Irish Weekend Boxing: Harrowgate Boxers Gain on Belfast Foes

BY BOB INGRAM

Four seems to be the lucky number for the boxing squared from Philly’s Harrowgate Boxing Club, as they kicked off Irish Weekend on Thursday night under the big tent in Moore’s parking lot by winning four of nine amateur fights they managed to win in each of the three prior years.

Fighting out of the blue corner, the Harrowgaters were a much improved aggregation this year, much more aggressive than formerly against the mostly stand up European-style Irish pugilists.

From here, the best bout of the evening led off the show, a female re-match between Holy Family’s Michaela Walsh and Harrowgate’s Kelly Ryan at 126 pounds. Holy Family’s Paul McMullan and Harrowgate’s Max Stein saw the Irish kid get the duke in an action fight from bell to bell for all three rounds.

Michaela Walsh is a slick article, countering and fighting like tigers – er, tigresses – but after the last bell they are the same gracious young ladies as before they start throwing bad-intention punches. Hope they do it again next year.

In the guy fights, the 123-pound matchup between Holy Family’s Ryan Phillip Adams and Harrowgate’s Verdill Rivera saw the Irisher start too late and loose the decision. The next go, at 132 pounds, was a slow starter that drew some boos early on and saw Harrowgate’s Kieran Hooks lose a decision that I thought he had won to Tyrone McCullough.

Another 132-pound fight between Ireland’s Gerard Matthews and Joshua Jones was more of a war and saw Jones get the nod. At 142 pounds, Belfast’s Anthony Upton took Eric Chandler and another Upton, Sonny, won by forfeit at 147 pounds when his opponent fell out. There were only two Uptons on the Irish team this year, as compared to four last year, but no problem because there are six more Upton brothers waiting in Belfast.

The seventh bout, at 165 pounds, between Holy Family’s Paul McMullan and Harrowgate’s Max Stein, could have been fought in a phone booth, the fighters toe to toe all the way, with the Irisher start too late and lose the decision.

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The evening’s finale, between super heavyweights Karl Moore of Holy family, and Corey Morley, ended in TKO victory for Moore when Dr. Raymond Marotta, in his first time as a ring physician, wisely called a halt to the proceedings. Afterwards, fighters, coaches, trainers, and officials repaired to the new Coconut Cove, the official Irish boxing sponsor, where they were treated to an Irish feast of ham and cabbage and shepherd’s pie. Hats off to Coconut Cove and to all involved.

Slainte!