

DOI: 10.21767/2472-5048.100031

Women, Boxing & Prejudice, the Facts

Michael R. Graham^{1*}, Yaodong Gu¹ and Julien S. Baker²¹Department of Research Academy Grand Health, Ningbo University, Zhejiang, P.R China²Department of Physiology Research Laboratory, School of Science and Sport, University of West of Scotland, Hamilton, Scotland

*Corresponding author: Michael R. Graham, Department of Research Academy Grand Health, Ningbo University, Zhejiang, P.R China, E-mail: drmirograham@icloud.com

Received date: Apr 27, 2017; Accepted date: May 13, 2017; Published date: May 17, 2017

Citation: Graham MR, Gu Y, Baker JS (2017) Women, Boxing & Prejudice, the Fact. Dual Diagn Open Acc 2:31. Doi: 10.21767/2472-5048.100031

Copyright: © 2017 Graham MR, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Short Report

Colossal changes have occurred within women's combat sports in the last two decades, which have challenged society's perception of women in boxing and mixed martial arts (MMA) [1,2].

Very little research has been produced on either the physiological effects on women or on their position in society by their inclusion in boxing. However, press publications promoting women's participation in the boxing world, has been very positive.

Following the London 2012 Olympics, female participation in boxing increased dramatically compared to males, in the UK. The Commonwealth Games in 2014 also had a positive effect on participation for both men and women. Not unusually following such events, the male participants decreased and fell to levels just above how they were pre-Commonwealth games [3]. However, surprisingly, female participation increased.

This suggested that opportunities for women in the boxing world may be improving, compared to previous years.

Nonetheless the number of males involved in boxing, still outweighs the number of females. The suggestion is that there are still gender related issues involved in combat sports.

Females in combat sport confront barriers and negative experiences as a consequence of their gender including; verbal and physical abuse, sexual harassment, lack of opportunity and lack of financial investment [4-6].

In Australia, Lafferty and McKay (2004) found that females were given less access to sparring opportunities and not taken seriously by coaches.

Comparable concerns were also present in a study in the USA by Paradis (2012) which also showed substantial levels of verbal abuse from male boxers.

The negative psychological implications these issues can have on women may also lead to a reduced retention rate of female boxers [7].

In sports such as boxing and MMA, these disputes arise because they do not fit in with the traditional expectations of femininity [8].

Women are expected to be beautiful, graceful, submissive, and elfin with negligible belligerent tendencies.

There are conflicting values in female boxing which reward the participants. Cultural femininity is challenged when customs are opposed.

Nicola Adams won gold at the 2012 Olympics, which had a progressive effect on challenging the dominance of males in boxing, but she received a series of negative criticisms on her appearance and legitimacy as a boxer [9].

Alfermann and Stambulova [10] have stressed, an athletic career depends on a subtle balance of resources and overcoming barriers.

Will current prejudices in boxing [11] continue to hinder the progress for females in boxing in the UK?

To prevent such pessimism, should not their rewards be the same as males, as in other sports, e.g., tennis?

It is critical that we assess the subjective and collective experiences of females who progress from amateur status to professional at an elite level, and the entire sporting atmosphere of boxing.

Ultimately, while the modern woman might utilise boxing to categorise a fundamental discontinuation from past eras, or a reinvention of herself, she might also use it to stage the violence and trauma of the era in which she lives, whilst still aware of its limits and vulnerabilities [12].

References

1. <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/aug/09/nicola-adams-olympic-boxing-gold>
2. Woodward K (2014) Legacies of 2012: putting women's boxing into discourse. *Contemporary Social Science* 9: 242-252.
3. Brown A, Massey J, Porter C (2004) The Sports Development Impact of the 2002 Commonwealth Games: Post Games Report. UK Sport.

4. Halbert C (1997) Tough Enough And Woman Enough: Stereotypes, discrimination, and impression management among women professional Boxers. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 21: 7-36.
5. Lafferty Y, McKay J (2004) "Suffragettes in Satin Shorts"? Gender and Competitive Boxing. *Qualitative Sociology* 27: 249-276.
6. Paradis E (2012) Boxers, briefs or Bras? Bodies, gender and change in the boxing gym. *Body and Society* 18: 82-109.
7. Hurst RJ, Beesley D (2013) Perceived sexism, self-silencing, and psychological distress in college women. *Sex Roles* 68: 311-320.
8. Connell R, Messerschmidt J (2005) Hegemonic Masculinity. Rethinking the concept *Gender and Society* 19: 229-247.
9. <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2012/08/27/am-i-the-last-person-opposed-to-women-boxing/>
10. Alfermann D, Stambulova N (2007) Career transitions and career termination. In G. Tenenbaum and R. C. Eklund (Eds.), *Handbook of sport psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 712-736). New York, NY: Wiley.
11. Fulton J (2011) 'What's your worth?' The Development of Capital in British Boxing. *European Journal for Sport and Society* 8: 193-218.
12. Gammel I (2015) Lacing Up the Gloves. Women, Boxing and Modernity. *The Journal of the Social History Society*. 9: 369-390.