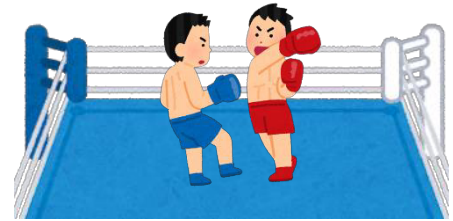


Boxing

Hello everyone! My name is Stephen Cannell. I work as a coordinator for international relations (CIR) in Toyohashi. Today I would like to talk about boxing, a combat sport that will be at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.



Boxing is a sport in which two athletes face off and fight using only their fists. Boxing has been part of the Olympics since the ancient games, but until the 19th century, boxers used their bare fists. Due to constant injuries, the sport was made illegal. However, with the invention of boxing gloves, boxing became an official sport, and has been incredibly popular to this day.

Boxing takes place in a square ring. The fighters wear gloves on their hands and are only allowed to punch their opponent above the waist. Boxing in Tokyo will have 3 rounds of 3 minutes, with a 1 minute break between each round during which the athletes can consult with their coaches. Each round, 5 judges will award points to the athletes based on their performance. In the case that the match continues to the very end, these points are used to determine the winner. Points are generally awarded based on how many punches were landed, but it is up to the judge's discretion, so style, defense, etc. can also play a role. Penalties, knockdowns, and instances where there is a large gap in the athletes skill level, can all result in a loss of points. With this scoring system, most rounds are scored 10 to 9 in favor of the winner, however 10 to 8 or 10 to 7 is not uncommon.

Boxing matches are not only determined based on points. It is an immediate victory if an athlete scores a knockout (when the opponent cannot return to the fight within 10 seconds,) if the opponent commits 3 penalties (such as hitting below the belt,) if there is too large of a skill gap between the fighters, and the referee has to stop the match (known as



a technical knockout, or TKO,) and finally if the opponent (or their staff) surrenders.

There are many ways for a fight to be decided, and one aspect that has a large influence on this is the fighters' styles. For example, fighters who aim to knock their opponent out with their all-out power are known as "sluggers," while fighters who try to keep a distance from their opponent and slowly wear them down are known as "out-fighters." Within these styles, there are matchups that are considered favorable and unfavorable. For example, "in-fighters," who try to stay close to their opponent throughout the fight, are generally considered to have an advantage over out-fighters.

The drama leading up to the fight, the sound of the powerful punches, and the masterful techniques on display make boxing one of the most exciting sports to watch.

Japan took medals at the 1960, 1964, and 1968 Olympics, before going 44 years without a medal. Finally, in 2012, Satoshi Shimizu took bronze, and Ryota Murata took gold in London. In 2016, the ban on professional boxers was lifted, and the field has only gotten stronger. Sena Irie and Tsukimi Namiki secured their Olympic qualification this month, and will be the first Japanese women to fight in the Olympic boxing event. The men's team has yet to qualify an athlete, however Daisuke Narimatsu and Yuito Moriwake are looking strong.

Oshae Jones, a native of Toyohashi's sister city, Toledo, Ohio, has been selected for the American national boxing team, with whom she will compete in the American continental Olympic qualifying tournament in late March. If she doesn't secure her qualification there, she will have one more chance at the final international qualifier in May. Let's cheer her on in her journey to Tokyo!