

## Malignaggi-Diaz: Exhibit A How A Boxing Match's Outcome Is Determined

Written by Frank Lotierzo  
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In what turned out to be a thrilling and exciting fight this past weekend on HBO between junior welterweights Paulie Malignaggi and Juan Diaz, the decision and dishonest post fight coverage is what boxing fans and observers are talking about. Heading into the fight it was pretty much a given that the evenly matched Malignaggi and Diaz would go the distance. Neither fighter was known for being a big puncher and it would come down to conditioning and which fighter would fight his fight without having their will broken over the course of 12-rounds.

Before the fight Malignaggi proved to be a prophet. Then again maybe he's not a prophet. It's more likely that he knows how the game of boxing works and therefore the fight was a replay of a movie that is popular in boxing and usually ends the same way. Paulie said in no uncertain terms that the deck was stacked against him and that fighting Diaz in his hometown of Houston was a risk he had to take since he was having a hard time getting fights. He also said that it would be impossible for him to win the decision and he was right.

If anyone wants exhibit A as to how networks and promoters control and hurt boxing, read what Paulie Malignaggi said before the fight and then watch the fight. Malignaggi's prefight words and performance in the fight along with the decision rendered by the three judges after it are evidence beyond a reasonable doubt as to how fights are manipulated without either fighter being involved. This time Diaz was the benefactor, but rest assured there's a night out there in the not too distant future where he'll be on the wrong end of it like Malignaggi was this time.

The reality is Juan Diaz is an exciting fighter and his swarming attack and volume punching makes for exciting fights. He's also aligned with Golden Boy Promotions and HBO is eager to push Golden Boy fighters, especially one who is a good guy and crowd pleaser like Juan Diaz. That said, Malignaggi fought the most complete fight of his career against Diaz. He came out at the bell for the first round and overwhelmed Diaz throwing one-tuos while keeping his feet moving and giving him different angles. Malignaggi threw punches in bunches and that kept Diaz occupied just enough so he couldn't wear Paulie down to the point where he could dictate the tempo of the fight. With Malignaggi keeping his hands busy, Diaz was unable to get inside long enough to be really effective. In a role reversal it was Malignaggi who was busier and out worked and out fought Diaz.

After trading the first four rounds and both fighters being cut, Diaz rocked Malignaggi in the fifth round with several big left-hooks. For about a minute of the round Malignaggi was shook and couldn't get away as Diaz worked him over to the body and head to win the round. However, Malignaggi stabilized the bout and after eight rounds it was still up for grabs. During rounds nine through 12 Malignaggi boxed beautifully and out hustled Diaz who had no answers for Malignaggi's stinging one-tuos and constant lateral movement circling to the left. On top of that Malignaggi grabbed Diaz and pushed him off, causing Juan to use up chunks of the round in order to get set and in position to unload again. Despite Diaz knowing he had to slide to the right and get in front of Malignaggi, he was always a step behind and reacting to what Malignaggi was doing instead of forcing him to do what he needed him to do. It wasn't a case of

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Diaz being ineffective because he did have some success in getting to Malignaggi. The problem was he couldn't hurt Paulie enough when he did connect with his Sunday best. Had Diaz been able to hurt and slow Malignaggi some, the outcome may have been different, but that wasn't the case.

Malignaggi-Diaz was close, but it was Malignaggi who fought his fight more so than Diaz did his. There were some close rounds but the difference was Malignaggi separated himself during the last third of the fight by out working and out boxing Diaz in at least three of the last four rounds to secure what should've been at the least a 115-113 unanimous decision victory. Instead Diaz was awarded a unanimous decision by the scores of 116-112, 115-113 and 118-110.

It's impossible to fathom that a 118-110 score could've been reached by a judge who wasn't in one form or another compromised. You could poll 100 competent viewers and not one would score the fight 118-110 for Diaz. If Gale Van Hoy is a delivery boy for Oscar De La Hoya, he's a dumb one, scoring the fight in a way that looks so corrupt. And if he actually saw the fight 118-110, he's way beyond incompetent.

After being robbed Malignaggi gave a terrific and honest post fight interview and detailed the dirty deed just done to him as he predicted, yet Max Kellerman and Bob Papa went on afterward about his inappropriate behavior and language. Give me a break! Here's a fighter whose livelihood depends on the outcome and the decision. Yet a network which broadcast the series Oz and the Soprano's gets weak kneed over what he says after getting hosed out of the most important decision of his career?! When is the last time a fighter named names as to the officials and detailed exactly what was going to happen before hand like Paulie Malignaggi did, and then it literally played out exactly as he predicted it would. Shame on HBO for not letting him say what he wanted. What were they afraid of?

Then in closing Max Kellerman says something stupid like because Malignaggi doesn't have the following in New York that Diaz does in Houston because his style isn't as exciting, that the marketplace spoke and these things happen, along with implying that Malignaggi's reaction to the decision was slightly over the top. If the obvious injustice rendered by the judges wasn't enough of an insult, boxing fans had to listen to the so-called good guys Papa and Kellerman paint Paulie Malignaggi as being the bad guy! Wrong, the bad guys are the thieves who stole the fight and the enablers who tried to provide subtle cover for them!

The Malignaggi-Diaz fight was exciting and action packed. Juan Diaz showed what a class guy he is admitting the fight was close and not trying to make a case for himself, and Paulie Malignaggi exposed the politics of boxing in a manner that's perfectly clear for even the most novice observer to see and understand.

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