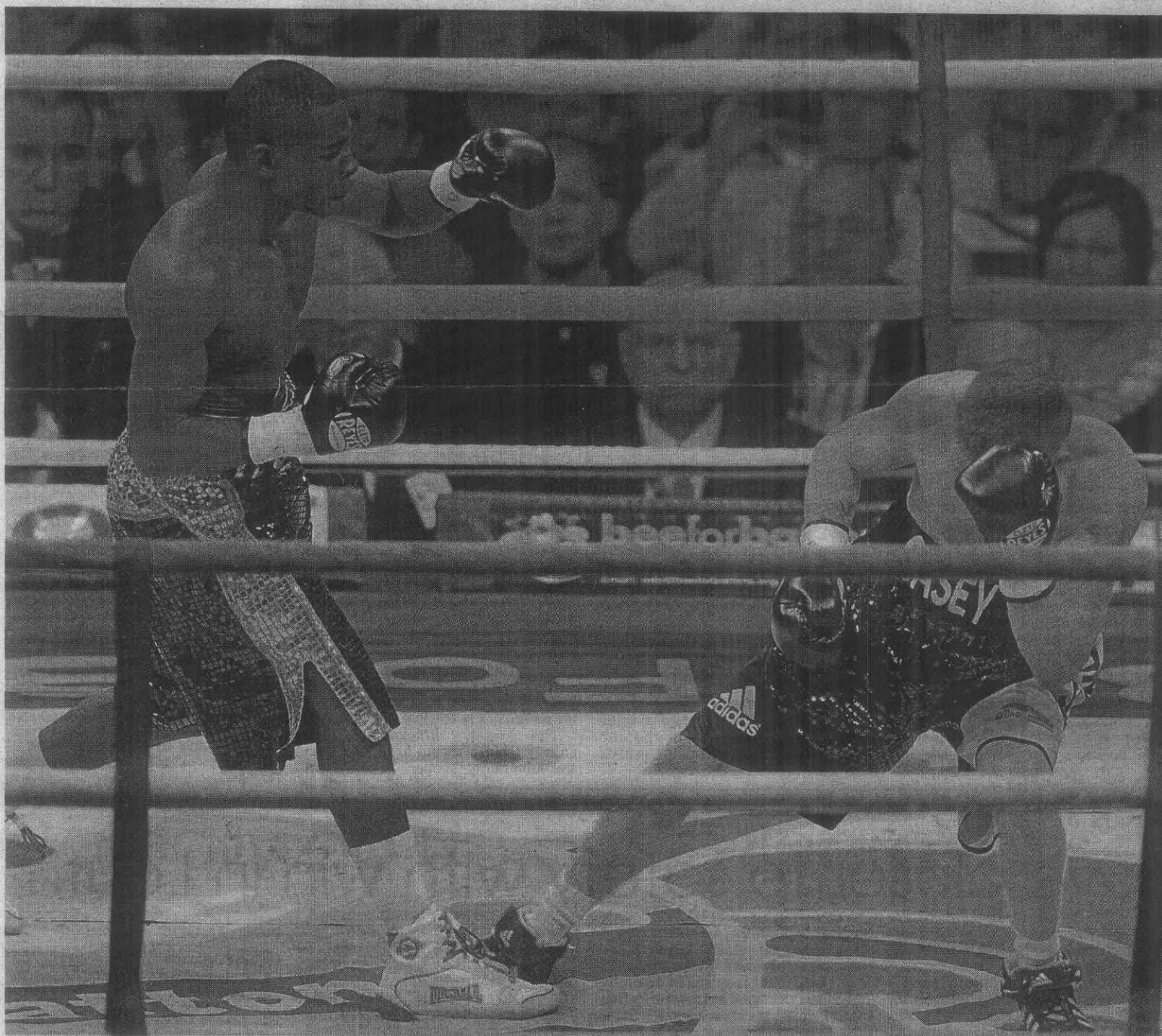


LEADER SPORT

MONDAY, March 21, 2011

LEADER SWITCHBOARD: 061 214 500 FAX: 061 401 424

Over and Out



Big Bang vows to fight back

Jerome O'Connell

WILLIE 'Big Bang' Casey has vowed to bounce back from his heartbreaking first round defeat in Saturday's world title fight.

"I'm a little bit disappointing but these things happen in boxing but a true champion gets back up and comes again," said a gallant Willie Casey after his defeat to world champion Guillermo Rigondeaux.

