

Sports Pace

# Lucky punch puts Jones on back, Tarver in spotlight

**By Huel Washington**  
*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

More than the 10,000-plus fans in the Mandalay Bay Events Center and millions of others watching pay-per-view around the world were just as surprised as Antonio Tarver at the sudden end of his fight with Roy Jones Jr.

Now Tarver holds the light heavyweight titles of the World Boxing Council and International Boxing Federation.

His overhand left that landed flush on Jones' right jaw has to be considered one of the luckiest punches ever witnessed by some people who have been around boxing for many years.

Having diddled around in the first round, Jones, instead of going to work, decided to prolong the action by toying with Tarver before getting down to business. That was bad strategy.

Referee Jay Nady, midway through the second round, halted the fight. Jones was cold cocked by Tarver's lucky shot. During the first round and up until the punch, Jones had, according to Compubox Punchstats, thrown only 42 punches, connecting 12. He missed on seven jabs, too.

Tarver had thrown 54 punches, connecting seven. Forty-four punches were jabs and only four connected. It was more like a pawing motion to keep Jones away.

Seconds before the surprising blow to his jaw, Jones attempted to land a left and then a right to Tarver, missing because Tarver bent his head down lower than Jones' waist.

As he recoiled from Jones' attempts to land blows, Tarver, who hadn't thrown an overhand punch during the fight, threw an overhand left that landed flush on Jones' jaw. Jones went down flush with his head under the ropes. Realizing he was down, he attempted to rise but fell forward again.

By the time Jones was able to regain his feet, Nady, who had been criticized once before for ending the Zab Judah-Kosto Tszu fight without giving the ten count, did the same to Jones. He waved the fight was over and surprised the entire arena and the fighters.

Nady claimed at the post-fight meeting with the executive director and commissioners that he had given Jones the full count. To some observers, he hadn't and put his arms around Jones without giving him a chance to con-

tinue.

Tarver, who had predicted before the fight that he was not going to allow the judges to decide who was the winner, was elated when the fight was halted by Nady. He was deliriously ecstatic.

Immediately after being given instructions in the middle of the ring before the first round, Tarver asked Jones, "What kind of excuse

are you going to have this time, Roy?"

Rather than submit to his opponent's lack of class, Jones did not answer. He just returned to his corner. After the fight was ended prematurely, Jones, when interviewed, didn't complain about the lucky punch or what was definitely a short count.

He recalled being knocked down in a similar manner as

an amateur. He was also floored battling Lou Del Valle in 1998.

Jones, now 48-2, wasn't willing to talk about a rematch following his sudden departure. With his age, at 35, and the thought of the millions of dollars another fight with Tarver might bring him, he just might reconsider a Tarver-Jones III.

It's been done before.

Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran fought three times. Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier also fought three times. Ali and Ken Norton fought three times. Sugar Ray Robinson and Jake Lamotta fought five times. Jersey Joe Walcott and Ezzard Charles fought three times.

Most of these fights were for peanuts when compared to Jones' \$6 million and

Tarver's \$2 million for this quickie fight.

After such a stellar career, Roy Jones Jr., doesn't seem like the kind to leave "his sport" with such a large black mark on his record. And Tarver, he got lucky this time, but he hasn't really convinced boxing purists that he is as good as he thinks. Can he repeat what happened Saturday? That's a big question.



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