LESSONS LEARNED FROM PACQUIAO-BRADLEY



# SCORE BIG

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM PACQUIAO-BRADLEY

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# CONTENTS

# DEDICATION FOREWORD HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES 10 KEYS TO KING MAKING

I. VERY FEW OPINIONS MATTER
II. SCOREKEEPING CAN BE SUBJECTIVE
III. STATISTICS ARE OFTEN UNDERVALUED
IV. GATEKEEPERS CAN'T REMAIN UNKNOWN
V. ATTENTION SPAN IS LIMITED
VI. DOING THINGS THE HARD WAY
VII. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?
VIII. WOOLED EYES FOR WINNERS
IX. WHO SHOWED UP TO FIGHT?
X. OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

# CLOSING POST FIGHT LESSON

XI. WHAT GOES AROUND — COMES AROUND

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# **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to anyone who's lost and been surprised.

# **FOREWORD**

Befuddled. Unfathomable.

These were the words chosen by boxing promoter Bob Arum when Manny Pacquiao was defeated by Timothy Bradley. Arum represented both men.

# In life, the winning formula is elusive. It even escapes those who most need to grasp it.

The breakdown often begins with too many cooks in the kitchen, each with competing recipes for leading challengers past obstacles. This noise is what makes reaching the pinnacle of any rat race or competition such a slippery slope. Contenders have enough trouble defeating opponents in competition. Those who labor through internal fighting on the road to the big show are weakened or doomed from the start.

When the undefeated, lineal junior welterweight champion Timothy Bradley defeated fan favorite and welterweight champion Manny Pacquiao, outrage ensued. It wasn't about David stepping up in weight to beat Goliath. It was unknown versus superknown.

In my opinion, Pacquiao won this fight. The overwhelming majority who watched live, and who later reviewed the round-by-round punch statistics, come to this conclusion. What's interesting is that he wasn't awarded the decision. The judges took a different perspective.

Why was Bradley awarded the championship by two of three official judges? Even the third judge, who scored the fight in favor of Pacquiao, had the bout far closer than what most believed was possible (115-113). Perhaps there were greater lessons to be gleaned? Was this a cautionary tale of a champion no longer fit for the throne? Was this king-making?

I dug for interviews with the official judges. I wanted to understand what they saw and believed. This wasn't an easy search. Most of the press items focused on the effect, which was outrage over the decision. I was interested in the cause. Who were these judges? Why did they score as they did? What did the fighters achieve leading up to and during the fight?

Amidst all of the clamor, I learned that one of the official judges (Duane Ford) was head trainer for all others in Las Vegas. Interesting. Now we're getting somewhere.

# How we're judged isn't always fair. Undisputed are two facts. There are game rules and gatekeepers who enforce them.

How well you meet or exceed the judges' expectations through your performance, and how favorably that ranks in a greater tradition — this determines success at the highest levels.

It's easy for those in the dark to guess incorrectly. Many become aware of the means to victory and choose not to adjust.

#### Winners can't afford to be stubborn.

If you're someone who's fallen short in the past, I offer here what I learned from a simple boxing match. Let this inform your choices and the perception of your performance in a new, positive light. Let this bolster your winning percentage each day.

You can watch Pacquiao-Bradley I in this HBO video clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Efrlr8diRfI

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# HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

"You don't win once in a while. You don't do things right once in a while. You do them right all the time. Winning is habit. Unfortunately, so is losing." — Vince Lombardi "Winning takes talent, to repeat takes character." — John Wooden "Don't fight a battle if you don't gain anything by winning." — Erwin Rommel "The only thing I'm addicted to is winning. This bootleg cult, arrogantly referred to as Alcoholics Anonymous, reports a 5 percent success rate. My success rate is 100 percent." — Charlie Sheen "Most people give up just when they're about to achieve success. They quit on the one yard line. They give up at the last minute of the game one foot from a winning touchdown.' — Ross Perot "The person that said winning isn't everything — never won anything." — Mia Hamm "Boxing is about being hit rather more than it is about hitting." — Joyce Carol Oates

"I try to do the right thing at the right time.

They may just be little things,
but usually they make the difference between winning and losing."

— Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

"Because Olivia Newton-John wasn't from Nashville, they didn't like her winning our awards. I've got no complaints."

— Loretta Lynn

"Winning is the science of being totally prepared."
— George Allen, Sr.

"Never change a winning game."
Always change a losing one."

— Bill Tilden

"Let's try winning and see what it feels like. If we don't like it, we can go back to our traditions."

— Paul Tsongas

"The thing that I want to do, the most important thing to me, is winning. How we do it, I really don't care."

— Mike Singletary

"Winning teams have the least amount of distractions. They have a really tight group of people working towards the same common goal."

— Larry Dixon

"Judging is a lonely job in which a man is, as near as may be, an island entire."

— Abe Fortas

# 10 KEYS TO KING MAKING

I. VERY FEW OPINIONS MATTER
II. SCOREKEEPING CAN BE SUBJECTIVE
III. STATISTICS ARE OFTEN UNDERVALUED
IV. GATEKEEPERS CAN'T REMAIN UNKNOWN
V. ATTENTION SPAN IS LIMITED
VI. DOING THINGS THE HARD WAY
VII. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?
VIII. WOOLED EYES FOR WINNERS
IX. WHO SHOWED UP TO FIGHT?
X. OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

# I. VERY FEW OPINIONS MATTER

The peanut gallery has been around for ages. With the rise of social media, it's been positioned as news. Facebook feeds are sorted by most recent or top stories.

It's been said that anyone can critique a competition from the cheapest seat in the house. While many voices rise, only a select few register in the official scoring. The loudest among the opposition are often the least informed.

