This Saturday night Paulie Malignaggi 26-3 (5) and Juan Diaz 35-2 (17) will meet in a rematch at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago. The last time we saw Malignaggi and Diaz in the ring they put on a very thrilling and action packed fight for 12-rounds this past Summer. The fight took place in Diaz's hometown of Houston, Texas and when it was over he left the ring with a unanimous decision victory.

After the fight there was some fallout regarding the decision because two of the judges scored the fight 116-112 and 118-110 in favor of Diaz (I had it 115-113 Malignaggi). The overwhelming scores favoring Diaz are indefensible. What's more is Malignaggi was emphatic before the bout that the deck was stacked against him and if he didn't score a knockout, he'd be robbed out of the decision in Diaz's hometown. And Paulie proved to be a prophet based on the two ridiculous scorecards submitted by judges David Sunderland and Gale Van Horn.

As stated here after the fight the outrage over the scoring and decision would quell within a week or two, and it did, because it always does. This is something promoters and broadcast networks know they can always count on, which is part and parcel why things never change regarding the outlandish scorecards turned in by some judges.

Malignaggi-Diaz was a close fight and the decision in favor of Diaz is not the biggest robbery we've ever seen in professional boxing during the modern era. Both Paulie and Juan are decent guys and easy to root for, despite Malignaggi not having the most aesthetically pleasing style to watch. However, fights should be scored by professionals who observe them with their eyes and mind open. There were some close rounds that were difficult to score in the last fight, but Malignaggi fought his fight more so than Diaz fought his.

Which brings us to-- who has the advantage in the rematch?

Who is it between Malignaggi and Diaz that has a better chance to adjust from the first fight and be more effective this time? With Malignaggi and Diaz having contrasting styles, one of them is going to have to either raise their game or implement something new from a tactical vantage point.

Malignaggi used the ring and gave Diaz a lot of lateral movement in the last fight. He boxed beautifully and out-hustled Diaz who really had no answers for Paulie's one-twos as he circled to his left. Another smart thing Malignaggi did was grabbing Diaz in between punches and then pushed him off of him. This caused Diaz to have to start and reload again using up chunks of the round in order to close the distance and get close enough to cut loose again. Diaz knowing he had to slide to the right and block Malignaggi's only escape route was always a step behind and reacting to what Malignaggi was doing instead of forcing Paulie to do what he needed him to.

Diaz wasn't completely ineffective in the fight. He did have some success at getting to

Malignaggi during the first half of the fight. His problem was he couldn't hurt Malignaggi enough when he did connect with his Sunday left-hooks and right hands. Had Juan been able to hurt and slow Malignaggi some, he could've seized the fight during the last three or four rounds and probably have won the decision conclusively. But that wasn't the case. And because Malignaggi hadn't been worn down by Diaz in the early going he was able to slide and glide around the ring and pick his spots during the deciding rounds of the fight and looked to be the winner when it was over.

Based on the styles and what transpired the last time, Malignaggi has the edge going into the rematch. Paulie did everything right in the last fight but get the decision. He doesn't have to change anything stylistically. Often times the first meeting between a "boxer" and a "swarmer," the swarmer will win because they overwhelm the boxer with pressure and force him to fight more so than allowing him to box. In the rematch after seeing the attacker the first time the boxer sees what he has to adjust to in order to neutralize the attacker. But that's not the case here. The "boxer," Malignaggi, got the better of it the first time and doesn't have to deviate from what he did and how he fought Diaz this past August.

The burden lies on Diaz in the upcoming rematch with Malignaggi. He has to somehow disrupt Malignaggi and prevent him from boxing and using the ring the way he did the last time. This is a task that won't be easy for Diaz this time either. And a big part of that is because Diaz doesn't seem to posses enough power to force Malignaggi to rush his punches as he looks to get away. When Diaz nailed Malignaggi with his big left-hooks and right hands in their last fight, Malignaggi not only took them but answered back with his own assault and then moved before Diaz could get set to fire back.

Unless Malignaggi has eroded dramatically over the last four months or shows up in less than top shape, Diaz has his work cut out for him this Saturday night. On top of that Malignaggi will be fighting with more purpose and a chip on his shoulder wanting to prove that he won the first fight, whereas Diaz will be looking to prove he deserved the decision that he was awarded in the last fight.

Diaz is in a tough spot. Fighting as the attacker without carrying a big punch as an equalizer is the hardest style to fight for a pro boxer. And it's not like he can develop a big punch because punchers are born, not developed or manufactured. Diaz is what he is and will fight with the doubt in his mind that he can't hurt Malignaggi. And that will be compounded by the fact that Paulie doesn't have to question whether he can stand up to Diaz's best; he knows it.

In Saturday night's Malignaggi-Diaz rematch, the fighter who won the first fight is at the disadvantage psychologically and stylistically. Diaz has to be better and more effective than he was the last time, and Malignaggi just has to do exactly what he did in the last fight.

The onus is on Diaz not to let him.

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