

**PROFESSIONAL JUDGES**  
**\*GENERAL RULES\***

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. All judges should dress professionally – men in coat and tie, women in business-like professional manner – Dress comfortably – Especially if outdoors.
3. No smoking or gum chewing – no hats
4. All judges should arrive at least 1-hour before the start of the event. Always check in with the Commission and make sure you have an up-to-date line-up (including the order) of the fighters that will be competing. Always make sure you know exactly what bouts you will be judging. Judges should never leave their post, without first checking with the Commission, and shall always return promptly.
5. Judges should always ensure that they have a clear and unobstructed view of the boxers (no photographers/fans in the way). If this is not the case the Commission should be notified immediately.
6. Make sure you can properly recognize the fighters especially if they have the same color trunks or if they are announced wrong or are in the wrong corners. Make sure you have given each fighter the proper points for each round you have scored. Always double-check your card before handing it in.
7. Mark your ballots clearly and be sure to sign all ballots – in PEN, not pencil. Always have at least (2) pens.
8. Judges should score each round independently and should never try to keep a “running” score of the bout. Think of each round as individual bouts.
9. At no time during a bout should judges talk with any parties. All attention should be given to the bout.
10. Judges should conduct themselves in a “professional” manner at all times. This includes never talking or commenting about the work of other ringside officials.
11. Score the “minor” bouts with the same concentration and conviction as you would the “major” round bouts.

12. Judges should 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.
13. If during a round the fighters are equal in your score then ask yourself who is the boxer that was in control of the bout – which boxer forced the majority of the action.
14. Score what you can justify – never doubt yourself – doubts in one round can affect your score in another.
15. Don't let a fighter's personality come into play – it's not whether you like or dislike a fighter it's what they do in the ring/cage during those three minutes that count.
16. Judge with your eyes not with your heart.

### **BASIC GUIDELINES**

The most basic and 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 he always gives the bout his 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.

Everyone in the fight game knows that there is no one infallible method of scoring. In fact, no two rounds of any fight are scored precisely the same, even though they may appear to be to the novice observer. **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. Therefore, the basic

criteria should be established on which an overall equitable decision can be achieved by the officials. Decisions do constitute the largest percentage of the verdicts in fighting. This fact alone emphasizes the need for sound basic guidelines on how to evaluate, score and award points to the contestants in the performance of their skills.

Unlike any other sport, Boxing/MMA is judged in three different locations, by three individuals, who are scoring two moving objects. There is no other sport scored in this manner. What the eyes of the judges see is reflected in the number of points given. But from that point of similarity, boxing alone has a complex scoring system, due to the fact that there are two contestants expending their physical efforts against one another in their individual attempt to out- maneuver and gain the greater number of points.

### 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 or five 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 throughout the country 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 his 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 trunk. Any blow struck within this area should be considered a legal and scoring blow. Again, a judgment factor should be taken into consideration, that is, if the boxer turns away from the punch, and the blow

lands on the side towards the back, consideration should be given to the boxer who lands the punch. (This is a judgment factor).

**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.

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 his 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 PUNCHING** – Simply put, fights are won by clean 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. Many judges just seem to concentrate on head shots and forget the use of effective body work.

**EFFECTIVE AGGRESSIVENESS** – This is the boxer that is taking the fight to his 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 punches.

**RING GENERALSHIP/RING CONTROL** - This is the thinking boxer. The boxer who, while punching or using clever footwork or moves, can keep his opponent off balance. This is the boxer that has controlled the action, the boxer, who, by using feints or slips, makes his opponent not only miss but then is able to put himself in an offensive position. This is a fighter that puts himself 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 is extremely important when a bout is stopped for some type of 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. Remember the winner of the round receives (10 points) and this is the boxer who is aggressive, has clean punching, shows defensive skills and ring generalship. 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. For example, if you score for aggressiveness in one round, you should score for aggressiveness in all the rounds. – Judges need to be consistent in their scoring. Also be cautious of close rounds. If one fighter wins all the rounds by the slimmest of margins your championship score could read 12-108. 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 boxer dominates the other, usually includes a knock-down, but does not have to if one boxer is clearly dominating the entire round. 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). (See paragraph below)

10/7 – Two knockdowns or one boxer clearly dominates and has knocked-down (at least once) his opponent. To reach this score should you should always have at least one knockdown

10/10 Should rarely happen. **There are very few even rounds in boxing.** There should never be back-to-back even rounds.

