

SPORTS COMMUNITY

Boxing and auto racing have much in common



Dick Berggren

Humpy Wheeler as one of the best. Things are different in boxing, as Don King usually comes to mind as the "boxing promoter."

Are we drawing a relationship between Wheeler and King in ability as a true promoter? Not on your life. This corner's personal opinion is that Wheeler does much to advance the sport of racing, while King is probably most responsible for the downfall of the heavyweight division.

Television: It's always been important. I remember all those great Friday night fights sponsored by Gillette in the '50s and '60s. Racing, although much later to arrive, has established itself as a prime TV ratings generator.

Announcers/Media: Boxing has good guy Al Bernstein, host Jim Lampley, hat man and magazine publisher Burt Sugar, former champ George Foreman and Dr. Ferdie Pacheco (amongst many). Racing has good guy Darrell

There are many similarities when comparing boxing and auto racing. Sure, there are dissimilarities, too, especially when it comes to timing. In boxing, a fight can stop after three seconds. In racing, you generally go to the checkered flag, or longer if necessary. Rain, of course, is the only exception.

It's the similarities, however, that intrigue us, so let's begin.

Athletes: Boxers and drivers must compete when the bell rings or the green flag drops (or the green light goes on). Granted, the boxer is more "self-contained and openly exposed," whereas auto racers are strapped into a car that can many times determine the outcome of the race (mechanical woes, etc.).

Injuries: Boxers get hurt regularly, and so do race drivers. Mistakes in the ring or behind the wheel don't show up as an "error, second baseman" in the next day's sports page. These athletes can be out cold on the mat or knocked silly in the driver's seat. Either way, they can pay big-time for errors.

Reflexes: Both athletes have incredible reflexes, and all actions in the ring or on the track are crucial to the outcome.

Entourages: This seems to be more prevalent in racing these days. In boxing, there's a host of "bodyguards" escorting fighters to the ring. In racing, it

seems the ladies receive the "bodyguard" attention, escorting their gladiators to their cars. Sometimes, fights break out between entourages, including, most recently, the females in racing.

The Crews: In boxing, there are corner men who tend to the boxer between rounds. In racing, the pit crew serves as the catalyst to keeping the driver in the race with routine maintenance. Be it water in the mouth or in the radiator, both have specific jobs to perform to keep their athlete in the hunt.

The Cheering Box: Every boxer has a corner man or manager who talks his boxer through the fight. In racing, it's the crew chief and sometimes the owner, too, giving the pep talks.

Specialists: Both sports employ specialists. Boxers have specialists who can staunch the flow of blood in one minute, and allow a boxer to go from a bloody mess to a winner. In racing, pit crewmembers repair ill-handling or slightly damaged cars and get their driver back into the fight with a chance to win or get a good finish. Favorite specialist tools? In boxing, Vaseline and Q-tips are the chosen tools. In racing, it's racer's tape and sheet-metal cutters.



Promoters: Very similar in both sports. Boxing has had some real winners, both good and bad. Same with racing. Nowadays, we look to racing's

Waltrip, host Mike Joy, hat man and magazine publisher Dick Berggren, former champ Benny Parsons and Dr. Jerry Punch. Quite an esteemed group.

Fans: Usually, those who like boxing also like racing. In summary, it was Ernest Hemingway who once said, "There are only three real


sports: bullfighting, mountain climbing and motor racing. The others are just games." I'm adding boxing to Hemingway's list.

Enjoy Summer on the Lake

Great Selection in Stock

Bait • Tackle • License • Lake maps
FULL SERVICE




LAKE CHATUGE MARINE
HIWASSEE, GA.
 Serving You Since 1972

Highway 17/69, Hiawassee
706-896-2835

YOU CAN HAVE THIS DOCK NEXT WEEK ON LAKE CHATUGE



- Double 24' slip with Hip Roof
- Swim platform
- Aluminum frame
- Brock vinyl deck
- Formex floats
- Arched gangway 50'

Benchmark Modular Dock Systems

3557 Fodder Creek Rd • Hiawassee, Ga 30546

706-896-3609 706-897-2838