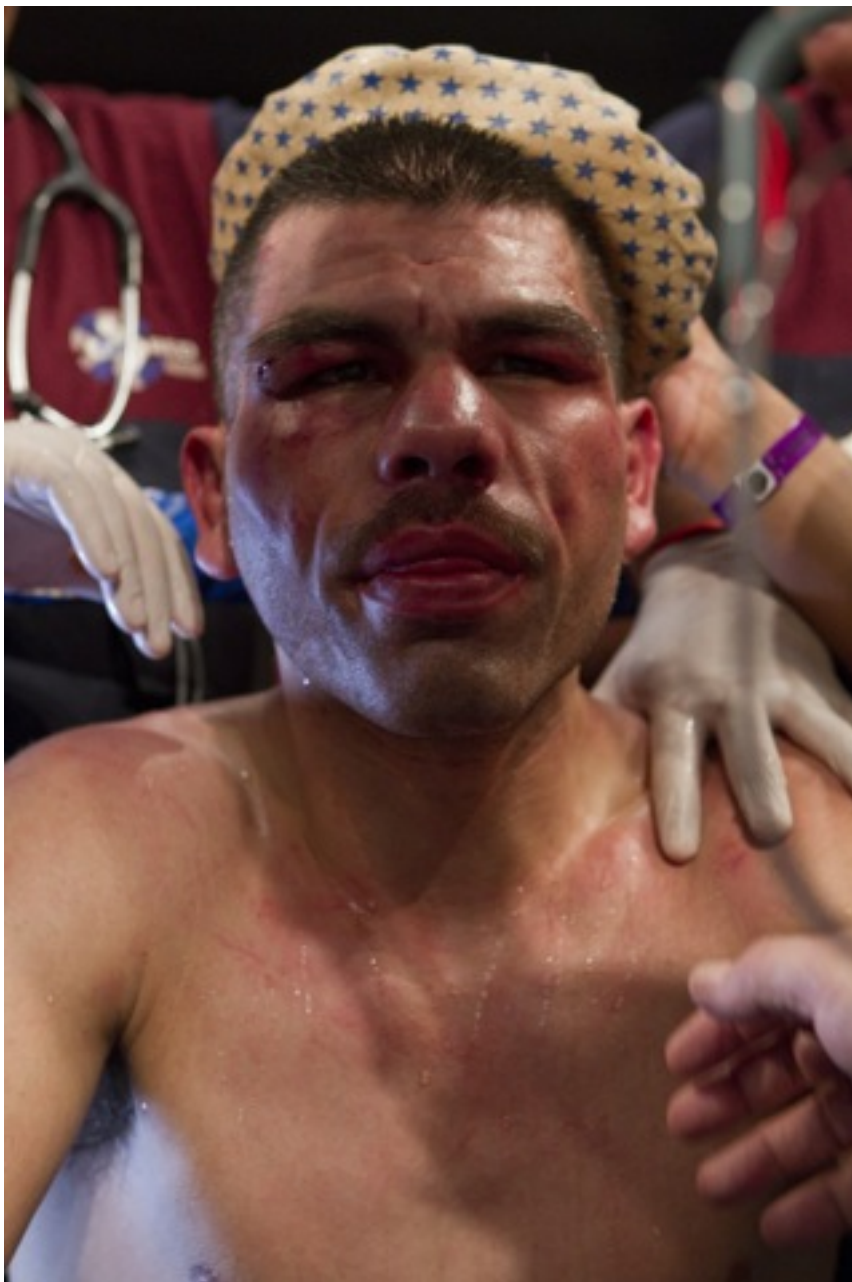


Written by Eric Raskin

Monday, 07 November 2011 11:01



Well, I'm finally over 1,000 followers on Twitter, so thanks to all of you who made this utterly meaningless feat possible! In honor of you, the readers who have supported my boxing writing lo these many years, I'm going answer not just one, but TWO emails this week in the mini mailbag. Let's start with one that was sent in as a "Tough Question" for Ring Theory but works nicely in the mailbag:

