

# Boxing - Overview

Boxing also known as the art of self-defense or pugilism (fist fight), is one of the most popular sports today. Its origins are tracked back 4000 years BC in North Africa. There is also evidence of it being played in Greece and Rome. Over the years, it developed into being the sport it is today. Boxing not only requires a high level of athleticism, vitality and strength, but also a high level of concentration and endurance.



## Objective

A boxing match is held in a square ring, with two corners marked with red and blue color belonging to the fighters' teams, where under the supervision of a judge and a commission, two athletes compete using fair fighting techniques under a set of rules.



The basic objective of boxing is knocking down the opponent using a combination of techniques, under the supervision of a judge and a commission and following a set of rules. Reading further, you will get to know the essentials of boxing, the rules, as well as how it's played and the current champions in the arena.

## Boxing - A Singles Sport

Boxing is a singles sport, meaning it's a competition between two individuals. It's played both in men's and women's category.

## Boxing - Participating Countries

Although originating from North Africa, boxing has become a worldwide sport, followed by many fans in every continent. Its biggest fan base is in America and Europe.

In the early days, boxing was illegal in USA, but after the State of New York legalized it in 1896, the other states followed. The main body of boxing is the American Boxing Association (ABA), which organizes tournaments and awards championship belts. America has produced and still produces many of the biggest names in boxing, such as Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson.

The biggest rival of America in boxing competitions is, of course, Europe. The European Boxing Union, known to fans as EBU, oversees the development of boxing in the continent, and also implements the rules.

## Boxing - Playing Environment

Before every match, each boxer is given a corner, the red or the blue, where his team is stationed and they meet between rounds.

## Boxing Ring Design

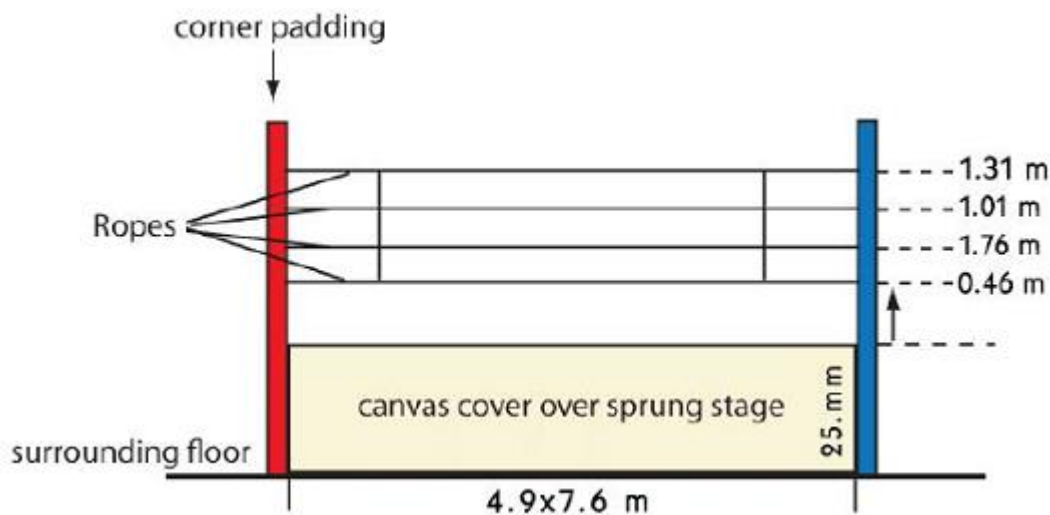
The term **“ring”** has its origin from the early boxing fights, where a circle was drawn at the spot in which the match was held.



A boxing ring is the space in which a boxing match is held. A modern ring, is set on a **raised platform**, it is square with a **post at each corner** to which four parallel **rows of ropes** are attached with a turnbuckle. Two of the corners are colored red and blue, belonging to a respective player. Unlike the wrestling ring, the boxing ring ropes are connected together between the posts. The floor of the ring must have around 1 inch (25mm) of padding covered with canvas.

## Dimensions Of a Boxing Ring

The size of the boxing ring may vary depending on the type of tournament and relevant governing body. The standard ring is between 16 and 25 feet (4.9 and 7.6 m) to a side between the ropes with another 2 feet (0.61 m) outside. The platform of the ring is generally 3 to 4 feet (0.91 to 1.22 m) from the ground with the posts rising around 5 feet (1.5 m).



