

3 TYPES OF BOXING SPARRING FOR DEVELOPING FIGHTERS

BY **BOBBY MAYNE** - June 5, 2019



There are 3 types of sparring | Pic: Boxrite

Sparring is important in the preparation for a competitive boxer in gaining confidence to apply technical and tactical skills in a controlled, supervised environment.

Prior to a session many rounds would have been spent on focus mitts training with the coach, developing offensive and defensive skills. It is practical in bringing a sense of realism to training, and assess the boxer's ability to perform set offensive and defensive tasks under pressure, and identify any problem areas that need correcting.

There are 3 types of sparring:

1. Technical
2. Conditional
3. Open (Full Contact)

The type is determined by the coach, depending on the training program phase and ability of the boxer. Use a mouthguard (gum shield) and wear heavier well-padded gloves up to 16oz weight. Headgear is worn when undertaking conditional sparring, in order to get used to the bulky, tight fitting and restrictive feel of the equipment.

1. Technical

Technical sparring are pre-set partner drills supervised by the coach, training objective is developing technique and improving reaction time not endurance or punching power.

For example: The first boxer will commence the drill with a jab, the second boxer will defend and counter jab. This training will perfect technique without pressure and develop the boxer in reading an oncoming punch without panicking.

2. Conditional

Conditional sparring is set conditions boxers undertake in the ring with coaching supervision. These conditions comprise of scenarios for developing skills and tactical awareness specific to competition. Pace should be faster than technical sparring with much control on the intensity of punches.

Examples include:

- Jab sparring
- Range sparring
- Boxer 1 punching – Boxer 2 defending only
- Sparring against Southpaw opponent
- Sparring tactics against different styles of opponents
- Cutting off the ring
- Backing opponent onto ropes and corners
- Fighting off ropes and out from corners
- Infighting tactics
- Bodypunching skills
- Defensive and counterpunching skills

3. Open

Open sparring is at a realistic pace to competition. Emphasis should be placed on building endurance over the prescribed rounds, along with applying skills and tactics developed in training and not trying to knock the partner out. Wearing of protective equipment such as 16oz gloves, mouthguard, head and groin protection is compulsory.

Coaching staff must be present for supervision and advising the boxers during the course of the rounds along with other cornering duties. Each session should be constructive with each boxer having gained some knowledge from the experience either from making mistakes or capitalising from the mistakes made by partner.

It is important to spar against various styles of partners for developing a boxer's skillset and self-confidence. There are no winners or losers in these sessions, just a big learning curve. Boxing associations regularly conduct inter club sparring sessions which prove invaluable for tournament preparation, gaining knowledge on strength, weaknesses and common traits of potential opponents.

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Bobby Mayne is the Head Coach at Boxrite Boxing Club and author of several boxing coaching books including the bestselling "The Art of Boxing: Your Guide to the Sweet Science". Mayne has been involved in boxing since 1981. He has trained professional boxers such as Australian Daniel Dawson to compete at the world level, becoming a world contender and ultimately the WBF World Superwelterweight Champion. He also assisted in the training of top boxers from the Philippines including Rey Megrino and Rey Loreto, who were both successful in winning their respective WBC Regional and WBO World Flyweight titles.



