

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Boxing risking its sanctity; time for return to purity

Boxing's ghosts of old probably turned over in their graves this weekend when the latest "fight of the millenium" proved to be a fight against nauseum. Two talented boxers, both champions, both undefeated, both in the prime of their athletic lives and both among the pound-for-pound best pugilists on the planet met to decide who would control two-thirds of boxing's welterweight kingdom.

Instead of the fireworks of Hearns and Hagler, the blood-and-guts saga of Leonard-Duran or the championship angst of Whitaker and Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya — named the "Golden Boy" because of his meteoric ascent in the boxing's — and sports entertainment's — hallowed stratosphere after winning a gold medal in the 1992 Olympics — and Felix Trinidad — a proud Puerto Rican nicknamed "Tito" and possessive of one the earth's most fearsome lefts — gave fight fans little of what they expected: a fight.

Most media pundits and boxing critics had De La Hoya winning the fight, despite a lapse in judgement in which he decided to spend the final third of the fight running instead of frustrating Trinidad with the peppery jabs and lightning-quick combinations he'd used earlier in the fight to build up a lead. De La Hoya flummoxed Trinidad, that much was apparent to anyone who watched the fight, except to whom it most counted — the judges.

In awarding Trinidad the victory, and De La Hoya's WBC welterweight title to boot, the judges bolstered public sentiment that boxing is becoming more of a farce. Despite his unquestioned genius in nearly monopolizing the sport, promoter Don King has done much to perpetuate the notion that the sport is a rigged circus that's becoming eerily similar to the elaborate, pre-ordained productions put on by the likes of the World Wrestling Federation, tough-man contests and the like.

A profanity-laced post-fight press conference had the feel of the recent WWF Smack Down event at the Thomas & Mack Center. Wrestler Hunter Hearst Helmsley, known as Triple H, used body parts and body functions to degrade WWF owner Vince McMahon. The thousands of youth in attendance happily displayed their souvenir rubber middle finger, a tribute to the beer-drinking, foul-mouthed Stone Cold Steve Austin, also known as the Rattlesnake. Fans by the thousands cheered and jeered as the pre-rehearsed performances drew on guts and goo and girls to work the crowd into a frenzy.

Boxing is quickly sinking into the mire of "professional" wrestling, with fighters using gimmicks to sell themselves rather than relying on skill to blaze their path. Much of the blame lies on promoters, King among them, who detract from boxing with "fantabulous" boasts, endless verbiage and an uncanny ability to always come out on top or near the top. No stranger to controversy, King one-upped himself when, as many people think, he coaxed judges into ruling the Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield heavyweight championship fight a draw. The consensus was that Lewis won.

Those same questions have flaired anew with the De La Hoya-Trinidad fight. Many critics say De La Hoya did enough to win the fight despite abandoning his plan in the later rounds and he certainly did enough to not lose 115-113, as one judge had it. Rumblings of King influence abound.

If boxing continues on this course, it might be time to bring in Hulk Hogan.



ALL IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE FOR EAST TIMOR RAISE YOUR HANDS!



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Flag should hang in museum, not capitol

By Lee Hubbard
Special to Sentinel-Voice

It was a hot day in Oakland as I walked down a busy street and came face to face with a bearded, middle-aged White man in a cowboy hat, boots and a body length shirt picturing a huge confederate flag.

I was in a rush, but the Stars and Stripes of the confederate flag caught my attention, so I stopped to look at the man.

As I stood to read the slogan "Dixie Pride" on the back of the shirt, a Black woman in her 40s began cussing at the man about his shirt.

The interaction between the two of them signals the racial divisiveness that the confederate flag creates.

It was the banner uniting the group of southern states that seceded from the United States in 1860-1861 and marched to war over the preservation of slavery. To some White people, the confederate flag symbolizes honor and southern pride. To Blacks, on the other hand, it is the visual equivalent of the "N" word and a sign of racial oppression and White supremacy.

The flag is now at the center of a national boycott of the state of South Carolina, called by Martin Luther King III and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a group his father once led.

South Carolina is the only state in the Union that

publicly flies the confederate flag at its state capital under the United States and South Carolina flags. It was re-raised in 1962 to symbolize the Civil War centennial. Coincidentally, it was around the same time the civil rights movement was dismantling American apartheid throughout the south, and it has remained affixed to the state capital ever since.

There have been attempts before to remove the flag. Former Republican Gov. David Beasley tried and was defeated in a re-election bid for saying he wanted it moved.

But, King's current call to boycott the state may be the quickest way to end this visual showing of nativism.

Tourism is a big deal in South Carolina, and Black tourists spend over \$280 million a year. So far, the SCLC boycott is being supported by the NAACP and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. The African Methodist Episcopal Church and the National Urban League have even rescheduled conferences — that generate millions in revenues — to other states until the flag comes down.

"In the 21st century, it is time that we move in a positive direction," said King. "The confederate flag belongs in a museum."

Some legislators in South Carolina like Sen. Arthur Ravenel Jr., a Republican, say the flag symbolizes "the

blood and the sacrifice of the people who carried that flag."

During the Civil War, there were many courageous confederate soldiers who fought for the flag, including between 60,000 to 90,000 Black soldiers who served in some capacity under the confederate flag in exchange for their freedom.

But, flying the flag in its present form is the visual equivalent of Germany hanging a Swastika under the current flag of Germany.

"It should be taken down," Sen. Fritz Hollis, a Democrat, said. "It is being used by extremists."

While politicians in the state are slow to move on the action, they may need to look at the actions of their southern brethren at the University of Mississippi.

In the past, after a football score, hundreds of students and alumni at OLE Miss, would wave and fly the confederate flag in celebration.

But after years of losing the recruiting battle for top Black athletes, as a result of flag waving celebration, Tommy Tuberville, the head coach of the football team, went on a public plea to fans and alumni to stop the flag waving. You see less talent equals losing, less exposure, and ultimately less money to the football team and university coffers.

Since Tuberville's plea, flag waving has virtually stopped at the games.

The moral argument against having the confederate flag rest on top of the state capital is sound. But the call to boycott the state of South Carolina may make politicians reconsider the symbol that as King says, "needs to be hanging in a (state) museum," instead of flying on top of the state capital.

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