

## FULL TIME

## BOXING - ANDY LEE FIGHT

How Twitter reacted to Andy Lee's title fight

@KENEGAN30

"Andy showed us why he deserves to be in there at the top level, great turn-around and the draw was hard earned #AndStill"

High praise from former Olympic silvermedallist Kenneth Egan. Or Cllr Kenneth Egan (FG) to give him his proper title now

@SEANSHEEHANBA

"Hope the people who wrote off Andy Lee acknowledge what a ballsy display that was after an awful start"

Sean Sheehan acknowledges Andy Lee's ballsy effort while also having a dig, excuse the pun, at those who wrote off the Limerick hero

@GERGILROY

"That was some fight for @AndyLeeBoxing - no harm millions watching him be a warrior king!

Newstalk's Ger Gilroy is happy that Andy Lee's warrior qualities were seen by a worldwide audience

@SECOND CAPTAINS

A draw that feels like a win #AndStill what a man

And the boys in Second Captains give context to what a draw in boxing actually feels like

@BADLEFTHOOK

Scores were good and fair. The questionable third round knockdown call cost Lee the fight, basically

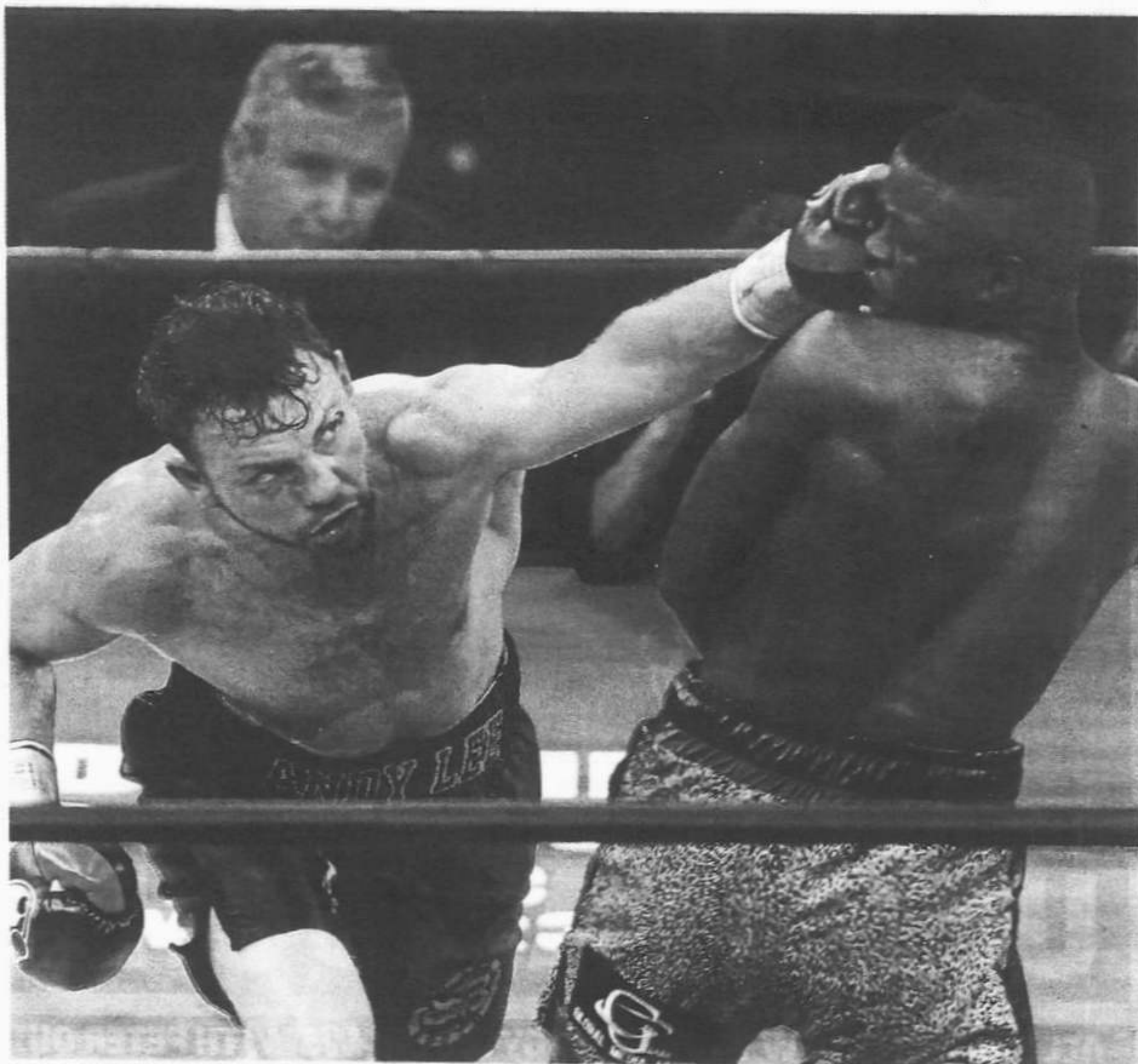
The Bad Left Hook on Twitter knows where the fight was lost outright

