



ASSOCIATION OF BOXING COMMISSIONS AND COMBATIVE SPORTS BOXING JUDGE MANUAL

APPLICATION OF THE RULES AND GUIDELINES

The general purpose of the Judge's Manual is to provide criteria and guidance for all officials, ensuring **uniformity and consistency** in actions, responsibilities, duties, and overall performance of all Professional Boxing Judges.

BASIC GUIDELINES

1. Eat light at least 4-5 hours before – No alcohol – No medications that may affect your ability to concentrate. Judges should have a “routine” on event day that ensures they are physical and mentally prepared to do their job.
2. Dress professionally – men in coat and tie, women in business attire. Dress comfortably – Especially if outdoors.
3. Judges should not request assignment to a specific bout, event combatant, or venue unless it is in response to a Commission request.
4. Ringside: No phone usage, smoking, eating, gum chewing, or hats.
5. Judges should not bet/gamble/wager on a combative sport of any type regulated by a Commission.
6. Arrive at least one hour before the start of the event, check in with the Commission, verify your bout assignments, have the right number of cards, and never leave your post without Commission approval.
7. Ensure you have a clear and unobstructed view of the boxers (no photographers/fans in the way). Report any issues to the Commission promptly.
8. Ensure you can accurately identify the fighters especially if they have the same color trunks, are announced incorrectly, or placed in the wrong corners. Double-

check your scoring for each fighter in each round and verify your card before submission.

9. Mark your ballots clearly and be sure to sign all ballots – in PEN, not pencil. Always have at least two (2) pens.
10. Score each round independently and should never try to keep a “running” score of the bout. Think of each round as individual bouts.
11. At no time during a bout should judges talk with any parties. All attention should be given to the bout.
12. Always maintain professionalism. This includes never discussing or commenting on the work of other ringside officials.
13. Score the “minor” bouts with the same concentration and conviction as you would the “major” round bouts.
14. Never accept any type of gifts (tickets) nor keep a personal relationship with any individual that may be connected or associated with any fighter boxer, manager, or promoter.
15. If during a round the fighters are equal in your score then ask yourself who is the boxer who was in control of the round – which boxer forced the majority of the action.
16. Score what you can justify – never doubt yourself – doubts in one round can affect your score in another.
17. Avoid personal bias based on a fighter’s personality – it’s not whether you like or dislike a fighter it’s what they do in the ring during those three minutes that count.
18. Judge with your eyes not with your heart.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- The most important factor required for any judge is to maintain **total concentration** throughout the bout. This will lead to consistency in your scoring. This consistency can be achieved by maintaining a total neutral and unbiased mental and emotional attitude.
- Judges should never allow their attention, judgment, or actions to be influenced, diverted, or distracted by outside ring activity or verbal comments. The judge should ensure that they always give the bout their undivided attention.

- Judges **should not pay attention to personalities**, nor should they give undeserved points to a champion. When a fight starts, both fighters are equal. There is no champion in the ring. A championship is earned, not given. All decisions must be based upon the points the fighter has earned during each round.
- Judges should not be swayed by blood or the swelling of a boxer. There is no question that some fighters cut more easily than others. Just because a fighter is cut does not necessarily mean he is losing the round.
- **Judging is not an exact science.** On very few occasions are the decisions of a close fight given full approval. If the fight is observed carefully, and a decision is rendered in accordance with what you have seen, judges should not be bothered by criticism from partisan fans or press. Your confidence in your judgment should not be deterred by outside influence. What the eyes of the judges see is reflected in the number of points given.

CONCENTRATION

There is no question that **concentration** is the key that separates good judges from championship-caliber judges. A judge should always focus at a point directly between the two fighters so that they can observe the actions of both fighters at all times.

Never allow yourself to get lulled into looking at just one fighter. Three minutes of concentration is needed so that all the action is clearly seen and that this action is registering with you, as a mental picture, on who is winning a round.

Part of this concentration is the ability to keep a running score in your head of which fighter is ahead in the round. The point is to keep your focus and concentration locked in on the fighters at all times, especially when there are exchanges.

SCORING: Using a 10 POINT SYSTEM

A skilled judge establishes a method of determining when a point has been scored. One method employed by many of the better judges is the effective use of **BOXING ZONES**.

The zones are established by splitting the upper torso of a boxer with an imaginary line, down through the head and shoulders to the waistline. The zone is broken down into three parts: the head, the body, and the arms.

