

BORGES: "Doesn't Anybody Ever Just Lose A Fight Anymore?"

Written by Ron Borges

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:04



Does anybody ever just lose a fight any more?

Must there always be some nefarious dealings, questionable scoring, incompetent refereeing or unsportsmanlike conduct to explain away defeat? Has anyone in boxing these days ever heard of the simple concept that your man lost?

Not, apparently, in Los Angeles, where Richard Schaefer and Golden Boy Promotions don't have a gym but they do have a Whine Cellar. That's where they too often seem to go these days when one of their fighters loses a close match, the latest example being their absurd protest of Lamont Peterson's close but deserved victory over Amir Khan last month.

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Naturally, the World Boxing Association ordered a rematch because of “questionable refereeing.” If the NBA ordered a rematch every time there was “questionable refereeing” an NBA season would be 656 games long.

Even as they were ordering this rematch within 180 days, the WBA was making sure to leave open the possibility that if someone else tried to seek the same redress from them against a powerfully connected fighter like Khan in the future it could avoid the precedent it just set by saying, “In its resolution mandating the rematch, the WBA went out of its way to note that, under normal circumstances, it would not disturb the discretionary function of a referee.”

Well, does he have discretion or doesn't he? If he does, and he rules a slip not a knockdown or deducts points for Khan continually and repeatedly pushing down on Peterson's neck, why is the WBA now forcing Peterson into a rematch he neither wants nor should have to grant?

If the referee has a “discretionary function” then why wasn't he left to it this time? Three words – Golden Boy Promotions. This is no different than the old days, when it was Don King who got whatever he wanted from the WBA. Now that King is seemingly in semi-retirement, it is GBP that has taken to pressuring this bandit operation into overturning outcomes and referees' rulings.

The WBA said it was “questionable” why referee Joseph Cooper deducted two points for pushing. Questionable? He could have deducted two points per round for Khan constantly grabbing the back of Peterson's neck and pushing his head down. What's questionable is why he didn't.

Khan claimed he was only doing that because Peterson was coming in with his head low. Ever heard of an upper cut, Amir?

Khan's representatives also claim a shadowy figure named Mustafa Ameen was seen doing...what exactly? He was hovering around the scorer's table inappropriately, they said. Does that mean he fixed the score, which is what GBP is implying because if he didn't it makes no difference what else he might have been doing?

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The IBF, which also sanctioned the fight and had its belt at risk, has said Ameen is no mystery man but an unpaid volunteer worker with its program for retired fighters. Although the IBF agreed he had no business at ringside or talking to the fight inspector or those who were collecting the scorecards that's a far cry from what GBP tried to imply.

Khan lost both titles by split decision on Dec. 10 in a fight in which he had two points deducted for pushing. Immediately after the decision was announced, he and his representatives began howling about the referee and possible shenanigans with the scorecards. To the best of my knowledge, they have yet to prove anything untoward went on in the scoring of the fight, which I scored closely for Peterson from ringside myself without, I can assure you, any input from Mr. Ameen. I was also not alone in that opinion.

GBP probably feels they are simply standing up for their fighter. Maybe they honestly believe that but every time they make these kind of unproven claims they further contribute to the marginalizing of a sport that has allowed itself to be trampled by UFC in large part because it runs its business in this fashion.

Are their bad refereeing jobs in boxing? Obviously. Is there questionable scoring? Indeed so. The same is true in every other sport. The difference is every time an NFL official or a major league umpire blows a call some nitwit in Panama or Mexico doesn't have the power to give one side a do over.

Schaefer has bent over backwards to continually praise Peterson's effort, saying he fought his heart out in D.C. that night and he's right. What he doesn't say is the counter was also true.

Amir Khan didn't lose because of some "shadowy figure" at ringside, nor from Cooper's ineptitude. He lost because he didn't fight his heart out.

As HBO commentator Larry Merchant said, Khan fought that night like his job depended on it. Lamont Peterson fought like his life depended on it.

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Where's the WBA rule that says you get a rematch because of that?

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DaveB says:

That is the society we live in. What is good enough for the common man or common fighter in this case is not the same for those with powerful connections. Remember it is always, always about the money and the power that goes with the money. If you can remember that you will understand why 90% of the things in the world that seemingly make no sense do make sense. Either get better trained referees and don't penalize the fighters with bending of the rules, as in this once we are going to do this, or Peterson should throw that piece of junk belt with its high sanctioning fees in the garbage. The promoters have too much power but then again they have the money, which is what it is always about.

astro1 says:

We unfortunately live in a society where every one has to be a winner, everyone gets a trophy, you can't beat an opposing team by too much, what else do we expect from any sport. Parents started this by not wanting little Johnny to lose. Losing is part of sports ALL sports. The better side wins, and so they should, and not have to feel sorry for it.

Radam G says:

A SUPER, SUPER DITTO DaveB. Nothing has changed much in the world. Those with the POWER and the well CONNECTED will always call for a fair-playing ground, and will get it too. And try to change the results of a jive-arse CHEAT, or even the perception of a CHEAT. Holla!

gibola says:

Why doesn't anyone get a rematch anymore?

Khan brought his title into Peterson's home town, it was a close fight, Peterson's been offered 50 per cent of everything to fight Khan again, more money than he'll make fighting anyone else- he still won't agree. He was full of 'a rematch is fine by me' afterwards but something's changed.

The controversy will go away if Peterson does what is right and agrees to fight Khan again.

If you think this referee was fair, think again and remember Cortez not allowing the less-skilled but more physical Hatton anywhere near Mayweather and watch what Peterson was allowed to do to Khan, then the points deductions on top?

It needs a rematch and if Peterson's camp were reasonable the controversy goes away because they fight again. Peterson deserves this rubbish because he is trying to deny Khan the

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opportunity Khan was happy to give Peterson.

Gibola