

don't make your weight; within the first 10 seconds of a fight they will stop it if the referee thinks you're mismatched whereas in the pros it's sometimes very difficult to do because you have a lot of money on the line."

"I'm an ardent fan of amateur boxing because of the care that is taken with the kids. That doesn't happen in the pros," Arnold states.

According to Arnold, the be-all and end-all in amateur boxing is not the "knockdown," as it is in the pros. "In pro boxing a technical knockout (TKO) or a knockdown where you get a count (the boxer is down for an amount of time) is valued by the judges more greatly than a jab. In amateur boxing a jab is worth the exact same as a knockdown. All you have to do is make contact."

Arnold spent her first three years of boxing training and sparring with men, including Olympians Lennox Lewis and Asif Dar. But Arnold now wants to get other women involved in the sport and to that end she started a women's boxing clinic about eight months ago. It's run through Boxing Ontario at the Thistleton Boxing Club in Etobicoke every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between six and eight p.m. where the women have the gym to themselves.

Training independently of the men is important, Arnold says, because different strategies of fighting are necessary. For men, the four elements in boxing, in order of importance, are speed, endurance, strength and technical skill (proper stances, co-ordination and intuition for example).

For women, however, "there's a totally different order," Arnold says. "We're built differently and we don't have the strength, so technical skill is the number one important element. Secondly, would be speed. Skill helps you with speed because it helps you exert the least amount of energy for the most benefit. If I have more energy, I'll have more endurance and I'll have more speed. (Endurance and strength are third and fourth respectively.) Strength is still important because you have to keep your opponent a little leery so they'll keep their distance," Arnold says.

By training with other women, Arnold is trying to avoid the inevitable social games that occur at a mixed workout. "There's a different atmosphere when you're just training with women. I know very well from taking dancercise and working out at different clubs that when there is a mixture of men and women, there are all sorts of different interactions and dynamics going on . . . When you're training with women, you're there to train. You'll meet the guys, but before or after you train. You don't have to worry about guys looking at you, making any type of remarks or trying to pick you up."

The clinic is basically meant "for women who are looking for something a little more challenging than dancercise, a bit more skillful, more intellectually demanding." It's also a lot more physically demanding, judging from the training sessions Arnold outlines.

Arnold trains four days a week for about two hours (for beginners the pace and length would not be as much). "It is the most rigorous

training of any sport and I'll bet my life on it," Arnold claims.

The session begins with a 45 minute warmup that in most other sports would suffice for the whole workout. The first 20 minutes consist of running laps and doing boxing exercises. "I may run a lap then do a duck walk for a lap (to strengthen the thighs) then run a lap while practising punching." The exercises for the next 25 minutes consist of neck rolls, "basic dancercise activities, plus exercises designed for boxing."

"The whole purpose of the warmup is to relax and get every single joint in your body ready for training. Boxing Ontario really stresses it and it is one of the things that eliminates a lot of the training injuries of other sports, like shin splints or . . . knees hurting. This type of thing doesn't happen in boxing if you're training properly."

During the main section of the workout, the boxers work on their punches and other skills using the punching bag, speed bag and wall bag, all the while being helped by their coaches. The athletes also do skipping, shadow boxing and sparring during this part of the training which lasts between 45 minutes and an hour. The exercise are split up into three minute rounds, with a one minute rest between each "so the training mimics the way it works in the ring."

The last 20 minutes is the warmdown made up of situps, stretches and more skipping. But after two hours of exhausting exercises, Arnold is ready for yet more punishment. "If you're training properly, you should feel that you

could do more when you finish training. Whenever I finish training, I always feel that I could do more, always. In the middle of the round, I feel like I'm going to die but with the minute rest (between rounds) you really learn how to pace yourself."

The training for boxing is primarily cardiovascular, but it also builds strength. Boxers, however, are not musclebound as they develop fast twitch muscle fibre through the use of light weights and many repetitions.

Weightlifters, on the other hand, work on slow twitch muscles fibre which gives them a heavy bulky look. The muscle in boxers is not really noticeable until they flex.

"For women, it's excellent," Arnold says. "You can get away with looking feminine and you don't look as if you're musclebound. I don't look big [she's 5' 2"; 115 pounds]. When you body build you carry around bulk. When you box, you don't, but I have a lot of muscle in my arms and shoulders. You really get toned, you lose the fat."

Arnold now has a small number of women training with her—one runs her own business, one's an education major like Arnold, and another is in her first year at York. Arnold would like to get a core group together, with which she can spar and put on exhibitions. As Arnold says, "It's time" for women to break down the barriers in this male-dominated sport.

Thistleton Boxing Club is located at 915 Albion Road (at Islington), five minutes from York by car, 15 minutes by bus. For more information, call 746-8868.



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