

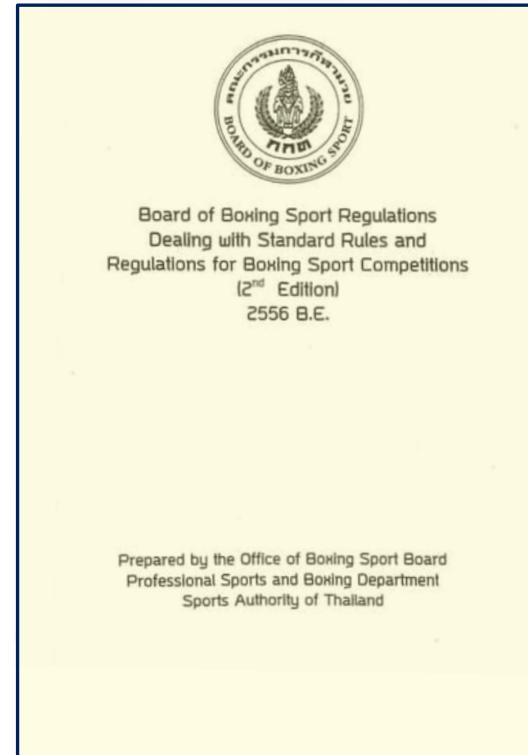


# Judging, scoring and the rules of Muay Thai



# Aims

- Present an overview of the rules and scoring of the sport of Muay Thai
  - Presenting the written and ‘official’ version of scoring criteria
  - Discussing how the criteria are interpreted the way that scoring should be actually implemented by Judges
  - Prepare you for the judging assessment



# Background

Setting the scene



# Judging Muay Thai

- Muay Thai is a sport and like other sports it has its own set of rules and a unique set of **scoring criteria**



# Judging Muay Thai

This is different than the criteria used in

K1

Kickboxing

Shootboxing

International boxing

MMA

One Championship



# Change over time



Tony Myers

# Change over time

**Apidej Sit-Harun**, “voted Boxer of the Century”

2x Lumpinee Champion  
2 x Radjadamnern Champion

**Adul Srisothorn** “Diamond Crown Champion”

2 x Lumpinee Champion  
Radjadamnern Champion

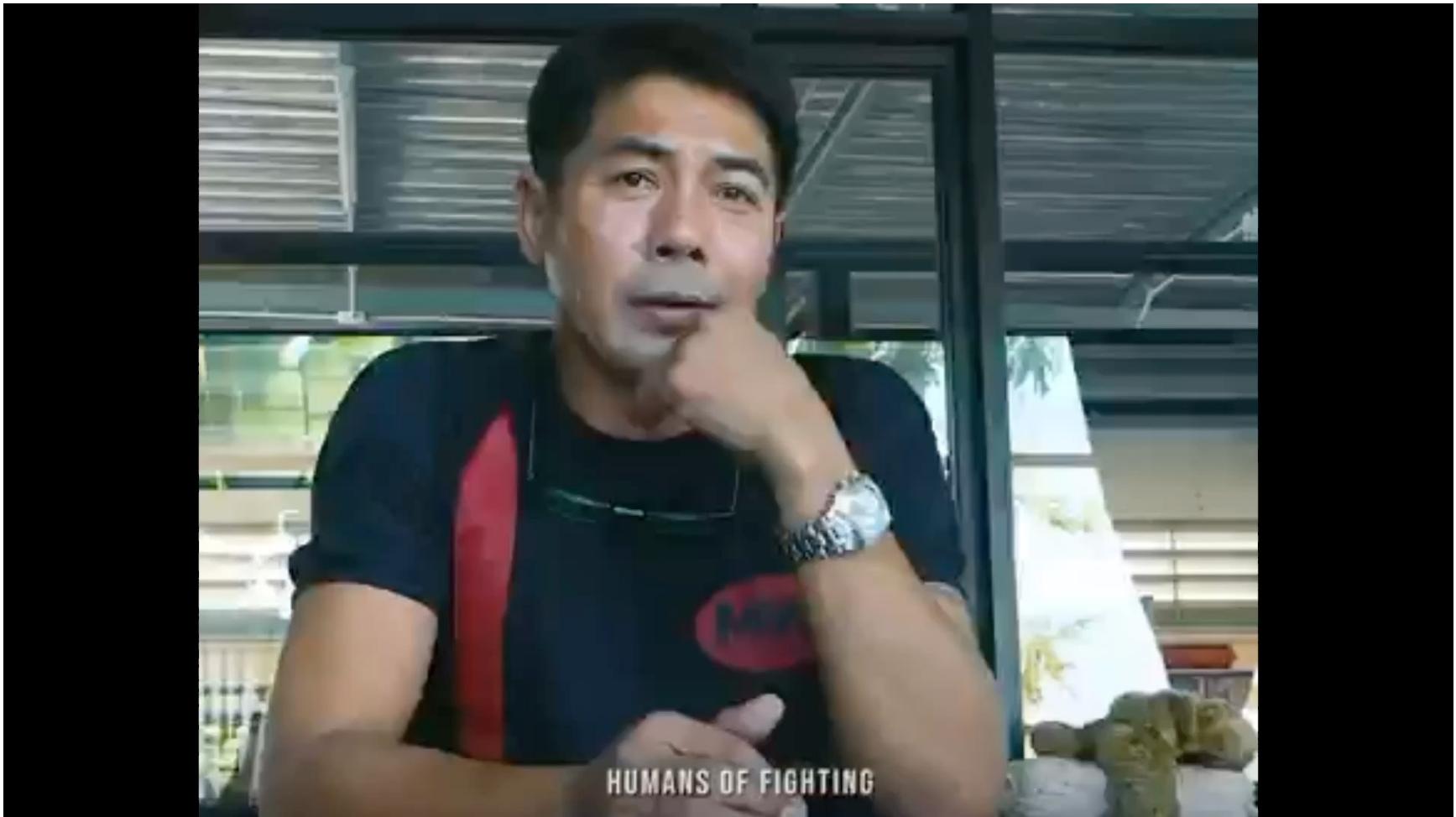
**Pud Pad Noi Worawoot** “Golden Leg/ Shin”

