

Scoring A Fight: 10-Point Must vs. 3-Point Max

Written by Frank Lotierzo
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Somebody please save the scoring system in boxing. I've never been a big fan of the 10-point must system, and the Paquiao-Marquez fight just further strengthens my belief. The 10-point must certainly has its drawbacks. It's too many points to allow for a round. In the Paquiao-Marquez fight, Paquiao scored three knockdowns in the first round. Two judges scored the round 10-6 and one scored it 10-7. The judge who scored it 10-7 says he made a mistake, but I think he really meant to score it 10-7, and is only admitting a mistake because he was overruled by the other two judges. I actually have no problem with a 10-7 score for round one. Even though I thought it was 10-6, the fact is the first knock down was a flash and Marquez wasn't hurt at all from the straight left that dropped him. The second two knockdowns were from much harder shots that clearly had Marquez hurt.

Exactly where does it say in the scoring manual that each knock down is counted as a point? And how about what transpired up to that point. Again, I thought 10-6, but don't think it being scored 10-7 is a crime. I have more of a problem with the judge who scored only two rounds for Paquiao. That's another story for another time, but that judge shouldn't be allowed to score dog or cock fights.

In boxing there are really only three scenarios that can play out in a round where a fighter isn't knocked out or stopped. Fighter-a can eke out a very close round, Fighter-b can win and control the round from start to finish without scoring a knockdown, or Fighter-a can score multiple knockdowns and dominate the round. The odd scenarios that can occur are all the obvious, both fighters being down, one fighter winning the round and getting dropped at the end of it just to name a few. In those cases just apply the same basics that are used under the current system.

The system I'd like to see is a 3-point max system. I'd also like to see the fighters have to earn points instead of starting with the maximum amount, (10), and working back. I say award Fighter-a the round 1-0 if he ekes it out and doesn't totally control or dominate it. Fighter-b should win the round 2-0 if he controls it from start to finish, but doesn't put the other fighter down. In the last scenario Fighter-a would win the round 3-0 if he scores multiple knockdowns like in the first round of the Paquiao-Marquez.

The 10-point must is too flimsy because it's not used in the way it was originally set out to be used. It was supposed to give the judges leeway in scoring rounds. The 10 point variance was meant to be used as a tool to aid the judges. It was thought to be a liberal system in which to judge fights. The problem turned out to be that the judges score every round 10-9 regardless of what happens in it. In 99% of the rounds that are scored in a fight, it's 10-9 if neither fighter puts the other one down. It doesn't matter how much a fighter dictates and controls the action and fighting. If nobody goes down it's 10-9.

That's absurd in my opinion. Fighters should be rewarded for fighting and taking charge. Doesn't it make more sense for a fighter be awarded a round more heavily if he totally controls

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it, even if he hasn't scored a knockdown? I think so. As it stands under the 10-point must, Fighter-a can dominate the entire three minutes of the round, but still only get it 10-9 if he does not put his opponent down. Yet in the next round, Fighter-b can even it up by landing some light jabs at the end of it and winning it by the same score, 10-9. I ask, is that an accurate portrayal of who was getting the better of it? I say it is not.

Changing the system to fit the most realistic scenarios that usually unfold during the course of a fight may not be a bad thing. Don't force the judges to have to think too much. Give them the tools to render a verdict that closer portrays what took place in the ring. They just don't use the 10-point must the way it was intended to be used. In actuality, the 10-point must is just too liberal. Ten points is too much of a variance in which to apply to a boxing match. What's the difference between a 10-4 round and a 10-6? The scenarios are only a few. A fighter can only win by a razor thin margin, he can control and dictate, or he can totally dominate. Let the system apply to those scenarios.

Instead of scoring round one for Paquiao 10-6, score it 3-0. Having such a wide swing in the points allows one fighter to almost seal the decision based off of one round. One round, regardless of how dominant and one sided it is, shouldn't force the other fighter to just about have to sweep the remaining rounds just to have a shot at the decision. One round should not carry so much weight unless a stoppage occurs in it. I'm not calling for a revamping of the current system. I believe that competent judges can navigate the current system, but it just seems as of late competency among judges is a thing of the past. I think the 3-point max is a viable option if need be.