

Boxing – Simmons celebrates despite a late scare



Stephen Simmons celebrates at Meadowbank with a fan after his title win. Picture Nigel Duncan Media

Stephen Simmons took the IBF European East/West cruiserweight title home to his baby son after revealing that a shoulder injury almost scuppered his title bid.

The 33-year-old suffered muscle spasms in a shoulder after falling asleep on a plane home to Edinburgh from London.

The fighter spent 90 minutes on the treatment table after booking an emergency appointment with his physio.

And he cut out sparring in the build-up to his fight at Meadowbank with Corby-based Simon Barclay.

Simmons came through the anxious time to outpoint the Englishman in a unanimous decision and now he looks to his management team to secure a British title fight.

While they do the talking, Simmons will take two weeks of to recover. His face was bruised during the 12 round contest with durable Barclay who, surprisingly, fought on the retreat for much of the bout.

The Scot took the initiative from the off and jabbed his way to victory. He said: "It was an absolutely amazing atmosphere and I'm grateful for so many fans who turned out to cheer me on.

"I'm now looking forward to the possibility of a British title fight and now I'm taking the belt home to my little boy.

“I’m also going to take two weeks off, no gym or running or anything, to be with my family.”

There was heartache for Inverness-born heavyweight Gary Cornish who lost his bid to become the first Scottish boxer to win the British heavyweight title.

Sam Sexton from Norwich won a scrappy bout on a unanimous points decision leaving the Scot to think what might have been.

Tommy Philbin, however, went home to Kirkliston with the Celtic super-middleweight title after outpointing Rhys Pagan from Sanquhar.

Pagan won the Scottish title in his last contest but Philbin punched his way to his tenth straight win in a bruising battle in one of the fights of the night.

One of the best performances of the night was logged by Stephen Tiffney from Newtongrange who outpointed lively Coventry fighter Troy James over ten rounds.

Tiffney, who trains with Terry McCormack at Lochend gym in Edinburgh, showed real quality against an opponent with a strong record.

The Midlothian-based fighter has now won eight straight fights and was never in any real trouble against the highly-rated Englishman.

And Edinburgh-based Lewis Benson took his record to nine straight wins since turning professional when he outpointed durable Georgian opponent Mikal Avarian in one of the early bouts.

Benson is scheduled to fight again in November and is buzzing after his six-round win in his first contest for seven months after suffering an injury.

Monty Ogilvie from Callander took his record to four straight wins when he comfortably outpointed game Croatian Antonio Horvatic.

And professional debutant Aidan McGlynn from Blackridge, West Lothian, won every round in outpointing Bulgarian Radoslav Mitev over four rounds.