3 x Lumpinee champion,  
Radjadamnern tournament winner

**Samart Payakaroon** “Jade-faced Tiger”

4 x Lumpinee Champion

# Importance of basics and standardised scoring



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# Judging Muay Thai

The criteria, properly applied offers a number of benefits:

It encourages athletes to develop good Muay Thai skills

Offering athletes and coaches a clear focus for training

Research has shown the link between judging criteria and technique selection and quality (Myers et al, 2013; Myers & Nevill, 2008)

It is highly consistent

Again research has demonstrated the consistency of applying the criteria with over 90% agreement on decisions (Myers, Nevill & Nakeeb, 2010)

# Clean, effective, balanced, and controlling actions score

**Effectiveness** (visible impact, off-balancing, damage that changes behaviour).

**Dominance/control** (who is imposing their game, ring command).

**Balance & posture** (who remains composed, who is disrupted).

**Defence and answers** (checking, blocking, evading, countering with effect).

**Narrative across rounds** (momentum and command matter; it is not a round-by-round strike count).

Defend → return with balance” sequences,  
rather than “trade volume”.

# Archetypes that win

- The composed kicker controlling range.
- The clinch controller turning and kneeing and breaking posture.
- The counter fighter who scores cleaner and looks dominant.
- The puncher who wins only when punches create unmistakable effect (knockdowns, visible damage, sustained dominance).

# Scoring

## High-value actions (when clean and balanced):

**Body kicks** (especially to ribs/torso) that visibly move the opponent or are not checked well.

**Knees** (especially to body) with clear effect.

**Teep** (when it off-balances, disrupts rhythm, shows control).

**Clinching dominance**: turns, off-balancing, knees that land clean.

**Dumps/sweeps** (when executed cleanly with the scorer remaining balanced).

## Lower-value or conditional actions:

**Punches**: can score, but usually need clear effect (stun, knockdown, visible damage) to outweigh kicks/knees.

**Low kicks**: variable; score more if they clearly compromise stance/mobility.

**“Busy” combinations**: low scoring if blocked, absorbed, or if the striker is off-balance or immediately countered.

“Touching is not scoring; effect is scoring.”

# Clinch scoring: clinching can be a major separator in fight

## **What counts**

Control of position, turning, posture breaking,  
knees landing clean, opponent neutralised.

## **What does not count much**

Holding without effect, knees that are smothered  
or weak, mutual stalling.

## **Sweeps/throws/dumps**

What makes them score (timing, control, opponent  
loss of balance).

# The Muay Thai scoring hierarchy

**KEY RULE:  
JUDGING IS  
TOP-DOWN**

## **Effect + dominance**

Visible effect / behavioural change

## **Balance + posture**

Who stays composed; who is disrupted

## **Clean scoring weapons (on scoring targets)**

Kicks, knees ; punches rise with effect

## **Control of space and clinch**

Ring command; turns, knees, dumps with control

## **Defence + counters that score**

Defend then return cleanly with balance

**A boxer can score while moving forward, backward, sideways, or on the ropes.  
Judges reward effective scoring with balance and control, not simply advancing**

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# Muay Thai scoring

## **Strong signals (often decisive):**

Displacement or posture break

Clear visible hurt / change in behaviour

Clean body kick/knee/with balance (and not convincingly returned)

## **Weak signals (only matter if the fight is otherwise close):**

High activity with little effect

Pressure that is neutralised or easily evaded

Contact that is clearly absorbed/checked with posture unaffected

# Professional fights

ใบให้คะแนน มวย

ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_ ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_ ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_

คู่ที่ \_\_\_\_\_

แดง \_\_\_\_\_ น้ำเงิน \_\_\_\_\_

|      |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |    |
|------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|----|
| ยก 1 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ยก 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ยก 3 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ยก 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ยก 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

รวม \_\_\_\_\_ คะแนน รวม \_\_\_\_\_ คะแนน

ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_ ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_ ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_

ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_ ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_ ผู้ตัดสิน \_\_\_\_\_

IBMTO SCORE CARD

IBMTO Judge \_\_\_\_\_ Venue \_\_\_\_\_

Fight Class/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Fight number \_\_\_\_\_

|                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fighters Name – Red Corner | Fighters Name – Blue Corner |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|

+ ROUND RED BLUE Notes

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |

Total Score RED = \_\_\_\_\_ Total Score BLUE = \_\_\_\_\_

RESULT \_\_\_\_\_

Official's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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# Scoring

10-10 Can't pick a winner

10-10+ Boxer has edged a round but not won clearly

10-9 Clearly won round

10-9 Both boxers are knocked down but one clearly wins the rest of the action

10-8 a) A knock down (8-count) 10-8

b) Total domination throughout the round by one boxer

10-7 Two knock downs (8-count)

(it is possible for different point allocations to be awarded, depending on other action in the round)

# Professional decisions

- Points
  - Majority decision
- Winning by Knockout (KO)
  - The boxer is knocked down and cannot continue the fight for the count of ten
- Winning by technical knockout (TKO)
  - Outclassed
  - Cannot continue after end of the round break
  - Injured
  - Counted the third time in one round
  - Counted the fifth time in the fight
  - Fallen out of the ring and can't return before the count of twenty
  - Fighter withdraws from contest

# Professional decisions

- Winning by disqualification
- Winning by walkover
  - Boxer fails the medical, fails to make the weight or does not turn up (not recorded as this in the UK)
- A draw
  - Majority decision is even
  - Both boxers are knocked down and counted to 10
  - Both boxers have fallen out of the ring and are counted to 20
  - Both boxers are seriously injured and cannot continue

# Professional decisions

- No decision
  - Both boxers fight dishonourably
- No contest
  - Boxers don't fight (either not engaging and trying to fight, or throwing the fight)
- Cancellation of the contest
  - Ring damage
  - Riot
  - Other unexpected situation

# The job of a Muay Thai Judge...

- The job of a Muay Thai judge is
  - to determine, who, over the whole fight is the stronger of two competitors in terms of Muay Thai
  - Judges do this by making a comparison of both boxers, their skills and the effective use of those skills over five rounds

# The job of a Muay Thai Judge...

- **This means can mean**
  - determining which of two highly skilled boxers is better in terms of **Muay Thai** across a whole fight
- **But equally it can mean...**
  - determining which of two rather unskilled boxers is the better in terms of **Muay Thai** across the whole fight (not in terms of another fighting style)
- **For example**
  - If a boxer can protect against every weapon their opponent throws and they are unable to land techniques, the boxer blocking will win by landing only one single kick.