**THE KNOCKDOWN:** The knockdown is generally scored as one point. If you are keeping a running score in your head and a knockdown occurs, the boxer scoring the knockdown should be awarded a point. Normally if a Boxer A is winning the round (your running score is 10-9 for A), and Boxer A scores a knockdown, your running score is now 10-8 for Boxer A. 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 knock-down 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 effect your scoring in a latter round.

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

Situation 1: Boxer A is winning the round convincingly – your score at the moment is 10-9-Boxer A. Boxer B knocks down Boxer A just before the bell. Since Boxer A was winning the round in convincing fashion your score maybe 10-9 for Boxer B (not 10-8 for Boxer B since he was well behind at the time of the knock-down). This round may also be scored 10-10 – depending on how far ahead you had Boxer A at the time of the knockdown.

Situation 2: Boxer A is winning the round 10-9. Boxer A scores a knockdown. You now have a 10-8 round.

Situation 3: 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 (not convincingly) your score could be 10-8 for Boxer B. Remember you must score the entire round. Never assume a knockdown gives a Boxer an automatic 10-8 round, especially if the knockdown occurs early in the round. The action for the remainder of this round could determine your score. It does not matter when the knock-down occurs – You must score what happens before and after the knockdown

Situation 4: Boxer A is winning the vast majority of the round by overwhelming dominance. Boxer B has taken punishment the entire round, you have it 10-8 for Boxer A. Nonetheless, with a flash punch, Boxer B scores a knockdown late in the round. Consideration can be given to judging this as 10-10, keeping in mind that knocking down the opponent is second best only to a knockout. However, the score maybe 10-9 for Boxer A. (It should be noted that some judges feel that a Boxer scoring the knock-down should not lose the round)

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 “non-significant” 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 **(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 ref calls time, it is a good practice for the judge to turn over his/her 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. Also remember that under the Unified Rules after the completion of 4 rounds any succeeding rounds, even those not going the full 3-minutes, are scored. So 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 put you in an awkward position come fight time.

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.**

PL 104-272 - Professional Boxing Safety Act - 1996  
PL 106-210 - Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act - 2000  
To provide for the safety of journeymen boxers, and  
for other purposes.

To reform unfair and anti-competitive practices in  
the professional boxing industry

REQUIRED DISCLOSURES FOR JUDGES AND REFEREES.

A judge or referee shall not be entitled to  
receive any compensation, directly or  
indirectly, in connection with a boxing match  
until it provides to the boxing commission  
responsible for regulating the match in a  
state a statement of all consideration,  
including.

reimbursement for expenses that will be  
received from any source for participation in  
the match

JUDGES AND REFEREES.

No person may arrange, promote, organize,  
produce, or fight in a professional boxing  
match unless all referees and judges  
participating in the match have been certified  
and approved by the boxing commission  
responsible for regulating the match in the  
State where the match is held.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST - Regulatory Personnel  
- No member or employee of a boxing commission, no  
person who administers or enforces state boxing  
laws, and no member of the Association of Boxing  
Commissions may belong to, contract with, or  
receive any compensation from any person who  
sanctions, arranges, or promotes professional  
boxing matches or who otherwise has a financial  
interest in an active boxer currently registered  
with a boxer registry. For purposes of this  
section, the term "compensation does not include  
funds held in escrow for payment to another person  
in connection with a professional boxing match. The  
prohibition set forth in this section shall not  
apply to any contract entered into, or any  
reasonable compensation received, by a boxing  
commission to supervise a professional boxing match  
in another state as described in section 4



ASSOCIATION OF BOXING COMMISSIONS  
FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

The Association of Boxing Commissions recommends that all Referees and Judges who have been appointed to a Title Bout read and sign the following:

Except as provided herein, I hereby firm that I DO NOT have any direct or indirect financial or pecuniary interest in any boxer, manager, second, promoter or any ratings or sanctioning body in regard to the bout between,

and

\_\_\_\_\_  
Boxer's Name                      Boxer's Name  
I also hereby affirm that I have received \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as payment for my services and received \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for travel expenses for the pro boxing match held on \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of the event

Name of organization that is sanctioning the bout:

I also hereby affirm that I have received no other payments for my services in association with the above stated event.

I DO REALIZE that a violation of the above could result in disciplinary actions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Official's Name - print)                      (Official's Signature)

(Type of Official)

**\* This form should be kept on file after every title bout by the local commission where the bout is held.**

## **Professional Boxing Judges - Over-all Review**

- Remember the FOUR BASIC RULES OF SCORING – Clean 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
- 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 onto 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 sorts can lead to some rather awkward situations.

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