Boxing matches are decided by what three judges see. They are the gatekeepers. Fans, broadcasters, promoters, advertisers, celebrity guests, trainers, other fighters — none of their opinions directly impact the scoring.

In any competition, you have two main ways to finish first.

- (i) Find a way to outclass your opponent(s) in such a way that there can be no other greater than you. This is the more difficult of your options. If the prize is worth obtaining, your opposition is likely to be staunch.
- (ii) Research those judging you. What measures do they use to rate performance? Focus on those factors foremost. Dial down the rest of the noise. Give them what they want to see.

Fans don't have favorite judges. They don't download their apps, or follow them on Twitter, or buy their clothing lines. There's a perfect storm brewing when a fan favorite ends up on the losing end of a decision rendered by three unknowns. Controversy usually erupts.

I'm not implying that judges should be famous. Boxers are the center of the action. They're the ones risking their lives. However, I do think that a boxer and his team should pursue a clearer understanding of how they'll likely be evaluated. It's a lesson we all should learn. Don't trust bravado. Don't believe the hype. Some won't drink the same Kool-Aid as you.

Watch the final rounds of fights. More often than not, you'll hear each trainer tell his fighter that he's winning. Prior to the decision on the night that he took Pacquiao's championship belt, Bradley allegedly told his promoter that he tried his best but could not break his opponent. Sometimes, even the champion is unsure if he won. How does this happen?

# II. SCOREKEEPING CAN BE SUBJECTIVE

# In America, boxing fans like to see blood. We hope for a devastating knockout and rally around a decisive victor.

Many would argue that competing brands like MMA and UFC sprung from the collective desire among fight fans to witness the highest level of socially-acceptable punishment possible — the type that produces clear-cut, gladiator-style champions.

Most people can score an MMA or UFC fight. They're generally one-sided affairs. Many end in a submission or knockout. In boxing, when the fight goes the distance to a decision, how many people understand the scoring criteria? Judging from the uproar behind the Pacquiao-Bradley decision, I would venture to say that it's a small percentage of the population.

Let's test my theory.

Here are the four criteria for judging a professional boxing match:

- (i) Clean Punching
- (ii) Effective Aggressiveness
- (iii) Ring Generalship
- (iv) Defense

You might be surprised by how subjective those four items sound. In fact, opinion plays heavily into most competitive scoring. It all comes down to how poignant your performance was for to the people in charge. There's no room for denial here.

*Clean Punching* equates to unblocked blows that land on the face, side of the head and the front or side of the torso. Shots that strike the back of the head or torso, or those landing below the belt are excluded.

Effective Aggressiveness rewards a fighter who presses forward to score more clean punches or damaging blows than his opponent. Boxers who are known as hard punchers are given credit for partially blocked strikes that affect his opponent.

*Ring Generalship* is the ability of one fighter to control the pace and style of the fight. A high-volume puncher will attempt to force a slugfest. A pure boxer will attempt to slow the pace of the fight, keep his opponent at the end of his jab and leverage angles that set up his scoring blows. It's imperative that judges understand each fighter's style in determining who's dictating the action.

*Defense* is the boxer's ability to avoid punishment. It's the most maligned and ignored of the four judging criteria. A fighter can defend by slipping punches, ducking or bobbing his head, blocking blows with his gloves, arms and shoulders or using his footwork to dodge his opponent. The last tactic is generally frowned upon by judges. A fighter who combines the other skills scores highly.

In How to Score a Professional Boxing Match, writer Bill Sherer summarizes:

"Professional fights are scored on a Ten Point Must System. The boxer who wins a round must be awarded ten points, with his opponent receiving nine or less (usually nine). A fighter loses a point for every knockdown he suffers. Thus, a boxer who's winning a round, and who scores two knockdowns during that round, will earn a score of ten. His opponent gets a seven. The four scoring criteria are used to determine the winner of each round. Once the fight is over, the scores from each of three judges at ringside are tallied and the results announced to the fighters and the audience. While clean punching is generally given greater weight by most judges, the other three criteria shouldn't be ignored. Judging a boxing match is an inherently subjective exercise, but adhering to the rules adds objectivity and veracity to the argument." (<a href="http://coolmaterial.com/feature/how-to-score-a-boxing-match/">http://coolmaterial.com/feature/how-to-score-a-boxing-match/</a>)

Judges aren't required to be in agreement. While they're trained to weigh four factors, the degree to which one factor is valued is left to each official's discretion. Judge A may look for the biggest blows. Judge B may like the highest work rate. Judge C may favor slickness.

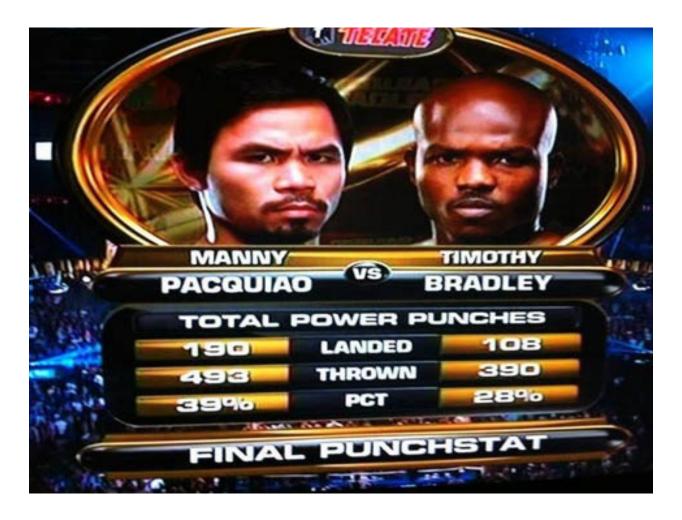
So why did we go into great detail here? The answer's simple. While there's plenty of room for definitive skill development by the fighter, there's also ample room for interpretation by the judges. It's this subjective element that can frustrate boxers and onlookers alike.