# What to consider when judging (as detailed in the rules)

## Effective Aggressiveness

The most important factor for winning a round:

The number of **clean blows** landed with **power** and **Accuracy** whether moving forwards, backwards, sideways, against the ropes or counter fighting

**70%**

**Ring Generalship**  
Whoever dominates The round with boxing skills to control the action And does not allow His opponent to Perform

**20%**

**Pure Aggressiveness**  
Who forces the Action, against a boxer who only runs away

**10%**

# Key things in scoring

- **The number of Muay Thai techniques delivered appropriately on target**
- **Effect**
  - Disturbing an opponent's physical equilibrium  
If a boxer loses position they get scored on
  - Disturbing an opponent's psychological equilibrium  
If an opponent shows pain or fear they scored upon
- **Sharp techniques**
  - Beginning in a good balanced position
  - Delivered quickly (sharply) on balance
  - Returning to a good balanced position

# Comparing the quality of delivery



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# Qualities of techniques

- **Targets** – trade between target and physical effect
  - Score without visual effect
    - Cleanly on the body or neck
    - Cleanly across the back
- **Boxer showing balance and control before, during and after delivery of scoring techniques**

# The target can be important in scoring

# Target



# Effect can be important in scoring

# Effect



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# Different style of fighters

- **Counter boxers** can move backwards or sideways can win just the same as a boxer going forward if they move in a controlled way, maintaining position and scoring
- **Attacking boxers** can win by advancing if they can maintain position and score

# Counter fighter

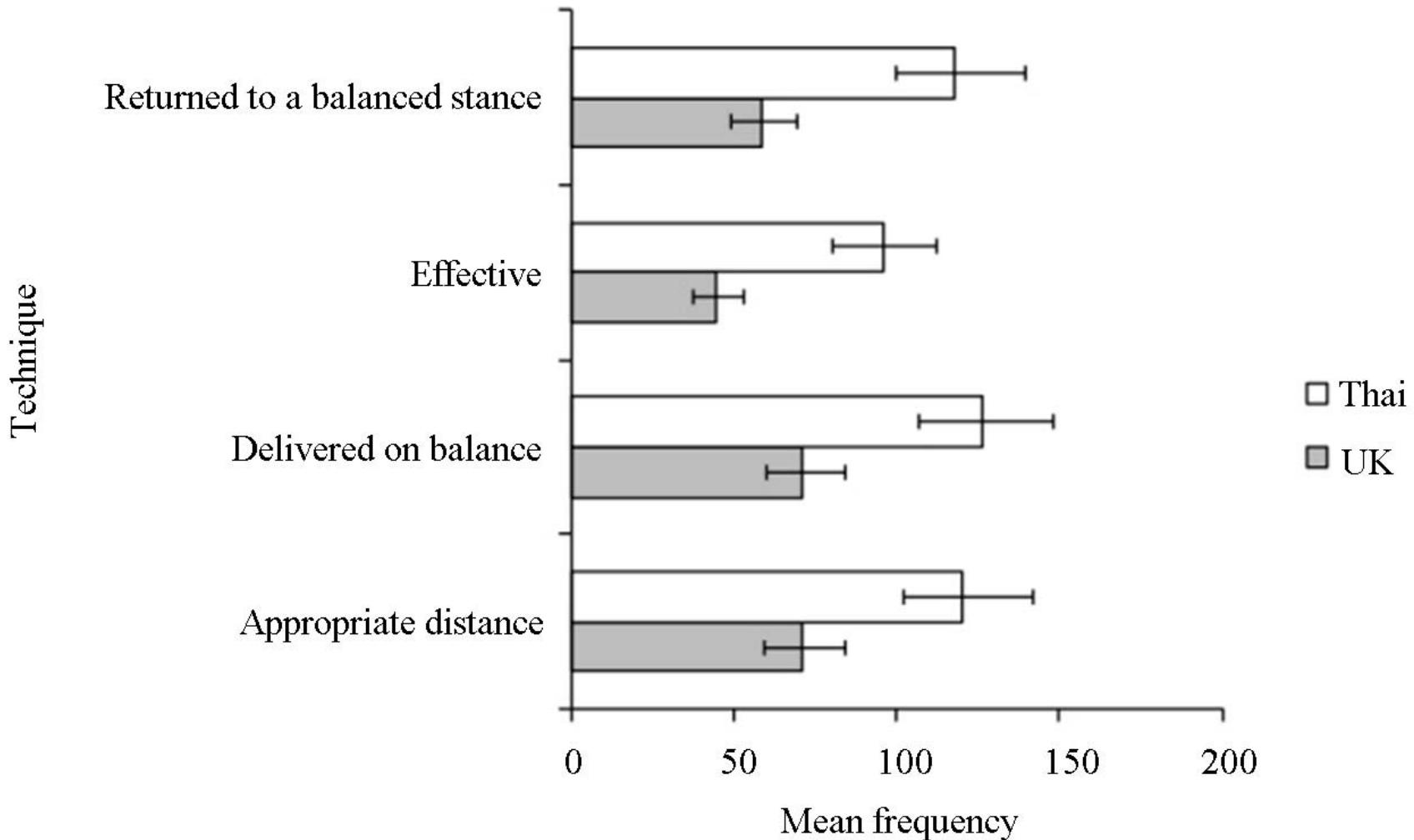


# Attack fighter



**Even though you get different styles  
there are key things each boxer  
needs**

# Appropriate technique at the right distance, balance, effectiveness



# One key to showing strength Footwork (Durn Muay)



# More than just the techniques landed that influence who wins

- Sometimes a person shows strength by just being able to block every technique an opponent throws
- A boxer whose leg is caught but the opponent can't throw the boxer down
- In the clinch a boxer gets their head pulled down
  - The boxer who has their head pulled down shows they are weaker
- The boxer who gets so tired they can't maintain position
  - The boxer who can't maintain position is the weaker boxer

