

BOXERS CAN WIN

Prof. Mike Donovan Writes About Judging Contests.

HOW REFEREES ARE TEMPTED

Unfair Decisions Are Not so Common as the Public Thinks--Tricks Adopted by Foul Fighters.



THE public interest in boxing was never keener than it is to-day. Any promising contest will draw thousands of spectators.

Such great numbers of people have the right to expect fair sport, and by the bestowal of their favor here or there should have the power to secure it.

But popular sentiment must be founded upon right principles in order to accomplish good results. When fair and crooked work meet about an equal share of adverse criticism, there is not much chance for reform.

It is impossible for a referee to please everybody; it is hard enough for him to act so that his own sense of justice will be satisfied afterwards. But I believe that this arduous position is generally well filled.

It should be remembered that in a crowd of two or three thousand spectators there are ordinarily not more than fifty really good judges of boxing. And no great proportion of so large a number can be near the ring. It is not easy to appreciate the fine points of a boxing match unless one's reasonably close to the contestants.

In general, however, the points of a good boxer should be clearly visible to the trained eye, and there should be few mistakes in the decisions. But a referee is beset by many temptations. It is hard for any man to be perfectly impartial. He sees two men come into the ring, and perhaps at the very outset he notices one of them do something which is a little unmanly.

It is almost impossible for him to prevent being set against such a contestant. Some referees have a tendency to be influenced by good looks. Here are two men, one of whom looks like the gentleman from head to foot while the other is a regular "ferrier" in appearance.

There are some who find it hard not to watch the gentleman, and let the "ferrier's" good points pass unnoticed. In close contests small matters have decisive weight. Here and there you will find a referee who will be influenced by one of the judges in whom he has confidence. In reality it is his business to follow his own best judgment when the choice falls to him.

The points of a good boxer begin to show as soon as the preliminary "shaka" is over and he has put up his hands. His position counts for something. Is he well poised? Is he equally ready for attack or defense? Then he leads and you ask yourself: Is he a good, straight biter? If one man hits straight, clean blows while the other swings, though they land the same number of times, I would give the fight to the former, other things being equal.

Watch each man's movement on his feet. He who is supple and easy scores a point from him who is stiff and awkward, for the former would have the better chance of tying his opponent out in a long contest. Clever feinting is a point.

Does the boxer betray his intention or does he deceive his adversary? A blow well parried counts for the defense as surely as a blow well landed counts for the man who delivers it. In general, the aggressive fighter should get the decision over someone who is trying to win by his counters. This principle is sometimes carried too far. There is no skill in wild and aimless leading. It requires long experience to enable a referee to decide just how much credit should be given for aggressive work.

All these points are familiar to every boxer. I have run them over because I wished to emphasize the necessity of giving every excellence its proper value. Some referees are too ready to order another round when there has been enough to determine the winner. A referee who makes it a practice to order another round in almost every case when the judges disagree, falls in my estimation. I think him more ready to encourage slugging and finish fighting than scientific boxing for points. Of course there are many cases where it is necessary in the interests of fairness but in general there's enough work in the rounds to give ground for a decision.

In my opinion Harry Baumeyer, as everybody calls him, is the best referee we have in and around New York. I don't mean to reflect upon others, but to emphasize my liking for Mr. Baumeyer. He has not escaped criticism. Who has? But I've watched his decisions in three championship meetings, and have disagreed with him just once. We have many other good referees. P. Donohue is a competent one. James

Motley is another. Maxwell Moore, a Scottish-American, and one of the early promoters of athletics hereabouts, is an exceptionally fine judge of boxing. Albert de Gurocourt, an ex-president of the New York Athletic club, is another. One of the best judges of boxing in this country is Pat Kendrick of New Orleans. I remember him gratefully for the lessons he gave me in St. Louis years ago. I learned more from him than I ever did from anybody else. He is a printer by trade. He is thought highly of in New Orleans, and is much in demand to referee the big contests down there. Mr. Violet, of the cotton exchange in New Orleans, is another excellent referee. Mr. Recap of the Schuylkill Navy A. C., and James Dawson of Philadelphia should be included in the list of referees whose judgment can be depended upon. In general, I wish to repeat my statement that the sport suffers little from bad decisions. They are much fewer than the public is led to believe.

A good deal is said about foul fighting. I believe in prompt disqualification for intentional vicious fouling. I don't take very much stock in what is called shouldering. It is hard to do any damage that way. Pat Cahill was accused of it in his recent fight with Jim Butler. I didn't see the battle but I know Cahill's style very well, and I am inclined to believe that his real intention was to get close to his man in order to deliver his favorite blow which is a right hand swing on the jaw given at close quarters and with a peculiar lift of the body.

Butting is a dangerous practice and should disqualify any fighter who does it with malice. Another bad foul is the



elbow trick. It is worked at the breaking of a clinch, sometimes with a simple "jab," or perhaps with the pivot. If I saw a man hurt by this trick in a fight I would certainly give him the decision.

The pivot blow generally bears La Blanche's name now, though it is really Jimmy Carroll's. He claims that he hits with the "heel of his hand," as the phrase is, and of course that is perfectly fair. I am not intimating that he does not. But there are fighters who use the elbow in this way, and they should never be allowed to win by it. A good referee can tell whether a punch with the elbow is accidental or not.

Low hitting should always be watched. The Birmingham blow is an ugly foul. It is a swinging upper cut, ostensibly for the pit of the stomach but really aimed low. The referee, if he knows anything about boxing, can readily detect this sort of work, and he should stop it right away. There's nothing in this style of hitting, and if a man who knows better uses it, he is trying to fool. A man who commits a deliberate foul is a coward. He wants to quit. If I am referee I'll decide against him as soon as his intentions are revealed.

In closing I wish to say a word about professionalism in the amateur ranks. It seems to me that the best way to get rid of the evil would be to form an amateur boxing league of America. The A. A. U. is handling too much, with its outdoor sports and other varieties of athletics. Boxing gives opportunities enough for an organization devoted to that alone. The entries in contests should be limited to representatives of clubs with an unimpeachable reputation and standing such as the New York Athletic club, the Schuylkill Navy, the Chicago Board of Trade club, the Detroit Athletic club, the Boston Athletic association, the Southern Athletic club of New Orleans, the Olympic club of San Francisco. The name of the club should be a sufficient guarantee that its representative is a genuine amateur. There should be men who are boxers to take charge of such matters, and to pass upon entries. Not everybody who has had a hand in such matters in the A. A. U. has been fitted by experience to do it.

By some such organization as I have suggested the amateur ring could be purified; and we should be able to get some first rate men into it who now stand aloof. I do not wish to appear as a fault finder, but I would like to see everything that has to do with the sport to which I have devoted most of my attention for a good many years, as straight and square and genuine as human nature will allow.

MICHAEL DONOVAN.

Not to Be Expected. Mrs. Spatts (nee Gotrox)—You're a perfect brute! I actually believe you married me simply because of my money.

Mr. Spatts—Well, my dear, you'd hardly expect a man to take such an important step without some reason. —Brooklyn Life.

Consecrated a Bishop. Returned Traveler—How do do, my little dear? Is your father still the rector of this church?

Little Girl—Oh, no, sir—not now. He's been consecrated a bishop.—Good News.

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