

Written by Michael Woods
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Hogan Photos

I suppose it wasn't a waste of time for the 17,125 folks who came to watch Amir Khan do his thing against Irish underdog Paul McCloskey at the MEN arena in Manchester, England on Saturday night. Most were there to see Khan, with a good number there to see if McCloskey could flip the script, and send a message to wiseguys like me who didn't see the upside in having rising star Khan fight a relative no-name, with no power, in something of a gimme bout. But let's say that this one won't be played up on Khan's resume when all is said and done. The Pakistani Brit won just about every second of every round, and was getting into a decent rhythm when he and the Irishman clashed heads, with 1:05 to go, in round six. A cut on McCloskey's left eye had the ref ask the doctor to look at the slice over the eye, which didn't look too severe. But the doc called for a stoppage, and it didn't appear McCloskey argued too heartily, and thus we went to the cards. All three judges had it 60-54, for Khan, in a technical decision win.

The WBA 140 pound champion Khan (25-1; will fight Tim Bradley on July 23rd) said the night was easy for him, and he was surprised that Mac (22-1) took a lot of shots. He said he though the Irishman refused to continue.

In the first, McCloskey stood with his hands down. Khan was aggressive, and connected with a nice left hook at the 1:30 mark. Mac, a lefty, slipped well, and made Khan miss more than he's accustomed to early on.

McCloskey said after, "I don't know what the referee or the doctor was thinking there. This is pay per view TV and people are paying 15 pound of their hard earned money to watch that and the referee and the doctor stopped the fight. I thought it was bad, he was looking at me head or looking at my head I thought it was bad but I come back and (my corner) said they could've stopped it, no problem." He said he wanted to continue, and that Khan had trouble making weight and that Khan was getting tired.

In the second, Khan circled to the right, and rushed in with flurries. He frankly looked amateurish at times. Mac looked for some O late in the round, but lost the frame.

Khan Wins Technical Decision Over McCloskey, After Doc Says Irishman's Cut Is Too Severe To Continue

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In the third, Khan landed a lead right, which he began looking for in round two. Neither man got in a comfortable rhythm. The ref chided both men for being chippy late in the round. I would've liked to hear what trainer Freddie Roach told Khan after the round, but he wasn't miked.

In the fourth, Khan knocked Mac to the mat, but it was not called a knockdown. It looked like a body shot maybe caused it. Seriously, it looked like maybe Naseem Hamed influenced a young McCloskey, what with his hands low, his exaggerated torso movement. Khan landed uppercuts toward the end of the round. Khan was getting into a groove by now.

In the fifth and sixth, Khan kept up his advantage. Khan had the crowd roaring when he landed a solid flurry at the 1:30 mark. A head butt opened a clash over Mac's left eye and the ref and doc looked at it, and the fight was halted. Khan came in head first, looking to land a right lead as Mac dipped his head, and a cut formed. Was it a bad gash? Well, it was bad enough for the doc to advise the ref to stop it.

SPEEDBAG Jim Lampley, Manny Steward and the poet laureate Larry Merchant called the bout for HBO.

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