# More than just the techniques landed that influence who wins

- If a boxer catches an opponents kick and kick their opponent over quickly and cleanly with a sharp kick it is better than if they catch and the opponent over slowly kick slowly
  - In the course of an exchange both catch and kick over the one who kicks over faster and sharper is the best

# Some examples of denomination of the stronger boxer

Some examples of  
denomination of  
the stronger boxer

# Scoring techniques



# Punch- with effect scores



# Roundkick to body



# Score with the knee



# Teep (Front kick) score



# Catch and attack score



# Elbow score



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**Kick to leg scores well at any particular time only if there is an effect - *but can be effective over the course of a fight***



# Leg kick score



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# Ring generalship: Controlling an opponent



# You are looking to determine...

- Which of the two boxers
  - Shows they are stronger (in terms of Muay Thai technique)
  - Shows good stance and position (balanced Muay Thai stance)
  - Delivers sharp weapons (Muay Thai techniques)
  - Controls the fight

# Judging effectiveness and technique quality

- Judges can't actually feel the techniques delivered by a boxer
- So they have to use a combination of an assessment of effect using set of visual clues to determine effect
  - Target  
Techniques cleanly landing on target
  - Aesthetics  
Good Muay Thai style balance before, during and after technique delivery  
Sharp clean weapons
  - Balance  
Does a boxer get moved by an opponent's technique?
  - Condition of the boxers  
e.g. one boxer showing they are tired – not being out of breath but not able to keep position

# Effectiveness in practice

- **Maintaining position** and **good balance** are essential in Muay Thai- *before, during and after delivery*
- Clean kicks and knees to the body are considered to be more effective than a cleanly landed punch of similar effect
- Is often judged in retrospect – *a boxer who shows they are tired by losing position is considered to show the accumulative effect of their opponent's techniques*

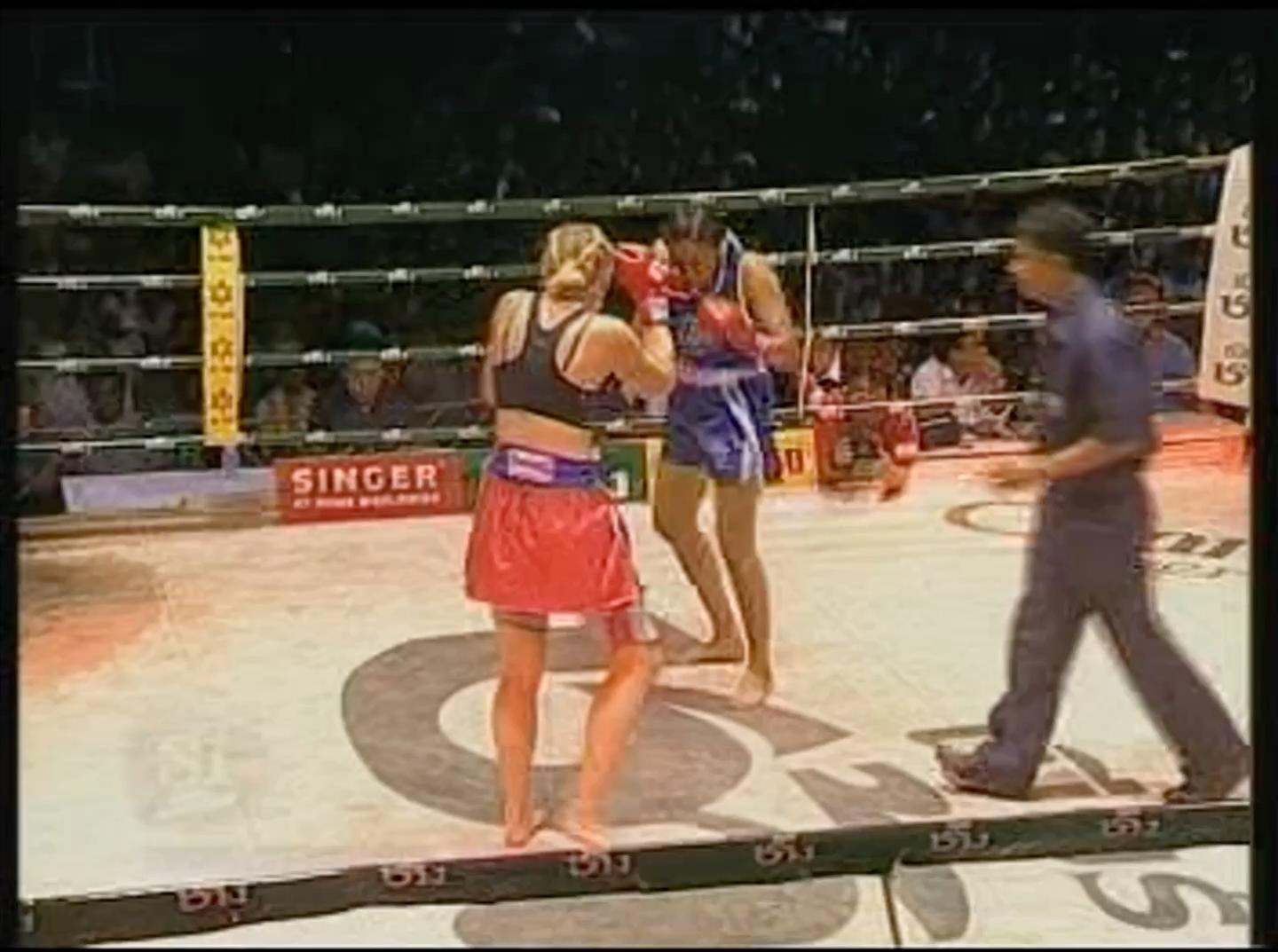
# Fouls

Examples  
of some  
common fouls



**It is not over until it's over — knock down on the bell**





**Click on the QR code to vote on who you thought won round 3**





**Click on the QR code to vote on who you thought won  
round 4**





**Click on the QR code to vote on who you thought won round 5**



**Who you thought won the rounds**

**Round 3**

**Round 4**

**Round 5**



# Other similar systems



## Chowdhry Amateur Boxing

This system used an electronic scoring method. It's similar to the Muay Thai system because it uses whole fight scoring rather than round by round. The fight can be won by winning more rounds.



