

## Mixed fortunes for British duo

Contributed by Daniel Cann  
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Saturday saw mixed fortunes for British boxers Amir Khan and Kevin Mitchell. In two crucial contests Khan demonstrated nerve, class, skill and maturity in dominating and defeating respected native New Yorker, Paulie Malignaggi at Madison Square Garden by stoppage in the eleventh round.

For Mitchell it was a terrible night. In what was supposed to be a coronation and coming of age fight in front of his 15,000 plus loyal East End fans he was hurt early and dismantled by Aussie tough man Michael Katsidis in three rounds. Allegations of a less than perfect build up soon followed...

Mitchell apparently had admitted to some 'domestic problems' affecting his training schedule and Jimmy Tibbs expressed frustration and concern that Mitchell was 'cutting corners' in training. This is a cardinal sin for any athlete but especially for a boxer preparing for a World title fight where stamina and durability are so crucial to success or failure.

It is a great pity as Mitchell looked the real deal in outpointing Khan conqueror Breidis Prescott in his last contest. Now it is a case of regrouping and going back to the drawing board. He will also have a lot of soul searching to do as well as convincing angered promoter Frank Warren that he is totally committed to a career as a top flight professional boxer.

For Khan it is onward and upward. After a slightly subdued and cautious start, he bided his time then from the fourth round onwards picked Malignaggi apart with fast, classy combinations. By the late rounds the once hostile New York crowd had warmed to Khan, even cheering him! Not bad for a British boxer.

Khan looked very impressive and composed and while it must be stressed that with only 5 knockout wins on his record and clearly a non-puncher, Malignaggi is renowned for his speed and skill which Khan totally negated, no mean feat.

Khan can look forward to unification contests with Devon Alexander or Timothy Bradley. He is likely to defend against big hitting mandatory challenger, the wild Marcos Maidana. That should be a solid test for him.

For now the World is his oyster and Khan showed that preparation free from distraction is the key to World success. For Mitchell he must heed this warning if he is to ever make a noise in boxing. Watch this space...