The ropes are around 1 inch (25 mm) in diameter and held up on posts rising around 5 feet (1.5 m) at heights of 18, 30, 42, and 55 inches (.46, .76, 1.07, and 1.37 m).

## Boxing - Equipment

Apart from the ring, boxers should have the following basic equipment in order to compete –

- **Gloves** – This is the most important piece of equipment for boxers. It's used to protect the wrists and hands of the boxers, as well as to protect the face of the opponent from incoming blows.
- **Mouthpiece** – It has to be worn in order to protect the mouth and teeth, as well as to absorb some of the force of the blows to the head.

- **Headgear** – It's mandatory only for amateur boxers to protect their head.
- **Protective cups** are to be worn on every competitive level, to shield the groin area.
- Boxing professionals have to wear **loose-fitting trunks** and **soft-soled shoes** across all the levels of the game.
- **Sleeveless jersey** at amateur level, boxers are required to wear a sleeveless jersey of a different color than the waistband of the trunks.

## Popular Terms in Boxing

Before being able to play or watch boxing, you should be familiar with the following terms, which are most frequently used during boxing matches.

- **Blocking** – The technique to prevent an opponent's punch from landing cleanly on the head or torso by using the hands, shoulders or arms.
- **Bout** – A short spanned match conducted between two competitors with a timeline of four three-minute rounds, and with a break of one-minute between each round.
- **Break** – A referee's command for boxers to free from a prolonged trap or a clinch.
- **Caution** – An admonition to the boxer by a referee. Three cautions are issued before a warning. Mostly, the player is cautioned when he commits a foul.
- **Clinch** – When two boxers are holding, or trapping each other for a longer duration, without any punches or fight involved
- **Down** – A boxer is considered "down" if he touches the floor with anything other than his feet or if he goes outside the ropes after receiving a punch. A boxer is also technically "down," even if he hasn't fallen but takes a serious blow or blows to the head and the referee steps in to stop the action.
- **Foul** – An infringement of boxing rules.
- **Hook** – A short power punch in which the boxer swings from the shoulder with his elbow bent, bringing his fist from the side toward the center.
- **In-fighting** – Boxing at close range.
- **Jab** – A quick, straight punch thrown with the lead hand.
- **Knock Down** – A boxer is technically "knocked down," even if he hasn't fallen but he takes a serious blow or blows to the head and the referee steps in to stop the action.
- **Neutral Corner** – One of the two corners in the ring that do not belong to either fighter.

- **Rabbit Punch** – This punch is considered to be against the game rules or as being illegal, as one of the competitors lodges a punch to the back of the opponent's head or body (mostly kidneys). This punch is mostly delivered when the boxers are having a wrestle "inside."
- **Saved by the Bell** – When a fighter is on the verge of being knocked out, or is knocked out just as the bell sounds, so that the fighter does not lose and has a minute to compose himself.
- **Standing 8 Count** – This term is used when one of the boxers is unable to continue the fight due to reasons like being injured, cannot continue, etc. In this case, the referee stops the fight and starts a count till eight, giving the player a chance to either continue or declare closure.
- **Uppercut** – This is one of the punches that is landed on the guard of the boxer from below in an upward direction.
- **Warning** – An alert given by the referee to the boxer in case of any fouls or extension of three warnings. Once the referee indicates a warning then the ringside judges will decide about issuing points. The opponent who is issued the warning, loses the bout or is disqualified.
- **Weaving** – A method used by the boxer to escape the anticipated punches through twist and turn movements.

## Boxing - How to Play?

The objective of boxing, as mentioned before, is to knock out the opponent, making him unable to stand until the referee counts to ten. Another way of winning in boxing, is by scoring points.

