There's no doubt about it. It was the worst decision of the year. Miguel Huerta (27-8, 17 KOs) had just been shorted of what seemed to be a clear win over Top Rank's rising lightweight star Almazbek Raiymkulov (A.K.A. Kid Diamond).

It was an old fashioned brawl with Huerta plowing through Diamond's defense.

Taking a wide assortment of punches in order to land his own. Round after round slipped by and it was obvious to anyone watching that an upset was in the making.

Huerta dropped Diamond in the eleventh round which seemed to punctuate a clear victory. "I thought I had it. I remember thinking they wouldn't rob me on national television. Would they?" said Huerta. "Sure enough they did."

When the scores of 114-113 (twice) for Diamond and 116-111 for Huerta were announced, Huerta was hugely dismayed. The kid from Mexico City got jobbed. The live audience made their disapproval well known by loudly booing the decision. "I would've rather been knocked out than be robbed like that. It was a tremendous disappointment," remembers Huerta. "But I understand I have to leave that in the past."

Huerta finished up preparations for his Thursday night fight on the Versus T.V. network against Efren Hinojosa (29-3, 17 KOs) for the N.A.B.F. title. Hinojosa has the similar search and destroy style that Huerta employs. "I know Hinojosa well. He's not going down until you give him a good beating," says Huerta. "It should be another great fight for the fans."

The match has all the makings of another rough battle for Huerta who's gone to war with the likes of IBF lightweight champion Julio Diaz (L-TKO8), Rolando Reyes (W-SD) and the aforementioned Kid Diamond. Make no mistake, when Huerta enters the ring, his opponent better be at his best to get past him. He put current IBF champion Julio Diaz on the deck before losing via t.k.o. in the later rounds. He admits he had less than proper pre-fight conditioning. "That was a tough fight. I didn't have the quality training facilities that I have now. It makes a big difference," said Huerta. "That's one of those fights that got away from me."

Being the main event on the Versus network will bring some valuable national television exposure that he hopes will translate into higher name recognition and bigger fights. "It's important that people see me fight," said Huerta. "I'm just like any other performer."

Huerta is ranked #12 by the WBC and is targeting its champion David Diaz who just defeated the legendary Erik "El Terrible" Morales. "I wasn't very impressed by David Diaz or Morales. Morales was way past his peak," said Huerta. "He didn't have anything left in the tank. His legs were gone."

Frank Espinoza has been managing Huerta for four years and believes his charge can defeat

Diaz. “I think he’s tougher than David Diaz,” Espinoza assured. “It would be a tremendous war. I just think my guy has more tools than Diaz.”

Once tagged as an under achiever with limited potential by some in the industry, Huerta’s performance against Diamond garnered him some respect. “In the end it didn’t matter that I lost,” said Huerta. “The people within the industry and the fans who know boxing knew I was robbed and recognized my performance for what it was.”

Having interviewed “El Anestesista” (the anesthesiologist) in the past, Huerta seems to have a more urgent need to succeed. Perhaps he finally realizes that the window of opportunity is slowly closing down.

“That’s true. I’m 29 and I need to think about my future. That’s what I’m fighting for,” said Huerta. “That’s why you’ll always see me giving everything I’ve got. I don’t want to retire from boxing without getting something out of it. I’ve put too much into it. I’ve left too much of myself in that ring. That’s why I’ve been training a lot harder than ever. I have two kids to worry about.”

“He’s definitely changed,” confirms Espinoza. “He’s more dedicated than he ever was. In the past it seemed like he was lacking the right motivation. I think reality is setting in for Miguel. He craves a world title and recognition just like all the other boxers do. He wants to go up against any of the lightweight champions. His style matches up well against any of the Diaz champions or Katsidis.”

IBF titlist Julio “The Kidd” Diaz and WBA Champion Juan “Baby Bull” Diaz have set a unification bout on October 13th. That leaves the WBO champion Michael Katisidis and the WBC’s David Diaz. “If we can make any of those fights happen I’d be more than happy,” said Huerta. “For now, I just have to keep putting on great performances against the best fighters in the world. That’s the key. Eventually the world title shot will come.”

Miguel Huerta vs. Efren Hinojosa is the main event set to take place on Thursday in Houston, Texas. Also on the Versus televised card will be Oxnard’s hot prospect “Vicious” Victor Ortiz vs Emmanuel Clottey along with special attraction Vanes “The Nightmare” Martirosyan. The card is being promoted by Top Rank.

For more info on the card go to: www.toprank.com

For more info on Miguel Huerta go to: www.espinozaboxingclub.com