- **HEAD:** From the top of the head, splitting the ears. The description of the head is quite simple, with the only complications arising if the fighter turns their head so that the blow is struck behind the ear or on the top of the head. This is where the consideration of the judges comes into effect.
- **BODY:** On scoring body punches, judges should mentally take away the arms and run an imaginary line from the shoulders, down the side, to the top of the hip

line. Any blow struck within this area should be considered a legal and scoring blow.

- **ARMS:** Most often the arms are considered to be defensive mechanisms. Punches landed directly to the arms should not be considered scoring punches unless they are high up on the arms. To be considered scoring punches, they should be near the shoulders, or on the front of the shoulders.

It should be noted that there are situations where one boxer does nothing but cover up. This again should be a judgment factor and considered in scoring the punches. There are situations where a boxer will intend to do harm to their opponent by striking the arms instead of the body. This should be closely observed and given consideration by the judge.

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED:

There are **four basic factors** that should be considered when scoring a boxing contest. If these factors are observed objectively, the scoring of the bout will for the most part be consistent. The factors are as follows:

- **CLEAN and EFFECTIVE PUNCHING** – Simply put, fights are won by clean and effective punches landing. Not all punches are created equally. The effect of the punch is very important. Hard punches are certainly considered, as are the number of the punches. There is no mathematical formula that equates the hard punches with lighter punches, but judges must be fair to take both into account. Also, good, solid body punches must be considered when judging a bout. Judges should not concentrate on head shots and forget the use of effective body work.
- **EFFECTIVE AGGRESSIVENESS** – This is the boxer that is taking the fight to their opponent. Usually, one boxer will force the action (being aggressive and getting positive results from this aggression). This is the boxer that should be awarded points for this aggressiveness. But note that if this aggressive boxer is being beat to the punch, (counterpunch) this is not effective aggressiveness. The key is which boxer is getting off first and landing the cleaner more effective punches.
- **RING GENERALSHIP/RING CONTROL** - This is the thinking boxer. The boxer who, while punching or using clever footwork or moves, can keep their opponent off balance. This is the boxer that has controlled the action, the boxer, who, by using feints or slips, makes their opponent not only miss but then is able to put themselves in an offensive position. This is a fighter that puts themselves in position to score and not be scored upon. Running and simply avoiding action should not be rewarded.
- **DEFENSE** – This is a display of boxing skills - basically punching while not being punched. The clever boxer can make all the classical moves, slip a punch, counter, fight off the ropes, and manage to keep his opponent off balance.

*Remember good defense is not holding or clinching to avoid contact.

CALCULATING THE SCORE

At all times during the fight, **the judge should have a mathematical score in mind as to who is winning the round.** This becomes particularly significant when a bout is stopped due to a foul or infraction and you now must score the round. Under the Unified Rules, **partial rounds are scored if four rounds or more have been completed.** In a 10 POINT system, the winner of the round gets 10 points, and the loser of the round gets 9 points or less.

Although no two rounds are exactly alike, the action obviously varies - a good judge will be able to score rounds in an exact manner. This will lead to consistency in your scoring. Also be cautious of close rounds. If one fighter wins all the rounds by the slimmest of margins, your championship score could read 120-108. Do not award rounds just to make your scorecard closer in a close fight unless the fighter deserves it.

The following is a good rule of thumb:

- 10/9 - One boxer routinely won the round.
- 10/8 – One knockdown (see language below) or one boxer wins the round in an extremely decisive manner including hurting their opponent. This is particularly true if one boxer has done nothing offensively in a round (runs or just survives by being in a defensive mode throughout the round).
- 10/7 – Two knockdowns or one boxer clearly dominates and has knocked-down (at least once) their opponent. To reach this score you should always have at least one knockdown
- 10/6 – More than two knockdowns. Your score can continue to go lower than 10-6 if additional knockdowns occur.
- 10/10 – Round ends, no clear winner. Should rarely happen.

THE KNOCKDOWN:

If Boxer A scores a knockdown, the round should be scored 10-8 for Boxer A. However, if the balance of the round is decisively and dominantly won by Boxer B, and Boxer B has actually hurt Boxer A during this time – you may score this round 10-9 for Boxer A.

A 10-10 in this circumstance is not advisable.

It is also possible for a round to be scored 10-7 with one (1) knockdown if the boxer who scores the knockdown also wins the balance of the round decisively and dominantly and hurts their opponent.

Remember you must score the remainder of the round. **Do not assume that a knockdown for a boxer gives him an automatic 10-8 round (especially if the knockdown occurs early in the round) you must score the entire round. Also, never act as a referee, when the ref says it is a knockdown; you score it as a knockdown.**

A landed punch (including a knock-down) should count the same whenever it occurs in the round – you should not allow a fighter to try an “steal” a round by using a last second flurry. Remember each round is scored independently. If the bout is a six rounder, your score should reflect six individual rounds, each based on its own merit. Do not let any actions in a previous round affect your score in a later round.

