

FIRST STEPS IN BOXING

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ILLUSTRATED WITH DIAGRAMS

PART II*

THE position of the boxer, on guard with extended left, makes that hand the skirmisher, as it were, who feels out the strength and weakness of the enemy and opens the way for the heavy artillery, the right. The straight left or jab is a difficult punch to block when delivered with great speed, and when once landed is sufficiently disconcerting to leave its victim open to another blow. For the undeviating rule of the boxer is: whenever you land a punch follow with another, and when you avoid one, counter.

The jab is often followed up by a right hook to the jaw. Look carefully at the positions of the two boxers as illustrated in Fig. 2. The man on the right, confused for the moment by the jab to the face, is a ready victim for the right hook which will follow in an in-

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stant. Now look at Fig. 3. The jab blocked, the man on the right is alert and watchful, and the chances are his own left will be quicker than the other's right. He will probably jab, or he may jolt his right to his opponent's jaw almost in one movement with that which blocks the jab.

The beginner must practice the double movement mentioned above. Block the straight left as shown in Fig. 2; then with as little pause as possible hook to the jaw. The other man may keep his right guard up, thus intercepting the hook. (See Fig. 10.) Another method of dealing with the jab is shown in Fig. 11. As the left shoots out it is caught on the defender's upward turned left palm or wrist and thrown sharply up, this exposing the jabber's body to a right counter. This block and counter will require a good deal of practice before they can be worked simultaneously, which they should be in order to be effective. There are several other meth-



Fig. 2—The straight left.



Fig. 3—Blocking a straight left.

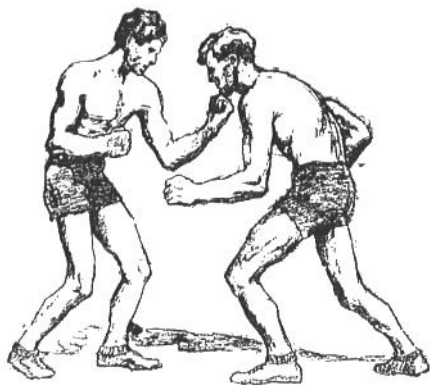


Fig. 5—The left uppercut.



Fig. 7—Left hook to body.

ods of blocking a left jab, all of them requiring great speed and accuracy, consequently much practice. One of these is illustrated in Fig. 12. The man on the defensive moves his head to the right and, at the same time, slaps the jabber's left sharply inward with his right palm or wrist. This leaves the defender in a position to counter with left to body or chin.

Better than such intricacies is the device of slipping the head to right or left, allowing the punch to pass over the shoulder. This has the advantage of leaving both hands free to counter. (See Figs. 7 and 9.) The jab, and all other blows, can be avoided by drawing back, and countered by stepping in with a return jab before the other man recovers his balance.

Fig. 5 will show that a left upper cut

may also be followed up by a right hook to jaw or body. Fig. 13 illustrates a block for the left upper cut which leaves the right free to counter. The blow may be checked either with the palm or forearm. This block may likewise be used to stop a left hook to the body. It will be noticed that what we have called the left upper cut and left hook to body are practically the same blow, directed at different points. In blocking an upward hook in this way the palm or fleshy part of the forearm is turned down—held stiff—and as it meets the blow it should be jerked strongly downward, otherwise the force of the hook will break through the guard.

The right hand may be used in the same manner to block a left upper cut, as is shown in Fig. 14. This diagram,

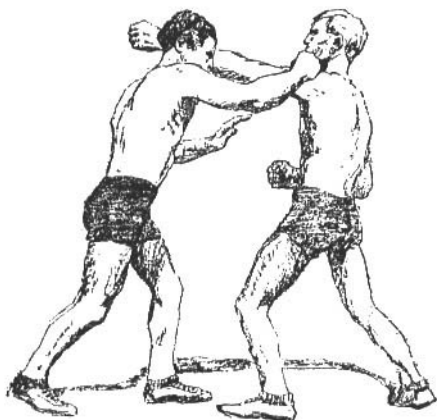


Fig. 9—The right-hand hook to jaw, the right cross-counter.