Fans want things definitive and simple, when sometimes they are closely-contested and complex.

# III. STATISTICS ARE OFTEN UNDERVALUED

If you've watched a major professional fight on television, then you've seen at least two types of fight statistics flash on the screen — round-by-round percentages that show punches landed out of total punches thrown (jabs versus power punches), and a graphic of each fighter that displays where each has been hit and how often (by quadrant).

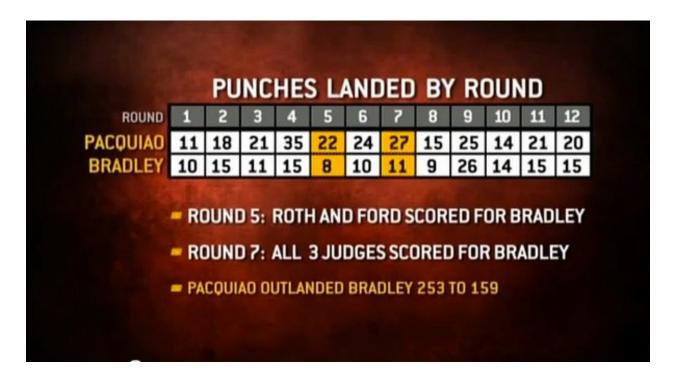
Visuals like these are generated from a method known as Compubox. Tallies are triggered by two operators as they watch the fight — one operator assigned to each fighter. Each has access to four keys: jab connect, jab miss, power punch connect, power punch miss.



This system is used in boxing matches internationally. The black and white approach is great for boxing broadcasts. There's only seconds between rounds to report on performance. Compubox gives the appearance that a boxing match produces clear-cut results.

It doesn't take a professor in ethics to see where this can go wrong. Despite a reputation for being "computerized," Compubox relies on what people see and interpret.

Human operators can score a punch twice instead of once, or miss a blow — thus rendering a tally more approximate than tidy. Compubox portrays what seem like bullet-proof results to the televised audience. While these statistics are flashed on the screen, three judges are using a subjective method to decide who's winning. That's the score that matters.



HBO shows the Compubox scores all night, round after round. Broadcasters reinforce the seemingly infallible stats with commentary that favors Pacquiao's performance. After all, he's the fan favorite. He puts the cash into stakeholder pockets. A network like HBO entertains its audience by giving them what they want to see and hear — Pacquiao is winning again.

From the moment Bradley was named the victor, and in the arguments among fans and industry professionals afterwards, it was one reference after another to the fight's Compubox stats. They paint a clear win for Pacquiao. Here's the problem: judges aren't required to score according to statistics. Numbers oversimplify the ebb and flow of a performance. Judges use the more nuanced mix we saw in the previous section. Interpretation is everything.

# IV. GATEKEEPERS CAN'T REMAIN UNKNOWN

Two of the three judges assigned to the Pacquiao-Bradley fight had judged for a third of a century. All three had substantive title fight experience. Duane Ford. Jerry Roth. C.J. Ross.

Let's take a closer look at the gatekeepers.

#### Duane Ford

He's regarded as the dean of all fight judges. He's judged and trained officials for 34 years. His track record includes scoring 148 title fights. HBO ringside expert Harold Lederman was quoted on fight night as saying, "I don't think we could get a better judge anywhere — Duane Ford is solid."

Ford had scored in each boxer's favor on key occasions. He authored a 97-93 card to lift Bradley to a technical win against then-undefeated belt-holder Devon Alexander. He judged a 115-112 decision for Pacquiao over Juan Manuel Marquez in their near-draw, second tussle. He was keenly aware of the qualities that lead each fighter to victory.

HBO's *The Fight Game with Jim Lampley* dedicated its second episode to what he called "Anatomy of a Scoring Disaster." In an exclusive interview, Ford took the lead in defending his 115-113 scorecard in favor of Bradley.

"It was a very, very close fight. In the fourth round, Pacquiao hurt Bradley. The Manny Pacquiao I've judged in the past would have finished him. He let him off the hook. In the later rounds, he tired. His punches were missing a bit. Bradley was scoring well to the body." What Ford describes here is Pacquiao losing the battle for ring generalship.

In a separate segment, Ford added, "This isn't American Idol. If I judge for the people, I shouldn't be a judge. I went in with a clear mind and judged each round. I thought Bradley gave Pacquiao a boxing lesson. Pacquiao missed a lot of punches and I thought he was throwing wildly." Here, Ford is touching upon Bradley's superior defensive skills.

His most revealing defense with Lampley finished with "a lot of things that a boxing judge sees during a round don't translate well across the airwaves. It doesn't even translate sometimes with what you're describing in a round."

#### Jerry Roth

Lederman said of judge Roth in his pre-fight summary, "This is the scary one. He's ready, but he blew Richard Abril versus Brandon Rios. He may be shook up over it." Roth has 30 years of scoring experience, including 153 title fights.

While it's true that his most recent scorecard was characterized by some as controversial, it was far from unexpected. Roth has a tendency to ride the favorite. This was reinforced by his judgment for Rios in a fight most feel the underdog (Abril) won. It was echoed in the lone winning score for Pacquiao against Bradley, 115-113. While some had the Filipino's margin of victory as wide as 119-109, Roth was just one round apart from how noted HBO color commentator Max Kellerman saw the fight (116-112).

