

**SPORTS
IN AMERICA**
FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA

VOLUME 1

STEVEN A. RIESS, EDITOR



SHARPE REFERENCE
an imprint of J.M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

SHARPE REFERENCE

Sharpe Reference is an imprint of M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
80 Business Park Drive
Armonk, NY 10504

© 2011 by M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holders.

Cover images (clockwise, from top left) were provided by the following: ASP/Getty Images; Bob Martin/Getty Images; Sports Illustrated/Getty Images; Otto Grunle, Jr./Stringer/Getty Images; The Granger Collection, New York; Stephen Dunn/Getty Images.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sports in America from colonial times to the twenty-first century: an encyclopedia / Steven A. Riess, editor.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-7656-1706-4 (hardcover: alk. paper)
1. Sports—United States—History. 2. Sports—Social aspects—United States—History.
GV583.S68388 2011
796.0973—dc22

2010050824

Printed and bound in the United States

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z 39.48, 1984.

CW (c) 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher: Myron E. Sharpe
Vice President and Director of New Product Development: Donna Sarzone
Vice President and Production Director: Carmen Cheit
Executive Development Editor: Jeff Hacker
Project Manager: Laura Brangelman
Program Coordinator: Cathleen Prisco
Editorial Assistant: Lauren LoPinto
Text Design and Cover Design: Jesse Sanchez

CONTENTS

<i>Topic Finder</i>	xi	Automobile Racing.....	118
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xvii	Avalanche, Colorado/Quebec Nordiques.....	123
<i>Introduction</i>	xxi		
Volume 1			
Essays			
Colonial Era.....	3	Baker, Hobby.....	125
Early Republic, Antebellum, and Civil War Era, 1790–1870.....	9	Baseball, to 1870.....	126
The Gilded Age, 1870–1900.....	17	Baseball, Major League.....	129
Progressive Era, 1900–1920.....	25	Baseball, Minor League.....	139
Interwar Period and World War II, 1920–1945.....	35	Baseball, Semi-professional.....	141
Postwar Era, 1946–1970.....	45	Basketball, College.....	143
Postwar Era, Since 1970.....	53	Basketball, Professional, Pre-NBA.....	148
		Basketball, Professional, NBA Era.....	151
		Basketball, Women's.....	157
		Baugh, Sammy.....	160
		Bears, Chicago.....	161
A–Z		Bennett, James G., Jr.....	163
Aaron, Hank.....	63	Berenson, Senda.....	165
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem.....	64	Billiards.....	166
African American Baseball, Before 1920.....	66	Black Sox Scandal.....	168
African American Baseball, Negro League Era.....	69	Blackhawks, Chicago.....	170
African Americans.....	72	Blue Jays, Toronto.....	172
Agents.....	79	Blue Laws.....	173
Air Racing.....	81	Bobsled, Luge, and Skeleton.....	176
Ali, Muhammad.....	83	Bodybuilding.....	177
All-America Football Conference.....	86	Bonds, Barry.....	180
All-American Girls Baseball League.....	87	Bowl Games, College Football.....	182
Amateur Athletic Union.....	89	Bowling.....	186
Amateurism.....	91	Boxing.....	188
American Basketball Association.....	94	Breves, Adana/Milwaukee/Boston.....	197
America's Cup.....	95	Brotherhood of Professional Baseball Players.....	199
Archery.....	97	Brown, Jim.....	200
Arledge, Roone.....	99	Brown, Paul.....	202
Armstrong, Lance.....	100	Browns, Cleveland.....	203
Arts, Visual.....	101	Brutus, Boston.....	205
Ashle, Arthur.....	108	Brundage, Avery.....	206
Astronomy.....	110	Bryant, Bear.....	208
Athletic Clubs.....	112	Bulls, Chicago.....	210
Athletics, Oakland/Kansas City/Philadelphia.....	114	Business of Sports.....	211
Atles, Charles.....	117		
		Camp, Walter.....	221
		Canadiens, Montreal.....	223

1962, the Congress of Racial Equality and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, two leading civil rights organizations, staged sit-ins in St. Louis to successfully desegregate local alleys. Then they took their fight to the South, where, in 1968, three young men were killed in the so-called Orangeburg (South Carolina) Massacre over access to the local bowling alley.

Bowling After World War II

In 1947, there were more than 16 million bowlers in the United States, spending over \$200 million annually, although the sport still had a seedy image. Within a few years, however, bowling would enjoy its greatest boom, making it a family entertainment, and renaming the bowling alley into the "people's country club."

The sport followed many of its players to the suburbs with large new recreational centers that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to construct and housed dozens of lanes and new technology. The biggest development was the introduction in 1952 of automatic pin spotters to replace pin boys, making the game more faster. (Pin boys had a reputation for rude and boisterous behavior, so their removal from bowling establishments also contributed to the new image of bowling as a sport that was appropriate for families.)

Other innovations included arrow markers to increase accuracy and underground ball returns to promote safety. Facilities were open 24 hours, and proprietors catered to housewives and children who played in the mornings and afternoons. The new facilities included nurseries for children, snack bars, cocktail lounges, and restaurants. By 1964, there were 39 million bowlers.

While the number has increased since then, the sport experienced a 40 percent drop in league bowling by the 1980s. To help reverse this trend, the United States Bowling Congress was created in 2005, merging the ABC, WIBC, Young American Bowling Alliance, and USA Bowling, serving more than 2.6 million Americans.

Bowling and Television

In the 1950s, bowling received considerable television exposure. The first network coverage was NBC's *Championship Bowling*, and a host of local shows, such as *Make That Spare* (1960–1964) and *Bowling for Dillards* (1968), gave participants a chance to win prizes.