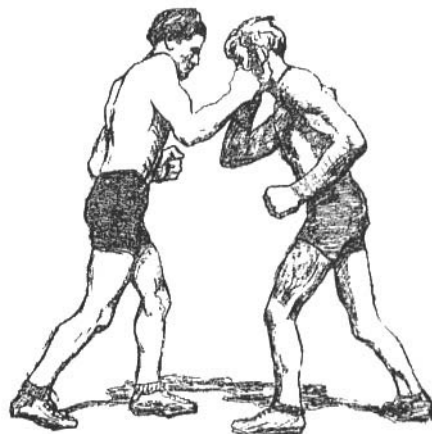


Fig. 10—Blocking a right hook to jaw.

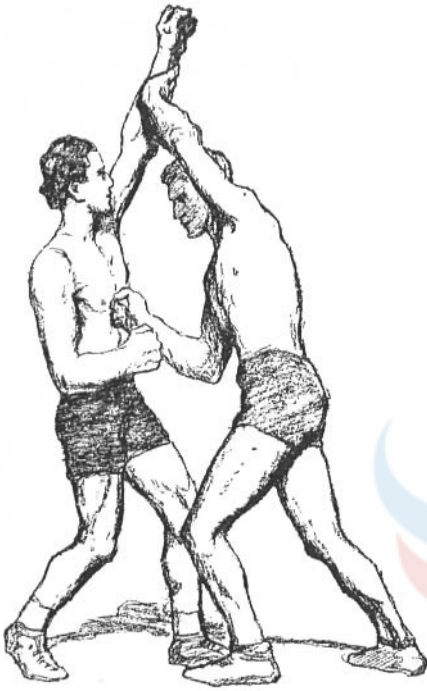


Fig. 11—Block and counter for left jab.

Fig. 14, shows an excellent double movement for the learner to practice. Let one man lead a left upper cut for the chin at the same instant as his partner leads a left hook for the stomach. Then let both block simultaneously with the right. Alternate, letting the second man lead for the chin, while the first leads for the stomach, and so on. Another method of blocking the left hook to body is shown in Fig. 15, where the left forearm is placed across the stomach, leaving the right free to counter. The defender's left shoulder must be kept high to protect his jaw in case his antagonist follows up his left to the body with a right to the jaw. With accurate timing these hooks (upper cut and left to body) may be avoided by side-stepping to the right, and countered with a return left hook or upper cut.

The right-hand cross counter, Fig. 9, is a right hook to the jaw. The name, right-hand cross counter, is also given to a right-hand swing when it is delivered to the jaw over or across a rival's extended left. A swing differs from a hook in that the arm is straighter in the

former, consequently the blow travels farther than the hook, and has more leverage. It may be added that it is usually slower. The swing belongs more truly to the fighter's repertoire than to that of the boxer. The block shown in Fig. 10 is equally effective for a hook or a swing. By studying the diagram, Fig. 10, it will be seen that the natural punch to follow up a right hook when blocked in this way is a left to the jaw. The natural thing for the man blocking to do next is to hook his left to the body.

Neither man is in a position to block a counter, and it is a question of whose punch will land first. This method of blocking a right hook or swing has the disadvantage of leaving the face or right jaw exposed to a jab or a left hook if the right was only a feint.

Fig. 16 shows a right hook for the jaw, blocked by the left forearm. In blocking a right hook or a swing in this way the forearm must be kept stiff, and pushed strongly outward to break the force of the blow.