Roth thought Bradley rallied late but didn't do enough for the victory. "I'm looking for effective aggressiveness," Roth said. "I thought Pacquiao won a lot of the early rounds, and I thought Bradley came on in the end. That's why I gave Bradley the last three rounds. But I still thought Pacquiao had done enough to win."

Title: WBO Welterweight					Refere	Referee: Robert Byrd Supervisor: Istvan Kovacs														
Date: 6/9/2012 City: Las Vegas				Venue: MGM Grand Garden Arena						Promoter: Top Rank, Inc.										
BOUT: 8 WHITE Emmanuel Pacquiao				BLUE					PINK											
MANNY PACQUIAO vs. TIMOTHY BRADLEY				MANNY PACQUIAO vs. TIMOTHY BRADLEY				MANNY	MANNY PACQUIAO VS. TIMOTHY BRADLEY											
Weight 147 Weight 146 R Corner Corner B				12 ROUNDS				12 ROUNDS												
Round		Score	Round	Score		Round	Round	Corner	Score	Round	Score	Corner	B	Round	Corner	Score		Score	Corner	Roun
	Deducted			-	Deducted		_	Deducted			-	Deducted			Deducted		_		Deducted	Scon
1D			1			9	10			1			9	9		1000	1	1000		10
9		19	2	19		10	9	2000	19	2	19		10	10		19	2	19		9
10	1000	29	3	28		9	10		29	3	28		9	10		29	3	28	1/2/2	9
10	36	39	4	37		9	10		39	4	37		9	10		39	4	37		9
10		49	5	46		9	9		48	5	47		10	9		48	5	47		10
10	1000	59	6	55		9	10		58	6	56		9	(0)		58	6	56		9
9		68	7	65		N	9		67	7	66		10	9		67	7	66		10
10		78	8	74		9	9		70	8	76		10	9		76	8	76		10
10		97	9	93		9	9	100	95	9	95		9	9		85	40	86		10
9		106	11	103		10	9		104	11	105		10	10		104	11	105		9
9		115	12	113		10	9		113	12	115		10	9		113	12	115		10
	SCORE			1.00	FINAL S	_	FINAL	SCORE			115	FINALS		FINAL:	SCORE	113		_	_	
Judge: Jerry Roth				1000	Judge: CJ Ross					Judge: Duane Ford										
Suspensions:					Explain deduction of points or comments:					Solit decision										

	Official J	ludges		Press Ro	w			Compubox		
	Joe	CJ	Duane	HBO	LA	Fox	USA	Compu	Compu	
Rd	Roth	Ross	Ford	Lederm	Times	Sport	Today	Total	Power	
1	Pac	Pac	Bra	Pac	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
2	Bra	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
3	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
4	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
5	Pac	Bra	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
6	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
7	Bra	Bra	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
8	Pac	Pac	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Bra	Pac	Pac	
9	Bra	Bra	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Bra	Pac	
10	Bra	Bra	Bra	Bra	Bra	Bra	Pac	Even	Even	
11	Bra	Bra	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	Pac	
12	Bra	Bra	Bra	Pac	Brad	Pac	Bra	Pac	Pac	
Totals										
Pac	7	5	5	11	9	11	12	10	11	
Bra	5	7	7	1	3	1	2	1	0	

#### C.J. Ross

Lederman has called Ross three things: questionable, a relatively mediocre judge and someone who can be swayed by the crowd. Her fight history spans 8 years, including 19 title fights. When an image surfaced of the panel's scorecards from the fight (*shown, previous page*), it was Ross who received the harshest treatment. Many clamored online that she should be banned from judging the sport, effective immediately.

Initially, Ross refused all calls for interview. In September 2013, *The Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported that she had taken a leave of absence from boxing. In January 2015, she finally spoke up to defend her scorecard.

"There are differences, and people don't understand how we judge," said Ross. "That was a very close fight."

"All three of us judges, in our discussions afterwards, stated that it looked like Pacquiao had taken off the last two rounds, like somebody told him, 'You got this, you don't have to stretch it anymore," she added.

"That's what it looked like to people at ringside."

Ross expected that Pacquiao's fans would complain.

"Pacquiao has a lot of fans all over the world, so when your team loses or your fighter loses, you're gonna find something wrong with the judging, the officiating, something, because it went against your thought," she said.

Ross added, "The judges, we all saw it as very close, very close rounds with Pacquiao dominating early, and then switching back and forth, one round one way, one round the other way," she said.

The judge suggested that Pacquiao took his foot off the pedal in the final two rounds, and that she didn't appreciate that in such an important fight.

"It was those last few rounds, had he kept that energy or the desire in the last two rounds, he probably would have taken that," she said. "I don't know why he backed off."

# V. ATTENTION SPAN IS LIMITED

Scoring requires attention to detail. It begins with a statistical evaluation. It ends with an overall assessment. It takes into account the facts (as best they can be summarized and understood), but it also relies on opinion and perspective.

The one thing you never hear mentioned is just how little time a judge has to evaluate performance and tally a score. Most of us can focus for only so long. In boxing, the factors to weigh are complex. The timing that's allotted for scoring a round or authoring a final decision is tight.

Yes, judges keep score — but they also decide champions. It's this secondary judgment that most would agree is not about statistics. It supersedes the temporal scorecard. It hastens the decision past the objective math to a subjective rendering of who reigns as king.

When judges make mistakes in their judgment (again, if that can be quantified objectively), the results are generally upheld. Judges are scolded and suspended at times, but the fighter retains the loss. There have been times when a ruling body (e.g., WBA, WBC, WBO) has reinstated a champion behind a controversial decision. Again, the loss remains on the record.

