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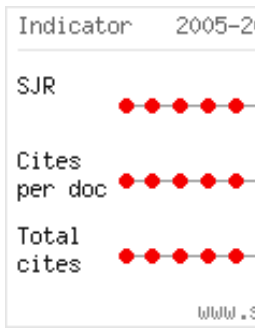
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A comparison of the effect of two different judging systems on the technique selection of Muay Thai competitors

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[Abstract](#)

Growing internationalisation of the sport of Muay Thai has prompted a debate on which judging system should be implemented internationally; a western system very similar to boxing (used pre-2005 in the UK) or the system used in Thailand, the country of origin. This paper examined the possible impact on athlete performance of these two different judging systems. Notational analysis was conducted on fights involving competitors who have been judged exclusively using the pre 2005 UK judging system (N=16), and on fighters exclusively judged using the Thai judging system (N=16), to determine if these judging systems produced quantifiably different performances. Statistically significant differences were found between the groups. A

Friedman's ANOVA suggested that competitors judged using the Thai system were homogeneous in their technique selection using a similar pattern of techniques ($p=0.14589$), but that the competitors judged by the UK system were not ($p=0.00277$). Chi squared analysis suggested statistically differences across a range of variables including attacking techniques, defensive techniques, distancing, balance and effect. Fighters judged using the Thai system used more attacking and defensive techniques ($p<0.001$), had better distancing ($p<0.001$), balance ($p<0.001$), and a greater effect of their techniques ($p<0.001$). The study concluded that the judging system employed does have an impact on the performance given the

differences found reflected different aspects of the judging criteria applied. In addition, the study found that the Thai judging system seemed to encourage competitors to use a greater number of more visually spectacular and effective techniques and as such may be more entertaining for spectators. Future research recommended included reanalysing fighters judged post 2005 in the UK where a system very similar to the Thai judging system has been implemented, along with the use of purposely-recorded footage.

Key words: Notational Analysis; Judging; Muay Thai; Technique selection

doi: 10.4100/jhse.2013.83.01

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