In 1958, Eddie Elias, a successful promoter, agent, and entrepreneur, founded the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) with 33 members, mainly from Detroit and Chicago brewery-sponsored leagues. Three years later, the association was on network television. ABC

telecast the Pro Bowlers Tour hosted by Chris Schenkel (1961–1997), which originally outdrew college football and basketball. Bowling was so popular that in 1964, Don Carter, considered the greatest bowler of all time, became the first athlete to sign a \$1 million endorsement deal, with bowling manufacturer Ebonite. The Ladies Pro Bowlers Tour, established in 1981 (now the Professional Women's Bowling Association) was one of the first women's pro sports to appear on television.

The PBA was bought in 2000 by three former Microsoft executives—Rob Glenser, Chris Peters, and Mike Slade—who hoped to save the organization by assuming its debts and providing imaginative leadership for the future. PBA events are covered by ESPN on Sunday afternoons. Prize money doubled to \$5.6 million in 2009. The current star is Walter Ray Williams, Jr., a six-time Player of the Year who holds the records for all-time PBA career titles (44) and earnings (more than \$4 million).

In 2010, the PBA gave Kelly Kulick, the winner of the Women's World Championship, a spot in its Tournament of Champions. Kulick averaged 226 for 90 games and won the title, 265–195 over Chris Barnea. She is the first woman to win a PBA crown.

Steven A. Riess

See also: Urbanization.

Further Reading

Brown, Christopher, prod. *A League of Ordinary Gentlemen*. New York: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2006.

Rigall, James H., and John C. Walter. "The Inception of the American Bowling Congress: The Buffalo Experience." *African Americans in New York Life and History* 29:2 (July 2005): 7–43.

Hemmer, John G., and W.J. Kenna. *The Western Bowler's Journal*. *Bowling Encyclopedia: A History of Bowling*. Chicago: Western Bowlers' Journal, 1904.

Hudley, Andrew. *Diners, Bowling Alleys and Trailer Parks: Clearing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Riess, Steven A. *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

Weiskopf, Herman. *The Pyrex Game: The World of Bowling*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1978.

Boxing

First becoming popular in America during the early nineteenth century, boxing is a sport in which two participants use their fists—originally bare and, later, in padded gloves—to score points or knockouts by land-

ing blows against opponents. Bouts usually are conducted in rings—actually, enclosed squares surrounded by ropes—and divided into a number of timed rounds. A referee patrols the ring to prevent illegal blows and holds. Judges score points and name the winner; unless a fighter is incapacitated by a punch, leading to a knockout or a technical knockout.

Given the sport's violent nature, the American public exhibited a mixed attitude toward boxing, condemning it as brutal, but also celebrating it as a symbol of manliness and courage. This ambivalent attitude led to restrictive legislation against boxing, often putting it on the margins of legitimate recreational activity. Another issue that divided the public was boxing's traditional association with high-stakes gambling and suspicions that the outcomes of big fights may be determined beforehand by unscrupulous officials, some with connections to the criminal underworld.

As for the boxers themselves, most have been working-class men (and, very recently, women), often from the most impoverished and lowest-status ethnic and racial groups, who have tried to use the sport to gain upward social and economic mobility. Prizefighting was permitted in only a few states until after World War I, when it became one of the most popular spectator sports in North America, while amateur boxing remained a widely practiced participatory sport.

Politicians, organized crime networks, business tycoons, state athletic commissions, and world sanctioning organizations—many of which have not served the athletes or the sport well—all have had a hand in shaping the prizefighting, or professional boxing, industry. Not surprisingly, boxing long has been beset by controversy over the integrity of the sport and its impact on the health of its practitioners.

Origins of Boxing

The sport of boxing dates to ancient times and was part of the Greek Olympic games in 688 B.C.E. It largely disappeared from the historical record from approximately 500 C.E. through the early 1700s, when it reemerged in the form of bare-knuckle fighting in England.

The first codified boxing rules, drafted by Jack Broughton in 1743, specified that each match would go on for an unlimited number of rounds, until one of the boxers was knocked down and could not continue within a half-minute time limit. While permitting wrestling holds and manning, the "Broughton rules" prohibited eye gouging, hitting below the belt, and striking a fallen opponent. Broughton also invented boxing gloves—or "muffs"—which, at the time, were used only in spar-

ring contests. Early bare-knuckle bouts were fought in a circle formed by spectators around the fighters; the purse was divided publicly after the bout, with two-thirds given to the winner.

In 1838, the Broughton rules were modified to introduce a 24-foot (7.3-meter) square ring made of turf and formed by eight stakes and ropes. Colored handkerchiefs tied onto the stakes of the opposite corners were claimed by the winner as trophies. The new "London Prize Ring rules" banned holding stones in your hands, low blows, head-butting, kicking, hitting below the waist, and biting as foul tactics; they also established guidelines for umpires, referees, seconds, and "bottle-holders." Rounds lasted until a knockdown, and then fighters had 30 seconds to rest, and then eight more seconds to return to the scratch line.

Rise of Boxing in North America

Before the sport became widely popular in the United States, slave owners often sponsored matches between slaves and wagered money on the outcome, sometimes granting slaves their freedom as a prize for a victorious fight. Bill "The Black Terror" Richmond of Staten Island, New York, for example, was a former slave who traveled to England in 1809 and fought as a protégé of the Duke of Northumberland. In 1810 and 1811, Tom Molyneux, a former slave from Virginia who was trained by Richmond, twice challenged and lost to English champion Tom Cribb, despite the losses, Molyneux was hailed as a celebrity in England.