EXAMPLE:

With the above-mentioned assumptions, let us look at some scoring situations:

- **Situation 1:** Boxer A is winning the round 10-9. Boxer A scores a knockdown. You now must have a 10-8 round.
- **Situation 2:** Boxer A is winning the round 10-9, by a slight margin, but then gets knocked down in the middle of the round. Since Boxer A was only winning the round by a slight margin, your score should be 10-8 for Boxer B. Remember you must score the entire round. The action for the remainder of this round could determine your score. It does not matter when the knockdown occurs. You must score what happens before and after the knockdown.
- **Situation 3:** Boxer A is winning the round extremely decisive, and Boxer B has taken punishment the entire round. Boxer B then scores a flash knockdown late in the round. Keeping in mind that knocking down the opponent is second best only to a knockout, your score should be 10-9 for Boxer B.

Scoring a 10-8 round without a knockdown:

Boxer A must be aggressively pursuing Boxer B and landing clean, effective punches throughout the round. Some of these punches must include “power” shots that although may not put Boxer B down they have stunned Boxer B. Also, Boxer B is just in a survival mode and continues to back up and only throws a few insignificant punches. If this happens, then Boxer A should be awarded a 10-8 round.

SCORING A FOUL/PENALTY

The scoring of penalty points may vary from commission to commission. Under the Unified Rules, if in any round a boxer shall be judged guilty by a referee of an intentional foul that causes an injury, the referee must deduct **two (2) points**. When the foul occurs,

the referee shall immediately stop the action and notify the judges of the number of points that shall be deducted. As a judge, make sure you know which boxer the points are being deducted from. In such cases, the judges shall mark their ballots in a normal manner. Then mark the number of points being deducted from the offending boxer next to the actual score. Remember the referee is the only one who can deduct a point. Do not let this point deduction influence your score.

What should a Judge do when a referee calls Time?

When a referee calls time, it's advisable for the judge to flip over their score card and make a notation as to which Boxer is ahead and by how much (for example you can mark Boxer A 10-9). You may even want to be more specific such as writing Boxer A-slightly ahead. Often concentration is lost when there is a delay from a time-out or any stoppage of a bout and you as a Judge must know where your score is at all times. Remember that under the Unified Rules after the completion of 4 rounds, partial rounds are scored in the event the bout is stopped because of an accidental foul. Therefore, as a Judge, you must always have your score in your head at all times.

ETHICS:

All judges should be familiar with the Federal Law regarding disclosures, and conflicts of interest. (See attached)

Generally, if it seems wrong or appears wrong it probably is. Don't wait for something to come out - be upfront if you feel there may be a conflict. Don't call promoters to get assignments nor have personal relationships with the boxers or any licensees that could compromise your impartiality when scoring. Judges must disclose to the commission any relationship with any licensee which might create a conflict of interest. Judges shall conduct themselves with honesty and integrity, and act in the best interest of combative sports and the public.

There is also a definite need for fellowship between all officials. **Officials should be supportive of one another and render assistance whenever possible.** Do not discuss the merits of another official's decision. They may be subject to criticism today; you may be subject to criticism tomorrow.

***BE PROFESSIONAL AT ALL TIMES**

Professional Boxing Judges - Overall Review

- Remember the FOUR BASIC RULES OF SCORING – Clean and Effective Punching, Effective Aggressiveness, Defense, and Ring Generalship/Ring control.
- Arrive on time - always check in with the Commission - always have an up-to-date order of the bouts
- Always dress professionally
- Never show your scores to anyone
- Always mark your scores in a neat and clear manner
- Always make sure you have a clear view of the bout at all times
- If you have to leave your post, always inform the Commission and return promptly
- Never talk to the press unless it is cleared by the Commission
- Never discuss the scores or actions of your fellow officials with anyone
- No smoking or gum chewing at ringside
- Do not bet or gamble on any combative sport
- No picture taking at ringside remember you are there to do a JOB not to be a fan.
- Never keep a separate running score of the bout - hand your scores in for that round; then forget about it and go on to scoring the next round
- Score each round independently
- **ALSO - Be mindful of what you say and do on “social media”** – Judges should never comment about an event or a fighter – postings of any sort can lead to some rather awkward situations.

**** ABOVE ALL – “CONCENTRATION AT ALL TIMES”**