-Symetrical style of boxing confuses Pattern fighters that have to get set before they punch and he knows how to approach boxers from uncomfortable angles that inhibits their opportunities. I'm dissappointed that his match with Alexander wasn't as watchable as it could have been. But Bradley shows a mental toughness and adaptability that has allowed him to get the edge so far against world class competition(anybody who can take a stinker like Witter school has to have a modicum of talent)... And the head butts... That's just an added plus but I suspect that it comes from him moving into an attack with his head down. I don't know what he'll do against Khan, who is better in almost every aspect of the game.... but lacks Bradley's craftiness. On paper I would say Bradley loses automatically... but he's probably capable tripping up Khan too.(he's the underdog but I wouldn't be ultra suprised to see an upset) Borges' article is tight,.. but it's right.

Radam G says:

As soon as Bradley gets a boxing REAL referee who explains to him that he is in a boxing match, and not in a head bowling contest, Bradley will fizzle. And on his arse, the opponent will conduct a dexterous, pugilistic beatdown sizzle. Unless, of course, the proudful Bradley quits. From his amateur history, when the shoe is on the other foot, he will boot. When things are going his way, he's LOUD. But when he is gettin his arse dusted, quitting -- he will be VERY PROUD. Then alibi after alibi he will try. I've heard him say that in that ring, he is willing to die. But on da DAY of his arse thrashing, he's going to quickly quit and CRY! I'm not catastrophizing da dude, but why come he gettin' away with some much cheeseball lippin?' Holla!

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Sergio Martinez is already getting more respect than he deserves. Martinez had a strong year, no doubt, but that's mostly because he was perceived as the underdog. It wasn't like he dominated Kelly Pavlik or Paul Williams (1st bout). If there's anyone getting all the accolades based on one fight, it's Martinez, not Donaire. Donaire has been on a roll since Darchinyan. And he's been blasting out just about every opponent since. He deserves to be #2.

the Roast says:

Bradley and the headbutts are not to be taken lightly. Getting hit repeatedly with a hard object upside to head can do more than cause cuts. It also can get the victim disorientated. With all this talk after his fights I wouldnt be surprized to see him get DQed. Khan and Roach will be too smart for Tim.

brownsugar says:

@Roast, and @RG.... the numbers show that Bradley does have a statistical propensity to be involved in a headbutt during his fights. But I can't believe the guy is trying to use his head as a weapon.. If a ref gave him a warning (which I'm sure they'll do going forward) I can't see Bradley not making the adjustments necessary to stay in the fight... because he wants to win that badly.. here's What makes Bradley so amusing,.. he's not a hard puncher... doesn't have a solid chin yet he beats everybody they've put in front of him and had to climb off the canvas a few times to do so... If he beats Khan I might start growing hair in my bald spot.

brownsugar says:

@RG,.. you've said many times that Bradley likes to "lip-off" too much. can you elaborate... the guy is squeaky clean as far as image is concerned,.. he's as well spoken as Donaire,.. and he could probably qualify to join Andre "SOG" Ward on a traveling "Camp Meeting" giving testimonies and such.. Is it because he's called out Pac ?.. and criticised him for fighting Mosley(along with other elite boxers) and likes to promote himself by calling out everyone under the Sun? just curious.

Radam G says:

@B-Sug, there are tons of interviews of the Desert Storm bad-mouthing fighters and calling them harsh names. Or just like at the Donaire-Montiel bout, Bradley started fibbing about Amir Khan ducking him. Bradley must be terribly delusional. It was Amir, who first said that he wanted the winner of Bradley-Alexander. I would never be upset because Bradley called out Da Manny. That is the nature of the hurt bitnezz, which is also not pridefighting but prizefighting -- book, hook or crook. Every fighter who is the IT and cashcow, the bottom guys will call him out the most. Calling out doesn't mean JACK! The champ will only answer if it makes BIG MONEY sense. Bradley probably won't ever get to fight Da Manny. Because Bradley's reign and delusional thinking will probably end with getting in that squared jungle with Amir Khan.

As far as one boxer criticizing the CHAMP for who the champ dances with, is as old as snot. Everybodee and dey momma criticized Tommy Burns for fighting Jack Johnson, who was

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following him around the world and calling him out. GOAT Ali got criticized for not fighting Kenny Norton a fourth time, but instead taking on "Ali is the Greatest, but I'm the latest" Leon Sprinks, who was calling him out. Everybodee and dey momma called Sugar Ray Leonard a coward for dancing with Marvelous Marvin Hagler, instead of Don Curry, who was calling him out. Everybodee and dey momma was calling Ray "Boom, Boom" Mancini a "chump and scary punk," because his fought the money-sense bout with Bobby "The Schoolboy" Chacon, insteading of dancing with Howard Davis Jr, who was calling him out and tons of the bad words in existence.

Hopefully, when calling out Da Manny by Bradley, you get my point. It ain't worth a hill of beans, or two types of famous Pinoy ice creams. And the super majority sees bradley as a B+ fighter who won't quit using that trick of the trade of head bowling until the RIGHT referee is onseen in dat squared jungle. One thing that you are righteous about, is that a no-nonsense ref will make Bradley adjust ASAP, or as n the post of the Roast, DQ his arse. And Bradley will gladly take a DQ before being KO'd! Boxing is full of optical illusions. The persona of Bradley will change, the very minute that he is made to halt the magic of the "inadvertent headbutt[s]." Part of the craft of using the tricks of the trade of the game is to disguise fouling and cheating, if that is your cup of poison. Bradley's noggin is just as much an accident as Money May's elbow to the noggin, and B-Hop's punches below the waist when the referee is behind him or on the opposite side of his punch. Holla!

brownsugar says:

thanks for letting me get a peak into the mastermind of boxicology Radam.... your comments make good sense..... by the way I always like the way Floyd uses that elbow... its probably why he never gets butted.... that elbow of his is like an all purpose utility tool. But Michael Spinks thru his with mean intentions.

the Roast says:

Spinx Jinxs!!! Tyson was also the king of the vicious elbow.

FighterforJC says:

I actually don't find anything wrong with Mayweather's use of elbows. It's not like he's slicing people up with it like Jon Jones. It's similar to Muhammad Ali's constant holding behind the neck. It's just one of those things. Besides, Pacquiao has the "pompyang punch."