## 10 Point Must System

This system was introduced in boxing to combat round by round scoring.

**All things being equal...when a  
boxer kicks the body and his  
opponent punches...**

**“Kick win... punch is international...kick is the logo (of Muay Thai) ”**

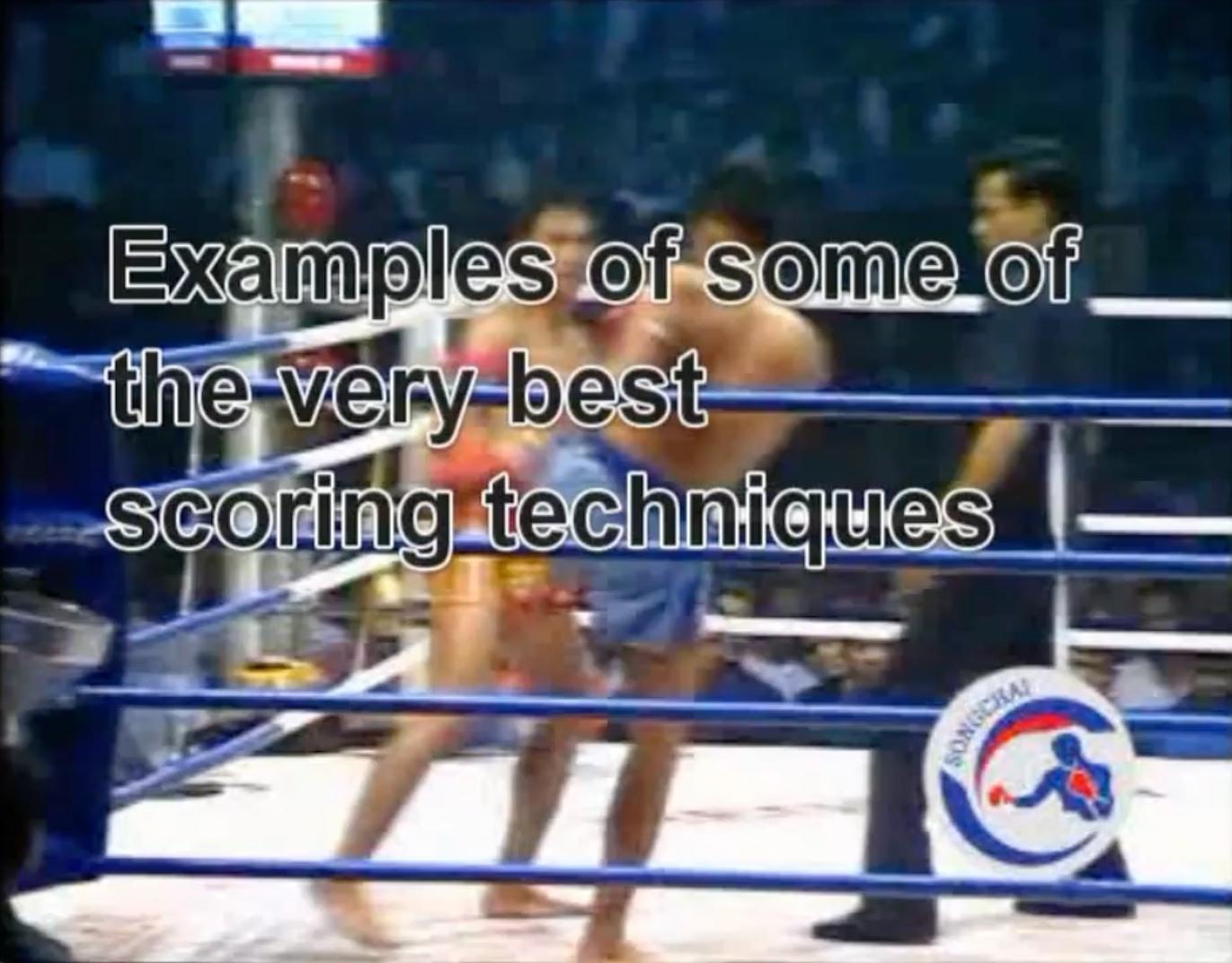


# Rough guide used by a Thai stadium fighter

- This is **not** the way fights are scored and **scoring really depends on the relative effect of techniques, the sharpness of techniques etc.**
- However, all else being equal this is a **rough guide** used by a top stadium fighter to monitor his own fights
  - 1 point punch
  - 1 point leg kick
  - 2 points round knee
  - 3 points kick body
  - 3 points straight knee



# Best scoring techniques — comparing effect



Examples of some of  
the very best  
scoring techniques

# Fouls

Tony myers

# Fouls

A blurry video still showing two basketball players in action on a court. One player is wearing a red jersey and the other is wearing a purple jersey. They appear to be in the middle of a play, possibly a foul. In the background, there's a basketball hoop and some gym equipment.

**Examples  
of some  
common fouls**

**It is not over until it's over —knock down on the bell**



# Applying the criteria Judging a fight

# Interpretation of scoring practice

- *An analogy used by both*
- Radom Na Bangchang
  - Technical Director and referee:  
Lumpinee Boxing stadium
  
