

Ring Reminiscences

— Fights and Fighters —

(By JAMES FENDERGAST)

THE GENESIS OF BOXING

Man is a fighting animal. From the teeth and claws of the caveman to the poison gas of modern warfare, fighting has been one of the principal preoccupations of what is termed the highest type of animal. Basically it was the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest," promulgated by Heigel and other German philosophers, which doctrine by the way, put Germany in the unenviable position which she now stands.

The lure of the prize ring undoubtedly has its roots deep in this primeval human instinct.

No other thrill in the world can equal that which comes from watching two men engage in combat with no other weapons of offence or defence, than those which mother nature has provided them. In the days when the Romans held sway over the then known world, it was a comparatively gentle sport to encase the hands of their warriors in lead gloves and then gloat over the results of the ensuing contest.

Before Rome rose to its predominant power and prestige, there was a writer and chronicler called Virgil, who vexed many people's college days with his immortal Aeneid, described at considerable length a boxing contest as it was conducted in those days. He describes with considerable relish the hollow thumps of the leaden mitts as they struck home on the panting chests of the gladiators. Homer chronicled the boxing match held by the Greeks as a part of the celebration of the fall of Troy.

Of course, in the days when feeding slaves to the eels was considered a mere overflow of Roman high spirits, boxing with leaden gloves was looked upon as a rather effeminate branch of

sports—much as we now look upon croquet. For many centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, boxing appears to have languished. There is no written or traditional record of fighting with the fists during the dark ages. The Medieval mind rather ran to poison and poniard than knuckles and gloves. It was not until the beginning of the Eighteenth Century that boxing occupied a place in the field of sports. Even then it rather sneaked in by the back door.

Boxing was first called to the attention of the general public as a sort of hanger-on of the aristocratic art of "fencing" and the more homely art of "singstick." The first definite appearance of bare-knuckle fighting on record was in the year 1716. In that year a certain John Figg issued an announcement card to the effect that he "taught fencing, boxing and singstick" to the nobility and gentry of the British Empire. Mr. Figg also announced that he was the champion at boxing. He modestly challenged all, any and sundry to try conclusions with him for a stake to be mutually agreed upon.

Some years after Mr. Figg's departure from this "vale of tears," there followed as champion, John Broughton, who did a great deal for the art of boxing. In addition to being a first class champion himself.

Broughton's patron was the Duke of Cumberland, who backed him in all his big matches—an indication that boxing had already risen from its humble estate as the amusement of the lowest stratum of society. Broughton was the first to set forth a set of boxing rules. These very simple and elastic rules lasted till the British Pugilists' Benevolent Association supplanted them with a more definite and effective code in 1838. It is interesting to note the evolution of the rules as time passed.

In one of the London newspapers of 1747, there is the following notice:

"Mr. John Broughton proposes, with proper assistance, to open an academy at his house in the Haymarket for the instruction of those who are willing to be instructed in the mystery of boxing, where the whole theory and practice of that truly British art, with all the numerous stops, blows, cross-butts, etc., incident to combatants will be taught and explained—and that persons of quality and distinction may not be debarred from entering a course of these lectures, they will be given with the utmost tenderness and regard for the delicacy of the frame and constitution of the pupil, for which reason mufflers are provided that will effectually secure them from the inconvenience of black eyes, broken jaws and bloody noses."

This is the first record we have of the use of gloves, and even so Professor Broughton's lecture must have been a trifle strenuous for some of his pupils. Furthermore, if Professor Broughton's wind in the ring equalled the length of some of his sentences, it is no wonder that he was one of England's bare-knuckle champions. However, Jack Broughton was a man of personality and character. His portraits show a man with a strong face, unmarked by the usual scars of devotees of the profession—with a good forehead, indicative of ability to do real thinking.

It was unquestionably Broughton's personality that attracted to the ring a class of persons never before interested in such plebeian matters as fighting with the fists.

Basketball Fixer Gets Long Term In Prison

By ARTHUR EVERETT

NEW YORK, Nov. 20 — (AP) — A basketball fixer has been sentenced to a long prison term by a judge who called college basketball and football in the United States a sordid big business. Five former college players also drew jail terms, and nine others received suspended sentences.

"Commercialism and over-emphasis in intercollegiate football and basketball are rampant throughout the country," said Judge Samuel S. Streit, and U.S. schools are courting an "atomic athletic scandal."

He sentenced gambler Salvatore Sollazzo to eight to 16 years in prison for spending \$22,000 to bribe basketball stars of big-time Madison Square Garden games.

Streit called Sollazzo "a cool, calculating and cunning waseel, who preys on the gullible and unsuspecting."

Five former players drew jail terms as conspirators in the biggest scandal in the history of U.S. intercollegiate sports.

One of them, Edward Gard, a Sollazzo lieutenant from Long Island University, got an indeterminate sentence up to three years.

Other former players and their sentences were Sherman White of L. I. U. one year; Edward Warner and Alvin Roth of City College of New York, and Harvey (Connie) Schaff of New York University, six months each.

Streit called the players "mature young men, all over 22 years of age, who should have known the iniquity of their conduct."

The court suspended sentence on Adolph Biggs, Richard Feustel, Nathan Miller, and Leroy Smith, all of L. I. U.; and Norman Mager, Irwin Dambrot, Herbert Cohen, Floyd Layne and Edward Roman, all of City College.

