

The Mouthpiece

Victor, Victor, Victor!—Vasquez Stops Dailey.

By: George Hanson Jr., Esq.

Date: Friday, June 3, 2011
Venue: Harrah's Chester Casino & Racetrack, Chester, Pennsylvania
Promoters: Joey Eye Boxing & David Feldman
Ring Announcer: Larry Tornambe
Referees: Blair Talmadge & Shawn Clark
Matchmaker: Nick Tiberi
Coverage: www.gofightlive.com
Photos: www.christoneyphotography.com

Future Hall of Famer and the oldest fighter to win a world title, Bernard “The Executioner” Hopkins has all the records, accolades and a large cache of benjamins. However, he still remains somewhat of an enigma in his hometown of Philadelphia—respected for his accomplishments, but never winning the hearts of rabid fight fans. One would think that a two-division world champion would be a boxing box-office hit in the



City of Brotherly Love—the largest ticket seller. However, this is not the case. That honor belongs to lightweight Victor “The Fighting Barber” Vasquez, a free-agent who doesn’t need to sign with a promoter. Based on his mass appeal, he decides when he fights and for whom.

Vasquez (R.) squaring off against Dailey

It’s axiomatic that if you put Vasquez on your show you are guaranteed to fill your venue with people from all walks of life. Having covered many of his fights there is almost a Svengali-like atmosphere with women, men, and children in the arena screaming his name—some with tears running down their faces as he goes about his business in the squared circle. Club shows survive on ticket sales since there is hardly ever any television coverage. Thus, if you want to be in the black and turn a profit—you better have a slot for Vasquez!

Tonight in a six-round main event— no this isn't a typo—Vasquez (12 wins – 5 losses – 1 draw – 5 kos) squared off against Gustavo Dailey (4 wins – 11 losses – 0 draws – 1 ko) of North Philadelphia by way of Panama. This was a rematch of their January 15, 2010 bout in which Vasquez won by technical knockout in the fifth round. You cannot help but admire Dailey who arrived in Philadelphia 21 years ago as a 13-year-old from his native country. He works two jobs barely finding time to train, while providing a better life for his children. Despite losing his last six fights, three inside the distance, you knew that Dailey was not going leave any stones unturned in giving a full effort. He is a proud man and takes pride in giving 100% every time the gong sounds to begin another pugilistic quest.

I had barely swallowed a sip of my *Red Bull*, my constant ringside companion, before Vasquez and Dailey were engaged toe-toe, trying to knock each other into next week, in the opening round. Familiarity breeds contempt and the leather was flying with disdain as these two warriors tore into each other as though the victor would get a date with one of the beautiful ring-card girls in 15 minutes. It was a sensational opening round with Vasquez landing the sharper punches on the southpaw Dailey who more than held his own. With his old trainer, Billy Briscoe, back at the helm, Vasquez came out in Round 2 committed to Dailey's body. Working behind his jab he went downstairs to the Panamanian's midsection. Not wanting to be outdone, Dailey responded by giving Vasquez some of his own medicine. The war of attrition continued in the third stanza as



Vasquez turned up the intensity by continuing to rake his opponent with some hard hooks and uppercuts to the old bread basket. Dailey landed a head-snapping, left uppercut that caught the Fighting Barber's whiskers. However, Vasquez ate it and continued whacking away at the body.

Vasquez (R.) landing to Dailey's body.

Round 4 was a continuation of the previous stanza with Vasquez doing his best Mike "The Body Snatcher" McCallum impersonation. McCallum, a three-division world champion, was notorious for crucifying his opponents with murderous punches to the body that forced them to collapse. With time running out in the round, Vasquez landed a laser-like straight right that ricocheted off the side of Dailey's head causing his back leg to wobble from underneath him like an invisible Bruce Lee pulled the rug from beneath him with a leg sweep. Dailey went to the canvas and bounced up immediately before

Referee Talmadge could administer the count. In an attempt to regain his equilibrium he roamed across the ring to the far right corner with Talmadge trailing him like paparazzi after a retreating Lindsay Lohan. After looking into the hurt fighter's glazed eyes, Talmadge called a halt at 2:42 much to the dismay of a protesting Dailey. However, it was the right call because the punch short-circuited Dailey's internal wiring and had the fight continued he would have been a sitting duck for further punishment.

Yesterday, Philly light-heavyweight Tony "Boom Boom" Ferrante turned 27-years old. Thus, I knew he wanted to begin his weekend celebration with a bang and it didn't matter if it started with his fists clashing against Joe Park's noggin. Park, a firefighter and welder back in his hometown of Florence, South Carolina, was relaxed, calm and focused during my pre-fight interview—letting me know that "Smokin" Joe Frazier is his favorite



pugilist. Having lost his last two fights, Ferrante (9 wins – 2 losses – 0 draws – 5 kos) had something to prove. On the other hand, the southpaw Park (8 wins – 5 losses – 0 draws – 6 kos) was returning to the ring after a two-year hiatus having dropped three in a row.

