

Scoring Even Rounds: It's not a Cop Out

Written by Frank Lotierzo

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It's Saturday night and you are watching the big championship fight with your buddies. If you're like most fight buffs, you score the fight along with the judges just to see how far off they are when the decision is announced. How many times do you go back and forth on a round that you don't know who to give it to? How do you make your decision? Is it for the guy who did nothing in a round in which nothing happened, but closes the round with a couple jabs for show? I say NO! I don't care about the boxing commissions mandate that forces judges not to score even rounds. They are clueless on everything else, why would we assume they're not just as senseless regarding the scoring of a bout? Forcing judges to chose a winner in each and every round only enhances the possibility of a disputed or unjust decision. A judge could possibly award rounds where he had to split hairs justifying who won for the same fighter thus tilting the bout in favor of one fighter over the other. This is Shameful and worse, it's WRONG !!

Judges must decide

This is a total misconception. The fact is that there are rounds in fights in which neither combatant imposes his will or skill on his opponent. This is not wrong, nor is it odd, it's boxing. Fighters coast, or plan different strategies in various stages of the bout. Sometimes fighters end up doing this in the same round in order to set up the next round. Why must the judge decide the round if neither fighter stood out in the round. Boxing is not the hardest thing in the world to judge as long as you know what you're watching. It's pretty clear an overwhelming majority of the time who's dictating the round or tempo of the fight. However it's just as clear when neither has distinguished himself during a round and you have to split hairs deciding who to score it for; those you score even. A lot of times in major fights the first round is an even round because the fighters are just sizing each other up. For example, they'll use the jab as a range finder more than to score with, hoping they can gain a sense of their opponent and make it appear to the judges that they're fighting. Why tilt the fight based on the theory I must decide, so Fighter B had the edge because he was pushing his jab out. This penalizes Fighter A, who wasn't even hit most likely but is now down a point. This is NOT shirking out on responsibility. However making a decision on something when nothing has occurred to sway one side over the other is.

It's unfair to the fighters

Why do they force the judges to make a decision on every round awarding it to one of the fighters? Obviously, they don't know that there isn't a winner in every round. It happens sometimes when you have evenly matched fighters facing one another. There is usually a round or two in the course of the fight that neither fighter has done enough to earn the round. Why can't that be scored even? I say make the fighters earn each and every round they are awarded. If neither fighter has done anything to distinguish himself during the course of a round, then penalize them both. Being forced to award the round to one of fighters is unfair to both fighters. Why should fighter A win a round cleanly only to have it evened up by fighter B throwing a meaningless flurry towards the end of a round? Scoring a round for a fighter who you have to anguish over before giving him the round tells you all you need to know that it's most

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likely an even round. What you've done is put the so called loser of the round behind a point in which you're not even sure that the winner really won the round. By scoring the round even you keep both fighters equally in the fight. Why should one guy benefit from a round in which nothing happened because he threw some meaningless jabs that missed or a couple of hard shots that never came close?

Permit judges to score even rounds

Having the liberty to score rounds even would alleviate some problems and confusion. It would keep the scoring of bouts more in line with what has happened in the ring. If a judge is forced to make a decision on every round, he may have a very close fight scored lopsided. Informing the fighters that even rounds are a possibility would take away their excuses when it comes to griping over the decision. It would also force fighters to fight to earn the round and make it harder for the judges not to score in favor of the fighter who earned it. Oh, and this may provide better fights since more emphasis is being placed on earning rounds. Fighters will know that they can't get by just going through the motions. This takes away the luxury of a fighter coasting or picking spots just to steal rounds, knowing that he may not get the round without earning it will force fighters to engage more since an even round does neither any good. The rounds will become more important since one fighter can't race out to a big early lead by throwing meaningless flurries or wild hay-makers that miss just to stand out in a round neither fighter had the edge.

Permitting boxing judges the flex ability to score even rounds will allow the judges to do their jobs fairly and accurately, resulting in fewer disputed or unpopular decisions. In other words, stop handicapping them and give them another tool to render a fair decision acceptable to the public. Thus, the fans will not be so quick to yell "fixed" over a bad decision. The bottom line is that sometimes neither fighter has done enough to merit the round. Those are even rounds. Even rounds have been part of boxing as long as the Marquess of Queensberry rules. Give judges the latitude to score them when appropriate. It's not a cop-out!!