



A New Perspective

If You've Ever Been Upset With a Judge's Decision, You Must Read This

By Nelson Hamilton

The slugfest is over, and the fighters are pacing in their corner, awaiting the judges' decision. When the ref calls them to the center of the cage, he grabs a wrist of each. The winner is announced, the ref raises his arm and ... a chorus of boos erupts. Immediately fans and reporters start talking about a "controversial decision."

Questions are asked.

What the hell were the judges watching? Are they blind, stupid, brain damaged or just corrupt? Ultimately, it's decided that they suffer from all these afflictions, plus some that haven't been thought of just quite yet.

Frequently, after the judges' scores are announced following a close fight, many fans are shocked and in total disbelief. Assuming that not all judges suffer from the afflictions noted above, let's explore some alternative reasons that may explain why they are not completely brain dead and the factors that contribute to such controversy.

FACTORS AFFECTING CONTROVERSY

ONE: The Scoring System

First and foremost, the current scoring system forces judges to reward fighters equally for clearly unequal efforts, actions and results.

Any round that falls between the grossly different circumstances of "marginal advantage in cage control" to anything short of "overwhelming dominance" are rewarded with the exact same score: 10-9.

The result is a total-bout score that all too often does not accurately reflect the action, leads to criticism of the officials and even incurs accusations of corruption.

TWO: Unfair Comments

Statements such as, "Don't leave it up to the judges" imply that the fighters cannot expect a fair decision.

THREE: Today's World

Given today's prevailing societal mind-set in which many individuals have a sense of entitlement and are unable to accept responsibility for their mistakes and failures, many fighters find it difficult to accept any decision that is not in their favor.

FOUR: Judges and Fans Differ

There is a distinct difference between being a fan/spectator and being a judge.

According to Webster's Dictionary, a spectator by definition is "an observer of an event, one who looks

and waits expectantly.” By contrast, a judge is one who “forms an opinion and decides authoritatively after due deliberation.” In other words, spectators are passive participants in the occasion; by contrast, judges are active participants.

FIVE: Objective Criteria

Although political correctness would have us believe that all decisions/opinions are equal, such is not the case.

Decisions about the outcome of a fight that are based on objective criteria are decidedly more valid than those decisions which are subjectively made.

In other words, decisions based on observable criteria (think judges) are more credible than decisions based on emotion (think fans) and feelings. Opinions are like buttocks, although everybody has one, some carry more weight than others.

SIX: A Different Perspective

Generally speaking, for the following reasons judges view the fight through a different prism than that of the fans, reporters and ringside dignitaries.

Color commentators weave a word picture that influences how the viewer sees the outcome of a fight. In contrast, the judges have no idea what the commentators are saying.

Viewers get the best angles that five cameras can capture, as well as repeated slow motion replays between each round. Judges view the action in real-time only; their view limited to the angle dictated by their stationary position at ringside.

Aside from the judges, almost no one watches a fight dispassionately. Consider the following:

- **During the course of a fight, fans (spectators) eat, drink, and look around for their friends. They talk with their girlfriend/boyfriend and think about the after-party. Oh, and let's not forget, how the judges decision is viewed is directly influenced by any bets placed on the fights.**

- **During the course of a fight, reporters make notes about the action being viewed, talk to others about what is being viewed and think about putting it all together for immediate posting after the event.**

- **During the course of a fight, commentators enthusiastically elaborate and may sensationalize the action being viewed, all while listening to the director's comments.**

- **In contrast to multitasking fans, commentators and reporters, judges direct 100% of their attention to the action being viewed, every second of every round. Their concentration is coupled with a deliberation of the criteria required for dispassionately scoring the action.**

WHAT MAKES YOU RIGHT?

What does it all mean?

When it comes to judging, there is no absolute truth as to the final score! Although there may be instances of poor scoring by some judges, many times it's just a matter of perspective.

Contrived controversy is a poor substitute for just accepting the fact that you may see the fight one-way, while the judges see it another.

What makes you right and them wrong?

SIDEBAR

Consider All Sides of the Matter

- **Watching a fight and rendering an opinion as to the winner does not constitute judging.**
- **Rendering an opinion as to who won a fight after saying that a certain round was too close to call is a luxury that judges don't have.**
- **Rendering an opinion that is at odds with the official decision and then accusing the judges of being inept is a luxury not shared by the judges.**