Bob Arum, who promotes both Bradley and Pacquiao, was quick to pull the age card in weighing the decision. He questioned whether an age limit should be installed for judges. Ford was 74 on fight night. Jerry Roth was 71. "I know this from experience," said Arum (who's 80 himself), "our attention span is less."

Boxing is a busy, well-attended spectacle. There's no shortage of distractions at ringside. Celebrities. Half-naked women on parade. Heckling. Coaching. Broadcasters and reporters whose voices carry. A non-stop barrage of supercharged lights and super-sized video.

This is the scorer's office. There are no cube walls. You can't close the door to better concentrate. There are no acoustical tiles for buffering. You can't take a break to smoke or use the bathroom. You're asked to focus amidst a bustle that borders on chaos.

# VI. DOING THINGS THE HARD WAY

Undisputed. Lineal.

These words carry so much weight in boxing because so few can attain those statuses. Disparity between judges' scoring formulas and how difficult it is to defeat all of the competition in your weight class render this extremely rare.

On the night that Pacquiao faced Bradley, only one man was undisputed and lineal champion among his peers. That was Bradley. You would never know that from the pre-fight hype.

Timothy Bradley beat the guy who beat the guy who beat the guy in his division. His junior welterweight supremacy was undisputed. He was stepping up in weight class to take on the seemingly indomitable Manny Pacquiao. Anyone could learn this storyline by catching episodes of HBO's popular series 24/7, which ran in the weeks before the fight.

It's remarkable how frequently people overlook an underdog. Noise, hype and the like rule the airwaves. They consolidate popular opinion on the favorite. If popularity is what you seek, then oil that publicity machine.

Here's a factor to consider — elevated respect for the one whose supremacy is unquestioned. He's been patient and disciplined. Judging him favorably is easy to defend.

Unification was once normal business. These days, fighters win belts and abandon them (or are forced to do so). There's more money in chasing the big names in other divisions. The governing bodies (who reward the belts) won't allow fighters to have it both ways. The less traditional "pound-for-pound best fighter" status exists to reward the fighter on the move. Without it, you could make more money but hold no distinction. America loves champions.

## VII. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?

Pacquiao looked shaky in his previous fight, against an older fighter who he'd faced twice in the past (Juan Manuel Marquez). That boxer had also moved up in weight to fight him (generally considered to be a disadvantage for the lighter fighter). Many had Pacquiao losing that fight. This was the dominant thinking in the days and weeks after that fight.

Fast forward to his bout with Bradley — Pacquiao looks suspect again. Perhaps, this time, they moved to "make it right." It, in this context, is history — the story beyond the scoring.

Here's another completely novel thought: perhaps fights aren't separated by months simply for recuperative and promotional build-up purposes. Could it be that consumer memories must fade, so perception can be reset? Once that's achieved, the storytelling can commence anew.

Look at the two men and their momentum leading up to the fight.

Pacquiao had many distractions in his life. These included working as a Filipino politician, launching several new products, instituting a ban on gambling and womanizing within his circle, making amends with his wife (he had been caught cheating a number of times) and leading Bible studies. To many, he looked more like a pastor than a pugilist.



Pacquiao's weight on the night before the fight should have raised eyebrows. He tipped the scales at the welterweight limit (the heaviest he'd weighed in his career). This generally means a fighter took last minute action to drop weight. You don't just get lucky and land on the correct number. Often, a fighter will be weaker in the 24 hours after this corrective measure.

Most peculiar is a statistical anomaly that defies explanation. If there's one thing I've noticed with a religious person, then it's just how powerful numerology can be. Google "Pacquiao loses every 16th fight." No one is sure why this is, but it's a definite and repeating pattern. Bradley was Pacquiao's 16th opponent from his last defeat.

How did the underdog look in the weeks leading up to the fight? If you're reading this book, and looking to learn something about winning, then you're likely an underdog too. Pay close attention to what follows here.

Bradley's focus was centered in the build-up to the fight. Distractions were nil. All he seemed to be doing was training and spending time with his family. He was perfectly in balance.

His interviews showed a confidence and determination not seen in recent Pacquiao opponents. Bradley was so certain of victory that he printed an over-sized ticket to a rematch he was already offering to Pacquiao — prior to their *first* contest. The bigger box office draw is always listed first in promotions. Bradley reversed the names for the rematch.



Bradley's body reacted well to moving up in weight. He had maintained his speed.

At the weigh-in, fighters flex and are photographed from the waist up. Bradley's upper body was more impressive than Pacquiao's on the scales. An aside — astute boxing fans and analysts note that Pacquiao's greatest muscle attribute is his over-sized calves. It's what provides the power behind his punches. This view isn't featured in most weigh-in photography.



On fight night, Bradley warmed up quickly and was prepared to approach the ring on-time. Contrast this with Pacquiao. He was backstage watching the Boston Celtics lose to the Miami Heat in the NBA Championship. That report came from his Hall of Fame trainer, Freddie Roach. Pacquiao's gloves were taped yet, and he couldn't get his calves to loosen up. After an additional 45 minutes was granted, Pacquiao was finally ready to fight.

Having good habits is critical to winning. Pacquiao had mismanaged his pre-fight routine for the first time in recent memory. Bradley looked like a hungry, deserving champion. Pacquiao portrayed the fall of Rome.

While it's easy to say that a judge's job is to score rounds, there's also an element of king-making. Judges decide who's ready to climb the next rung. They determine who best honors the championship tradition. They can quickly move to impeach any ruler who has undervalued his talents and forgotten what matters most.

# VIII. WOOLED EYES FOR WINNERS

Pacquiao looks great in commercials. His clothing line is hot. He does good for people who're starving. He' likely become President of the Philippines one day soon.



