

Boxers Seem Fine Fellows

Dorothy Day

The New Orleans Item Tuesday; February 12, 1924 (P. 10)

Boxers Seem Fine Fellows By Comparison After Sleek Sheiks Mincing at Cabaret

What a noble and godlike sport boxing seems after a week in the dance halls, and what fellows the boxers seem after watching sleek sheiks mince around the cabarets. Leaving it to the sporting editor to write the story properly with the hero in the first paragraph and a gradual working back to the beginning—the first two contestants in the four preliminaries to the Dempsey exhibition Monday night were Freddie Brewer and Zack Blanchard.

Finding our seats after the third round, we were able to identify the fighters by the color of their trunks, Brewer's being green and Blanchard's red. Our impression of this fight deciphered with difficulty from the notes taken with our eyes on the ring are that Brewer's back kept getting redder and redder and that he's the best looking of the two. Blanchard seemed to spend most of the fifth round resting his head on Brewer's shoulder, and then again from the way the former shoved the latter out of the clutch you'd think it was the other way around. We noticed especially the perfunctory and casual shake before the sixth round before they jump in at each other. Brewer's face had been pale up to this point, but Blanchard landed him one on the nose and his face was not so white. At the end of the sixth round the referee declared it a draw, and the contestants fell on each other's necks in friendly fashion.

Second Preliminary

The second preliminary was between Joe Mandell and Sam Pizzitola. Before the first round the seconds on both sides busied themselves with tying gloves on the pair and massaging their back muscles. In the first couple of rounds everything seemed to be against Mandell. Pizzitola kept landing blows on the back of his neck and in the very first round, knocked him to the floor. But he got to his feet on the third count. In the second round, Mandell picked up and the third round was all his except for one on the jaw that Pizzitola got in. In a tense silence you could hear the paper boys nonchalantly calling the morning papers and the cries, "Orange crush, who wants some ice cold lemon crush?" Then there'd be a roar that rose from floor to roof and everything would be drowned out. In the fourth round Pizzitola landed one but his arm slid along his opponent's ear and gave Mandell a chance. There was less clinching in this round and the enthusiasm of the opponents was such that they got in a few more wallops at each other after the gong. At the end of the fifth round,

both were more anxious to fall on the stools hastily stuck between the ropes, but Pizzitola tried to disguise his eagerness by giving a vivacious little dance towards his seat. In the sixth round there was a rhythmical exchange of blows but they didn't resound as earlier ones did, and the two boxers seemed to be holding each other up. Pizzitola was pronounced the victor, and embraced Mandell as it seems the custom is and escorted him to his seat.

Doyle vs. Campau

The third fight was between Jack Doyle and Joe Campau. In the first round everybody yelled for Jack, and in the second round the audience accused them of holding punches. Doyle had his head on Campau's chest most of the time. They couldn't seem to get each other disentangled to get in a single wallop. In the third round everybody jeered. "La, la," "Step on his toes," "On with the dance," and suddenly the excitement began. The roars shook the roof, falling and rising again and again, and pierced by shrill whistling. Doyle was knocked down, and turning over lightly three times, he got to his feet. Campau was on his knees at the end of the round which left the room in a turmoil. In the fourth Doyle kept staggering with a surprised and drunken air. Doyle kept falling against the rope and rebounded lightly, for a moment both seemed to be going blind because they punched aimlessly and kept missing each other. Through the fifth and sixth everybody kept shrieking, "put him out, Jack," but the fight ended in a draw.

The fourth fight, a ten-rounder between Charley Rodriguez and Delos Williams was interesting in the fact that everybody shouted for Charley all the way through and yet Williams won the decision. There was so much infighting that the pale faced referee in the pongee shirt had to keep peering anxiously between the two. The crowd were demanding blood, but Williams had it all his own way, getting in six blows to Charley's one. The latter fought with his mouth wide open and we were afraid he'd bite his tongue. He began losing the sympathy of his supporters who baa-ed like sheep.

This seemed to infuriate the two into more action, and Williams was seen waving the mist out of his eyes. By the tenth round they were butting each other like a pair of goats and the crowd who thought that Charley would come to at the last minute were disappointed.

Magnificent Dempsey

And here Dempsey appears upon the scene, the house rising to him as he walks into the arena magnificent in his purple tights with the red, white and blue rosette at his waist. After the 117-pounders or thereabouts who were appearing in the ring all evening, everybody gasped and roared their approval at the sight of Dempsey. It's no use talking in terms of polite fiction about bronzed shoulders or silkily moving muscles which are supposed to ripple. Dempsey was so lightning quick that you couldn't see if his muscles rippled or not.

Needless to say, no notes were taken during the three two-round bouts of the champion. You sat with your mouth open, as if that could assist you in following every move, and then you felt as though you were missing half of it.

Everybody kept shouting, "I'd hate to feel the way that Irishman feels," during the first bout with Martin Burke. At the sounding of the gong, the opponents disdained to sit down, but restlessly permitted a few dabs of a towel from their seconds. In the second round Dempsey showed what he could do in the way of defending himself, holding off Burke with the utmost

ease so that his lusty opponent couldn't get near him. Only at the end of his round, he held Burke lightly by the side of the head and delivered several cuffs with incredible swiftness.

Tommy Marvin and Dan O'Dowd were the other two opponents of the champion, and they weren't in it at all. "Take 'em over your knee and spank 'em," the crowd yelled gleefully. Although Dempsey "pulled" his punches, he had to hold the last two contestants up from the floor as he delivered the blows which could only have been heavy from the weight of his arm and not from any force behind it. It was a great night!