NEWS OF SPORTS

IN WHICH THE WRITER GIVES HIS OPINION OF THE RECENT DEMPSEY—SHARKEY FIGHT IN NEW YORK—OHTER NOTES OF INTEREST

BY POLK T. BRAMBLE

The recent Dempsey—Sharkey fight in New York was, in some respects, like all the big prize-fights we have witnessed, because it was followed by a storm of protest against the verdict of the referee, claims of foul, as well as charges of fake and fraud. This criticism following in the wake of the conflict always comes from ones who have lost money on the contest, have predicted the loser, or are disappointed because of some sentimental preference for one of the contestants. These arguments and charges and countercharges are as old as the boxing game, and are always expected. Every person who attends a prize-fight, or takes particular interest in the same, is, in his own mind, the referee, and he immediately judges the game according to his limited viewpoint and knowledge. However, the promoters of fights, like owners of baseball clubs and other athletic contests, realize the importance of the referee and the umpires as second only to the participants themselves, and, consequently, they select men of the keenest judgment, as well as the most honest reputations and motives, to officiate and decide the contests. The verdict of these officials always stands, first, because it is official; second, because the promoters realize their verdict must, necessarly, be just.

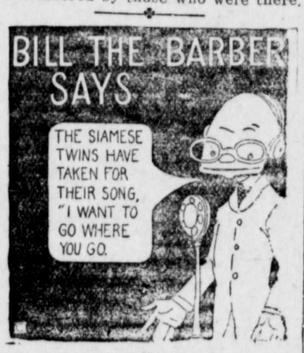
The queston that has been asked of the writer a great many times, is, of course, "Was there a foul?" The referee, the only man in a position to say positively, says there was no foul. The writer of this column saw no foul and could not have seen a foul had one been delivered. And we doubt very much if any of the so-called boxing experts were in a much better position to see a foul, because of the fact that the finishing blows were delivered while the men were engaged in furious inflighting. The moving pictures, which we had hoped would settle the matter definitely, failed to convince the ones who contended there was a foul, while the ones who claim there was no foul are strengthened in their convictions. From the writing of Grantland Rice, an eloquent writer but a poor judge of boxing, one concludes that the Dempsey—Tunney match was a frameup, while the Sharkey—Dempsey affair ended with Dempsey fouling his opponent four times, while Harry Igloe, of the New York World, leading boxing writer in the country, says he was in a position to see with clearness, and that there was absolutely no foul. And so the experts differ to such an extent that the writer, after reading the pre-fight predictions, comes to the conclusion that a boxing expert is a man who picks the wrong man in a great majority of cases.

Personally, the writer thinks that Dempsey was the master of the situation from the beginning. We reach this conclusion because of the fact that Sharkey was unable to hold his own at the style of fighting which he decided to adopt. Infighting has always been Dempsey's strong point in boxing. No man has ever been able to stand before him and slug with him. But Sharkey did this very thing, against all advise. In the first round, he received what he thought were Dempsey's hardest blows. They, apparently, did not damage him. Then he decided to go in and fight Dempsey at his own game and knock him out, something never before accomplished since Dempsey gained the peak. This was courageous, but not practical, because the continuous pounding that Sharkey stood up under for six rounds only fitted him for the final collapse, which occurred from practically the same blow that sent Corbett sprawling in the rosin from the fist of Ftzsmons over a quarter century ago.

And then cames the question to us, after seeing both fights during the past year, "Will Dempsey defeat Tunney?" If Tunney will go in and fight Dempsey, that is, try to knock him out, he will last less time than did Sharkey. Anyone who has seen Tunney box, knows he cannot fight, and, in fact, will not fight. The Tunney-Renault fight was stopped by the referee several years ago, and both disqualified, because neither would fight. Each wanted the other to carry the fight and expose himself to the other's punches. The referee, who is in the ring to see that the men fight, and that the public, at least in the open, receives what it pays for, stopped the fight. Tunney, a skillful defensive fighter, won his championship because he refused to fight, and was satisfied to jab away, piling up enough points to carry away the honors. In that particular fight, with public sentiment almost unanimously against Dempsey, he was able to carry through this style of fighting to the end. In another fight, with the sentiment directly opposite, we doubt if the public will stand for it. Consequently, the referee will make Tunney put up some semblance of a fight. However, if the Tunney—Dempsey fight is only a ten-round affair, we doubt very much if the former will adopt any other method of defending his title. If he is allowed to do so, and with Dempsey in the condition he was for Sharkey, there will be considerable ground covered in a short time with Tunney in continual retreat. In another battle, we believe this defensive fighting of Tunney will be so pronounced that it will result in Dempsey winning the fight, from one couse or another, especially if it is a 15-round affair.

As we have stated before in this column, 15 rounds are too few to decide a big fight. Practically all the championship fights of the past three decades show this to be true, because they show the loser at ten rounds the winner before the fight ends. It is a rather simple proposition. The fighter with a wallop takes the punches of boxing opponent throughout the first rounds. Continually pressing in, the fighter overcomes his opponent, the boxer finally realizing he is unable to keep his opponent from him with his lighter blows. One only has to read the big fights of the past to prove this for himself in a great majority of cases.

While a much harder fight than the former big contest, the New York fight lacked the tremendous spectacular features of the Philadelphia contest, first, because of the larger crowd at the Sesqui fight, which in itself was worth going to the place to see, and second, because there was no championship involved. Another thing, a crowd is not unusual in New York. It is quickly gathered and as quickly scattered by the wonderful transportation systems. However, because of its savage featuers, and because it demonstrated the fact that a man can come back, the Dempsey—Sharkey fight will go down in history as one of the greatest of all fights and will be long remembered by those who were there.



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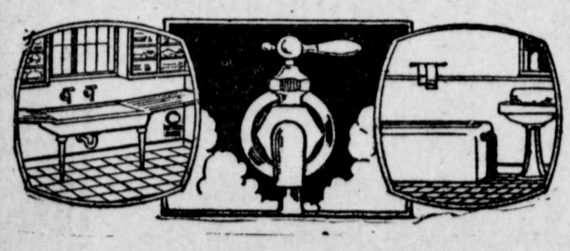

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