Eric,

Following the recent announcement that there would be a performance bonus of \$100,000 for

RASKIN'S RANTS: On Fight, Round, And Upset Of The Year Candidates

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the winner of the next Nonito Donaire fight, the easy question is “why in the name of all that is holy is there not a bonus for the winner of EVERY fight?” Your tough question is to imagine yourself as a boxing promoter and tell us why you think there shouldn't be.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian,

First, let me say that I love the idea of winner bonuses and knockout bonuses. For the most part, they would eliminate fights where a guy shows up looking strictly to survive.

However, you're asking me to explain from a promoter's perspective why bonuses don't make sense, and I can give you two valid reasons a promoter would offer—as well as one reason that a promoter would never say publicly.

Reason #1: It doesn't work in fights where the two boxers' purses are wildly disparate. Look at the Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz fight as an example; according to reports, Mayweather was guaranteed \$25-million, and Ortiz was guaranteed \$2.5-million. If you set the bonus at, say, \$500,000, that means something to Ortiz but means nothing to Mayweather. If you set the bonus at \$5-million, that means something to Mayweather, but is an outrageous amount to give Ortiz, since it triples his purse.

Reason #2: Bonuses open the door for bribery and corruption (wider than it's already open). If there's a million-dollar bonus for the winner of a major fight, couldn't you see someone from one of the fighters' camps offering the referee or a judge \$100,000 to help his guy win? The system is already plenty corruptible, and direct bonuses that depend upon the result of the bout create a lot of new incentive for such ugliness.

Reason #3 (the reason no promoter would ever admit): Why give the underdog a financial incentive to win when all you really want is for him to lose? Todd duBoef wished Omar Narvaez had given a more entertaining effort against Donaire a couple of weeks ago. But he sure as hell didn't want Narvaez to knock off “The Filipino Flash.”

Ultimately, performance bonuses are a cool idea, but you'll never see them become the norm. There are only occasional instances where they make sense for both fighters and both promoters and can be seriously considered. And by the way, did you notice Manny Pacquiao's response when Jimmy Kimmel asked him about a winner-take-all fight with Mayweather last week? Pacquiao completely avoided the question until Kimmel asked it a second time, then he said, “Of course.” That was Pacquiao telling a little white lie on live television. No fighter would ever risk getting \$0 out of a \$100-million pie.

Eric,

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Great Column. Great Podcast. GREAT FIGHT!

Thanks for reporting the Porpramook-Yaegashi fight. I would certainly have missed it otherwise, and it was a phenomenal scrap. Yaegashi has a terrific left hook.

As Dettloff would say: Kudos Mr. Raskin.

I think the Japanese commentary made the fight even more fun. I had no clue what they were saying, but knew exactly what they were talking about. How much fun would it be if Jim Lampley ever got that excited? (You know, without resorting to yelling, "Bang Bang Bang.")

I have a great idea. Just to settle things, maybe you and Bill should engage in four-rounders against Fischer and Rosenthal. Stream it live online and charge for it. The proceeds could buy Fischer a haircut for that ridiculous ponytail and Rosenthal a less nerdy hat. Joe Cortez could be the ref, to make sure no one actually gets to land a punch without getting a stern talking to.

Keep up the good work. I always enjoy your articles.

—Matthew Swain

Matthew,

Actually, I should address the non-Matthew readers first: If you're not sure what Matthew is talking about, he's referring to my Grantland.com blog last week about my top pick for Fight of the Year as of now, Akira Yaegashi vs. Pornsawan Porpramook, with the YouTube video of the fight embedded (<http://tinyurl.com/3nkhwez>). Read it/watch it if you haven't yet, then come on back to this Rants column.