Fig. 17 shows how a right swing may be stopped before it is well started. As your opponent's right starts, thrust out your left with palm forward, striking his arm below the shoulder. This is effective when it can be worked, as it not only checks the swing, but keeps your opponent at such a distance that he can't reach you until you bend your arm, and, the advantage being with you,

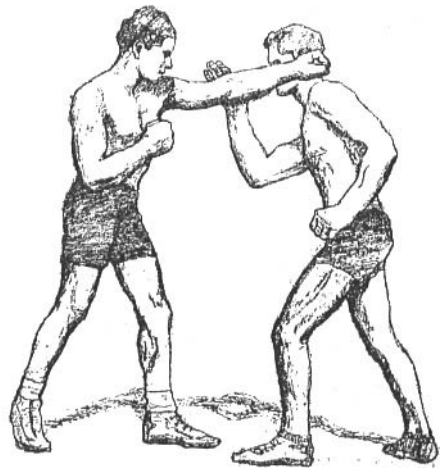


Fig. 12—A guard for the left jab.

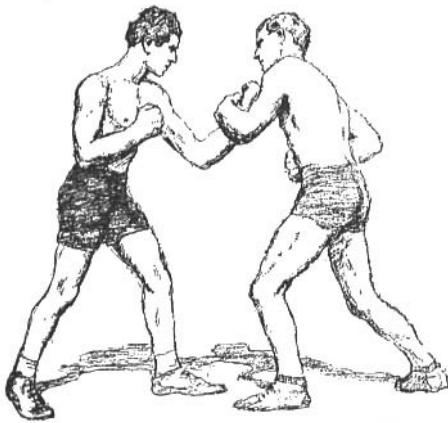


Fig. 13—A block for left uppercut permitting right counter to jaw.

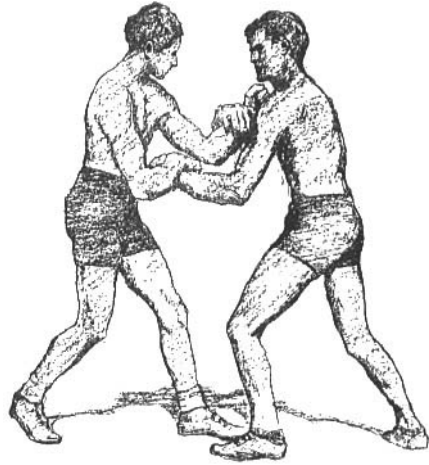


Fig. 14—Left hooks blocked simultaneously.

you may beat him to the punch with your right.

A way often employed to avoid a right swing for the jaw without blocking is to duck. This, if carried out successfully, throws an opponent off his balance, and leaves him at a disadvantage; but the risk of ducking into an upper cut is so great that some good instructors lay down the rule: never duck. If there is any time when ducking is advisable, it is with a ponderous swinger, one who keeps his elbows high, and whose swings travel horizontally.

It is safe enough to duck a genuine left swing; that is, a swing that travels

all the way, that is not a feint. Duck to your right, countering with a left to the body. An effective maneuver, one requiring very accurate timing, is to step in as the swing comes and allow it to go around your neck. You can often land a stiff upper cut to your antagonist's jaw at the same time. (See Fig. 18.) A well-timed, well-directed jab will generally stop a swing or spoil its effectiveness.

The necessity of perfect timing has been mentioned as essential to the boxer. Together with sure judgment of time must go accurate judgment of distance. Boxing in this respect is on a par with

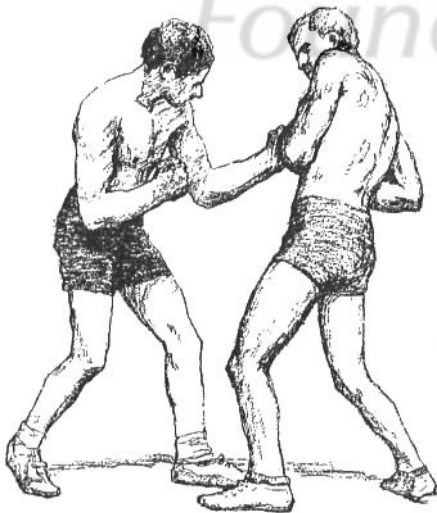


Fig. 15—Blocking left hook to body with left forearm across stomach.