@LOVEIRISHBOXING

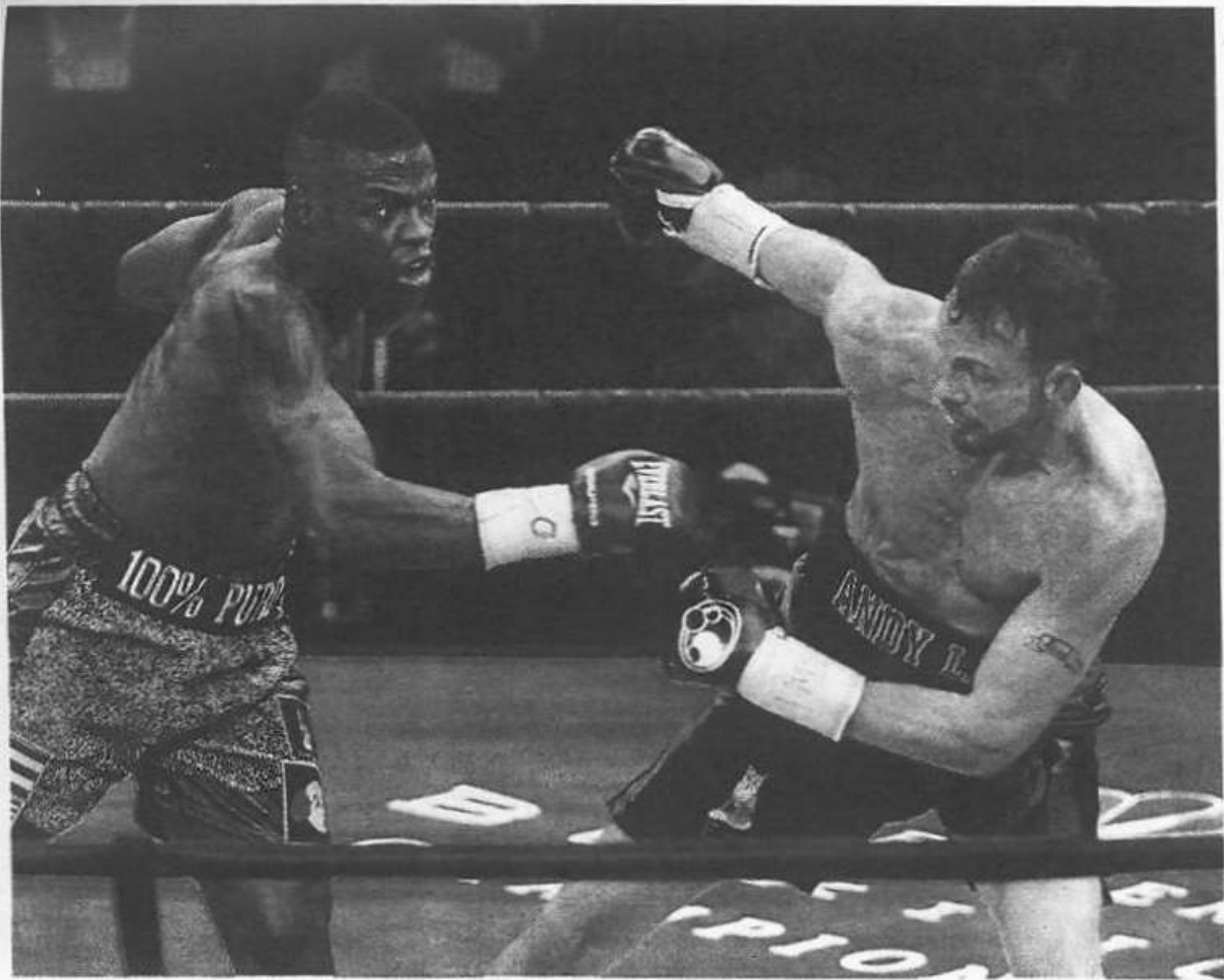
"Ill head to bed. Andy Lee has nuts akin to a Cyrus wrecking ball!!! No need to feel compelled to give a rematch. BJS, or even Macklin, next While the folks in Boxing Ireland reckon that Lee can turn his thoughts to a different challenger now