- Wan Chai
  - Referee Radjadamnern Boxing  
stadium



**“A Running Race”!!**



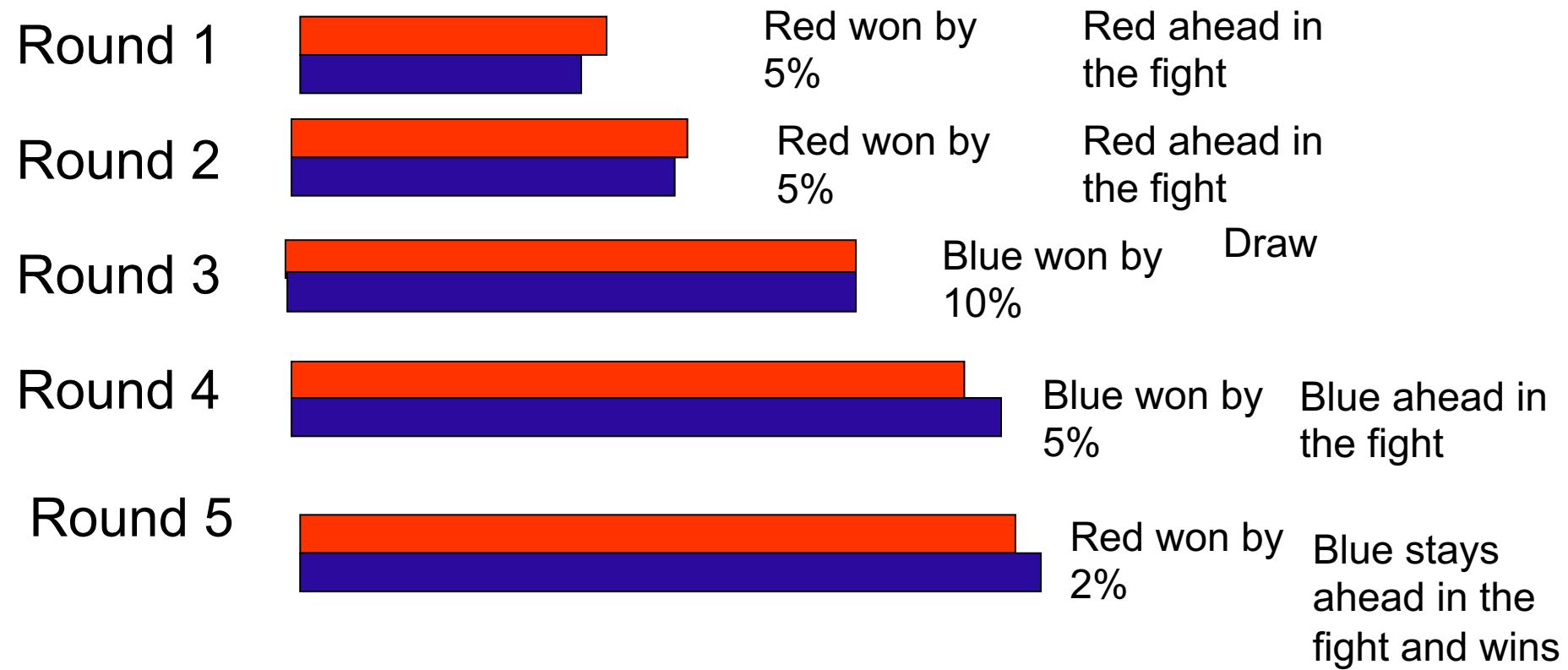
BMC 1500M MEN

**00:41:16**

# Other similar systems

- Chowdhry Amateur boxing (old electronic scoring system)
  - Different way that scores are given but a similar whole fight system
  - e.g., Boxer can win 2 rounds and lose the fight in the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The original concept of the 10 point must system in professional boxing
  - Designed as an antidote to round by round scoring

# A typical fight



# Recording scores for that fight

| Round | Notes                         | Score card |
|-------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1     | ▪ Red corner slightly ahead * | ▪ 10*:10   |
| 2     | ▪ Red stays ahead             | ▪ 10:9     |
| 3     | ▪ Drawn round                 | ▪ 10:10    |
| 4     | ▪ Blue takes the lead         | ▪ 9:10     |
| 5     | ▪ Blue maintains the lead     | ▪ 9:10     |
|       |                               | ▪ 48:49    |

# Recording scores –example 2

| Round | Notes   | Score card      |
|-------|---|-----------------|
| 1     | ▪ Red corner slightly ahead *                           | ▪ <b>10*:10</b> |
| 2     | ▪ Red stays ahead                                       | ▪ <b>10:9</b>   |
| 3     | ▪ Red pulls ahead again                                 | ▪ <b>10:9</b>   |
| 4     | ▪ Red maintains their lead                              | ▪ <b>10:9</b>   |
| 5     | ▪ Blue come back but does not do enough to catch up Red | ▪ <b>9:10</b>   |
|       |   | ▪ <b>49:47</b>  |

# Recording scores –example 3

| Round | Notes   | Score card        |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| 1     | ▪ Red corner clear win                                  | ▪ 10:9            |
| 2     | ▪ Blue corner comes back but still slightly behind*     | ▪ 9:10            |
| 3     | ▪ Blue pulls ahead                                      | ▪ 9:10            |
| 4     | ▪ Blue maintains their lead                             | ▪ 9:10            |
| 5     | ▪ Red come back but does not do enough to catch up Blue | ▪ 10:9<br>▪ 47:48 |



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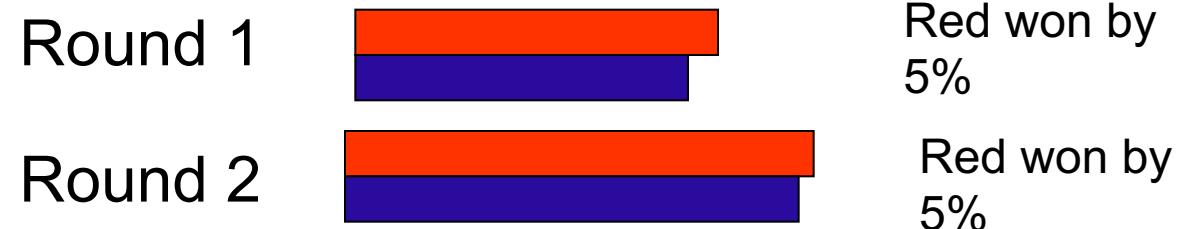
# Judging the whole fight - an unusual example

