

Origin and evolution of Olympic Spanish boxing in the period 1920-1968

MARÍA TERESA CALLE-MOLINA , MARÍA EUGENIA MARTÍNEZ-GORROÑO

Department of Physical Education, Sport and Human Movement, Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain

ABSTRACT

This research presents the origins of boxing in the Olympic structures in Spain at the end of the 19th century, as well as the social, sporting and economic circumstances of Spanish boxing in the 1960s. This historical qualitative recovery was made based on the analysis of the testimonies of Spanish Olympic boxers who participated in the Mexican Games in 1968, information triangulated with numerous and diverse sources. The results show that Spanish participation in boxing in the Games, since its inclusion in the Spanish sports structures in 1920, took place four times until 1960. In this last decade its practitioners came from disadvantaged backgrounds and their evolution as boxers was very precarious in terms of material and personal resources. During this period, the national team developed with scarce resources. Fighters had to combine their sporting careers with other temporary jobs to support the family economy. We can conclude that those circumstances involved very poor preparation and international and Olympic defeats. However, boxing provided a platform to raise the social, economic and cultural status of the fighters and, considering their circumstances, becoming an Olympian was the greatest milestone in their personal lives and a national sporting landmark.

Keywords: Boxing; Olympism; Olympic Games; Spanish sport.

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 **Corresponding author.** *Department of Physical Education, Sport and Human Movement, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Autonomous University of Madrid, Francisco Tomás y Valiente street, 3. Madrid 28049. Spain.*

E-mail: mariat.calle@uam.es

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INTRODUCTION

Currently there is scarce research on Spanish boxing and even less on national Olympic boxing. This sport has generated a lot of controversy in Spain and in the rest of the world, being questioned on many occasions about its presence in the Olympic Program. Since the first Spanish participation in this discipline in the 1920 Olympic Games until today, Spanish boxing has undergone great changes in its federal structure and in the population's opinion about its practice. However, despite the popular and media interest in this sport, no research has been carried out on its origin in sports structures, nor on the historical recovery of the participation of those first Spanish fighters in the Olympic Games.

This research is therefore an unprecedented historical rescue. On the one hand, the circumstances of this sport at the origin of the Spanish Olympic structures have been recovered. And, on the other hand, it has led to the recovery of the memory and the testimonies of the family, economic and sporting circumstances experienced by the longest living Spanish fighters who participated in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. This work recovers and rescues, in some cases from unpublished sources, the origin of the history of Spanish Olympic boxing, writing a part of the history of unwritten sport that, with the passage of time, could be lost.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research techniques used in this investigation have been diverse. As regards documentary analysis, the content of written press sources, bibliographic sources and other sources from the archives of Spanish and international sports institutions, such as the library of the International Olympic Academy and documents from the International Olympic Committee, have been analysed. The documentary analysis of unpublished documentation rescued from the personal archives of the oral sources involved in the events has also been carried out.

On the other hand, the memory of the oral sources has been collected through the technique of the semi-structured open-ended interview (Hammer and Wildavsky, 1990). The recording of their testimonies, to obtain information from oral sources has been a definitive methodological resource. The information obtained was analysed and subjected to the processes of internal and external criticism (Best, 1982) to verify and guarantee the veracity of the sources and the contents of the stories. Previously, a process of identification and categorization of those people who could be primary oral sources of the historical events we intended to rescue was carried out. Categorizing and subsequently locating the only sources alive today, who participated as boxers in an Olympic Games before the 1970s.

The Olympic boxers who have been sources in this investigation offering their testimony and personal archives have been Antonio Marcos Chinaea, José Manuel Durán Pérez and Moisés Fajardo Pérez, boxers who participated in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. In addition, we have had access to the personal archives of boxer Antonio Rubio Fernández, who participated in the Munich Games in 1972 and in Montreal in 1976.