The first recognized U.S. bare-knuckle bout took place between Jacob Hyer and Tom Basely in New York in 1816. The victorious Hyer generally is referred to as the "Father of the American Ring." These early bouts were chronicled in the periodical *American Fistiana* and later were compiled into a history of U.S. pugilism, or boxing, of the same title, first published in 1849.

U.S. pugilism developed in tandem with urbanization and the commercialization of leisure culture, especially in immigrant hubs such as Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia. Urban neighborhoods, rife with interethnic conflicts and labor tensions, served as breeding grounds for aspiring boxers, who otherwise had few prospects for upward mobility or chances at fame. The ethnic working class spent much of their leisure time in drinking establishments—saloons, brothels, and taverns—where boxing matches generally were staged, complete with vigorous betting wagers on the side.

The bare-knuckle contests took on strong nationalistic undertones, epitomized by Hyer's son Tom, who

became the U.S. heavyweight champion when he defeated Yankee Sullivan (James Ambrose) on February 7, 1849, at Still Pond Creek, Maryland. Sullivan, who enjoyed a maverick reputation, ran a saloon in New York, where he fought many of the best boxers of the day, although he only claimed the heavyweight title after Hyer's retirement in 1851.

Notwithstanding the actual practice, boxing was prohibited by law in many states because of the violence (and occasional deaths), the riotous crowds, and the gambling. New Jersey was the first state to implement legislation against prizefighting in 1835. Massachusetts followed suit in 1849, and New York in 1858. By the 1880s, all 38 existing states had made boxing illegal.

On October 12, 1853, Sullivan met John Morrissey for the heavyweight championship in Boston Corners, New York. After the thirty-sixth round, a riot broke out when Sullivan hit Morrissey while he was down, and spectators spilled into the ring. After the chaos was quelled, the referee awarded the fight to Morrissey based on low blows and Sullivan's failure to come to scratch, the line in the middle of the ring. On October 20, 1858, Morrissey defeated John C. Heenan at Long Point, Canada, to become the heavyweight champion of America (the United States and Canada).

After the bout, Morrissey retired from boxing, while Heenan went on to meet British champion Tom Sayers in Rarborough, England, on April 17, 1860, for a world championship contest that was invested with ideas of American versus British manliness. Heenan seemed to be making his way toward victory, but after the forty-second round, the crowd broke into the ring and the bout was declared a draw, with each boxer awarded a championship belt.

Irish Americans

Amid the great wave of Irish immigration in the mid-nineteenth century, an increasing number of first- and second-generation Irish immigrants became involved in boxing, and by the late nineteenth century, most champions were of Irish descent. While these immigrant youth were used to settling scores in brawls in the streets, boxing matches offered them a payday, social mobility, and respect among their peers. Neighborhood gangs often had close links to political organizations that had a stake in the ongoing religious (Protestant versus Catholic), political (Whig versus Democrat), and citizenship (nativist versus immigrant) debates. New York's notoriously corrupt Tammany Hall, for example, hired physically

strong Irish men to intimidate wavering voters from their own ranks as well as members of their rival organizations, such as the anti-Catholic Know-Nothing or American Party. The best known of these so-called shoulder-hitters was Morrissey, who, after retiring from boxing, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1866 and—after a falling-out with Tammany Hall—became a New York state senator in 1875.

A curious symbiosis between sports and politics was forged: politicians sponsored fighters, served as managers and matchmakers, and used their leverage with the police to gain approval and protection for semipublic boxing matches. Newspapers had an important role in promoting boxing matches, and boxers used the papers to issue challenges to one another through printed advertisements, known as "cards." Richard Kyle Fox, an Irish immigrant and the publisher of the *National Police Gazette*, was one of the most prominent promoters. He declared the winners of fights and gave out championship belts to boxers whom he considered the best in each weight class. Popular boxing reporting appeared in a number of newspapers and periodicals, including the *Boston Post*, the *Daily Pleasure* (New Orleans), *Leitch's Weekly Illustrated* (New York), the *New York Clipper*, the *New York Herald*, and *The Spirit of the Times* (New York).

A late-nineteenth-century culture of physicality that celebrated masculine prowess—in particular, the white male body—brought wider attention to sports, but boxing provided the era's most famous hero and raised the sport's financial stakes to new levels. Irish American John L. Sullivan became known for his crowd-pleasing brawls, offering a handsome sum of money to any man of any size who would challenge him in the ring. The ability of the "Boston Strong Boy" to knock his opponents out turned the charismatic Sullivan into a publicity magnet, particularly embraced by working-class men.

On February 2, 1882, when Sullivan fought the reigning champion, Patrick "Paddy" Ryan, for the heavyweight crown in Mississippi City, Mississippi, both boxers brought \$25,000 to the ring under the agreement "winner takes all." The fight, which Sullivan won, originally had been scheduled to take place in New Orleans, but, as often was the case with the illegal matches, it had to be moved across state lines to evade the law.

On July 8, 1889, Sullivan engaged in a bout in Richburg, Mississippi, with Jake Kilrain, who previously had been declared heavyweight champion by

Fox. After 75 rounds, Kilrain was unable to continue in what turned out to be the last heavyweight bare-knuckle championship fight.

Legalized Prizefighting

Boxing's status improved near the end of the century, as it became known as the "manly art of self-defense." In 1888, the Amateur Athletic Union began organizing local, state, and national amateur boxing championships in the United States. This encouraged the legalization of boxing, first in Texas in 1889, and then New Orleans in 1890.