Round 1

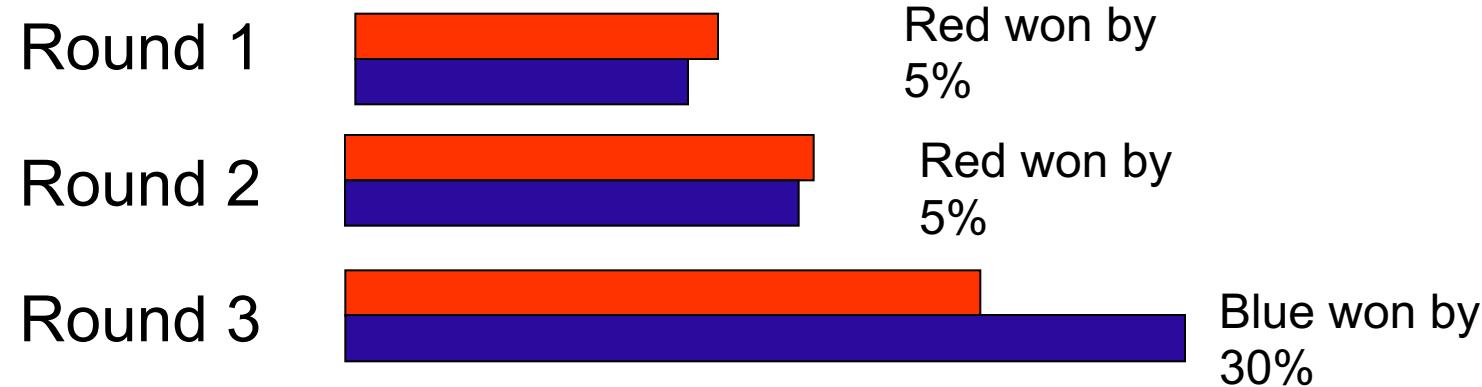


Red won by  
5%

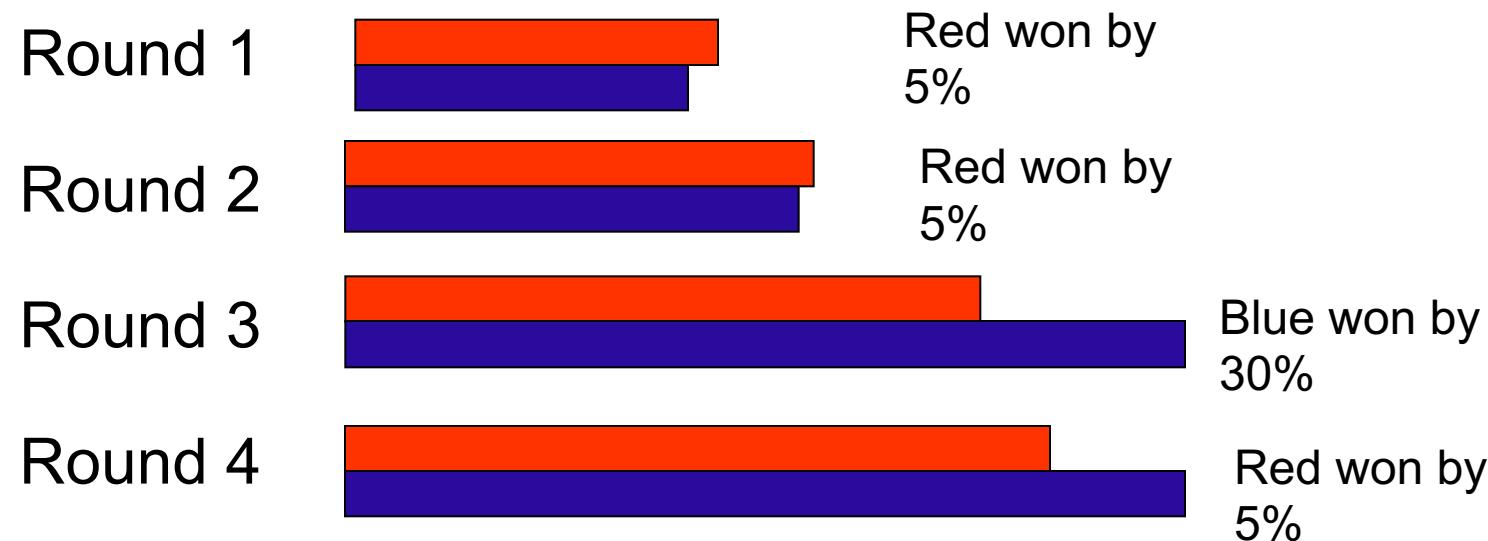
# Judging the whole fight



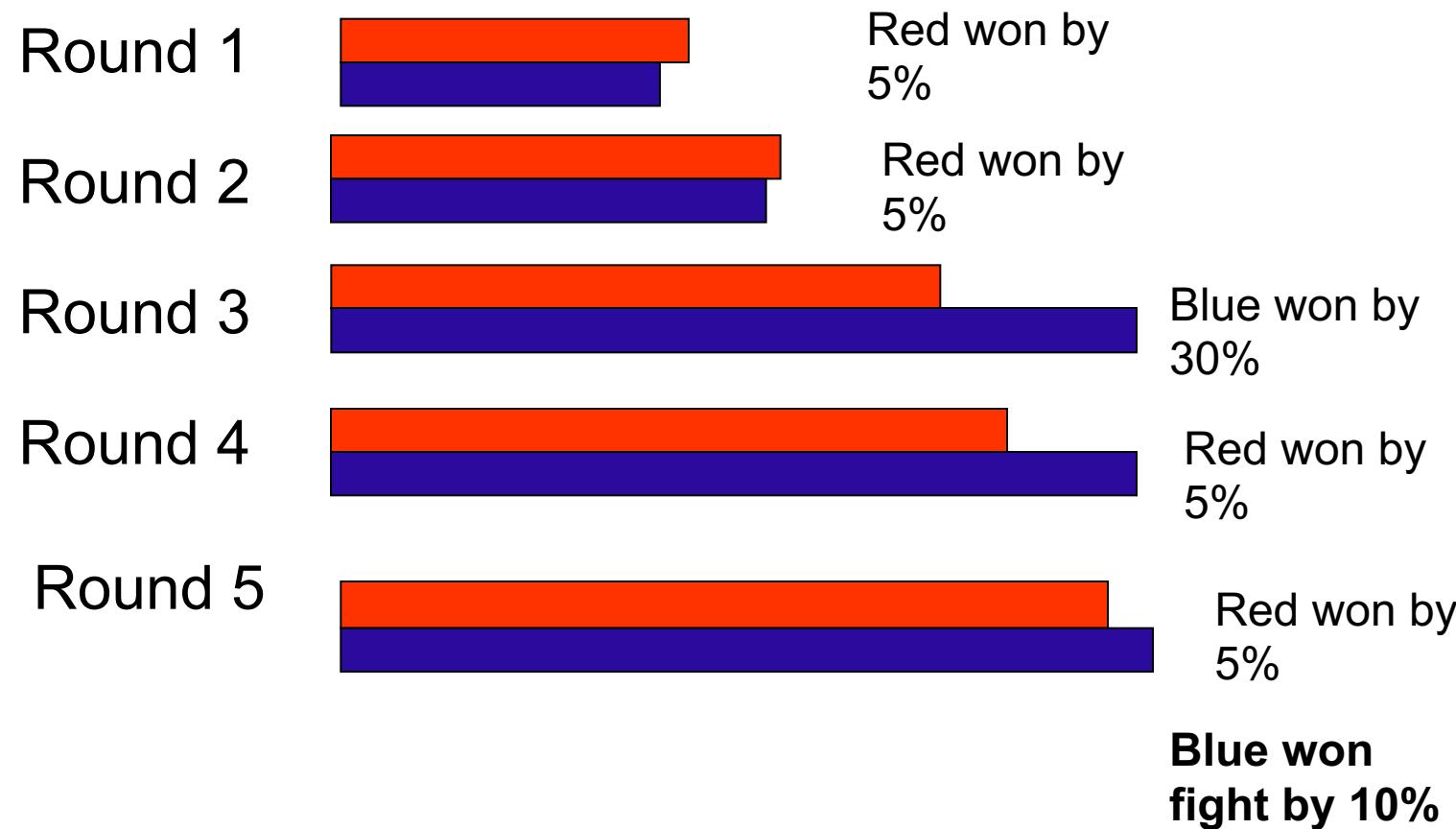
# Judging the whole fight



# Judging the whole fight



# Judging the whole fight



# Recording that fight

# Judging the whole fight

## Round 1



**Red** won by  
5%

**10 + : 10**

**Running total**

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| <b>10 +</b> | <b>10</b> |
|             |           |
|             |           |
|             |           |
|             |           |

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| <b>10 +</b> | <b>10</b> |
|-------------|-----------|

# Judging the whole fight

## Round 2



**Red** won by  
5%

**10 : 9**

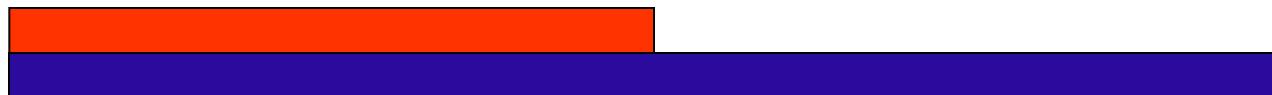
**Running total**

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| <b>10 +</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>10</b>   | <b>9</b>  |
|             |           |
|             |           |
|             |           |

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| <b>20</b> | <b>19</b> |
|-----------|-----------|

# Judging the whole fight

## Round 3



being so big  
a win, it is  
possible that  
this round is  
awarded a  
**8:10**

**9 : 10**

**Blue** won  
by 30%

|      |    |
|------|----|
| 10 + | 10 |
| 10   | 9  |
| 9    | 10 |
|      |    |
|      |    |

**Running total**

|    |    |
|----|----|
| 29 | 29 |
|    |    |
|    |    |

# Judging the whole fight

Round 4



**10 : 10**

**Red** won  
by 5%

|      |    |
|------|----|
| 10 + | 10 |
| 10   | 9  |
| 9    | 10 |
| 10   | 10 |
|      |    |

**Running total**

**39      39**

# Judging the whole fight

Round 5



**9 : 10**

**Red**  
won  
by 5%

|      |    |
|------|----|
| 10 + | 10 |
| 10   | 9  |
| 9    | 10 |
| 10   | 10 |
| 9    | 10 |

**Running total**

**48      49**

# Completing the scorecard

- Indicate the fight number
- Make sure you get the corners the correct way round
- Fill in every round
- Indicate clearly who wins (the scores should indicate this – the winner should have highest score)
- Sign the card

| IBMTO SCORE CARD   |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
