

# Bugner's No Hit at Centre Either

By Dave Brady

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Joe Bugner scored few hits and no stuns on Muhammad Ali in the version of the yawner which bounced off a satellite from Kuala Lumpur to Capital Centre last night.

Yet, three of Ali's devoted rooters were not disconcerted by the lack of sustained action after paying \$10. A spokesman said the heavyweight champion's unanimous decision was his sharpest effort since his comeback. "Satisfied? I thought it was great."

Ali, an old trouper who knows a turkey, even when he is in it, had enough strength to resist the previously irresistible—a microphone. He whipped out of the ring as fast as he eluded Bugner.

So, besides being stuck with Bugner's reluctant performance, the 11,179 customers in Largo were left with his even less satisfactory explanation.

"I would wait too long in a round to see how fast he was, and he would win it," Bugner said, unmarked, underexercised and overpaid at \$500,000."

Inadvertently, he supplied at least a few titters when he tried to bolster his cop-out about Ali's speed. "That's bleep, he's not fast."

Manager Andy Smith tried to extricate Bugner but only compounded the felony as he took over the microphone and said, "When Joe tried to bring up an effort, he couldn't. He is green."

Bugner has had more than 50 bouts, including prior losses to Ali and Joe Frazier.

Promoter Don King, apparently stricken with a mild case of Laryngitis after seeing so many empty seats in the Malaysia Stadium, forgot his custom of quoting Shakespeare, Shaw and Voltaire, and ran out of material after insisting, "It was one of the greatest fights I've even seen Ali—and in this heat (90 degrees plus with matching humidity)."

The fans who rushed from the exits at Capital Centre missed an emergency gab session by Ali, taped earlier. It made a listener out of chatterbox King, who must be wondering about his promotional genius after his fifth straight failure to crowd theater seats around the world.

Boiled down to the essence that was music to

King's ears, Ali said, in the quietest reverse since Bugner adopted his rope-a-dope and shuffles last night, "Joe Frazier wants another fight—he's got it!"

It seemed like only a week ago that Ali said he was retiring. Frazier was at ringside in Kuala Lumpur, disgusted with Bugner's caution and expressing his eagerness to get at the champion he has split with in two bouts.

Ali at least could not say that he did not get his hair mussed as he danced blithely around immobile Bugner as though the Englishman's shoes were nailed to the floor. While impatiently waiting for the mere formality of the decision, Ali combed his hair in the ring.

Bugner received a warm

welcome in a carryover courtesy from when Malaysia was more closely allied to Britain, but the Muslims adopted Ali as their sentimental favorite as soon as the bout started. His faithful sent up a continual chant of "Ali-Ali-Ali" and got giddy every time he threw a punch close to Bugner.

A travelogue was shown after Ali got into the ring, as if the Malaysian government was set on getting its money's worth, no matter if the fight itself turned into a sleeping giant.

Frazier emerged as the most believable commentator when the announcer asked him in the 13th round if he thought Ali and Bugner were getting tired.

"What from? Frazier said "They didn't do anything."