On September 7, 1892, John L. Sullivan met James J. "Gentleman Jim" Corbett in the three-day "Carnival of Champions" tournament, which also included a featherweight fight between George Dixon and Jack Skelly, and a lightweight match between Jack McAuliffe and Billy Myer. It was a legal event organized by the Pelican Athletic Club in New Orleans, and the boxers followed the Marquis of Queensberry rules.

Drafted by John Graham Chambers, a member of England's Amateur Athletic Club, under the sponsorship of John Sholto Douglas, the ninth Marquis of Queensberry, in 1867, the Queensberry rules introduced boxing gloves, three-minute rounds—with a minute between rounds and ten seconds to get up after a knockdown—while banning wrestling and hugging holds. Sullivan and Corbett both wore 5-ounce (142-gram) gloves to the contest. The younger and more technically skillful Corbett knocked out the aging Sullivan in the twenty-first round, marking the demise of a decade-old hero who had turned boxing into a major sporting attraction.

Boxing soon was legalized in New York under the Horton Law (1896–1900), which allowed athletic clubs licensed by local municipalities to organize sparring sessions. In practice, these "exhibition contests" often were fronts for prizefights, at times prevented and at other times ignored by the police. Prizefighting was legalized in Nevada (1897) and Colorado (1899), although the latter state soon repealed its decision.

African American and Women Boxers in the Late Nineteenth Century

Although boxing initially was not segregated along racial lines, by the end of the nineteenth century, in-

terracial matches, especially among heavyweights, were rare. John L. Sullivan adamantly refused to meet any nonwhite challengers during his career, while Corbett fought an interracial match to a 61-round draw against the popular Peter "Black Prince" Jackson in San Francisco on May 21, 1891. But Corbett also drew the color line as champion. The so-called Negro circuit produced many boxes of renown, including Canadian George "Little Chocolate" Dixon, the first black fighter to win a world boxing championship in 1890 as a bantamweight, and Joe Gans, lightweight champion of the world from 1902 to 1908.

In addition, some women in late-nineteenth-century North America sporadically stepped into the ring. The first known women's boxing match was Nell Saunders's 1876 victory over Rose Harland in New York City; in 1884, Nellie Stewart of Norfolk, Virginia, was crowned the first "Female Champion of the World."

Boxing, 1900–1920

The early twentieth century saw a lull in the mainstream popularity of boxing, which operated with little legal protection. Prizefighting was banned in New York in 1900 (although boxing clubs survived there under the guise of "membership" clubs) and in Chicago in 1905. San Francisco became the main scene for championship fights under the protection of city boss Abe Reub, who also was the city's leading boxing promoter.

The volatile racial relations of the Progressive Era aided antiboxing crusades across the nation. The rise of African American Jack Johnson as the first publicly acknowledged black fighter to challenge for the heavyweight championship raised violent opposition. On December 26, 1908, the "Galveston Giant," as Johnson was known, defeated Canadian Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, upsetting the century-long reign of white boxers for the most prestigious boxing crown. This shocked Americans who believed in the supremacy of the white race and led to an ongoing quest for the "Great White Hope."

Former champion Jim Jeffries agreed to come out of retirement to challenge Johnson in Reno, Nevada, the only state that would allow the fight, on July 4, 1910. In the promotions, Johnson was billed as the "Negroes' Deliverer" and Jeffries as the "Hope of the White Race." Jeffries's loss to Johnson provoked riots and mob violence throughout the United States, galvanizing a movement to ban prizefighting outright. At a time when motion pictures were becoming a popular form of entertainment, many states banned the showing

of the Johnson-Jeffries fight film. This prompted Congress in 1912 to bar the interstate commerce of all fight films for public viewing, a ban that lasted until 1940.

Johnson finally was dethroned in Havana, Cuba, on April 15, 1915, by Jess Willard, who restored the racial status quo in and out of the ring. After Johnson, no African American boxer would get a shot at the heavyweight title until 1937.

Some restrictions on boxing broke down in the 1910s, with New York's Frawley Law, which allowed for "no decision" contests from 1911 to 1917, and in California, four-round bouts were allowed between 1914 and 1924. As the United States' entry into World War I became imminent, boxing received widespread positive publicity as part of soldiers' training for combat, prompting many states to allow prizefights again, including New Jersey, whose Hurley Law in 1918 permitted eight-round bouts.

Interwar Years

The 1920s often are referred to in the United States as the "golden age of sports," when large numbers of people enjoyed pro sports and had more leisure time than ever before. Spectator sports boomed, and each sport seemed to have its own great hero. In New York in 1920, the Walker Act, sponsored by James J. Walker, minority leader of the state senate, legalized prizefights, allowed them to be concluded by a decision, and established the first state athletic commission to regulate the industry. Other states soon followed.

In 1921, the National Boxing Association, comprising the state commissions and their international equivalents, was formed to sanction world championship title bouts. Promoter George "Tex" Rickard made a ten-year arrangement to stage boxing shows at New York's Madison Square Garden, a lucrative deal that turned Rickard into the preeminent boxing promoter and established New York as the sports national center. Radio broadcasting of fights, publication of Nat Fleischer's magazine *The Ring* (launched in February 1922), and newspaper coverage of heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey turned the preeminent prizefighter of the era into an international superstar.

Under the tutelage of manager Jack "Doc" Kearns, Dempsey, known as the "Manassa Mauler," became a national celebrity, hailed as the incarnation of white masculine "Americanness." Dempsey, together with the emerging mass entertainment industry, contributed to boxing's rising popularity and turned the sport into

big business. It is estimated that some 12 million Americans followed prizefighting in the 1920s. Men and women of all socioeconomic backgrounds—including members of high society—wanted to be seen at fights, especially championship bouts at arenas such as Madison Square Garden.