There are obvious comparisons to Bernard Dunne. Back in August 2007, Dunne lost in the first round to Kiko Martinez, but less than two years later he won the world title by beating Corboba.

"He came back and won a world title and its how you pick yourself up and where you take it from here," outlined Casey.

"I am not afraid of being beaten - unfortunately I got knocked out but this happens and you have got to get on with it and this is not the end of me. I didn't get into this game without knowing that I was going to loose - the real test for me now is to see when do I get back into the ring and where do we go from here. You are going to see me pretty soon back in the ring again," said Casey.

"I go into every fight confident. I was 110 per cent positive going into that fight that I was going to win and nothing would stop me but when you get caught with the big bangs, you get caught and there is nothing you can do. Look at whats going on in the world at the moment with Japan, nuclear stations and earthquakes, so I am just really looking forward to going home to my wife and kids.

"Was it too soon for me? I don't think so, I trained very hard for this fight - it wasn't just about one round, I spent the last 10-weeks killing myself to be ready for this fight and it was just unfortunate that I got caught at the wrong time."

He continued: "I am fighting for the world title after just 11 fights. Was it too soon for me? I don't think so, I think it was the right time for me, it was just unfortunate I got caught. Boxing is boxing, it was either him or me and tonight it was me."

"If another big fight like this came along next week I would jump back on the bike again and take it - without a doubt, without even hesitating. I am in this game to try and box and do the best I can and here I am boxing the best and I was just unlucky tonight.

Casey admitted he had no answer to the early onslaught from the two time Olympic champion. "It was the body shot that I got caught with first and it took me a minute to recover again and I didn't think I was going to recover but I did and just as I recovered I got caught with another hook over the top."

Limerick boxer Willie 'Big Bang' Casey is knocked down during his WBA superbantamweight world title fight against Guillermo Rigondeaux at the City West Hotel in Dublin on Saturday night PICTURE: SPORTSFILE

Jerome O'Connell
At the City West Hotel

GUILLERMO Rigondeaux proved to be the party pooper in Dublin's City West Convention Centre.

Close to 5,000 fans packed into the Dublin venue for the historic WBA super bantamweight world title fight and 99 per cent were supporters of Limerick's own Willie 'Big Bang' Casey.

With just 11 pro fights to his name, the 29 year old Southill southpaw and his vocal following were looking for a fairytale ending.

"There's only one Willie Casey" sang the crowd over a half four before Limerick star entered the ring. From early on Saturday afternoon they

made their way up the M7 to the Saggart venue. Not the presence of the visiting Tyrone senior football team, Irish Dancing Championships or a wedding in the vast resort could derail the vast support.

Although the undercard offered a European middleweight title fight, an Irish Cruiserweight title fight and an amateur contest involved female star Katie Taylor, there was only one show in town for the vast attendance.

Just after 10.20 Willie Casey arrived on the balcony overhead as the atmosphere reached feverpitch.

As contender Casey was first to come skipping into the ring in his normal relaxed manner amid fazed scenes in the crowd.

Master of Ceremonies Lupe Contreras tried to introduce Casey,

but his scripted biography was barely audible above a chorus of 'Willie-Willie-Willie'.

Everything was set but Guillermo 'The Jackal' Rigondeaux was in no mood for sentiment.

Just like his nickname he hunted down Casey from the opening bell and within two minutes and 38 seconds of the opening round he had demonstrated his vast skill, putting Casey on the canvas twice.

The opening round started amid a version of 'Ole-Ole' but soon the crowd went quiet as the Cuban had Casey grimacing with a big left to the body on 50 seconds and then came a flurry of punches as the Limerick man sought solace on the back foot.

Casey looked to regain composure but midway through the round, he was

knocked with one of Rigondeaux's trademark left hooks to the body. A count for Casey and the signs were ominous already. Less than 30 seconds later, the Limerick man was again on the floor after taking a left to the head. Now unsteady on his feet, Casey again readied himself to continue but Rigondeaux sensed victory and another onslaught left the referee with no option but to call a halt to proceedings and deem a technical knockout to the champion.

Inside and outside the ring all were stunned but as Rigondeaux was carried shoulder high and Casey regained his breath in his corner, again a chorus of 'Willie-Willie-Willie' filled the arena.

A memorable night, but not a favourable result.