### Getting Ready

Before every match, there are a few steps that needs to be completed –

- **Passbook check** – A passbook is the identification of a boxer, and it is required to be shown before every competition. It documents your weight, information about your opponents and results of the matches played.
- **Weigh-in** – This is required in order to be placed in the fitting weight category.
- **Physical examination** – After the weigh-on a physician examines the capability of a boxer to compete. The things they check consist of –
  - Blood pressure

- Breathing
- Condition of hands and face
- **Wrap check** – Usually the judge signs the wraps, meaning the boxer has followed the given procedures and rules. After the signing, the boxer is sent to the host, who gives the boxer either red or blue gloves, depending on the assigned corner.
- As the boxers get into the ring, and sit on their assigned posts, the judge comes to make a final check if the boxers are wearing a mouthpiece and the correct size of gloves.
- The boxers are introduced, and called in the center of the ring where they touch gloves, a sign of sportsmanship.
- The boxers return to their corners and wait for the bell to ring to mark the beginning of the fight.

## Quick Glimpse of the Game

The players have to fight a series of rounds (normally 12) with one-three minutes intervals. A bell is rung to signify the start of each round.

There is a wooden table placed at the ringside, and a ring official hits it with a hammer, to denote that there are only ten seconds left in each round.

A boxer is declared winner, when the opponent is down and does not resume within ten counts or when the player is seriously injured.

Winner of the game is declared through scoring, only when there is no disqualification or any knock-outs.

## Scoring

Who won the round is mostly based on counting "scoring punches" - punches with the knuckle side of the fists that strike the front or sides of the opponent's body (above the belt) or head. Fouls are also tracked and affect scoring. According to the judges, these may be: the number of punches, aggression put in, control of the ring, controlling the fight tempo, and the amount of damage caused.

Scoring in professional boxing is quite different from scoring at the amateur level. It's based on four criteria –

- Clean punching
- Effective aggressiveness
- Ring generalship
- Defense

The scoring system maintained by the judges is the 10-point-must system. In a closed round, the winner of each round is issued 10 points, whereas the defeated boxer will receive 9 points. Similarly, the loser will receive 8 points if knocked down or taken over. Seven points if knock-out was twice. Both boxers will receive 10 points each when the round is even.

A boxer is declared the winner when all the three judges are in accordance and when the boxer receives more points than the opponent. If the majority of judges declare the match tie, then the match is called for a draw.

A match can be concluded by four possible decisions of the judges –

- **Unanimous decision** – Here all the judges are in agreement and score the boxer same and declare as the winner.
- **Split decision** – Here, two of the three judges support one boxer, and the other one, supports the other boxer.
- **Majority decision** – One judge draws the match, whereas the two other judges score one boxer.
- **Draw** – This happens, when none of the judges are in agreement. One judge scores for one boxer, another judge for another boxer, and the third judge evens out the match. In this state, none of the boxers is declared the winner.

## Fouls

A **foul** committed by a player results in the deduction of points by the judges. Committing a serious foul or committing a foul repeatedly, can result in disqualification. To prevent the fight from becoming a brawl and prevent severe injuries boxers must not –

- Strike below the belt
- Strike when the opponent boxer is down on the canvas
- Kick
- Strike with elbows, forearms or the inside of the hand (slap)
- Head-butt
- Bite ears
- Grab onto the ropes
- Poke the eye with a thumb
- Wrestle, grapple or hold the opponent excessively

# Boxing - Variants

Boxing is played at two levels – Amateur (Olympic) and Professional boxing

## Amateur boxing

Amateur boxing takes place at many events, such as the Olympic Games, Pan American Games and Commonwealth Games. The bouts are short in duration compared to professional bouts and fighters must wear protective headgear. For this reason, the winner is decided by scoring punches, meaning, when boxers connect with the knuckle portion of the gloves. Every punch that is landed either on the head or the torso of the boxer is considered as a point. The judge monitors the fight to make sure that only legal punches are dealt.



## Professional boxing

Professional boxing is also called prizefighting. It originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when boxing was legalized and started to be a regulated sport. The bouts last longer than in amateur boxing, with more number of rounds, depending on the significance of the fight.





Protective gear is not allowed, and the boxers can take up much more damage than amateur fighters, before the judge halts the fight. Although it seems more brutal, professional fights are enjoyed much more than amateur fights.

## Boxing - Tournaments

Because of its huge popularity, different organizations organize boxing tournaments at a professional or amateur level.