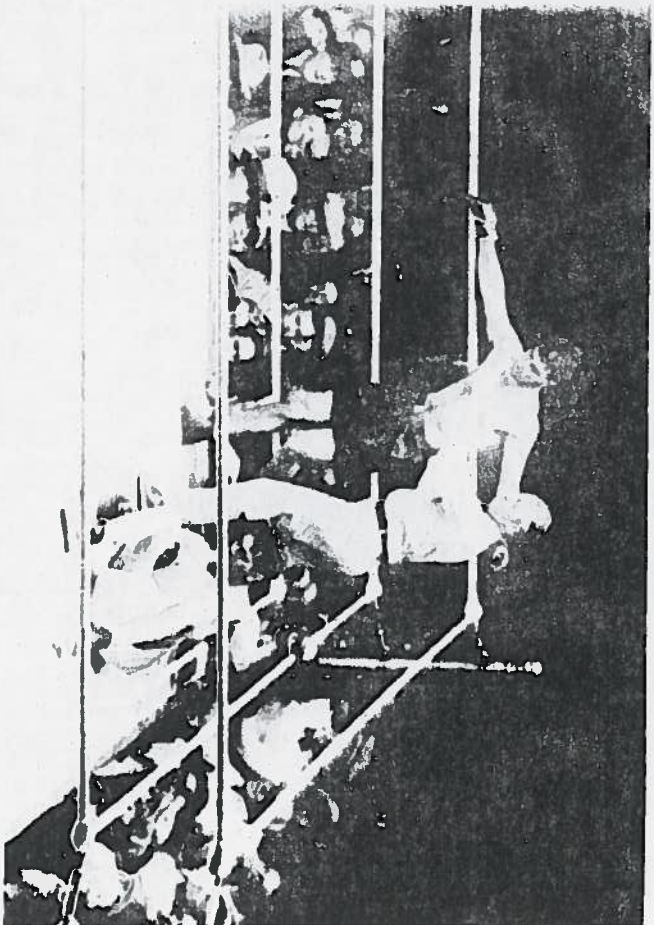
Dempsey's most popular fights were billed as patriotic contests against foreign "challengers," including Georges Carpentier of France and Luis "Wild Bull of the Pampas" Firpo of Argentina. On July 2, 1921, Dempsey defeated Carpentier in New Jersey in a fight dubbed the "Battle of the Century," the first bout sanctioned by the National Boxing Association. It was also the first world title fight broadcast over radio and the first million-dollar gate, with gross receipts of \$1,789,238.

Notwithstanding his popularity, Dempsey frequently was taken to task for his military record. Unlike his nemesis, Gene Tunney, who had served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War I and was celebrated as a war hero, Dempsey's public image was shadowed by insinuations of draft dodging. On September 23, 1926, Tunney dethroned Dempsey in Philadelphia before more than 120,000 spectators who paid a total of \$1.8 million to attend. Their rematch at Soldier Field in Chicago on September 22, 1927, produced a gate of \$2.65 million, a record that stood for more than 30 years.

The 1927 fight was one of the most controversial pugilistic encounters of all times. In the seventh round, Dempsey knocked down Tunney, but the referee did not start the count until Dempsey had retreated to the farther neutral corner, giving Tunney extra time to recover. He went on to win the bout, which became known inistic annals as the "long-count" fight.

Like other heavyweight champions, Dempsey refused to meet any African American challengers, particularly the number-one contender, Harry Wills. However, the 1920s saw the emergence of the first black middleweight champion when Theodore "Tiger" Flowers defeated Harry Greb in New York on February 26, 1926. The ring was dominated by Americans, although there were significant changes in their ethnicity.

After the overwhelming dominance of Irish boxers until 1916, the early decades of the twentieth century experienced a brief Jewish boxing boom. Alongside increasing Eastern European immigration, there were no fewer than 26 Jewish world champions between the years 1910 and 1940; Jews also had a strong presence in boxing as trainers, managers, and promoters. The most famous Jewish boxer, lightweight Benny Leonard (Benjamin Letney), held his championship title for eight years, from 1917 to 1925. Barney Ross (Beryl



Jack Dempsey knocked down Gene Tunney in the seventh round of their heavyweight championship rematch in 1927—dubbed the "long-count fight"—but Tunney retained the title. The gate of \$2.65 million at Chicago's Soldier Field was a record. (New York Daily News/Getty Images)

David Rosafsky) won the world championship in three weight categories: lightweight, junior welterweight, and welterweight.

When Max "Slapsie Maxie" Rosenbloom, the world light heavyweight champion from 1930 to 1934, was defeated by Bob Olin in New York on November 16, 1934, it marked the last time two Jews fought for a championship. After 1936, Italian Americans reigned in the boxing ring for more than a decade, while Jews mainly were active in the business side of boxing, as promoters (Mickey Jacobs, the leading promoter in the late 1930s and 1940s), writers (Nat Fleischer, founder of *The Ring* magazine), or entrepreneurs (Jacob Colomb, founder of Everlast boxing gear).

The prominence of Italian Americans in the ring reflected that group's widespread poverty. Most Italian immigrants who came to America near the turn of the century were unskilled and uneducated, and they were slanted for the lowest occupational positions. They also became the object of discrimination by mainstream

society, who stereotyped them as dangerous criminals and even questioned whether they were white. Many first- and second-generation Italian boxers fought under Anglicized aliases. For example, Giuseppe Carroza became lightweight champion in 1921 as Johnny Dundee.

