

LOOKING BACK

By: Scott Brooks

Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent made a stop at the train station to address the people of Acton on June 21, 1949. - Photo Credit: Acton Free Press.



SPORTS TALK

For the love of boxing

With the World Cup of soccer well under way and all the euphoria that naturally comes along



By
Michael Oke

with it, I discovered that Canadians can generally be split into two main categories come World Cup time.

One group tends to follow all the games going on in Russia 2018, or at least most of them. These people are normally interested in the final results of matches they are unable to catch on T.V. Some even take it a step farther by having various countries' flags on their homes or cars.

The second category, on the other hand can't seem to understand what all the fuss is about—and can't wait for it all to come to an end.

It is because of the latter that I decided to write about the once very famous combat sport of boxing. Yes, boxing.

This most historic of sports traces its origins as far back as the third millennium B.C. and the early Greeks. Boxing used to be considered one of the purest examples of athleticism due to the rigours and personal physical strain an aspiring boxer needed to overcome to rise through the ranks. Boxing also happens to be one of the original non-track and field events that existed in ancient Olympic games along with Greco-Roman wrestling. At one point, the Olympic heavyweight

gold medal was considered one of the most coveted prizes in all of sports.

It's also worthy to note the impact of real athletes like Mohammed Ali, Mike Tyson and the make-believe ones like Rocky Balboa on the popularity of boxing over the years. However, boxing is no longer as popular as it used to be. Though, you might be fooled into thinking otherwise just by watching some hockey games. So why has the pugilistic sport experienced such a decline in recent years?

A number of factors, in my opinion. One would be the excessive influence of money. The other would be the increased focus and science around concussion and other CTE related ailments. Another reason would be the growing popularity of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), which combines boxing with many other combat programs beautifully put together for Pay Per View T.V.

The one issue that stands out for me is the multiplicity of "champions". Back in the day, you could tell who the heavy-weight champion of the world was, right now this title is split between three "champions". There is obviously also an age gap with the younger generation taking less interest in the sport.

All in all, it's a good time to read up more about boxing—while the rest of us gets back to those World Cup scores.

JUST A THOUGHT

What a Brave New World we have found for ourselves

When I think back to my days in high school, I can't help but think of all the absolutely depressing dystopian stories we were forced to spend countless hours dissecting—Fahrenheit 451, 1984, Brave New World. And yet, today, I find myself grateful to have such—one might call fantastical—stories in which to relate. After all, with all this talk of nationalism and populism, immigration and terror, such worlds seem less like fiction these days. The newsfeeds are ripe with dystopia: migrant children separated from their families—again, people retreating from the global community in search of a national identity—again, every action and decision scrutinized by an ever-changing litmus test of beliefs and values that become more self-serving and controlling—again, clearly our world still isn't the utopia as we were lead to believe it to be. But that's the point isn't it. Dystopian novels weren't about showing us what could be, it was about illuminating the true nature of what we already are. As Aldous Huxley wrote, "words can be like X-rays if you use them properly," and clearly, Huxley saw human nature for what it was: not kind or cultured or empathetic, but ruthless and opportunistic. Sure, as individuals we manage to fight that nature, but on the whole, as a species, we are merely cunning animals willing to do whatever it takes to climb to



By
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the top, despite how imaginary the ladder of power and prestige might be. I know; it sounds too fantastical, too pessimistic to be true, but as Huxley's character says, "we did not make ourselves, we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We are not our own masters."

Can humanity truly be doomed to such gross indecencies? Generations have learned of the struggles of our past, believing these people saw the ills of the world and finally stood up to make a difference. And yet, here we find ourselves, still struggling to keep afloat. It takes little effort to find a vast array of propaganda written in our not-so-distant past that could have just as easily been written for what befalls our world today. And yet, we take no heed of such warnings, making one wonder how we could be so educated, so well-versed in the mistakes and triumphs of history, and still continue to find ourselves doing such abhorrent things? In philosophy, we can rely on Occam's Razor—or that the reasoning that the simplest answer is most often the correct one—to see the answer. And like it or not, the evidence is unequivocal; it is our nature to be so. History shows that we have walked such

paths before and yet, even in our attempts to stop them we make the same mistakes. We want to believe that we are good and just and kind, but as a group we are simply cruel and selfish and evil. We continue to do it over and over and over. We act outraged—heck, we are outraged—and yet, here we return again and again. We dress it up with different names and play the roles we think we should, creating groups like the United Nations and G7, simultaneously repeating the mantra never again, only to let such organizations become the tools of the next time. And make no mistake there is always a next time. Yes, deep down, inside our core, our species seems committed to always returning to its flaw, turning what could be easy peace and kindness into hate and war—often over simple things and by simply doing nothing. Trump or Trudeau—in your face politics or quiet hushed policies—they are both playing the same game and what's worse, we are allowing it. Because, as Huxley hinted, "most men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution." So, might I suggest thinking hard before condemning an enemy while celebrating the legalization of marijuana; after all, drug induced happiness, psychological manipulation and intelligence-based social hierarchies won't lead to happy endings in our Brave New World either.

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