

Kaliesha & Ava Like Ali & Frazier: One More Time Will Do...AVILA

Written by David A. Avila
Tuesday, 21 June 2011 22:05



photo by Al Applerose

Think of Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier's three epic battles, with each getting more intense than the previous and that's what Kaliesha "Wild Wild" West and Ava "Lady of Boxing" Knight brought in their second cataclysmic encounter.

Forget that the WBO bantamweight world title was at stake because even if there were no belt they would have fought just as hard.

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On one side was West (13-1-3), the super quick 118-pounder with a lightning jab and left hook out of Moreno Valley, California. On the other side was Knight (6-1-3), the quick and intense pressure fighter out of Oakland, California.

Fighting each other is like fighting a mirror image.

Last Saturday at the Pico Rivera Sports Arena they entered the ring around 11 p.m. after a very lengthy and drawn out Muy Thai and mixed martial arts fight card. West-Knight was the only boxing bout but they were the main event.

About 31 months ago both met up north in Friant, California and in that bout Knight pulled out the victory in the last two rounds. Several said it was the best female bout they'd ever witnessed. They were just starting out then.

West walked into the ring with the WBO title she won last year with a knockout victory at the Staples Center. An automobile accident had left her unable to train, let alone defend her title since that victory in September 2010. Many boxing experts wondered silently if the perky bantamweight retained any of her skills and zest for fighting.

Knight had questions too. In a span of 22 months she had fought only one round and many wondered if the long layoff would result in layers of rust that could sink a battleship.

No problem. Both started the fight slowly and built up a crescendo battle that ended in a blinding flurry of punches from round two until round 10.

Ali and Frazier move over.

"They're both fast and exchanged a lot. The ten rounds went very quickly," said writer Igor Frank of the Glendale Boxing Examiner by telephone on Sunday.

Television should have been a major ingredient of this fight. About only 500 people witnessed the firefight between Knight and West. Many of the original 1,500 fans in the early part of the fight card were gone by the 11 p.m. starting time.

Those who stayed got what they came for.

"It was a great fight," said Wendy Rodriguez, who writes for a boxing web site and is a former world champion. "They are both very skilled fighters. They're two of the best out there."

West's jab was quicker than a blink and the left hook was like a scythe. Knight's blows to the body were destructive. Both girls absorbed blows that others definitely would be unable to sustain.

"I think we may have seen a clear winner at a different venue with an earlier fight time," said Lori Steinhorst of WBAN.com.

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Moreno Valley's West still holds the WBO title and a rematch with Knight will probably take place soon. Next time television would help.

"I want the rubber match," said Knight, 22.

Though fans were disappointed in the split draw decision, none were disappointed by the actual fight action.

A third match would be even better.

"We need a rematch," said West.

"I'm all for it," Knight said.

Just two suggestions: televise it for the world and fight three-minute rounds.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., John Molina (22-1) vs. Robert Frankel (28-10-1).

Fri. Telefutera, 11:30 p.m., James Kirkland (27-1) vs. Saul Duran (37-18-2).

Fri. Telemundo, 11:30 p.m., Jesus Pabon (17-1) vs. Javier Castro (24-4).

Sat. Fox, 8 p.m., Mike Jones (24-0) vs. Raul Munoz (22-13-1).

Sat. HBO, 6:45 p.m. Devon Alexander (21-1) vs. Lucas Matthyse (28-1).