No title on the line but Andy Lee shows qualities of a champion to defy two knockdowns to secure a dramatic draw in enthralling contest

# Heroic Lee is a true champion



On the chin: WBO middle weight champion Andy Lee on the attack against Peter Quillin in the Barclay Centre in New York



Under pressure: Andy Lee exchanges punches with Peter Quillin during their WBO middleweight fight in the Barclays Center in New York

## JEROME O'CONNELL

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ANDY Lee showed all the qualities that made him champion of the world when he battled back from two knockdowns to secure a draw in his middleweight contest with Peter Quillin in the early hours of Sunday morning in New York.

The Limerick man was on the canvas twice in the opening three rounds but recovered brilliantly to secure a deserved draw after 12 rounds of absorbing fair, watched by 12,300 in the Barclays Center in Brooklyn and a television audience of millions.

One judge scored the contest 113-112 in favour of Lee, another 113-112 in favour of Quillin and the third had it 113-113 each leaving referee Steve Willis to declare a draw.

"It was a hard contest to score. He had the knockdowns but I boxed consistently, especially down the stretch, said Andy Lee after what was the first time in his 37 professional fights that the former St Francis Box Club Olympian went the full 12 rounds of championship boxing.

It was an enthralling con-

test, tentative at times but mixed with explosive punches from both. Statistics have shown the Lee threw 299 punches, while Quillin had 267 with 113 connecting for Lee and 103 for Quillin.

The fight was to be Lee's first title defence of his WBO title but in a dramatic weight-in on Friday morning in New York, Quillin failed to make the 116lbs and therefore the belt was not fought for.

After a 10-week training camp in Monaco with trainer Adam Booth, Lee weighed in at 159.6 but Quillin was initially only 161.4. The American was given two hours to make the weight but could only lose six ounces.

Therefore Jose Izquierdo, general secretary of the WBO confirmed that Lee's title would no longer be on offer in the New York fight.

Even if it were, Lee would have continued as champion with the draw.

Quillin was the hot 2/5 favourite and showed why in the opening round when he had Lee on the canvas. With less than 30-seconds to the bell, Lee was caught with a right hook and sent down by the former WBO champion, who had ended nine of his unbeaten 31 fights with first round KOs.

But the Limerick man was straight back to his feet and made it safely to the bell and

his blue corner.

