

Boxing Judges Questioned: DiBella Outraged

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Don't talk to promoter Lou DiBella about a Happy New Year. It hasn't been a happy start for DiBella Entertainment and their prized super flyweight star Jose Navarro.

Earlier today in Tokyo, Japan, Navarro squared off against Katsushige Kawashima for the WBC 115-pound title at Ariake Coliseum. Kawashima, the champion, was awarded a split decision over the previously unbeaten Navarro, and DiBella says it stinks. Navarro completely dominated the fight, and Kawashima was beaten and bloody. So thorough was Navarro's domination that the Canadian judge scored the bout 120-109 for Jose, representing a near sweep with 11 rounds scored for Navarro, and one scored even. Somehow, the incompetent and or/co-opted judges from Thailand and Mexico scored the bout 115-113 and 115-114 for Kawashima.

"I haven't even written 2005 on a piece of paper yet, and the filth of this business has already sullied this year," said DiBella, the president of DBE. "Jose Navarro has worked tirelessly for his opportunity. We told him that he was on hostile ground and would need to win convincingly. He did everything but knock the champion out, and was robbed.

"This travesty will go unnoticed by many who should notice and will not hurt DiBella Entertainment significantly from a business perspective," added DiBella. "Still, the judging in boxing and inherent organizational biases continue to diminish and help destroy a potentially great sport. Most importantly, the damage done, both emotionally and financially, to a kid like Jose is immeasurable."

Said DBE vice president David Itskowitch, who was ringside in Japan for the championship bout: "I was stunned. Jose gave him a boxing lesson. Jose cut him up. His punches were more accurate and landed with higher frequency. He controlled the fight. Kawashima was desperate after being cut. For one judge to have it a shutout for the visiting fighter, and two others have it close for the hometown fighter is terrible."

Navarro (21-1, 9 KO's) put his unbeaten pro record on the line against titleholder Kawashima (28-3, 18 KO's), who fought on his home turf and has never fought outside of Tokyo and Yokohama. Navarro traveled 5,452 miles for his title opportunity. DBE is protesting the decision and calling for an immediate rematch. "The WBC should take a good look at itself and fix the situation. Jose and Mauricio Sulaiman say that they stand for justice. Now is their time to prove it," said DiBella.