

Boxing, should it be banned from the 21st century?

Boxing is a sport with history dating back many centuries ago. Right back to the days of bare-knuckle boxing and barnyard fights. Boxing can be defined as a sport that is merely a legalised way of beating-up another person. It is a male dominated sport, and some people think it should be banned from the 21st century.

These people believe that boxing is too dangerous and too violent to be shown on television, or even viewed by anyone. A further point they add is that a lot of people who are influenced in the boxing world end up with their lives wrecked by money scams, violent behavior and their health is put in great danger.

Others argue it is an exciting, full-on-contact sport, which is more realistic than wrestling, and therefore makes it a better sport. The people who are attracted to the sport love watching it because of its competitiveness and excitement. Others are attracted because of the appeal of money, fame, glory of winners, and sadness of losers; which comes with the sport. Big title fights attract big crowds who want to see 12 rounds of fast, hard-hitting action. Viewers want to see someone get knocked-out and they want to see a victorious champion.

However, some argue that the boxing fans do not realise that many boxers have histories of being young, aggressive juveniles, who got themselves reputations of being accomplished street fighters. They then were noticed by local professional talent scouts, who brought these juveniles into a world where the golden rule is that - the harder you throw the punches; the further you get in the way of a career. These young boxers are conned into believing that the more aggressive they are in the ring, the more respect they will gain in the boxing community. They are also conned into a sense of belonging within this community. When really they are being exploited in all ways imaginable by their managers and fight promoters. Many non-supporters think this is a primary reason why boxing should be banned from the 21st century.

Another major argument put against boxing is that once a boxer reaches the age of 18; a manager can take a 25% cut of the takings of a match. This is a big sum of money when you take into consideration that it is the boxer who is knocking the years of his life with each fight, not the manager. But managers claim that this cut is only right considering the required dedication that goes into training a boxer. But non-supporters say this is another harsh reality in boxing. It is the boxers who put their lives in danger every time they step inside the ring and not the manager.

In fact with every fight a boxer can be knocking years off his life without realising it.

Boxers are the means by which managers make their money. What boxers don't realise is the crushing risk of what other boxers punches can do to them. Brain damage and blood clots often lead to death. It may not be their own fault for again managers/fight promoters often lead young boxers into a false sense of security and allow them to believe they are not going to be hurt in fights. Managers often emphasize the glory and money involved but not the more important health risks. A prime example of a boxing promoter/ fight arranger who scams money from boxers is *Don King*. He is responsible from taking large cuts of money from *Muhammad Ali*, *Mike Tyson* and *Lennox Lewis*.

People who believe that boxing should be banned are aware of the dangers of professional and amateur boxing. Professionals can punch hard, and both the speed at which the punch travels and the weight behind it can certainly cause extensive damage if aimed anywhere near the head. It is hard to imagine the force and pain that a punch like that can cause. An example of a boxer who died not weeks after being knocked out in a fight is *Johnny Owen*, the Matchstick Man. He died in November 1980, after being knocked out by *Lupe Pintor* when fighting for the World Bantamweight title in Los Angeles. Another example is the most famous (greatest) boxer ever in the world *Muhammad Ali*, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease after taking a lot of blows to the head during his boxing career. But the list doesn't end at this, there are many more boxers whose lives are ultimately devastated or lost as a result of boxing.

In boxing you must score as many points as you can by hitting your opponent in the body or on the head as much as you can and also to block yourself from getting hit. But many non-boxing supporters continue to ask why should this violence be a legalised sport. Some extremists insist that it is reflective of Roman times when it was popular to watch gladiators duel to the death. Yet seemingly it won't be banned, based upon the popularity of the sport and the wide acclaim it receives both from the media and world spectators. Boxing is an intensely violent sport that has people of all ages both young and old watching their television sets and waiting to see some hard-core action. Boxing fans shout remarks like, "Hit him, punch him! knock him out!!" This leads non-supporters to argue that such remarks can pose a threat to peoples behavior and could be destructive to the emotions of society.

Another aspect of boxing besides the fighting is the money that is made. Boxing is a multi-million pound sport that is completely cash motivated. There are many out to make a living through its various branches e.g. the selling of the tickets for predominant fights or the betting on the results of such fights. Tickets for fights are very high profile, difficult to come by at short notice and do cost the ordinary boxing fan a lot of money. Betting on such fights often creates scams, even prize

money is the source of lots of scams where boxing promoters and boxing managers are sometimes all in on it. Boxers can be left out and often can be left out with little or no money at all.

An example of this is in the famous boxing film series *Rocky*, where the boxer *Rocky Balboa* is conned out of millions of pounds and loses his home and most of his possessions. This is said to be a portrayal of the actuality of the boxing scene, it does really happen in boxing. A late example of another boxing scam was *Mike Tyson's* first fight after his 3 year ban from boxing. He was banned after he viciously bit a lump out of *Evander Holyfields'* ear in a fight for the world heavy weight title. *Tyson* won his first fight after 3 years against his opponent who had not been boxing for long. The fight was said to be a scam when the loser picked up + \$50,000 just for showing in the ring. But it was *Tyson* who won millions of dollars for his 1 round effort.

Another way that boxing has created money is through the television rights that are sold usually to *SKY* for millions of dollars every year. When a boxing fan who can't get a ticket wants to see a fight he would pay for Sky television and then have to pay an extra \$20 in the US or £15 in the UK to see the fight. Most of the money resulting from scams is that taken from the fans who pay to be entertained. This is why a large amount of people wish to see boxing banned from the 21st century. They wish to see it become an illegal sport and for all boxing licenses to be withdrawn.

The people who enjoy watching boxing and those involved in the sport in some way say that health risks occur more in lots of other sports than in boxing. If for example a footballer heads the ball enough times using one particular area of the head; brain damage would be bound to occur. Or if a rugby player gets tackled roughly that player could end up getting his neck broken. They say the chance of a boxer getting killed in the ring is very slim although there are some health risks. These people also say that referees and medical staff try to make sure that a fight does not become too brutal therefore the boxers face no serious risk. They claim boxing is a safer sport than motorbike racing, American football and speedboat racing. These sports have a higher death tally and more chance of injuries every year in comparison to boxing.

People who enjoy boxing and are in favour of the sport also say that the boxing world isn't a big money scam and that people's lives are not ruined because of it. They claim boxers are well looked after and that boxing managers and promoters aren't out to scam them, but instead wish to see them win their fights for the boxers own glory. Usually some close family are involved in the boxers affairs, and they aren't going to scam money out of them. They claim that every boxer knows the health risks that are involved in the sport and that boxing managers are there to keep them safe and to teach them how to defend themselves. They argue that if

someone is against the sport they should just not watch it or take part in it. Its good entertainment for some, but for others it might not suit them.

I myself think that boxing is a very exciting sport which does have its dangers. It is fun to watch today's boxers like *Prince Naseem* and *Mike Tyson* in action and to watch the big fights on television. But I think to stop a lot of money scams and to improve safety standards the boxing commission and head board of the boxing community will have to make the necessary improvements in the sport. Most professional boxers do not wear safety gear around their heads, and damage is very easily caused. In the Olympics, their boxing safety standards are much better. I think boxing wont be banned from the 21st century because it is too popular and too much money is involved in the sport. I think that boxing shouldn't be banned from the 21st century, but safety standards and protection for boxers will have to be improved.

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