Saturday was a great night for boxing fans with four big bouts on tap for aficionados, as Showtime and HBO did their part to both help and hinder the sport. Weekends like the one that just passed are great for fights fans and the networks made it happen, but the fact that other weekends go by with little or no action and then Showtime and HBO force us to choose between fights on the same night, well, sometimes life just isn't fair I guess. Still, I won't complain, and actually I can't justifiably complain. You see, where I watched the fights on Saturday, we had both cards showing on separate televisions at the same time. If I could manipulate my eyes to work independently from one another I really could have caught every blow.

The four titles that were up for grabs turned into 3½ when Diego Corrales pulled a "Castillo" and forfeited his chance to retain the WBC Lightweight title against Joel "El Cepillo" Casamayor by tipping the scales nearly 5 pounds over the lightweight limit. The irony and hypocrisy aside, it turned into a title fight where only the Cuban Casamayor could leave the ring as champion, and he did. Casamayor took shots at a slightly passive Corrales and did enough in the bout to earn a split decision victory. Whether "Chico" Corrales was drained from the efforts to lose weight or just not "into" the fight due to the disappointment of losing his title on the scales, it wasn't the typical fierce fighter we have come to expect. "El Cepillo" brushed his opponent away by getting the better of the exchanges landing two punches to his opponents one as the fighters faced off for a third time. The judges were split on the decision but Joel Casamayor was the rightful winner on Saturday. A wager on Casamayor to win exactly by Decision paid of big, $425 profit for each $100 risked.

When the betting lines opened for this fight months ago Diego Corrales started off as a -200 favorite with backers of Casamayor getting back +170. The number of rounds was established at 11.5 with bettors laying -110 to bet either Over or Under that total. Casamayor supporters gradually bet the line down to the point where Corrales was a -185 favorite by fight week while the total had been bet slightly Under. Still, Corrales was steady favorite, until the news came in on Friday of his weight problems. It is an interesting debate among gamblers as to how a bettor can interpret the case of a fighter coming in over the weight limit against a fighter who successfully makes weight. In this case, Corrales had two hours to drop two pounds, which is the maximum weight loss that the Nevada Commission would allow the fighter to lose in such a short period. Corrales tried unsuccessfully to lose the weight and came back just a half-pound lighter than before. The parties agreed to go on with the fight with Corrales being fined and having restrictions put in place as to how much weight he could gain before entering the ring. Herein lays the bettor’s dilemma.

If Corrales truly sacrificed his body to the limit in order to try to weigh in at 135 pounds, how much would he have left in the tank on fight night? On the other hand, if Diego didn't torture his body to make the limit and came in much bigger and stronger than his opponent, well, this would definitely play into his favor. We saw a perfect example of this last time that "Chico" was in the ring as Jose Luis Castillo failed to make weight, was much bigger and stronger than

Corrales, and subsequently blew out a weakened Corrales in less than four rounds. Bettors seemed to believe Diego Corrales when he claimed that he really worked hard to lose the weight and his body just wouldn't allow it. Taking that position, most bettors leaned to Joel Casamayor having the edge as he would be stronger in the ring if Corrales in fact weakened himself in attempt to beat the scales. The wave of Casamayor backers moved the price on Corrales down to a -170 favorite with the take-back on the Cuban down to +150. The Total rounds stayed much the same as opinion was divided as to whether or not the bout would go the championship distance.

Weight was also a likely going to be a factor on the Corrales-Castillo undercard presented by Showtime when the "Raging Bull" Vic Darchinyan met the "Filipino Bomber" Glenn Donaire as Darchinyan put his IBF and IBO Flyweight titles on the line. Darchinyan, a 5'5", 112-pound punching monster from Armenia who makes his home in Australia, had put together an amazing string of 21 victories inside the distance in his past 22 fights. The stalking southpaw delivers rocket rights down the middle and carries sleep drops in either hand. His opponent on this night, Donaire, was simply a smaller man despite both tipping the scales at the flyweight limit of 112 pounds. Bettors drove the price on Darchinyan up from -600 to -1000 and hammered the total Under 7.5 rounds from the opening price from laying -120 on the Over 7.5 rounds so much so that by fight time the Under 7.5 cost backers -160.