# Pacquiao was the winning brand pre-fight, even if his career winning percentage was lower than Bradley's.

In the wake of Pacquiao's defeat, celebrities and others defended their man on Twitter and Facebook. The number of people who witnessed that alone was staggering. Google "Top 100 most followed on Twitter" for a sense of the cumulative influence. Consider how easily people are swayed by the opinion of those they like or respect.



Consider a theory called Zipf's Law. It demonstrates the degree to which the market loves a winner. For example, statistics show that Americans favor vanilla ice cream nearly 4:1 over the runner-up, chocolate. In his book *The Dip*, Seth Godin concludes that the law "applies to resumés and college applications rates to best-selling records and everything in between."

With a slant this pronounced, it's easy to see why fans struggle when a favorite loses — and how that collective voice muffles all others. Emotions can quickly overpower lucidity.

# Knowing how tough it would be for people to accept, and knowing that there would likely be outcries of foul play and incompetence, two of three judges crowned the underdog.

Could an element of disappointment in Pacquiao's performance have led to Bradley's win? Given the overwhelming adoration for the Filipino star, there must have been some level of scorn for him not doing what people expected or wanted to see. They likely felt cheated. Could two of these people have been the judges who scored for Bradley?



Look again at what judge Duane Ford said in defending his scorecard: "In the fourth round, Pacquiao hurt Bradley. The Manny Pacquiao I've judged in the past would have finished him. He let him off the hook."

Ford decided it was time for a changing of the guard.

# IX. WHO SHOWED UP TO FIGHT?

What would you say are the two most common reasons for an employee to be fired? I would argue that it's less than satisfactory attendance, followed closely by a perceived or measured dip in performance.

Sometimes, it's not whether you show up that matters most. It's whether you show up to fight. Focus may be lacking. Presence could be minimal. If those in charge think that you've lost your edge, then you become a reminder of what once was. Teams want to be as competitive as possible RIGHT NOW. Those "glory days" won't cut it.

Teams recruit, train and retain championship-caliber talent. They look to contend. They don't owe patience to faded, pretending and trying-to-rebound individuals.

Pacquiao lacked presence against Marquez. He lacked focus against Bradley. This was not the champion of old. His punch statistics were average. He missed wildly at times. He was touched more easily. He showed that he was hurt to the body.

Leading up to the fight, Pacquiao's attention seemed horribly divided. He wore many hats — boxer, congressman, singer, actor, brand spokesperson, pastor, philanthropist and more. A jack of all trades is a master of none. At this stage in his career, Pacquiao was spread thin. He wasn't on top of his game in any of his myriad roles.

Perhaps the toughest thing to swallow was his decreased work rate during the fight. Pacquiao delayed the fight to get his calves ready, yet he dragged through the later rounds. He did enough to win by most peoples' accounting, but it was far from a dominant result. Why was that "nobody" fighter allowed to stick around? Bradley looked like the fresher competitor at the end of the match. How could that be if Pacquiao is the better fighter?

Some market corrections occur naturally. Others are forced by gatekeepers. Perhaps the most decorated judge and one of his pupils felt it was time to fix a broken situation. It was perfectly within their job description to make that happen. The fighters are at their mercy. Don't hate the players. Learn the game.

# X. OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

When men share fighting words on the street, it's common to hear something like "I could whoop you with one arm tied behind my back." It's impressive when one man doesn't need to be at full strength or advantage to defeat another.

In the second round of the fight, Bradley rolled one of his ankles badly. In the fifth round, he tweaked the other one because he relied on it too much. Broadcasters overheard his corner talking about the injuries. This likely meant that the judges knew about them as well. Bradley attended the post-fight press conference in a wheelchair. In the days after the event, tests revealed that he tore ligaments and fractured one foot. He twisted the other ankle.



How was an injured fighter able to compete with a champion? He was compromised. What kind of will did that take to outwork a top-notch opponent? Yes, Americans love a winner above all else. However, given the right set of circumstances, a underdog who overcomes adversity will rival a champion in favor.

# **CLOSING**

Many are nostalgic. They like a routine. They don't invite surprise or change.

Prior to his fight with Pacquiao, Bradley was relatively unknown. Had he been groomed as an imminent challenger, perhaps the public's willingness to accept his victory would've been greater. It wasn't.

Luckily for Bradley, the judges liked what he brought to the boxing match. His style has always earned him winning marks. As an amateur, Bradley was a two-time national champion. He was undefeated as a professional fighter. This storyline was largely ignored.

Winning doesn't always follow a formula that's popular. Sometimes, a finite group of gatekeepers decide. Scoring criteria are rarely exacting. Full disclosure isn't a mandate. Interpretation is commonplace.

The masses and the judges aren't always on the same page. The public will often convince themselves that they know better than the experts — that quality is determined by the quantity of people in favor of something.

In boxing, the three judges are under no obligation to answer to the public. Many won't go on record to reconcile aspects of their decisions against majority opinion. Information on how to score a boxing match is available online.

Boxing includes obvious and subtle scoring opportunities. It isn't just about knockouts. Unlike many sports, the official score is rarely reported in real time. There's no instant replay to ensure that scores are uniform, nor is there an absolute, objective measure of "correct."

Correct scoring in boxing includes variance. Subjectivity and qualitative aspects are squarely part of the formula. Viewpoints differ. What each judge prefers in a fighter is acceptable criteria within the rules. That means the results are volatile by nature. It takes a simple majority in the scorecards to announce a victor. The scores don't have to be in agreement.

If winning is a subject that matters to you, take the time to understand contest rules and regulations. If anything is unclear, ask questions.

Don't compete blindly.

Don't accept surprising results.

Don't overlook what matters most.

Don't allow a simple process to become complex or cloudy. Don't be careless with your fate.

