By Eric Raskin:

As this wasn't the most eventful weekend in boxing (televised main events were limited to a rare dull Friday Night Fights bout and a Saturday midnight ESPN Deportes fight that was over by about 12:02), this week's one-email mailbag harkens back to the highly eventful Abner Mares-Joseph Agbeko fight from two Saturdays ago:

Hey Eric,

I just read your piece from this past Monday and I'm gonna have to go ahead and disagree with you about the judging of the Mares-Agbeko fight. 115-111 in favor of Mares is, as I'm sure you well know, 7-5 in rounds, which seems to me reasonable. You said yourself you gave Agbeko but one of the first six rounds, is it that farfetched to believe Abner won two more? Personally, I thought he did. How did you score the fight? I thought the third card, can't remember the judge's name, at 113-113 was too far in favor of Agbeko (7-5 for him). The oddest part of all of this is that despite probably four to five really close rounds in the second half of the fight, we didn't get one truly wacky scorecard. I've come to expect decisions that somehow manage to be 115-113, 113-115, 117-111.

Best,

Robb

Hey Robb,

You make some valid points, and after thinking it through more carefully than I did before banging away impulsively on my keyboard last week, I have (almost) no problem with your 115-111 card. Still, I don't have any regrets over what I wrote because the wording I used was "slightly too wide" and "questionable." Had I used the word "unreasonable," I would want to retract that.

My scorecard looked different than the 115-111 cards of Oren Shellenberger and Adalaide Byrd. I had it just 114-113 for Mares. But you're right, 115-111 was reasonable—or at least just one point away from being reasonable. The only thing about the 115-111 card that I vehemently disagree with is that those judges gave Mares a 10-8 round in the 11th. The knockdown was so obviously a horrible call by ref Russell Mora, and Agbeko was doing just fine in the round otherwise, so to me, that was an obvious 10-9 knockdown round. Official judges at ringside and unofficial scorers at home alike need to use a little personal judgment and not just automatically make a round 10-8 because the ref says there was a knockdown. I didn't have a problem with scoring the opening round 10-8 despite the shaky knockdown call, because Mares dominated the round so completely that it could almost have been 10-8 without a knockdown. But the 11th round was a different story. It was unfair enough to Agbeko just to make it 10-9 in the other guy's favor.

In any case, while I had the fight six rounds apiece, with one 10-8 round, giving Mares a one-point win, I'm okay with a 7-5 scorecard and a 115-112 victory for Mares. I also think you could have given Agbeko one more early round than I did (the second was close) and had "King Kong" ahead 114-113. Bottom line: While I don't quite agree with 115-111 (and I think Byrd's scorecards are frequently off-base), maybe I was a tad harsh to rank the two judges who scored it that way among the "losers" of the evening. You're right, Robb, there were no wacky scorecards here. Just a wacky ref who caused scorecards that didn't reflect what really happened in the fight. With correct knockdown non-calls and reasonable low-blow deductions (conservatively, there should have been one deduction prior to the 11th round and a second one on the "knockdown" punch), Agbeko should have been at least a one-point winner.

And now let's get the weekly Rants rolling, segueing seamlessly by starting with a note on the Mares-Agbeko rematch in the offing:

• Yes, the alphabet body involved in the Mares-Agbeko fight made a good decision in ordering an immediate rematch. But all of the alphabet embracers in the media, who are so very content with the status quo, shouldn't rush to press with their "See, we need the alphabets!" columns. This is a rematch that the marketplace was going to dictate happen anyway, and Mares is a real fighter who wasn't going to run away from it.

• You'll notice in my Alexander Povetkin-Ruslan Chagaev article that will run later this week on TSS that I don't write one single word about the silly alphabet title involved, and the story doesn't suffer for it. Ignore, ignore, ignore. It's not that hard, people.

• I spoke last week to Doug Loughrey, ESPN boxing's director of programming and acquisitions, and he informed me that preliminary discussions have begun to get some extra boxing cards on the air late in the year if NBA games are missed. "If there's not a positive end to the NBA lockout, some dates might open up toward November or December," Loughrey said. "A lot of the college football games that would have been on ESPN2 would move over to ESPN to fill the NBA slot, and leave a hole on ESPN2 and a need for live programming. If the lockout happens, we're prepared to step in." I know most of the folks at ESPN, including Loughrey, aren't actively rooting for a lockout. But as a boxing fan—and, importantly, as a 76ers fan—I sure am.

• I asked Amir Khan over the weekend if he regretted his conspiracy-theory tweets regarding the Robert Guerrero-Marcos Maidana cancellation. Khan said he wasn't the one who sent those tweets; they were typed by a second tweeter on the grassy knoll.

• Glen Johnson is clearly the most credible opponent that was available for Lucian Bute to fight, and with Johnson having just fought Carl Froch, this bout will give us some indication of where Bute stands in relation to the Super Six finalists. So I'm fully in favor of Bute-Johnson happening. But at the same time, it's getting hard to believe Johnson, at age 42 and with close losses in the past 24 months to Froch, Tavoris Cloud, and Chad Dawson is actually going to win a fight against an elite opponent. This fits the description of a quality bout that somehow is hard to get pumped for.

• I will say this, in terms of finding a reason to get pumped for Bute-Johnson: Johnson's insistence on taking this fight for short money makes you wonder if he knows something the rest of us don't.

• Is there any reason to think Oliver McCall won't still be beating fourth-rate heavyweights when he's in his sixties?

• Alfredo Angulo is back, and on Saturday night, "El Perro" proved he can defeat a chew toy. Instead of the stick-and-move, Joseph Gomez used the move-and-suck, which involves running for one minute, then taking a couple of clean punches and folding immediately. It wasn't a very entertaining return for Alfredo Angulo, but at least he followed that old show-biz maxim about leaving us wanting more.

• I thought Andre Ward was solid overall providing color commentary on the season finale of Friday Night Fights, and he got off one outstanding line in defense of Demetrius Andrade as the unbeaten prospect started stinking it out in the main event: "This is not pride fighting. This is prize fighting." I don't know if it was an original line or not, but it was a fine turn of phrase just the same.

• Credit for another excellent line to fellow fight scribe David Greisman, who tweeted, "Is this Demetrius Andrade Dirrell?" There was an unmistakable Dirrell vs. Curtis Stevens vibe to the fight, though Andrade's performance wasn't as boring and maddening. I give Andrade a bit of a pass for the way he fought because Grady Brewer represented such an enormous step up in competition and because Brewer is a dangerous puncher.

• Maybe Andrade-Brewer wasn't the ideal capper to the FNF season, but at least we got the super-slo-mo in the co-feature that offered blood splashing off of David Diaz's face, followed by the magnificent undulating ear shot. For what it's worth, I doubt that left hand from Hank Lundy lands so cleanly if Diaz isn't busy trying to blink the blood out of his right eye.

• What's less surprising: that Octomom is hitting the celebrity-boxing circuit, or that Damon Feldman is promoting it?

• It's not tooting your own horn if you're quoting someone else tooting it, right? In reference to last week's episode of Ring Theory (http://ringtheory.podbean.com), one listener with impeccable taste emailed me to say "the Morales-Marquez-Barrera discussion was maybe the best boxing conversation I've ever heard." If you want to discover for yourself what that listener was talking about, well, it's not too late to subscribe and join our club of true fight fans.

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