|--|-------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------|-----|------|-------|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| IBMTO Judge _____  | Venue _____ | Fight Class/Title _____     | Date _____ |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Fight number _____   |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Fighters Name – Red Corner   |             | Fighters Name – Blue Corner |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>ROUND</th><th>RED</th><th>BLUE</th><th>Notes</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></tbody></table> |             |                             |            | ROUND | RED | BLUE | Notes | 1 |  |  |  | 2 |  |  |  | 3 |  |  |  | 4 |  |  |  | 5 |  |  |  |
| ROUND  | RED         | BLUE                        | Notes      |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| 1  |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| 2  |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| 3  |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| 4  |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| 5  |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Total Score RED =  |             | Total Score BLUE =          |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| RESULT<br><input type="text"/>   |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Official's Signature _____   |             |                             |            |       |     |      |       |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |

# Review

## Effective Aggressiveness

The most important factor for winning a round:

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Visible effect / behavioural change

## **Balance + posture**

Who stays composed; who is disrupted

## **Clean scoring weapons (on scoring targets)**

Kicks, knees ; punches rise with effect

## **Control of space and clinch**

Ring command; turns, knees, dumps with control

## **Defence + counters that score**

Defend then return cleanly with balance

**A boxer can score while moving forward, backward, sideways, or on the ropes.  
Judges reward effective scoring with balance and control, not simply advancing**

Tony Myers

# Explaining who won

You should be able to explain to someone who won the fight using the scoring criteria directly

To judge the art of  
MuayThai...you need to  
know MuayThai

# Assessment

Scoring fights using this link



# Assessment

For the assessment you will judge 10 fights — 5 fights now, in person and 5 fights online at your leisure over the week.

I will provide you with your results after everyone has submitted their assessment.

# Assessment

## Judging Assessment

1. Fight 1 — 5 x 3 the fighter in the yellow shorts with red trim is in the red corner, fighter in blue shorts in the blue corner

Red

Blue

# Assessment

10. Fight 10

Red

Blue

11. Name

Enter your answer

12. Email address

Enter your answer