By the time the fight came around on Saturday, Darchinyan would be close to 5 pounds heavier than his foe and bullied the game Donaire for most of the 6 rounds the bout lasted. Stalking and pressing the entire fight, Darchinyan won a lopsided technical decision - 60-53 on each judge's card - after Donaire turned his back to his opponent in the sixth round and motioned to the ref that he felt his jaw was broken. Referee Tony Weeks ruled the damage to have been caused by an unintentional head butt and thus the cards came out. Darchinyan insists his heavy hands inflicted the damage and will petition the Nevada State Athletic Commission to rule the victory a TKO. Weeks may have got the butt wrong, but gamblers certainly got the bet right and wagers on Darchinyan and the Under both cashed.

The HBO main event between 7' 0" giant Nicolay Valuev and Monte Barrett likely came down to weight as much as it was determined by skill. The towering Russian WBA champion pushed and pulled the game challenger across the ring for much of the eleven rounds the bout lasted as the two had sporadic exchanges that were generally decided by heavy shots coming from the "Beast From The East." Barrett absorbed many thudding blows, most of which were the type that shave the IQ, but he kept putting up enough of a fight to stay in it. Valuev was a solid -600 favorite to retain the title he won against John Ruiz, and that price moved little as bettors and fans alike were more curious than anything to see the beast. The Sportsbooks were split on the Total Rounds that the fight would last as some offered the Over/Under at 9.5 rounds and laying -110 either way, while others had it at 10.5 rounds and had Under bettors lay -150 to go Under that number or take back +130 if they bet the Over. Regardless of which total was wagered on, only the Over bettors cashed on this proposition. The exact outcome wager of Valuev by KO, TKO or DQ was the favored outcome at -165, and correctly so.

Clearly the best bout of the entire night was another rematch, this one between Tomasz Adamek of Poland and rugged Australian Paul Briggs. The two battled last year for the vacant

WBC Light Heavyweight title in a bout that Adamek escaped with a majority decision over twelve heated rounds. The rematch was much of the same as Adamek, viewed as the superior boxer in the bout, overcame some tense moments to edge out the harder hitting Briggs by split decision. Adamek was installed a slight -160 favorite while Briggs backers got +140. The total rounds was set at 11.5 with the Over favored -160. The two were both solid punchers but the fact that they had already gone the distance helped dictate the Over being favored. From the opening bell it was a battle between Adamek's accurate jab and laser right hand countered by Briggs overhand rights and whistling left hooks. The Pole opened the bout peppering his foe with jabs and searing rights before being deposited on the seat of his pants by a perfect counter left hook. It was going to be that kind of night, and it was an exhilarating bout. Both fighters were cut and bloody but continued to give everything they had for each of the twelve rounds. In the end Adamek was awarded for his clean accurate shots for a close split decision win. Both fighters deserve full marks for doing battle a second time and each should take some time off to recover from an exhausting fight.

Noteworthy: Wandee Singwangcha of Thailand won the fight but lost his WBC interim title to the scales in advance of his showdown in Japan against Munetsugo Kayo this weekend. Singwangcha was almost three pounds over the 108-pound limit and did not lose any of the excess weight before the fight. Just last month Jorge Rodrigo Barrios couldn't make weight before his WBO Super Featherweight title bout against Joan Guzman. Surely there has to be a way of monitoring fighters' weights so that pounds are lost in a healthy, controlled manner and bouts are not lost to the scales. The reputation of boxing is one that needs to be cared for. The sport and its warriors should be treated with, and act with, respect. If a fighter simply cannot lose sufficient weight to make a fight, it must be known days before the fight date, not the day before at a public weigh-in. Everyone deserves better.

(For entertainment purposes only)