

## EXCLUSIVE! DIAZ/KATSIDIS Judge Talks

Written by Ron Borges

Monday, 08 September 2008 19:00

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Nearly three days after the fact, Glen Hamada remains “dumbfounded.” Now he knows how everyone else watching Saturday night felt when he scored Michael Katsidis a 115-113 winner over former lightweight champion Juan Diaz.

In the opinion of the overwhelming majority of people with reasonable vision the fight was no contest as Diaz systematically tore Katsidis apart. HBO’s judge in residence, Harold Lederman, had it 118-110 for the Baby Bull and the other two judges at ringside both had Diaz winning, although Levi Martinez somehow saw it a close 115-113 for Diaz, a score nearly as remarkable as Hamada’s.

HBO commentator Max Kellerman went hyperbolic as usual, claiming correctly that “That’s one of the worst jobs of scoring I have ever seen” and had he left it there he would have been fine. Unfortunately he did not, inserting foot firmly in mouth by adding, “It goes beyond just bad scoring and makes you question whether there was a corrupting influence in the scoring.”

Had Kellerman not brought in the charge of corruption his criticism of Hamada in particular and the judges in general would have been as accurate as Diaz’ jab was. But it is one thing to violently disagree with a judge’s scorecard and quite another to demean the reputation of a guy who has judged fights for over 25 years with few such glaring slipups on his resume.

CompuBox statistics have to be taken with some reservation in general because they score only jabs and what they term as power punches, which is anything except the jab. Despite that indigenous flaw in the system they are a reasonable measuring stick for a case like that one and what they said about Diaz vs. Katsidis was that Glen Hamada wasn’t as dumbfounded as the people who heard his score read to them.

Compubox statistics had Diaz out landing Katsidis nearly 2-to-1 (296 to 149) while connecting on 37 per cent of his 801 punches to Katsidis’ 17 per cent of the 868 he threw. When one adds in the fact that Katsidis finished the night cut badly along the left eyelid, with a cut and ugly purple bruise under his right eye and a mouth filling and re-filling with blood from a cut lip, it was shocking to see Hamada’s opinion when across the ring from Katsidis Diaz looked like the fight hadn’t started yet even after it was over.

“I’m really confused that my score could be so far off what others are saying,” Hamada said from his home in the Pacific Northwest. “I thought they were both blocking a lot of punches with their gloves and elbows. Diaz had a nice jab but Katsidis seemed to be throwing pretty good body shots.

“I asked Harold after the fight how he had it. When he said 10-2 Diaz, I was shocked. I know he’s looking at a TV monitor and that can make it look different than it was at ringside but I have a lot of respect for Harold. He’s been a good judge for many years. When he said 10-2, I was dumbfounded.

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“I’ve had a lot of my friends call and say, “What fight were you watching?? It bothers me.”

Hamada said he has yet to review a tape of the fight but hopes to get one and study it, rescoring the bout to see if his second view agrees with his first. He’s unsure what he will see the second time but freely admitted one thing.

“If all three judges are close it’s one thing but when you see it one way and the other two see it the other way and one of them has it 116-112 (for Diaz in this case) that’s a big swing,” Hamada said.

“I’ve done a hell of a lot of fights (including over 60 world championships). I try to do a good job. I try to be professional. I called it the way I saw it but I’d like to review it and see if I did screw up. I tried my best.”

There is no evidence to the contrary despite Kellerman’s loose-lipped accusation, but this time, for whatever reason, the scores did not add up. At least Hamada’s didn’t in the opinion of most fight fans, journalists and the other two judges (although Levi Martinez’ 115-113 for Diaz wasn’t that far removed from Hamada’s point of view, to be fair).

One bright spot was that Hamada freely said he wants to review his work because of the outcry, something that should be done more regularly by both state boxing commissions and sanctioning bodies.

“I need to evaluate myself,” Hamada said. “Am I going senile? Everybody has a right to their opinion but my God, that’s a big swing. They must have seen something.

“I thought a lot of the punches landed on the gloves. Even some of his uppercuts I thought were grazing blows. At ringside you can see the punches digging in.

“I’d never worked either guy before Saturday night so I came into the fight with a very open mind. I scored what I saw but when you hear people you respect saying they saw it as a complete shutout for the other guy it has to bother you.

“We take this very seriously. If we’re that far off, what are we? That’s why I’d like to see it again. Study the tape. A lot of times you see a different fight from a different angle. I’m human like everybody else. Maybe I had a bad night.

Most people will assume after Glen Hamada watches that tape he will be able to come to no other conclusion. Barring any evidence to the contrary, that’s what the rest of us should conclude as well. To throw out a veiled corruption charge with no evidence whatsoever is reckless and serves no purpose unless the broadcaster knows more than he was telling, which I doubt.

When fans see weekend after weekend of overturned calls in football or bad calls in baseball no one suggests corruption. So why is it that everything that goes amiss in boxing has to have some deeper, more sinister motivation?

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Glen Hamada may not have seen what the rest of us did Saturday night but to take it further than that is to do what he's being accused of, seeing things that aren't there.