Written by Michael Woods
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Mares is pleased as his BFF Russell Mora counts a knockdown in round one. (Hogan)

Showtime announcer Al Bernstein called ref Russell Mora's work during the Abner Mares-Joseph Agebko bantamweight tournament final on Saturday the very worst he's seen in 15 years. Mora missed numerous low blows thrown by Mora, including a hellacious low left hook which landed right on IBF bantamweight champion Agbeko's cup which the ref called a knockdown. That blow came in round 11, and it was thrown right in front of the ref's face. After 12 rounds, the judges gave Mares a majority decision (115-111, 115-111, 113-113) and Agbeko after said he'd lodge a protest to the IFF.

Jim Gray laced into Mora after the bout and showed him the egregious left hook, which Mora protested he thought was on the belt line. His nonexistent credibility went into the sewer from the gutter when he said he'd like to view the tape later to see if it truly was low, and ventured that the punch might have slipped off Agebko's glove. One wondered if Mora would go after Gray...

If Mora had taken points for repeated low blows (and Bernstein said he saw 25 or 30), and Agebko had been awarded round 11, as he did good work, then those 115-111 scores could've gone to Agbeko. Nevermind that Agbeko's energy had to be affected by being hit low so many times, and who knows how much more zip he would have had if Mares had been forcefully warned, and had a point or two taken away, and was threatened with a DQ, as it looked like he could've or should've been.

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mortcola says:

Saw it. Mares was pumped, busy, fast, landed lots. Unfortunately, the announcers were right. It was low blow after low blow; Mora cautioned Agbeko several times for pushing down on Mares' head, but that was the case only on a few occasions. Had Mora done even a basically correct job, Mares would have been warned off the illicit testicle assault, and Agbeko wouldn't have been as depleted, or points would have been deducted leading to an Agbeko win, or Mares would have been DQd. It was a flagrantly bad job by the Mora, and it should be protested and made a NC.

DaveB says:

That was horrible officiating. Where are they getting these officials from? The repeated lows blows were the worst but what really got me was when the ref warned Agbeko about Mares pulling Agbeko's head down. How ludicrous is that? Either guy could have won but all we wanted to see was a fair one.

brownsugar says:

agreed DaveB.....the fighters came to fight... but the ref didn't want to do his job... Don King said he was a "GBP" ref. My guess is.... this isn't over!