

# Dempsey-Tunney Fight Highlight Of Great Era

Editor's Note: Thirty years ago, Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney met, for the second time, in a prize fight which was to highlight sport's greatest era. It not only drew the biggest gate in boxing history, it became one of the most controversial matches of all time. Alan J. Gould, executive editor of The Associated Press, was general sports editor then. Here is his recollection of that classic.

By ALAN J. GOULD  
Associated Press Writer  
America's golden age of sports came to a spectacular climax along Chicago's lake front on a balmy September evening in 1927. That was the night of the return match for the world's heavyweight boxing championship between the old mauler, William Harrison (Jack) Dempsey, and the fighting marine, James Joseph (Gene) Tunney. The battle drew an all-time record of \$2,658,000 in gate receipts and ended in a 10-round victory on points for Tunney, the plebeian, as he rallied from a "long count" knockdown in the seventh round.

It may have been suspected at the time, but it has taken history and the perspective of 30 years to record that it was not only one of the most controversial prize fights of all time, but the centerpiece of all the fabulous sports events of that era of wonderful nonsense — the "roaring twenties."

**PEAK OF PROMOTION**  
These were the days of such glamorous performers as Babe Ruth and Bobby Jones, of Helen Wills and Big Bill Tilden, of Paavo Nurmi and Red Grange. Above all, it was the peak period of sports, it was the peak period of pugilistic promotion under the guiding genius of that gifted gambler of the Klondike—George Lewis (Tex) Rickard.

Prize fighting had become the most fashionable of all professional sports. With Dempsey as his star attraction, Rickard promoted five top heavyweight fights that drew in excess of \$8,000,000 from 1921 to 1927, and attracted the patronage of people willing to pay as high as \$100 each for ringside seats.

In an atmosphere featuring nothing but the biggest and the best, with money no object, the second Dempsey-Tunney fight was a "natural."

Tunney, a product of the sidewalks of New York, fought chiefly in light heavyweight ranks until he caught Rickard's eye as a potential challenger for Dempsey. On that July day in 1921 when Dempsey knocked out Georges Carpentier of France in the first heavyweight "battle of the century" at Boyle's Thirty Acres in Jersey City, Gene Tunney was an inconspicuous figure in a preliminary bout — in which he kayoed Soldier Jones.

"I'LL LICK HIM"  
By 1925, Tunney not only had gained weight and stature, he was mature and confident. To Rickard he said: "Get me Demp-

sey. As sure as there are stars in the heavens, I'll lick him." Tex agreed that Gene would be the next man to get a crack at Jack's title.

In a steady downpour of rain on the night of Sept. 23, 1926, Tunney — a 5-to-1 underdog — outboxed and outfought Dempsey decisively in 10 rounds to dethrone the man who had been heavyweight king for seven years.

**DEMPSEY THE AGGRESSOR**  
For six rounds, Tunney held the upper hand. As previously, he relied on his speed, boxing skill, and counterpunching. Dempsey, tanned and alert, was the aggressor. He was not match for Tunney at close quarters, though, and was consistently outpointed.

Then came the seventh. Dempsey crowded Tunney against the ropes, caught the champion suddenly a bit off-guard, and crashed a right to the jaw. Unable to manoeuvre, Tunney tried to clinch, but Dempsey was quick to seize his advantage. He landed a hard left hook, then a short right that blasted Tunney's chin. As the champion's legs buckled and he started to fall, Dempsey kept punching at his crumpling target.

It looked like the end. Tunney's eyes were closed as he dropped to the canvas. Instinctively he reached out and grasped the second strand of rope to keep himself from falling flat.

Pandemonium broke loose as 105,000 fans leaped to their feet, yelling for the "kill". It had the old primeval effect on Dempsey, too, for he hovered menacingly over his fallen opponent and at first ignored referee Dave Barry's insistence that he go to the farthest neutral corner.

Five fateful seconds elapsed before Dempsey obeyed the referee's instructions, based on a rule that had been spelled out for both fighters in advance. Thus when Barry began the count at "one" it was actually "six" from the moment of the knockdown. When Tunney arose at the count of "nine," taking full advantage of the chance to recover from the punishment, he had the benefit of the "long count" of 14 seconds.

In ring parlance, Tunney "got

on his bicycle and back-pedaled" to keep out of the plunging Dempsey's reach. It was the smart thing to do. Any other tactic could have been disastrous.

Dempsey had shot his bolt. Tunney came out for the eighth round with renewed confidence. He had absorbed Dempsey's heaviest punches. Sensing that the former champion was weakening, Tunney moved to the attack and dropped Dempsey with a right to the jaw.

Gathering steam, he outboxed and outpunched the challenger through the last two rounds and clearly was the winner on points when the last bell sounded. Dempsey was bleeding from a bad cut over his left eye and so battered he did not seem to realize when the fight was over.

Did the "long count" save Tunney's title and prevent Dempsey from becoming the first fighter to regain the heavyweight crown? Since no one can say for sure, that's one of the fistic debates that can — and probably will — go on forever.