The greatest fighter of the era was not an Italian, but an African American—Joe Louis (Joseph Louis Barrow), who, on June 22, 1937, defeated James Braddock in Chicago to become the second African American world heavyweight champion. Promoted by Jacobs and African American managers John Roxborough and Julian Black, Louis's career—unlike that of Jack Johnson before him—was celebrated in the United States. Louis was billed in the media as a symbol of American democratic ideals, as opposed to the oppressive regime of Nazi Germany, homeland of Louis's nemesis Max Schmeling, who had knocked out the American boxer in 1936. Their rematch in New York on June 22, 1938, with the stakes much higher, was Louis's most famous bout. With his first-round

knockout victory, Louis was hailed as a victor for American democracy and racial egalitarianism, while Schmeling was depicted as a token for Nazi nationalism and racism—though, in fact, Schmeling had assisted Jews in Germany. A month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, pushed the United States into World War II, Louis enlisted in the U.S. Army; he mainly performed in exhibition tours overseas, while his image was used by the Office of War Information to publicize the war effort.

Even as African Americans were rising in the male boxing world, female boxing remained very much on the fringes. In 1910, Crystal Bennett of Kansas City, Missouri, was crowned "Female Lightweight Champion of the World." In the 1920s, boxing was part of ladies' health education in Boston. Then, in the 1930s, former middleweight champion Mickey Walker toured the United States with a troupe of fighting women.

In the interwar era, control of boxing shifted away from politicians to organized crime networks. In ethnic neighborhoods where boxing gyms were located, fighters and criminals—both scrambling for a living—grew up together or met later on, giving underworld figures ready access to boxers and their handlers. The structural deficiencies in boxing, including dysfunctional state athletic commissions and the lack of a federal governing body, facilitated corruption in the sport. During the Great Depression, when boxing was second in popularity only to baseball, notable mobsters—among them, Paul John "Frankie" Carbo, Max "Boo Boo" Hoff, and Owen "Owney" Madden—moved in on the business side of the sport.

The gangsters took a cut from boxers' purses—often stealing them outright—and there also was money to be made from selling tickets and fixing fights. Abetted by a nexus of "fronts" across the nation, they served as de facto managers and matchmakers, and few boxers could become contenders, let alone champions, without their blessing. Carbo, for example, made his living from boxing and claimed a virtual monopoly on the middleweight division, while Madden managed many heavyweights, including the Italian heavyweight champion Primo Carnera. Notorious for his lack of boxing skill, Carnera won many fights in the 1930s amid cries of foul play, and his 1967 obituary in *The New York Times* referred to his career as a "hoax."

As a result of fight fixing, bribery, and extortion, the criminal influence penetrated all aspects of prizefighting. Boxers, trainers, managers, matchmakers, promoters, fight officials, athletic commissions, and even sportswriters all were influenced by the underworld.

Postwar Era Through the 1980s

The postwar era witnessed enormous public interest in prizefighting, especially among the urban ethnic working class. Boxing was a sport that perfectly fit the needs of the new medium of television, with its constant action and all the activity focused in a small space. By 1950, televised boxing shows—including ABC's *Wednesday Night Fights* from Chicago and NBC's *Gillette Friday Night Fights* (1948–1960) from New York on prime time—gave exposure to popular boxers, including Carmen Basilio, Rocky Graziano (Rocco Barbell), Jake LaMotta, Cuban Kid Gavilán (Gerardo Gonzalez), and African American "Sugar Ray" Robinson (Walker Smith, Jr.), as well as to many previously unknown fighters, especially in the welterweight and middleweight divisions. In 1955, *Gillette Friday Night Fights*, broadcast from the Madison Square Garden, won an Emmy Award for best sports program of the year. The popularity of boxing on television and the revenues it generated only intensified the sport's already rampant corruption and ties to organized crime, which were depicted in a slew of popular films of the day, including *Body and Soul* (1947), *Champion* (1949), *The Set-Up* (1949), *On the Waterfront* (1954), *The Harder They Fall* (1956), and *Somewhere Up There Lies Me* (1956).

The pattern of ethnic succession continued after World War II, when African Americans began to dominate the sport, followed by Italians and Mexicans. Louis, the preeminent figure in the ring, retired in 1949, after 35 successful title defenses. However, financial problems forced him back into the ring for a few more bouts, including his final fight on October 26, 1951, when Italian American Rocky Marciano defeated him. One year later, Marciano dethroned African American "Jersey Joe" Walcott to become the new superstar heavyweight champion.

The 1950s also saw the emergence of a famed female boxer, "Barling" Barbara Buttrick, of Great Britain, who won the first "Undisputed Women's World Boxing Title" against Phyllis Kugler in San Antonio, Texas, on October 6, 1957. Buttrick was the first woman boxer to appear in *The Ring* (1957 and 1959), and she fought Gloria Adams in the first women's boxing bout ever broadcast by a radio station, WCKR Miami, on October 1, 1959.

The International Boxing Club

During the 1950s, the International Boxing Club (IBC) controlled the promotional side of boxing, while the underworld continued to exercise covert control of

the matchmaking process. In January 1949, Chicago businessmen James D. Norris and Arthur M. Wirtz incorporated the International Boxing Club of Illinois and New York to promote championship boxing in major cities in the United States. Within months, they had gained control of most boxing promotions. Between 1949 and 1953 alone, they staged 36 of 44 championship bouts.

The sweeping takeover was accomplished through several tactics, beginning with their ownership of the main fight arenas, including Chicago Stadium, Detroit's Olympia Stadium, Madison Square Garden, and the St. Louis Arena. Second, to eliminate competition, they bought or made special agreements with all their major promotional rivals. Third, they imposed exclusive three- to five-year contracts on all boxers, complete with film and broadcasting rights, making it next to impossible for unaffiliated contenders to get championship bouts. Finally, their close connections with the underworld helped them secure a monopoly on the heavyweight, middleweight, and welterweight divisions.