In business and in life, the best know why they're winning. They're not getting lucky. They know who's judging them. They build and execute a game plan that's designed to score big.

# POST FIGHT LESSON

XI. WHAT GOES AROUND — COMES AROUND

# XI. WHAT GOES AROUND — COMES AROUND

In the aftermath of the controversial decision, promoter Bob Arum demanded a review of the fight and the scorecards. Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach echoed that call. It was an embarrassing scene for Bradley, who was also represented by Arum.

In June, WBO president Francisco "Paco" Valcarcel assigned a panel of judges. The scores were unanimous in favor of Pacquiao: 118-110, 117-111, 117-111, 116-112, 115-113. It's interesting to note that two of the five judges scored it close — a tighter contest than was witnessed by nearly all of the experts and the overwhelming majority of fans.

In July, Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto investigated the matter. "There doesn't appear to be any facts or evidence to indicate that a criminal violation occurred," Masto concluded. Senators John McCain of Arizona and Harry Reid of Nevada followed with a proposal for a new regulatory body called the US Boxing Commission (USBC).

With both initial and continued support of his performance, Pacquiao opted out of the next step — pushing the WBO to revoke Bradley's title. In a Dan Rafael article for ESPN.com, Pacquiao stated "my supporters shouldn't worry, we're going to get that title" in a rematch.

Timothy "Ray" Bradley Sr., the victor's father, also called for a second fight.

"I'm old school. When a champion loses a fight, he should automatically want to get his title back."

— Timothy "Ray" Bradley, Sr.

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In September, Pacquiao decided not to exercise the rematch clause in his original contract with Bradley. He instead chose to meet his long-time rival Marquez in a fourth fight.

What was the likely reasoning behind Pacquiao's decision?

Neutral observers point toward a less than promising business outlook. A Bradley fight generated 700,000 to 850,000 buys. That's 450,000 to 600,000 short of the 1,300,000 buys

Marquez delivered in his third fight with Pacquiao. A net of 450,000 buys at the lesser of two purchase prices (\$60) could mean \$27,000,000 in revenue left on the table with Bradley. The Pacquiao camp claimed there was limited justification. If the first fight was a clear-cut victory for Pacquiao, then why would fans need to see the matchup again?

Bradley supporters believed that he posed a significant threat to Pacquiao's legacy. In the least, he won a competitive fight on two injured feet. At best, he's the more superior boxer.

"Hopefully, he doesn't retire...I'd definitely like to get in there with him again healthy and show him what I got," Bradley said. "Look, there were three judges there, and two thought I won the fight. If I had my feet, that would've been a completely different fight. I didn't have my left foot from the second round on, and I wasn't hurt. I wasn't jacked up like those other guys who get the Pacquiao treatment. He couldn't finish me, and he won't be able to again."

Still others called Bradley greedy. He neglected his weak draw and required too much money.

Regardless of where you stood on the speculation, one thing was certain. The welterweight champion was left without an opponent for the forseeable future. Bradley achieved what former champions Miguel Cotto, Antonio Margarito, Joshua Clottey, Ricky Hatton, Oscar De La Hoya, Marquez, and others could not. He defeated Pacquiao. His reward? No one was willing to challenge him in the ring. Outside of it, most were ready to oppose him.

Initially, Bradley teed off. "What the public needs to know is Pacquiao, their No. 1 dude, doesn't care about his loss. He didn't want any part of me. Marquez is an easier fight. In my eyes, chicken (expletive), chicken, chicken, chicken."

Since that outburst, Bradley tempered his stance. "I just want the next-best thing, a fight that makes business sense and turns heads. I'll fight the best in the world. You know that, because I just did it. It doesn't matter who, as long as it's a competitive fight."

If Pacquiao had stuck a knife in an already open wound by passing on an immediate rematch, then he had twisted it with his comments since the announcement. During a recent press conference to promote the taping of his show "Manny Many Prizes," Pacquiao was asked if he would welcome Bradley as a contestant.

"If he plays, we will let him win — this time, for real."
— Manny Pacquiao

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When you recap the post-fight abuse that Bradley has endured, it's an unprecedented series of setbacks for a champion.

- He was booed at the arena, once the decision was announced.
- He was shamed by his promoter Bob Arum at the post-fight press conference.
- He was unanimously defeated by five judges in a WBO scoring review.
- He was ridiculed by Pacquiao in subsequent interviews.
- His neighbors routinely referred to the decision as a mistake.
- He was cursed repeatedly on Facebook and Twitter.
- He received death threats by mail and phone.
- He was refused an immediate second fight with Pacquiao.
- He was denied a fight with another leading contender.

The events took a toll on the usually proud Bradley. He retreated to his family. He fell into depression. His weight rose to 185 pounds (nearly 40 above the welterweight limit of 147).

"He didn't get what he should've got from that win. He was exiled."

— Timothy "Ray" Bradley, Sr.

Bradley even pondered retirement — in the prime of his career at 29 years old, after his greatest victory in the ring. That's an astonishing consideration for a competitor who had just won a coveted title from one of the all-time greats.

Thankfully, for the sake of a story that would soon swing back around to redemption, Bradley and his supporters pressed forward. As the saying goes, "that which does not kill us makes us stronger."

Instead of a Pacquiao rematch purse of close to \$9M, Bradley accepted a \$1.75M fight with the former Filipino champion's sparring mate, Ruslan Provodnikov (22-1, 15 KOs).

That's not a misprint. Bradley took 80% less to face a Pacquiao practice partner. Despite his ring prowess, he represented too much risk and not enough reward.

"Boxing is a tough business. There's a lot of promises, a lot of things you feel should happen that don't."

