

IN THE RING

by Michael Bunin

Benn vs Barkley controversy

World Boxing Organization middleweight champion Nigel "Dark Destroyer" Benn from West Ham, England successfully defended his belt against Iran "Blade" Barkley when he knocked Barkley down three times in the first round of the bout. Or did he? Controversy seems to be surrounding every championship bout now days.

The fight began explosively as Benn caught Barkley with a hard overhand right that immediately staggered the two time world champion. After a lot of shoving along with a small flurry of punches and then another hard right Barkley went down. Now the controversy begins. No one could tell if Barkley had slipped or had been knocked down. It was also hard to tell how referee Carlos Padilla ruled it. Benn then

proceeded to hit Barkley when he was already down.

Barkley got up instantly. Padilla gave Barkley no recovery time as Benn was back on Barkley immediately. Within 30 seconds Barkley was back down on the canvas. This time it was clearly a knockdown. After Barkley was down on the mat Benn took aim and hit him square on the chin, another illegal punch by Benn.

Barkley again got up immediately, and again, before he could tell the referee to warn Benn, The "Dark Destroyer" was all over him. This time the result was different. Barkley hit Benn with a powerful uppercut that almost put Benn to the canvas. After an incredible display of trading punches Barkley again went down. This knockdown was ruled

the third and final knockdown.

The post fight press conference was as confusing as the fight. Barkley had a lot to say. "Carlos Padilla came into the dressing room before the fight and told us that if anyone hits after the bell, or when a man is down they would be punished by disqualification," stated Barkley. "He never hurt me, I hurt him more than he hurt me. I wasn't knocked down three times. He hit me when I was down,...I demand a rematch," protested Barkley.

When Nigel Benn spoke he very simply said, "I'm not gonna stand up here and argue with him. I've still got my belt." When asked if he thought Barkley had been knocked down three times he replied, "I was a little confused as to how many times he went down, but I really wasn't paying atten-



Yell Photo / Marc Baruch

Look-out! - Nigel Benn stares down Iran Barkley before knocking him out in the first round.

tion. I was just trying to win."

Comments from the two resulted in anger. The anger nearly erupted in a rematch only to be broken up by trainers and managers.

Will Barkley get a rematch? It seems apparent that he was hit after he was knocked down. Even referee Carlos Padilla was a little confused as to how many times Barkley was knocked down. Before he ruled a third knock down he leaned over the ropes and asked a member of the commission about it. Along with Padilla, Benn was also confused as to how many knockdowns there had been. It seems Barkley should get a rematch. One thing is sure, just like Tyson vs. Douglas, and Chavez vs. Taylor, Benn vs. Barkley equals controversy.

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Curry won't be second to Nunn

On Aug. 17, at Bally's Hotel and Casino, Donald "Lone Star Cobra" Curry pushed his record to 33-3, (with 24 KO's) after he defeated Jose Duran Martinez. The fight was a must win for Curry since he had already signed to fight Michael Nunn for his International Boxing Federation middleweight belt on October 24, in Paris, France.

Curry didn't make this look like much of a tune-up fight for him when he knocked Martinez out in the third round.

This was Curry's first fight as a middleweight. "I feel comfortable at this weight," Curry said. He also said, "Come October 24, I feel confident I will take Nunn's belt."

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