Ferrante (L.) eluding Park.

The opening round, of the scheduled six-rounder, proved little except that Ferrante could really dig shots to the body and that maybe Park should have continued his break from boxing. Ferrante marched forward in the second round with Park gesturing like he was going to punch, but hesitant about pulling the trigger. Towards the conclusion of the round, Ferrante landed a hard right hand that he immediately turned into an uppercut and Park was seriously hurt. Rather than fall to the canvas he immediately grabbed Ferrante around the waist like an NFL linebacker tackling a running back driving him backwards into the ropes while remaining on top. Ferrante was almost catapulted through the third strand of the ring ropes. Fortunately, he has strong legs and was able to defy gravity. The bell sounded and Park survived a knockdown and a possible disqualification.

Ferrante finally got the bang he wanted when he blasted two straight rights off Park's head that send him to the canvas in the third round. Naturally, Park survived by holding and walked into a right uppercut at the bell ending the round. Only Bernard Hopkins can make holding and hitting an art form. Park tried holding in the next round. However, the only one hitting was Ferrante, who again rung Park's bell, but this time with a one-two

combination. Referee Talmadge rescued the man from North Carolina, stopping the fight at 2:47—a technical knockout victory for Ferrante and the genesis of his weekend festivities honoring his birthday.

Leaving the amateur ranks for the smaller gloves and no headgear that is professional boxing is oftentimes a daunting transition for many amateurs. However, three-time Pennsylvania Gloves champion and Philadelphia Community College journalism student Naim Nelson transitioned as effortlessly as a chrysalis turning into a monarch butterfly. A quiet and unpretentious young man, Nelson entered the ring with a humble air of superiority in black trunks, low-cut black boxing shoes, showing no socks— akin to his idol “Iron” Mike Tyson. Across the ring from him was the cagey veteran Kywame Hill (1 win – 7 losses – 0 draws – 1 ko) of North Philadelphia ready for their scheduled four-round junior-welterweight bout. A 10-year professional, Hill won his first bout, losing seven straight, only one by stoppage, his second fight. Hill can fight and is always in closely contested matches. Tonight, it wasn’t close as Nelson showing composure well-



beyond his years, stalked the wily fighter, banged his body causing him to retreat most of the bout. When it was over, all three judges had it 40-36 for Nelson, who has a bright future either as a fighter or a journalist.

Nelson (R.) catching Hill with the left jab.

Other Results: Undefeated Philadelphia lightweight **Angel Ocasio** (4 wins – 0 losses – 0 draws – 1 ko) won a spirited four-round unanimous decision by scores of 40-35 and 39-36 twice over an unorthodox rangy **Randolph “Rocket” Scott** (0 wins – 3 losses – 0 draws) of Salisbury, Maryland who hadn’t seen action in over two years. In another four-rounder, middleweight prospect **Rashad “All Business” Brown** (3 wins – 0 losses – 0 draws – 1 ko) of Philadelphia made short work of **Phillip Burnette** (2 wins – 2 losses – 0 draws – 1 ko) of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina dropping him twice in the opening round forcing Referee Clark to call an end to this one-sided affair at 2:59 with Burnette on his back like he was sun-bathing in Negril, Jamaica. Super-middleweight **Fred Jenkins Jr.** (1 win – 0 losses – 0 draws – 1 ko) of Philadelphia out-boxed and out-slicked **Todd “The Viking” Eriksson** (3 wins – 5 losses – 2 draws – 1 ko) of Dover, New Jersey winning a unanimous four-round decision 39-37 on all scorecards. Lightweight **“Jolting” Joey Tiberi** (3 wins – 1 loss – 0 draws – 3 kos) of Newark, Delaware won a heated four-round

battle with tough, tenacious and winless **Jonathan Ocassio** (0 wins – 7 losses – 0 draws) of Philadelphia. Ocassio was all over Tiberi from the opening bell attacking with reckless abandon blanketing his opponent like a cheap seer-sucker suit. Ocassio pressed the action forcing Tiberi to match his intensity. I had it a draw 38-38, but was overruled by the three ringside judges who had it 40-36 and 39-37 twice for Tiberi.

It was another exciting night of the sweet science with the capacity crowd following the script and pouring out into the casino after the last bout. Maybe Victor Vasquez's reign as the Philadelphia Boxing Box Office king is quietly winding down. However, there is nothing to fear from Bernard Hopkins whose longevity as a world champion and elite fighter does not translate into ticket sales. The man coming up the rear challenging Vasquez is lightweight Angel Ocasio whose supporters made their presence felt by bringing air horns, those annoying little gadgets, and squeezing them every time he would land a power punch. I thought we were in South Africa at last year's FIFA World Cup being driven senseless by the ubiquitous vuvuzelas. To say the fans love Ocasio is an understatement.

Continue to support the sweet science, and remember, always carry your mouthpiece!

ghanson3@hotmail.com