Cases against 16 other players are pending in the big cage scandal, in which players rigged points in games for the benefit of gamblers.

Judge Streit saw the scandal as evidence of widespread corruption in the American college athletic setup.

As examples of over-emphasis in

Broughton's patron being a scion of royalty, his bouts naturally attracted the patronage of the nobility, and the man's friends were found among the upper classes of England of that day, instead of in the submerged millions who had previously patronized ring contests.

Broughton won his title of Champion of England in 1740 and held it for ten years. During this time he brought boxing from a yokel sport of the country fairs to a recognized athletic amusement of the nobility and gentry. He built a new arena in London, where boxing was held under his direction.

In one fell swoop Broughton's life work was apparently undone. In 1750 he was matched to fight a butcher by the name of Jack Slack, who was supposed to be an easy mark. The Duke of Cumberland wagered many thousands of pounds on his protegee, and all the nobility of the Kingdom were down heavily on Broughton.

Scarcely had the fight started before Slack smashed Broughton a terrific blow right between the eyes. Within a few minutes this caused such a swelling that Broughton was completely blinded. The man before him was hitting him at will.

The Duke, who was watching the contest, with his heavy bets on his mind, called out: "What's the matter with you Broughton? You can't fight! You're beaten!"

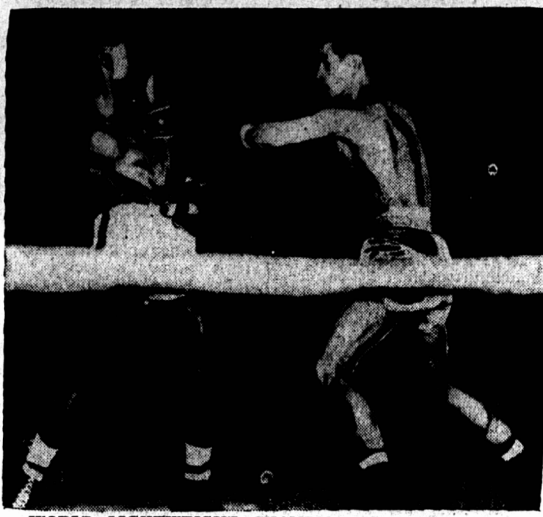
Back came Broughton's sad reply: "I'm blind, Your Grace; only let me see my man and he'll not beat me yet."

Nevertheless Slack beat him, and the result was disastrous to boxing for many years. The noble Duke gave a bad exhibition of sportsmanship, and belittled from one end of England that he had been sold out and robbed.

From being a patron of the ring he became its arch enemy, finally getting Parliament to pass laws against prize fighting, which became an outlawed sport practiced clandestinely and under threats of law for both principals and spectators. Broughton's arena was closed.

Notwithstanding the embargo, a certain number of the noble and gentle patrons of the sport clung to the rough and manly sport that they loved. Boxing lived through this low period, simply because of the inherent interest in physical contests between man and man.

When the American John C. Heenan fought Sayers for the world's championship in 1860, Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, half of the House of Commons, and some of the Bishops were incognito spectators.



WORLD LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION IS RARIN' TO GO

Lightweight boxing champion Jimmy Carter (left) of New York, covers up as Art Aragon, of Los Angeles, Calif., presses his attack during an early round of their 15-round championship bout in Los Angeles. Carter, who floored Aragon twice, once in the sixth and again in the 15th, won a unanimous decision, to retain his title. The champ plans to return to New York shortly to open a "fight anybody, any time" campaign, in defence of his title.

football, Streit singled out Oklahoma, Texas, Texas A. & M., Southern Methodist, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Maryland and Kentucky. Only Kentucky has been mixed up in the basketball scandal.

The University of Kentucky grossed more than \$1,200,000, he said, and Tennessee grossed \$1,347,000 while spending \$250,000 a year on its football program — \$100,000 for scholarships.

Of Tennessee, one of the country's top grid powers, Streit said: "No big league baseball club has

Defends Athletic Scholarships

DALLAS, Tex., Nov. 19 — (AP) — Matty Bell, athletic director of Southern Methodist University, asked today what was wrong with his school granting 154 athletic scholarships.

Commenting on the scathing statement of Judge Paul S. Streit of New York, at the sentencing of a basketball fixer to prison, during which the judge said Southern Methodist awarded 154 athletic scholarships, Bell said:

"Well it isn't any of the judge's business in the first place and in the second place these scholarships cover all sports, not just football. Only about 90 are for football."

"These are given to boys who, in the main, would be unable to attend college without the assistance. In other words, athletics are giving boys an education."

AMBERGATE, England — (CP) — Girl workers at a nylon factory here will be provided with free manicures, in the hope of reducing damage to stockings by rough hands and broken fingernails.

a superior scouting and recruiting system."

The basketball scandal involved a number of gamblers, who operated openly, travelled with the teams and passed out big bundles of money to rig games to their satisfaction.

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Flying freight elevator

"Open air" elevator service would amaze most folks, but at Alcan's British Columbia project it's just part of the job. At Kogano helicopters are the elevators which lift men to work each day to perches atop 1000 foot cliffs. Men, tents, drill rigs, cigarettes, laundry and all the many items of camp life are delivered in a matter of minutes to ledges which could not be reached in hours, even days, of climbing.

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