— Timothy Bradley

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At the same time that the champion Bradley was forced to backpedal, Pacquiao accelerated full steam ahead to a fourth showdown with his arch rival, Juan Manual Marquez.

Coming off a loss and without a belt, Pacquiao was guaranteed \$8.595M for the fight. He was poised to earn up to \$30M, with live gate and pay-per-view buys tallied. We would enter the ring 2-0-1 against the Mexican great.

It was a bitter pill to swallow for Bradley, but a dramatic turn in the story was just ahead.

Leading up to the fight, rumors leaked that Marquez had used illegal substances during training. Two smoking guns were present — Marquez had gained significant muscle mass after hiring Angel Guillermo "Memo" Heredia, a strength and conditioning coach who previously endorsed performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs).

It was an ironic twist in the four-fight saga. Leading up to their previous two fights, it was Pacquiao who had been accused of using PEDs. In September 2012, he settled a defamatory lawsuit with Floyd Mayweather, Jr. over that fighter's PED claims.

Undefeated against Marquez but lacking a definitive win, Pacquiao took aim at a knockout.

The fight began like the others before it — a contentious affair that was difficult to score. Both fighters were knocked down early. Pacquiao seemed to score the more decisive knockdown in the fifth round. At the close of the sixth round, he moved in for the kill.

That's when it happened.

Marquez expected to be underestimated. While Pacquiao remained dangerous, he had also become his own worst enemy. Marquez waited for Pacquiao to try and steal a round before unleashing the perfect counter at the bell. Down goes Pacquiao. Out cold. No ten count.

Google "Pacquiao knocked out" for more on the shot heard round the world.

In an instant, a sure thing fighter had lost twice in a row. His freefall was the type that Hall of Famers routinely avoid. He went from being a heavy favorite in a contest to someone who many felt should consider retirement. Whispers were that this was karma's work.



For all that Bradley endured in recent months, a bit of justice was served in the ring that night. The veil was lifted and Pacquiao was exposed. It was now up to Bradley to capitalize.

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Left to enter the ring against Pacquiao's sparring mate, with a need not unlike Pacquiao versus Marquez, Bradley trained for a knockout. It was a tall order for a boxer-puncher not known for his power.

The fight began in dramatic fashion. Bradley came out firing and and controlled the action. In the final minute of the opening round, Provodnikov staggered Bradley. Bradley went down, but referee Pat Russell ruled it a slip. The damage was done.

It was clear that Bradley intended to hold his ground and slug it out with the bigger puncher.

"The will of Tim Bradley is a skill."

— Kery Davis, HBO SVP

He was out on his feet again in the second round, but refused to quit. Bradley upped his punch output and began to box his opponent effectively. Most of the middle of the fight belonged to Bradley. Provodnikov's offense diminished, and his face began to be disfigured.

"I wanted to show him with the exchanges that I wasn't afraid of him. I didn't want to show fear. I can brawl and box with anyone, but this was extremely difficult. I gave it everything I have. Every ounce I had, I gave."

— Timothy Bradley

In the final seconds, Provodnikov again overwhelmed Bradley. This time, Bradley took a knee for an official knockdown. It was just the third time he'd been knocked down in a fight. He was down twice in a victory against Kendall Holt in 2009.

Bradley rose to claim a hotly-contested, unanimous decision, 114-113, 114-113, 115-112. More than the win on the scorecards, Bradley had gained the respect of fight fans. He'd stood his ground against a game fighter, bloodied him and put on a crowd-pleasing show.

"It's not just winning the fight. You have to be an attraction. He sure as hell gave the people some excitement tonight."

— Bob Arum



HBO commentator Max Kellerman said it was an honor to watch the fight. Afterwards, Bradley told him that he thought he was concussed in the first round. When asked why he thought that, Bradley offered, "Because I'm still dizzy."

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Here's where the story comes full circle.

After Pacquiao's second defeat in a row, his camp contacted Marquez with an offer for a fifth contest, reported to be \$13M. Marquez hesitated. He felt their business together was settled. He pivoted to Bradley with a rematch offer — the one he wouldn't provide previously. This offer may have been as much as \$6M to the weak-drawing Bradley.

Instead of either facing Pacquiao, they decided to fight each other. Bradley and Marquez agreed to meet on October 12, 2013. For Bradley, a decisive victory would likely soften the edge from his controversial win over Pacquiao.

Pacquiao scrambled for a Plan C. He was forced to engage the dangerous Brandon Rios, whose most recent fight was a tough loss. The draw was lower. Rios is not a future Hall of Famer. The risk of damage on the road to victory was greater since Rios is a brawler.

#### November 23, 2013 update:

Pacquiao defeated Rios soundly. Scorecards were 120-108, 119-109, 118-110. Pacquiao won the WBO International Welterweight Championship.

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#### April 12, 2014 update:

Pacquiao and Bradley met in a rematch. Pacquiao won by unanimous decision to end Bradley's undefeated streak at 31 matches and claim his. Scorecards were 118–110, 116–112, 116–112. Many felt as though this match was closer than their historic first contest. <u>USA Today coverage</u>.

#### Watch Pacquiao-Bradley II:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiOF1TLfsWc

If the link breaks with time, then search YouTube by the fight name for a replacement.

#### April 9, 2016 update:

Pacquiao and Bradley met in a rubber match. Pacquiao won by unanimous decision. Scorecards were 116–110, 116–110, 116–110. This fight was a lop-sided decision, with Pacquiao knocking down Bradley twice, in the 7th and 9th rounds.

#### Watch Pacquiao-Bradley III:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDD2QzVvHIo

If the link breaks with time, then search You Tube by the fight name for a replacement.

## THE END.

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