These questionable business practices led the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Justice to launch investigations into the prizefighting business, resulting in antitrust action against the IBC, which controlled the rights to televise, broadcast, and film boxing matches. In *United States v. International Boxing Club of New York* (1955), a federal district court found the IBC guilty of monopolizing the promotion of professional championship matches as interstate commerce. The court ordered the IBC to be dissolved and denied its exclusive rights to Madison Square Garden and Chicago Stadium, ordering Norris and Wirtz to sell all of their stock in Madison Square Garden. The IBC appealed, but in 1959, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ruling.

Carbo and several other mobsters who had control of the industry were arrested soon after. Carbo, Frank "Blinky" Palermo, Joe Sica, Louis Dragna, and Truman Gibson were found guilty of extortion, bribery, and racketeering and sentenced to fines and imprisonment.

Muhammad Ali Era

During the 1960s, several sanctioning organizations were established to award championship belts and to rank contenders worldwide, which only served to increase chaos in the industry. The National Boxing Association was renamed the World Boxing Association in 1962, the World Boxing Council was created in 1963, and the North American Boxing Federation came into being in 1969. From then on, championships were fought

under the rules and regulations of each individual organization. Many title bouts were organized outside of North America and broadcast on closed-circuit television in the United States.

African American champions dominated the heavyweight division—most notably Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay), Joe Frazier, and George Foreman—and raised the popularity of the sport worldwide, as many fans appreciated the boxers' skills and identified with their underdog status. Ali had a unique career, starting off as a popular amateur Olympic champion before upsetting the fearsome Sonny Liston in 1964. However, by joining the Nation of Islam, an early advocate of Black Power, and by refusing to serve in the U.S. armed forces in Vietnam, the wily and articulate Ali represented a new type of champion, one who brought attention to the politics of racial relations at home while garnering attention abroad for his pacifist stance—all the while jeopardizing his career.

Among Ali's most popular fights were a trilogy of bouts with "Smokin'" Joe Frazier and his second heavyweight title against Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire (now Congo), on October 30, 1974, known as the "Rumble in the Jungle." During his heyday and even after his retirement in 1981, Ali often was named as the most famous athlete in the world.

Post-Ali Era

In the 1980s, the welterweight and middleweight divisions produced a number of outstanding boxers, including African Americans "Sugar" Ray Leonard, "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler, and Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns and Latinos Julio César Chávez, Hector "Macho" Camacho, and Roberto Duran. Two legendary duels between Leonard and Duran, in particular, epitomized the African American and Latino dominance of the lower weight categories.

The most prominent figure in the ring during the late twentieth century was an African American, "Iron" Mike Tyson, who on November 22, 1986, knocked out Trevor Berbick of Jamaica in the second round of his first title bout to become, at age 20, the youngest heavyweight champion in prizefighting history. Tyson's ferocious early-round knockouts produced the biggest live gates and television sales ever seen in boxing, turning him into an instant celebrity across the globe. However, his frequent problems with the law, complete with several convictions and prison sentences, brought negative publicity to the sport. No charismatic heavyweight emerged to fill the gap. No network television dropped the broadcasting of boxing for a decade.

Turn of the Twenty-First Century

Late-twentieth-century boxing was dominated by African Americans in the middleweight divisions and up, and by Latinos in the higher weight categories. Mexicans, in particular, already had strong traditions of boxing in their homeland. Boxing gyms in the American barrios provided a cheap athletic option, while providing skills to defend oneself amid interethnic feuds. Superstar Latino boxers such as Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad brought a mainstream following to the sport, and Spanish-language television stations attracted an increasing number of Latino viewers, especially in the Southwest.

At the same time, a growing cohort of women became involved in the sport, and some, most notably Christy Martin, Laila Ali (daughter of Muhammad Ali), and Lucia Rijker, even claimed celebrity status. This surge in women's boxing was reflected in several films, including *Shadow Boxer* (2000), *Against the Ropes* (2004), *Girl Fighter* (2000), *New Waterford Girl* (2000), and *Million Dollar Baby* (2005), which won the Academy Award for best motion picture.

Prizefighting in the United States has offered successive groups of impoverished athletes the means to demonstrate their physical prowess, make a living, and bolster their sense of community. The sport is a lucrative business for some, mainly the promoters, but only 5 percent of professional boxers make it to the world championship level. The world sanctioning bodies today grant championships in 17 different weight divisions (as opposed to the original eight), all with different champions, disparate ratings, and inconsistent regulations.

In the 1990s, Senators John McCain of Arizona and Richard Bryan of Nevada indicated government intervention in the industry to establish minimum health and safety standards, uniform business policies, and a national umbrella organization for the sport. This led to the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 and the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act of 2000, both of which were enacted into federal law.

Although these laws brought about some generally accepted business principles and rules regarding the deductions made from boxers' purses, many of their provisions regulating the prizefighting industry remain to be implemented. The initiative for a national umbrella organization stalled, and boxers have no collective forum protecting their interests and no minimum social benefits, health and life insurance, or basic

pension plans. The sport continues to grapple with unscrupulous promoters, incongruous regulations, and rigged results worldwide.

Even more threatening to boxers than corrupt promoters or the lack of bargaining rights is the potential for brain injury, particularly a form of neurodegenerative disease or dementia known as *dementia pugilistica*. It long has been known—indeed, it is a cliché of the sport—that experienced boxers often suffer a number of symptoms, particularly as they age, including loss of memory, declining mental acuity, speech problems, and physical unsteadiness. And it long has been suspected that these symptoms were the result of repeated blows to the head, even though symptoms of dementia pugilistica may not arise for up to 20 years after the boxer has left the ring.