Matthew, you make a great point about the Japanese commentary. No disrespect to Lampley, Joe Tessitore, etc., but boxing doesn't always require a blow-by-blow man. These aren't the radio days anymore. We know what we're looking at. Today's best blow-by-blow guys direct traffic well, set up their partners well, sometimes make insightful points of analysis themselves. But we don't need someone saying "a left, a right, a jab," etc. Fights broadcast in foreign languages are proof of that. We all knew exactly what we were looking at in Yaegashi-Pornsawan. But just hearing the varied excitement levels in the Japanese broadcasters' voices added something to the experience. The same was true of the 2006 Fight of the Year between Somsak Sithchatchawal and Mahyar Monshipour.

As for your comments on the Golden-Boy-hired new Ring gang, those are personal insults you're hurling about their style choices, and as a professional, I can't condone your attacks. (But it does seem that I'm not above running them in my mini-mailbag.)

Okay, enough mailbaggin', let's get Rantin':

RASKIN'S RANTS: On Fight, Round, And Upset Of The Year Candidates

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--I don't retract my declaration that Yaegashi-Pornsawan is the Fight of the Year, but round one of James Kirkland vs. Alfredo Angulo certainly replaces round eight of Yaegashi-Pornsawan as the leader in the clubhouse for Round of the Year. By the way, remember when Dettloff and I railed against Joe Cortez's teabag stoppage of Kirkland in the Nobuhito Ishida fight, and said the appropriate thing to do would have been to calmly take up a count and see how Kirkland looked at the end of that count? I know, I know, maybe Kirkland was spared career-shortening punishment by Cortez. But he also might have been deprived of the chance to show his recuperative powers.

--As I noted on Twitter, here's a rare situation: Kirkland has now been on both the winning and losing ends of 2011 Upset of the Year contenders. My pick to win that award is probably either Ishida-Kirkland or Orlando Salido-JuanMa Lopez, and I have to say, Kirkland defeating Angulo makes Ishida-Kirkland an even stronger candidate in retrospect.

--For whatever reason, I thoroughly enjoyed Alex McClintock on the Queensberry Rules blog calling Ann Wolfe "the baddest b----t on the planet."

--Oh, Glen Johnson. I'm one of your biggest fans. I've never had a bad word to say about you before. But do you really think you deserved the decision against Lucian Bute? Sorry to say it, but if you'd been given that decision, it would have single-handedly overcompensated for the last 13 years of bogus decisions against you.

--Regular Ring Theory listeners know that Bill Dettloff enjoys commenting on how you can see Johnson's brain right through his wrinkled scalp. This has to be the all-time greatest Johnson brain-through-scalp photo: <http://www.fightnews.com/Boxing/more-on-bute-johnson-100901>

--That was an interesting start to Bute's ring entrance. But if I wanted to watch the movie "Drumline," I'd ... well, I'd question everything about myself as a man.

--I second TSS editor Mike Woods' opinion expressed on ESPN.com Saturday night that we retire the phrase "matinee idol" on the grounds that nobody under the age of 35 knows what it means. From now on, when a boxer is good-looking, let's say he's a "mimbo," since that reference still has three or four years until nobody gets it.

--There's something kind of familiar about that Showtime "Staredown" show. I wish I could put my finger on what it reminds me of ...

--So Denis Lebedev, who just got done smacking Roy Jones and James Toney around, is fighting Antonio Tarver next? Hey, Michael Spinks and Bob Foster, stay close to the phone.

--Say a prayer for the great Joe Frazier. And for the poor schmuck who recently wrote an article saying Frazier doesn't belong in the Hall of Fame.

--Is it just me, or does Manny Pacquiao's singing get a little worse every time? His falsetto is the greatest advertisement for lip synching that I've ever heard. With that in mind, great work by whoever conceived last week's duet with Jimmy Kimmel. Limited vocal range is always relative,

RASKIN'S RANTS: On Fight, Round, And Upset Of The Year Candidates

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right?