Because this research is a historical recovery, the four oral sources personally authorized during the interviews the citation of their identities and testimonies, in order to fulfil the objective of a historical recovery that would give voice and recognition to their important sports achievements; therefore, following Thompson's (1988) statements, we consider that the historical recovery deals with "*characters not only extracted from among the leaders, but also from among the unknown majority of the people*" (p. 36).

ORIGINS OF BOXING IN SPANISH OLYMPIC STRUCTURES

Baron Pierre de Coubertin initiated contact with the Spanish royal house to ask for support in his push for the creation of the Games. In 1885, he sent a letter requesting that a Spanish member be allowed to join the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Gonzalo de Figueroa y Torres Count of Mejorada del Campo and Marqués de Villamejor, a well-known member of the Spanish nobility for his sporting tastes, were appointed to that task. These facts are the first antecedent of the impulse of the Olympic sport in Spain (Duránte, 2003).

The Spanish Olympic Committee (SOC) was created on 25 November 1912 at the initiative of the Marquis of Villamejor, which took place in his own home, located at 70 Velázquez Street in Madrid (Duránte, 2011). At that time an event was sponsored that was designated as the Madrid Olympics which, together with those held in Barcelona, were in fact a test for Spanish athletes who intended to attend the Berlin Olympics in 1916. However, these were not held because of the First World War. The aforementioned championships were held on a football pitch near Calle O'Donnell in Madrid, and the sporting events included pugilistic festivals (FEB, 2016). Despite the prohibition of its practice in 1911 by the Spanish Government, due to the fact that it was an Olympic sport it could be held without any inconvenience (Barbero, 1989).

While the SOC began to be formed in Spain, pugilism began to be practiced in improvised gyms, under the direction of foreign teachers. Examples of this were the boxing halls in Xuclá street run by Monsieur Vidal, the hall run by Ramón Larruy or even the halls set up in the Círculo del Liceo (Meyer & Girard, 1966), all located in Barcelona, the Spanish city where boxing was introduced from its port to the rest of the country (Astor & Riba, 2016).

Boxing was part of the Olympic Program for the first time at the 1904 St. Louis Olympic Games, with the only participation of the United States. From that moment on, without having been part of the Olympic programme in Athens-1886 and Paris-1900, boxing was integrated into all Olympic programs except for the 1912 Stockholm Games, because Swedish legislation prohibited its practice. In this respect, Pierre de Coubertin published several letters ("*Olympic Letter XIV: the value of boxing I*" and "*Olympic Letter XV: the value of boxing II*") against the decision to remove boxing from the Olympic Programme for the first time in history. In these letters he attributed to boxing qualities that other sports did not have, qualities necessary for the education of young people. He also added the advantage that hardly any materials were needed for its practice, which was interesting for geographical areas with few resources. He emphasized that boxing provided a great source of energy to its practitioners, since in short intervals of time the muscular and physical involvement required very high efforts. He ended his letters by stating that boxing was an instinctive practice that could not be repressed and should be used as a channelling practice that would generate benefits in youth (IOC, 2000).

Twenty years later, at the Olympic Games held in Antwerp in 1920, the attendance of a Spanish delegation was documented for the first time. Some previous participations of certain Spanish athletes who had attended other editions in a personal capacity should be excluded. In that first official participation promoted by the SOC there was no participation in boxing. However, already in that year, boxing in Spain had experienced a significant evolution.

Santiago Güel y López, Baron of Güel, member of the IOC since the summer of 1921, took the presidency of the SOC (Aragón Pérez, 2014). On January 11, 1924, the same year that the Olympic Games were held in Paris, Spain selected six boxers for the first time to be part of the delegation of athletes. These were:

Ruperto Biete Berdes and Lorenzo Vitria Barrera in flyweight, Juan Pastor Catalán and Antonio Sánchez Dietz in bantamweight, Luis Bru Pérez and Emilio Bautista Cachaza in featherweight and Vicente Valdero Cerdán in lightweight.¹ Those fighters were accompanied to the Games by Spanish boxing referee Juan Casanovas, president of the "*Barcelona Boxing Club*", one of the first Spanish clubs in boxing history (COE, 2012a; FEB, 2016; González, 2015; Tamayo Fajardo, 2005).