In recent years, advances in brain research and new diagnostic tools have allowed scientists a better understanding of the mechanics of this form of dementia, including the loss of neurons, buildup of water on the brain (hydrocephalus), the accumulation of different forms of plaque on the brain, and the scarring of brain tissue. In some notable cases, such as that of Ali, another degenerative brain and nervous system disorder—Parkinson's disease—may be linked to the repeated blows to the head received by boxers and other contact-sport athletes, such as football players.

The growing scientific evidence linking boxing to degenerative brain disorders has led to renewed calls for banning professional boxing in recent years. If that cannot be achieved, reformers seek to require that professional boxers wear the kind of protective headgear already required in most amateur and all Olympic bouts. However, some experts question the extent to which such protective headgear prevents brain injury.

Berita Feilkenell

See also: Crime, Organized; Gambling; Injuries, Protection Against; and Remediation of Violence in Sports.

Further Reading

- Eisenberg, Lewis A. *The Quarter Right of Our Generation: Louis in Suburbia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Gorn, Elliott J. *The Murky Art: Barn-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Haskamen, Benita. "The Laminarization of Boxing: A Texas Case Study." *Journal of Sport History* 32.1 (Spring 2005): 43–66.
- Hirsch, Thomas R. *The Fight of the Century: Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, and the Struggle for Racial Equality*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002.

Lenberg, Michael T., John L. Wilton, and H. A. Swisher. Urbana (University of Illinois Press, 1988).

Roberts, Randy. *Jack Dempsey: The Missouri Middleweight Champion*. Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hope. New York: Free Press, 1983.

Summons, Jeffrey. *T. Bayard the Ring: The R. of Boxing in American Society*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Braves, Atlanta/Milwaukee/Boston

The Atlanta Braves, winners of three World Series and 11 National League pennants, is the oldest continuously operating U.S. sports franchise. The team dates back to the Boston Red Stockings, which in 1876 formed the core of the Boston Red Caps, an original National League squad, later renamed the Beaneaters, Doves, Rustlers, and Bees. The name that eventually struck was the Boston Braves.

The team was one of Major League Baseball's weakest-performing and least profitable franchises until 1953, when the team moved to Milwaukee, seeking greater returns and success on the playing field. This was the first franchise move in Major League Baseball in 50 years. Then, just 13 years later, the club moved to Atlanta, again in search of more revenue. There, team owner Ted Turner was an innovator in cable broadcasting, and his club became a dominant National League squad, with 11 division championships between 1995 and 2005. The Braves returned to the National League Division Series in 2010, losing in four games to the San Francisco Giants.

Rise and Fall of the Triumvirs: Boston, 1871–1952

In 1871, Harry Wright, manager of the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the first professional team, moved to Boston with shortstop and brother George Wright and other Cincinnati players to play for Ivers Whitney Adams, a twine manufacturer and aspiring baseball owner. Adams's team, called the Boston Red Stockings, played in the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, the first professional baseball league. They won four straight pennants (1872–1875) while playing at the South End Grounds. In 1876, when the more business-oriented National League supplanted the National Association, the Red Stockings franchise, owned by Nicholas T. Apollonio, became the Red Caps.

Braves, Atlanta/Milwaukee/Boston 197

Under new owner Arthur Soden, the Red Caps took consecutive National League championships in 1877 and 1878. Then, in 1879, after shortstop George Wright and two other stars left the Red Caps, Soden and his two partners, known together as the Triumvirs, drew up baseball's reserve clause, a rule intended to keep players from jumping from team to team and to drive down salaries. In 1883, the Boston club, renamed the Beaneaters, won the pennant. The Triumvirs attracted Irish fans by signing Irish players, such as colorful catcher and right fielder Mike "King" Kelly, a national favorite who was acquired from the Chicago White Stockings for \$10,000.

In 1890, Boston hired manager Frank Selee, who brought with him rookie fireballer Charles "Kid" Nichols. Nichols won 297 games for Boston over the next decade, the most wins by a pitcher in a ten-year span. Selee piloted the club superbly, winning five National League pennants (1891–1893, 1897–1898). Three straight championships (1891–1893) garnered Boston permanent possession of the Davenny Cup, named after the wife of New York Giants player John Montgomery Ward, across Helen Davenny. In 1894, the club's insufficiently insured wooden ballpark burned down, and a smaller field replaced it.

The emergence of a rival major league in 1901 brought unwarranted competition to the National League. Several Beaneaters stars jumped to the new American League franchise in Boston, then known as the Americans. The Beaneaters finished no better than sixth from 1903 to 1912. The team changed its name to the Doves in 1907 and to the Rustlers in 1911.

In 1911, John Montgomery Ward formed a syndicate to buy the team and became its president. Ward tried to revive the team by naming them the Braves, to give the club an identity that was infused with spirit and pride. The name also honored majority owner James Gaffney, a leader of New York City's Tammany Hall political machine, whose members were nicknamed "Braves." The ball club was the first major professional team to carry a Native American name. Ward also redesigned the club's plain uniforms to feature a colorful Native American profile.

In 1914, the Braves were in last place in early July, 15 games out of first place, but went on to capture the top spot in a remarkable turnaround, going 66–18 for rest of the season. The "Miracle Braves" under manager George Stallings pulled off a sweep of the Philadelphia Athletics in a shocking World Series upset. One year later, the team built Braves Field, a fireproof stadium seating 40,000.