--Let's end with a gratuitous plug for last week's episode of Ring Theory (<http://ringtheory.podbean.com>), featuring guest David Greisman. I think I managed to avoid the scenario I suggested last week that would see me land in the "Podcasters Behaving Badly" department. Unfortunately, my performance did qualify me for "Podcasters Coughing Badly." I apologize to any listeners who didn't want my lugeys in their ears.

Eric Raskin can be contacted at RaskinBoxing@yahoo.com. You can follow him on Twitter @EricRaskin and listen to new episodes of his podcast, Ring Theory, at <http://ringtheory.podbean.com>.

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Radam G says:

I'm with the ranting one. Angulo-Kirkland is, as of now, the upset of the year, the fight of the year and the Cowboy Mandingo James Kirkland is the comeback fighter of the year, and just maybe the fighter of the year. And though she won't be considered for it, Ann "Da Mermaid in need of anger management" Wolfe is the trainer of the year. No doubt the female trainer of the year, decade and century. She brought James Kirkland back from the deepest sh*thole and dumping ground. After he lost to that feather-fisted puncher, everybodeee and dey momma thought that he was _____. I bet she had his arse swimming in Texas oil well without getting oily slick. Dat jive turned him into a hammering brick. Wow! Up in her noggin, everybody and his cousin shoulda known that she had a trick. Da Cowboy Mandingo's fists were like a mustang horse kick. WTF! Holla!

brownsugar says:

There were a lot of factors at play in this past Saturday's fight between the Margarito look-a-like-canine sensation Angulo and the Pitt fighter better known as the Mandingo Warrior.

Kirkland knew he was being served up as the sacrificial lamb to Golden Boys thoroughbred Pitt Bull.

But surely as Kirkland had his own demons to tame, Angulo was struggling to keep his skeletons in the closet as well.

When Angulo got deported his access to quality training and career building fights was all but cut off.... in addition to this he had a nasty falling out with Gary Shaw after he turned down \$700,000.00 to fight Sergio Martinez.... He'll be lucky if he ever fights for half that again.

Still Angulo ain't no slouch and even though he was probably lacking the best preparation,

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wasn't as focused as he could have been... and had been wasting away for the past year..... you know he's always going to put on a show.

Yes James won big,... but in the bigger picture, how big was Angulo?? Or should I say how good was this version of Angulo... Jame ought not get too caught up in the perception that he conquered a world-beater. (although he surely deserves to celebrate)

James nearly looked like his old self,.. but what happens when they put him in with a fighter that doesn't mesh well with his come-forward-or-die-trying style of boxing?

I really think Kirkland can go places,.. but they'll have to match him carefully. Already Lara,.. is calling him out. As the target on his back looms larger and larger,.. his management had best know,... when to hold em' and when to fold em'. Enjoy him while it lasts. I know I will.

the Roast says:

Love Raskin, sensational fight between Kirkland and Angulo. Angulo took a beating that I dont think he will recover from. First round was round of the year, Ortiz-Berto is still fight of the year in my book. Savage stuff.

mortcola says:

Lovin' watching the replays of that fight. The contrast between the instant knockdown, with the certainty that Kirkland's career as a contender was about to end, and the incredibly focused and gutsy beatdown he got up to administer, was great boxing drama in a nutshell. I do think the combo of Angulo punching himself out badly, his mental distraction and lack of usual training were significant factors. If he can come back from this, then he's even money against Kirkland. Angulo is a guy who doesn't usual tire, doesn't usually get discouraged, and just really shot his wad in this fight. As for Kirkland - enjoy it while its hot, like I read above. With a little more skill and intelligence, he is too much like Frank The Animal Fletcher to have a prolonged career. And that chin just may be a piece of the excitement of watching him fight, along with that amazing heart. A faster fighter than Angulo, with head movement and decent power, will always have a good shot against Mandingo. Something worth watching will always happen when he's in the ring.