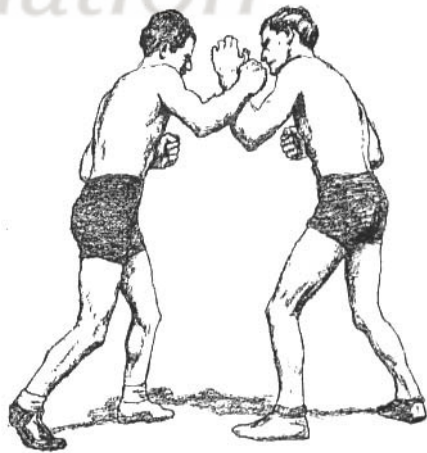


Fig. 16—Block for right hook to jaw.

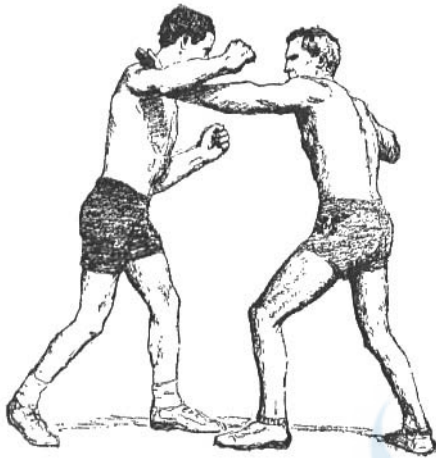


Fig. 17—Guard for right swing.

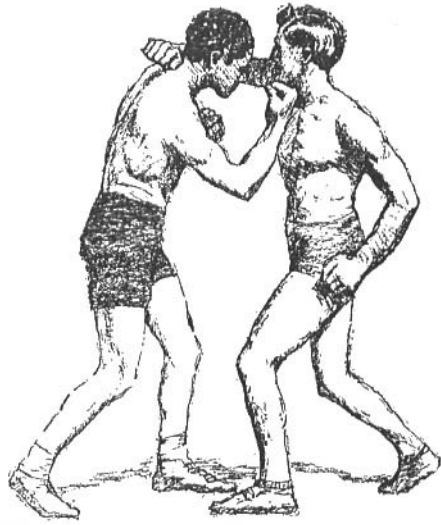


Fig. 18—Stepping inside of a right hook, and countering with uppercut.

any other game requiring a high degree of skill. The batter who strikes at a pitched ball a fraction of a second too soon, or too late, the sportsman who fires at a flying bird without making sufficient allowance for its distance and the rapidity of its flight, are no worse than the boxer who raises his guard too late, or who directs a punch at the jaw and lands it on the ear, or cuts the air with it.

The learner should bend his every effort to the perfection of his judgment of distance and time, for therein, above all else, lies the distinction between the expert and the novice. Besides boxing itself, which is the best of training for speed and sureness of hand and eye, punching the pneumatic bag, and the game of handball, are excellent.

Good judgment of time and distance partly constitute what is called good headwork in the ring. But good headwork embraces much more than these.

Following out the simile used at the beginning of this article, if the left hand may be likened to the skirmishing line, and the right to the artillery, the head may be regarded as the general, who supervises and directs both.

The intelligent boxer fights no two men alike. He notes the temperament, the build, the posture, the style of his antagonist, and directs his battle accordingly. He will conceal his ultimate designs with false attacks; he will ascertain wherein lies the greatest danger from his rival, and where he is most vulnerable; he will endeavor to out-guess and outmaneuver him, and will often cause a slower thinking antagonist to help defeat himself. It is this matching of wits in the ring that raises a boxing exhibition above the level of mere brute struggle, and in this, added to man's inborn love of combat, lies the appeal of the game to so many persons of standing and intelligence.

