This sight crushed Steve Cunningham, who was certain he beat Tomasz Adamek on Dec. 22. The judges said otherwise. How did you score the fighter, readers?

Boxing, theater of the unexpected. Except in the realm of bad decisions. Then…expected.

The sport suffered another black eye, howled many if not most folks who watched the Steve Cunningham-Tomasz Adamek fight Saturday, a bout which served as the return of the sweet science to NBC. The heavyweights tussled in Pennsylvania, on a card promoted by Main Events, and Adamek had his hand raised after 12 rounds. Judges Debra Barnes (115-112) and Tom Greer (116-112) liked the work of the Pole, apparently rewarding him for trying to land more power punches than Cunningham, who used a jab to keep the Pole at bay and moved smartly to stay out of trouble. Judge Tom Miller liked the Philly fighter's work, and scored it for him 115-113.

Announcer Michael Buffer initially called the fight a split draw—and you could sense that the fans weren't thrilled but weren't hating on a tie-- but he was alerted after doing so that Barnes' card had been mis-tallied. He got back on the mike, said that Barnes scored it 115-112, Adamek. Buffer amended his call, and announced Adamek as the victor. The card was again scanned, and it was later revealed that Barnes had it 115-113 for the Pole.

The same scrappers had clashed in 2008, when both were cruiserweights, with Adamek snagging a UD12 on that occasion. Since then, he jetted to the heavyweight division for more moolah, and Cunningham finally followed suit this year. Both are 36 years old.

Spewing of disgust and dismay on the Twittersphere ensued. Robbery, they cried. Investigation, they called for. I watched the bout in my sister's living room in Potomac, Maryland, with my dad, who likely hasn't watched boxing on TV since Ali reigned, and his sis, who likes boxing but isn't inclined to hunt through a haystack for a scrap on a pay-cable channel an hour after she typically goes to bed, and her hubby. None of them saw a robbery, as most of us agreed that Adamek in the early rounds did some good work, and in many if not most of the rounds, landed one or two of the most showy power shots in the frame. I noted, as we watched, and weighed in as semi-expert commentator for the crew, that judges oftentimes don't reward the counterpuncher, or the guy who spends much of the fight backing up. Judges these days may not be skilled enough to reward such subtlety, I noted.

Indeed.

There were no knockdowns, unlike the first tussle, when Cunningham went down three times, and Cunningham, according to Compubox, outlanded Adamek, 209-169. But Adamek landed more power punches, 120, than did Cunningham, who landed 80, and threw 267 to Cunningham's 167. Output was similar, with Cunningham boasting a slight edge, 561-513.

Adamek will likely face Kubrat Pulev next, with the winner to meet Wladimir Klitschko. There is no market, really, for Adamek to meet any Klitschko, seeing as how he got chopped up when he fought Vitali in September 2010, and was stopped in the tenth of a one-sided “fight.”

I’d say the right thing to do would be to put off that eliminator, and book Adamek-Cunningham three, in early March or so. Perhaps in another jurisdiction, where math isn’t so challenging, and in front of more seasoned judges.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Wow! There will always be something wrong in boksing's Denmark. And everybody and dey momma will bark. The bout could've gone either way or been called a draw. The guy was not robbed so badly that you need to call the law.

Since the buttholes da be messed up in the scoring, and it was announced wrong, they should change it to a no-contest verdict and do it over. That is the way that they use to do. And "It ain't gonna hurt nobodee ta gettin' on down" again.

"Let's do it again! Owwww BABBBBEEEEEE! Let's do it AGGAINNNN!" Holla!

SouthPaul says:

It wasn't a robbery but very appalling the scores were read wrong on national television. Nice way to make the sports return debut on a major mainstream network. They're all laughing at us. Wtf...

deepwater says:

Boxing did not suffer a black eye over this fight. Close fight. Adamak threw and landed more power shots. Effective aggression . If it was amateur fight then cunnghams little jab would of scored more point s but this is pro boxing. Stop crying wolf every time it's a close fight. Real robberies happen in boxing and this isn't one of them..

DaveB says:

Close fight indeed. I liked Cunningham because I thought he controlled the fight. After being knocked down three times previously and presently being out weighed by 25 pounds that was the way I thought he would fight. Fight could have gone either way depending on what type of

fighting you like. But I thought - what a fight to showcase on national TV. Screw up the tallying of the cards, give a decision that a lot of people would disagree with, and then cut off the telecast and not interview the fighters. There was so much wasted time prior to the fight. I don't think this fight and broadcast did anything good to further the cause of boxing. It probably does more to make the casual fan remember why they left and no one but the hardcore talk about or care about boxing anymore.

brownsugar says:

[QUOTE=DaveB;23906]Close fight indeed. I liked Cunningham because I thought he controlled the fight. After being knocked down three times previously and presently being out weighed by 25 pounds that was the way I thought he would fight. Fight could have gone either way depending on what type of fighting you like. But I thought - what a fight to showcase on national TV. Screw up the tallying of the cards, give a decision that a lot of people would disagree with, and then cut off the telecast and not interview the fighters. There was so much wasted time prior to the fight. I don't think this fight and broadcast did anything good to further the cause of boxing. It probably does more to make the casual fan remember why they left and no one but the hardcore talk about or care about boxing anymore.[/QUOTE]

Nice Commentary DaveB... It's so hard to win a slick technical fight in the other guys back yard. Adameks own promoter said he thought Chrismas came early for the rugged Pole and I agree.. also the Ring ratings dropped TA from # 3 to #5 shortly after the fight for what it's worth.
As is stands now,.... Adamek continues to take on all comers as he's already scheduled to fight against a big eastern Euro Heavyweight named Pulev.. But he's starting to fade a little, He should make sure he gets another good paycheck before it's all said and done...

I'd like to see Adamek vs Price, Fury, or Jennings. All 3 would be fan friendly... another shot against another Klitschko would be redundantly unnecessary.

Bernie Campbell says:

Tomasz had the momentum at the end; he took all 3 of the Championship rounds! I would have called it a draw! Cunningham came into the fight extremely conditioned for this bout! He didnt look good against Hernandez or Gavern! My hats off to him!

amayseng says:

I had Cunningham winning.
He controlled the ring landed more cleaner punches and seemed
To have stunned adamek enough through out the fight
to look like it was his fight.

I like and follow both fighters hope they do it again.

Adamek looked a bit heavy with slower feet than usual which made
steve look all better.