

-Round by round-

ROUND ONE

Blue held the centre of the ring as Ali danced around the first punch, a left hook was thrown by Ali and caught Lewis slightly. Ali slipped in some early lefts but missed with a swing and then hit his man with two left shots to the body and head, Lewis landed a solid right to the body in Ali's corner.

Ali's left hook was a damaging-looking weapon and mid-through the round it hit Lewis and clearly shook but Muhammad stood and was satisfied to let his rival's rather wild punches with soft jabs to the body. Towards the end of the round Lewis crowded his man failed to land with any solid. Ali's round.

ROUND TWO

Lewis threw a right and left failed to connect and we saw a strange Muhammad Ali who tried to crouch and move forward and landing with stab lefts to head and body. Lewis was warned for a left that was dangerously low but he kept on throwing lefts to the body and Lewis was already getting worried and rather

Lewis backed into a corner did not throw a punch as he did some shadow boxing in the corner and after Lewis landed fists to sharp lefts, hung on a right which was good but did not trouble Ali who came back with hard lefts and rights, the killer look

towards the end of the round, Ali landed two light lefts to the head and a right cross and the bell came as something of a relief to Lewis, round.

ROUND THREE

Ali opened up with a hard right to the body followed with left to the head, doing all leading and he introduced

the Ali shuffle before cutting loose with a series of dancing steps plus some strong punching to head and body. Lewis fought back and forced Ali to a neutral corner where he stood back and invited Ali to come forward.

This Ali did and picked off his man with a succession of stabbing lefts and a right cross to which Lewis had no reply. At this stage Lewis had no reply to Ali's straight and shortened left hand punches and although Muhammad eased off on occasion and allowed Lewis to take the initiative, Ali Blue just could not find his way through to anything like a punishing delivery. Ali's round.

ROUND FOUR

Ali went into his dance routine around the ring as Lewis stood in the centre throwing ineffectual punches and when Lewis did get through with a long left hand Ali gave him three similar punches in quick reply. The Ali left was now in complete operation and he landed it almost at will, easily avoiding Lewis's rather wild counters until midway through the round when Lewis sank a good left hook to Ali's body.

This really stirred Muhammad to produce his best punch so far, a solid right across which had Lewis clutching at the ropes before coming back in an attack that promised much but achieved little and Ali saw everything coming and easily avoided it.

The action stepped up just before the end of the round when after Ali had landed a classical combination left and right Lewis fought back and had rather the better of an exchange which went on seconds after the bell had sounded. Ali's round.

ROUND FIVE

Lewis threw a hard right but failed to connect and Ali landed a right to the body followed up with two jabs as Lewis moved in. There was real power in

Ali's jabs to the body which bent Lewis visibly and as Lewis tried to work his way out of trouble he ran into further punishment in the shape of precision lefts to the head and a right cross to the body which obviously hurt.

All the steam had left Lewis at this stage and although he landed with some desperation punches they had no effect whatsoever on Ali, who picked off his man almost at will and looked as though he could finish it which he almost did with a tremendous right to the head that sent Lewis flat on his back, legs waving in the air and he struggled to his feet at the count of nine just as the bell went for the end of the round.

Ali's round

ROUND SIX

Referee Lew Eskin asked Lewis between rounds was he prepared to continue. He got a nod and the Detroit man came out but was a punchbag for Ali from the start of the round. He threw one right-hand punch which drew a trickle of blood from Ali's nose but Ali was really applying the pressure and Lewis's knees buckled as two-handed punching found its target with the plucky Lewis now virtually defenceless.

A left hook nearly finished it and then a right and left had Lewis almost on his knees. It was a demonstration now of precision punching by one man and great courage by another.

Towards the end of the round Lewis found some reserves of strength and stamina and actually caught his man with his back to the ropes and landed a succession of punches which at this stage were rather meaningless but at least halted Ali's advance and brought the fight up to the half-way stage.

Ali's round.

ROUND SEVEN

Ali resumed the attack and scored heavily to head and body with Lewis now barely able to

hold his hands up and fighting almost entirely by instinct. Ali's best punch all through had been a stabbing left to the body which sapped Lewis's energy and he landed several of these early on before cutting loose with a two fisted attack to the head which Lewis did well to survive.

Lewis still continued to throw punches even in the face of continual punishment and it did seem as Ali landed almost at will that much of the steam had gone out of his punches—otherwise Lewis must have gone down. Ali's round.

ROUND EIGHT

Both men stepped up and threw punches which missed but Ali was now advancing all the time and trapped Lewis in a corner to score with well picked lefts to the head and body followed by a hard right to the head.

Lewis raised a cheer with a chopping right which was on target but lacked the power to keep Ali out and the former champion now using both hands kept on moving forward and punched away Lewis's discerning attacks.

Mid-way through the round Ali cut loose with seven or eight precision punches without reply and he continued to pick off his man despite Lewis's crowding efforts which sent Ali back on the ropes but still landing the punches that mattered.

Lewis landed with a left to the head and a right to the body towards the end of the round which proved effective as Ali dropped his hands and moved away not in quite such spritely fashion as in the earlier stages.

ROUND NINE

Ali resumed his left-hand attacks to the body and landed half a dozen without reply, Lewis cut through with a few lefts to the head but no real damage was being done by either man and it was hardly surprising at this stage as two rather tired

gladiators did little more than feint and stand off that the slow handclap came from those looking for more action.

Ali responded with his best attack of the fight and the crowd roared as he tore after his man and landed to head and body but without real power and Lewis fought back magnificently landing with lefts and rights to the head which stopped Ali's gallop and actually gave him a winning round. Lewis's round.

ROUND TEN

Ali opened up with two lefts and a right to the head and did all the punching as Lewis was caught in a neutral corner. It was all Ali in the early stages of the round and he was on target with two solid rights and a left hook before he clipped Lewis with another two hard rights to the head in Lewis's corner.

Ali really was the master now as Lewis could hardly summon up enough energy even to throw a punch. And as Ali stood back he picked off punches almost where he wanted, lefts and rights to the head sending Lewis staggering backwards across the ring and miraculously staying on his feet but with his hands down as he backed wearily away from the incessant punishment being handed out to him. Ali's round.

ROUND ELEVEN

This started as the other had finished with Ali picking his punches not with great power but with great precision, dancing around so clearly the master that only a knockout, entirely improbable at this stage, could prevent him from winning.

Quite properly referee Eskin stepped in after 1 minute 15 seconds to save a very brave fighter from further unnecessary punishment. Lewis nodded his approval and had strength enough to move over and raise Ali's hand and also lift his rival in his arms to receive the applause of the crowd.