In an mostly tentative opening both struggled to find any opening and the highlight of the second round was a flurry of punches from both in the final 30-seconds. It left Lee with a cut over his left eye, which needed constant attention between the remaining rounds by David Coldwell.

But Lee was to be down again in the third round.

The 30 year old Castleconnell southpaw had started the better but was again on the canvas when Quillin found another big right, albeit it appears he has standing on Lee's foot and not for the first or last time in the contest.

Down twice in three rounds all did not look good for the champion.

A chorus of Ole, Ole, Ole, greeted the fighters for the fourth round as Lee looked to settle.

And, settle he did. Lee showed all the qualities of a champion to pull this contest back from the brink.

With his left jab doing some fine work, Lee edged his way into the contest and won rounds six to nine.

With some better foot work around the ring, Lee began to find a way to open up Quillin.

Round seven saw Lee send Quillin tumbling when he connected with a right but

again it was the left that led the way.

Lee turned away with arm raised - he knew he had fought his way back into the contest.

It looked as though Lee could need a KO finish but he continued to win round by round. Three times in the ninth he round punches to hurt Quillin but the American stood strong.

But clearly the judges felt that Lee was doing enough as the rounds progressed.

As Quillin tired, Lee continued to throw the vast majority of the punches into the 11th and 12th rounds.

Entering the final round, trainer Adam Booth could be heard in the corner urging Lee 'we need this one, we need this on'.

Lee responded with another assured round with neither getting the TKO to claim victory.

Then came the wait for the three judges. To most observers there were five clear rounds for boxers with two tight calls.

In the end that's what prevailed with the three judges undecided.

There may not have been too many complaints if Quillin was declared the points winner, but it was nothing more than Lee deserved for a display of true grit and quality - the signs of a champion.



Ouch: Peter Quillin lands a punch during Sunday's WBO middleweight fight in New York Picture: Sportsfile

# Lee 'satisfied' with draw after 'lazy' start

## REACTION

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WITH a total of 46 knockout wins from their combined 66 pro-fights something explosive should have been expected when Andy Lee met Peter Quillin.

But while both like to throw big punches finding themselves on the canvas was a new experience for the duo.

"It was a tough fight, he dropped me at the start because I was lazy," explained Lee, who was harsh on himself in his fight review.

"I had the momentum late on. I understand with two knockdowns people may have thought he won but I could have done better," said a typically honest Lee.

But the champion had no complaints with the result.

"A draw? I'm satisfied. Honestly, if they'd have given it to Peter in his hometown, I wouldn't have had much to argue about. I'm being honest. But I think a draw is a fair decision."

Lee added: "It was a hard fight to score. He had the knockdowns, but I boxed consistently, especially down the stretch, which is where it counts."

What's next?

"If my next fight is Quillin it should be in Ireland. He has an Irish surname. Maybe he has some ancestors there," smiled Lee.

"I never give up - you keep fighting. We're fighters, that's what we do. He would have done the same. He's a great fighter, we had a great fight and we can do it again. I'm happy to have a rematch. And

for a title next time."

But the Limerickman wasn't happy that Quillin's weight issues meant a non-title fight.

"It was pretty unprofessional of him not to make weight," said Lee.

"We had 10 weeks to prepare. But I sympathise with him because making weight is the hardest part. He did make a genuine effort to make the weight and he really struggled. I sympathise with him but really he should have been on top of it."

## IN BRIEF

### Star Rating

After all the pre-fight dramatics of the weigh-in the two boxers served up a memorable contest. It was tentative at times but the 12-rounds produced heart stopping moments aplenty - including three knockdowns. At the end of the 36-minutes both were still

### Key moment

After surviving the two knockdowns, Lee grew in confidence from round six. Once he put Quillin on the canvas in round seven, Lee was back in the contest and grew in confidence.

### What now?

Talks of a rematch in a title fight will linger for a long time. Billy Joe Saunders will want his shot at Lee first in a WBO middleweight title defence.