

The most telling comment about Muhammad Ali's tap dance in Malaysia came when announcer Don Dunphy, at ringside, said: "Joe Bugner has lost seven rounds in a row, in my opinion." That was just after the sixth round.

Indeed, Ali's defense of his heavyweight title was not so much a fight as a 15-round clinic. It was obvious to the closed-circuit audience worldwide—including 11,178 fans at the Capital Centre—that Ali was intent on winning big.

Why became obvious when the drums from Kuala Lumpur brought word that—wonder of wonders—Ali will not retire after all. Probably, he will fight the closed-circuit

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analyst, Joe Frazier, in October at Manila for several million dollars or several gallons of gas, whichever is more valuable at the time.

Fortunately, the fans got three fights for their money, with the one they anticipated the most being the dulllest. Ali was the aggressor from the opening moments and though he never hurt Bugner, he kept tapping him at will.

Generous scorers and relatives may have given Bugner two rounds. Bugner could offer no more than a few solid flurries, hardly causing Ali any alarm.

"I don't know why Bugner don't go to work," Frazier

told the audience after the seventh round. "I don't see why he don't open up. I've seen him in better condition; I've seen him hit harder."

In truth, Ali's dominance was so great at several points a viewer wished he had paid more attention to the Malaysian travelogue that followed Carlos Monzon and Victor Galindez successfully defending their middleweight and light-heavyweight titles respectively.

Everyone expected Ali to begin the fight the way he did, and when Bugner offered little resistance some of the audience began following up on Dunphy's remarks.

"Most of the action's been in Bugner's corner," Dunphy said about midway through the bout.

"Yeah, in between rounds," someone said.

Ali's 33-year-old legs had him circling Bugner as easily in the 15th round as in the first round. Whenever Bugner landed a sharp blow, as he did now and then, Ali followed with a flurry of punches.

Bugner probably won the 10th round, with several solid blows, and may have been superior in the 12th, when Ali was keeping his distance for the most part.

Frazier was as honest as one could hope in an analyst—and Dunphy echoed the thoughts of many customers when he scolded Bugner to his face after the fight for not putting on a better show.

Still, many thought before the fight that the only way Bugner could win would be if Ali chose—as he has on occasion—not to be serious or faltered in the 90-degree heat and humidity.

The fight scarcely had begun when Ali proved this tuneup for much larger money would be no joke. And he often stood between rounds.

However although the noise level was intense, with chants of "Ali, Ali, Ali" sprinkled throughout the bout, the cameras showed lots of empty seats. And Dunphy seemed caught between reporting the scene and trying to retain his audience.

"Nothing very sensational has happened so far, but it's been interesting," he said during round seven.

"Bugner's an intelligent fighter—up to a point," he said a round later.

Bugner was smart enough to realize \$500,000 for an hour-long session—and seemed to leave the ring with just his ego seriously hurt.

Ali was ever alert to future attractions. Before the final round, he walked to the ropes nearest Frazier and gestured toward him. Frazier was quick on the pickup himself.

"You will get it," he yelled to the champ. "You will get it."