From where I sat at the ringside, an arm's length from where Tunney went down under Dempsey's savage attack, several things may be said with some conviction, though not with finality.

**COULD HAVE RISEN**  
First, there is no doubt in my mind that Tunney could have got up after the count of "nine", i.e., without the benefit of the five-second bonus. There is no doubt, either, that he was badly hurt and that, superb as was his physical condition and the thoroughness with which he had trained himself for just such emergencies, he would have been a much readier target for Dempsey's renewed efforts to deliver the crusher.

In my judgment, the chances were better than 50-50 that Jack would have done so — though in so saying now, as I did 30 years ago, I do not underestimate Dempsey's psychological handicap when he found his heaviest artillery had not kept Gene down.

In any case, there can be no alibi for Dempsey — and to his credit as a fighter and sportsman he offered none, even in the midst of his greatest disappointment. He knew the rule requiring either fighter, in scoring a knockdown, to go at once to a neutral corner.



**NEW COMMANDER IN EGYPT**

RAFAH, Egypt.—Col. W. Capelle, (right) of Ottawa, new commander of the Canadian Army contingent of the UN Emer-

gency Force, and retiring commander Col. H.E. Brown of Brandon, Man., look over a map of Rafah camp where the Can-

adians are located. Col. Capelle was formerly director of engineering development at Army headquarters. (CP from National Defence)

## Poultry Study Brings Profits

OTTAWA—Over the past 50 years the poultry industry has developed from the small farm flock, hatched and brooded by mother hen, to the large commercial flock as we know it today. This rapid development would have been impossible without continuous poultry research, says T.M. MacIntyre, Senior Nutritionist, Experimental Farm Nappan N.S.

Until 1900 little attention was given to the economic characteristics of the many breeds and varieties of chickens. About 1910 the trapnest was invented, and shortly after the progeny test was introduced as a means of improving egg production. Improved incubation and brooding followed and by 1920 practically all farm hatching had ceased.

## Rain Delays Prairie Harvest

OTTAWA (CP)—Rain has curbed Prairie crop harvesting and warm, dry weather is urgently needed, the bureau of statistics said Wednesday in the last of a series of telegraphic crop reports.

Widespread showers have kept machines out of fields and reduced the quality of cut grain during the last two weeks, the bureau said. Only half the grain crop has been harvested in Saskatchewan; 45 per cent in Manitoba and considerably less in

# Human Carelessness Chief Cause Of Forest Fire Loss

By THE CANADIAN PRESS  
Despite forest fire prevention campaigns, human carelessness, after a year's respite, again heads the list of forest fire causes in 1957, forestry officials say.

Lightning which led the list last year, causing more than half of the fires, this year accounted for between 14 and 20 per cent. A Canadian Press survey showed that up to the end of August more than 4,200 forest fires were reported in Canada compared with approximately 5,000 in the corresponding period in 1956.

**LESS ACREAGE BURNED**  
Comparative reports are available so far from only five provinces. They indicate less acreage burned than in 1956. One factor may have been new firefighting methods.

In Ontario, 90-gallon tanks fitted to the sides of aircraft are filled with water by a scoop device as the plane taxis along a lake's surface. Controlled by the pilot, the tanks are filled in a matter of seconds and can be emptied at any desired spot.

**Sydney Worker Fatally Injured**  
SYDNEY (CP)—Construction worker John A. MacNeil, 80, of Sydney, died in hospital here Thursday of injuries suffered when struck by a car Tuesday. A steel plant pensioner, Mr. MacNeil was working with the Webster Construction Co. of Truro as a flagman.

Publicity was credited with helping officials get to the root of the problem. In northern Manitoba, for example, officials this year made up large red crests with blue lettering — "honorary fire guardian" — which have been distributed to selected Indians on various reservations.

Forestry officials say that 33 per cent of Manitoba's fires were caused by Indians who did not extinguish camp fires.

Of the 4,218 forest fires recorded, Ontario had 1,570 fires, while British Columbia reported 1,361.

Officials said the reason behind the increase in Ontario forest fires — last year there were only 876 — was the difference in weather conditions. But the acreage of timberland burned was cut to 45,000 acres this year from 222,780 acres in 1956.

**QUICK ACTION**  
Officials said this year fire fighters were able to get to the scene before fires got out of hand. Human carelessness was held accountable for 86 per cent of the fires.

Newfoundland's exceptionally dry summer accounted for 70 fires but recent rains ended the hazard. The burned area covered 15,590 acres.

A good rainfall kept Saskatchewan forest fires down to 138 compared with 186 last year. A total of 37,000 acres were burned compared with 57,718 acres last year.

Alberta's 635 fires burned on 14,500 acres as against 235 fires that whipped through 694,000 acres in 1956. Again human carelessness was blamed for 80 per cent of the fires.

British Columbia officials say the cost of firefighting was reduced to one-third this year. Last year they spent \$440,915 in putting out 2,592 fires. This year it cost \$138,294 to extinguish 1,361 fires.

Most popular slogan in B.C. is "Keep B.C. green—use your ash-tray."

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