### Amateur boxing tournaments

- **Golden Gloves Association of America** – This association organizes tournaments in different states, the winners of each different state compete at a national level (The Golden Gloves Tournament of Champions) to decide the winner.
- Mexico also organizes a tournament called **Guantes De Oro** (meaning “Gloves of Gold”)
- **USA Boxing** – A non-profit organization that promotes Olympic-style boxing in America. It is overseen by the United States Olympic Committee, and its rules are set by the International Boxing Association.

### Professional boxing tournaments

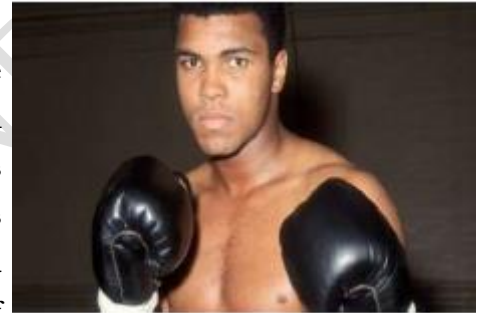
- **World Boxing Association (WBA)** – An international boxing organization that awards the WBA world championship title.

- **World Boxing Council (WBC)** – One of the most prestigious organizations for boxing. It has over 140 countries with their flags represented on the awarding belt.
- **World Boxing Organization (WBO)** – The organization which recognizes professional boxing world champions.
- **International Boxing Federation (IBF)** – The federation creates different regional titles throughout the United States and other countries, to give young boxers the opportunity to participate.

## Boxing - Champions

Boxing tournaments are held in different categories, depending on the weight of the competitors. Following are some of the legends of the sport.

**Muhammad Ali**, the American professional boxer is one of the most renowned heavyweight champion in sports history. He reserves the record of being the only one to have won the lineal World Heavyweight Championship title three times, in 1964, 1974, and 1978. He won several historic boxing titles and hence earned the nickname "Greatest". His unprecedented grace and unique style made him a legend and Sports Illustrated declared him to be the "Sportsman of the Century".



**Mike Tyson**, often referred to as 'Kid Dynamite' is considered as one of the best heavyweight champions of all time and has an impressive list of accomplishments to his credit. He holds the record of being the youngest boxer to have won the World Boxing Council, World Boxing Association, and International Boxing Federation heavyweight titles at 20 years, 4 months, and 22 days old.



**Henry Jackson Jr.**, known as Henry Armstrong is regarded as one of the greatest boxers of all time. He not only belonged to the group of boxers who won boxing championships in three or more different divisions (there were only eight universally recognized World titles at the time) but also has the record of holding three world championship titles (featherweight, lightweight, and welterweight) at a time in 1938. Armstrong successfully defended his welterweight title 19 times and was known for his style of throwing punches from all angles.



**Herbert Lewis Hardwick**, the Afro Puerto Rican boxer, was inducted into the hall of fame in 2012. He primarily fought middleweight and welterweight matches. Hardwick, who was well known by his nickname “Cacao Kid” won the World Colored Championships in both these divisions.



**Joseph William Calzaghe**, the former Ring Super Middleweight and light heavyweight champion, is the longest reigning super middleweight champion, having held the title for more than 10 years. He successfully defended the title 21 times, however, finally relinquished it move up to the light heavyweight division. In 2009, *The Ring Magazine* ranked him Number 3 in the world.



**Rocky Marciano**, is said to be the only boxer to have held the heavyweight title without a bout tie or defeat throughout his career. Marciano was famous for his cast iron chin and incredible endurance power. Known for his ferocious punches, he holds the highest knockout percentage of 87.75.



**Floyd Joy Mayweather Jr.**, is best known as the undefeated professional five division world champion. Mayweather has 11 world titles to his credit, and has won the lineal championship in four different weight categories. He topped the list of the 50 highest paid athletes by *Forbes* and *Sports Illustrated* for the year 2012, 2013 and 2014.



**Manny Pacquiao**, the Filipino boxer is the first and the only eight-division world champion. Pacquiao, is a three-time winner of the 'The Ring' and 'BWAA' Fighter of the Year award having won in the year 2006, 2008, and 2009. The Boxing Writers Association of America, World Boxing Council, and World Boxing Organization endowed him with the title "Fighter of the Decade" for the 2000s. Forbes ranked him as the second highest paid athlete in the world in 2015.