The number of Spanish boxers who attended the Olympic Games held in Amsterdam in 1928 was significant, despite the small number of that Olympic delegation, conditioned by the economic shortages that Spain and the SOC were going through (Tamayo Fajardo, 2005). In 1928, six fighters represented Spain: José Vilanova Pueyo (flyweight), Juan Muñoz Panades (featherweight), Roberto Sanz Jusa (lightweight), Dionisio Fernández Fagundez (welterweight), César Campuzano Sanz (middleweight) and José Monllor Pastor (light heavyweight). Data collected by different sources state that no victory was obtained and that all the boxers were eliminated in the first fight (Barbero, 1989; COE, 2012b).

According to these same authors, the data of the boxers who composed the final selection to go to the Games held in Berlin in 1936 were Lucas Céspedes and Serafin Martínez or Martín (according to the revised source), in flyweight; José Llorente or Lorente (according to the source) and Antonio Martí in bantamweight; José Llovera in featherweight; José García Álvarez in lightweight; Antonio Zúñiga in welterweight; in middleweight Paulino Rodríguez and Ángel Anaya; in semi-heavyweight Francisco Bueno and in semi-heavyweight Fabián Vicente del Valle (Barbero, 1989). All of them accompanied by the trainer José Teividó. Unfortunately, on July 18, 1936, only thirteen days before the opening of the Games, they were informed that Spain would not participate as a result of the coup d'état and the beginning of the Spanish civil war (Aguilera & Rosell, 2009; FEB, 2016).

At the same time, an alternative "*People's Olympics*"² to the Berlin Olympics, based in Barcelona, was to be organized. It was planned that it would include the athletes who, due to the circumstances surrounding the Games held in Berlin, were unable to participate. That initiative had the support of some boxers, like Fabián Vicente del Valle, but finally it could not be held due to the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

Boxing in Spain continued to be practiced with a high level of competition, during the twelve years in which the editions of the Games that would have corresponded to 1940 and 1944 (Helsinki and London respectively) were not held as a result of the Second World War. Due to its high level, in October 1945, the National Sports Delegation accepted the proposal of the Spanish Boxing Federation (SBF) regarding the appointment of Fabián Vicente del Valle as the trainer and coach of the National Boxing Team that would participate in the Games in 1948 (Aguilera & Rosell, 2009). That proposal was accepted by the IOC and, moreover, in that edition Fabián Vicente del Valle was the Spanish flag bearer in the opening ceremony of the Games.

After a pre-selection and a sports training camp in Madrid, together with the coach "*Comas*", Fabián Vicente del Valle selected those who were finally to attend the 1948 Olympic Games in London: Luis Martínez Zapata (flyweight), Álvaro Vicente Doménech (bantamweight), Felipe Verdú Belén (featherweight), Agustín Argote Marquinez (lightweight), Aurelio Díaz Cadaveda (welterweight), Jaime Oliver Frontera (middleweight),

¹ Currently, two boxers in the same category or weight representing the same country cannot attend. However, in that Olympic edition several Spaniards competed in the same weights.

² Its original name is "*Olimpiada Popular*".

Alejandro Arteché Zurinaga (semi-heavyweight) and José Arturo Rubio Fernández (heavyweight) (Barbero, 1989).

Álvaro Vicente Domenech or Demenech (according to the source consulted), after defeating the Iranian Aghassi, the Mexican Ojeda Malpica and the Chilean Gonzales Enriques, he boxed in the semi-final against the Italian Zuddas. He was defeated at that stage, so the final was between the boxers Csik and Zuddas. At that time, the two losers of the semi-finals had to face each other again to qualify for the bronze medal, an award won by the Puerto Rican boxer Venegas. Currently, the two boxers who are defeated in the semi-final receive the bronze medal without having to face each other again, taking into account the harshness of the sport and the tight competition times. So, with the current scoring system, Domenech could have been the first Spanish boxer to get a bronze medal. However, he only obtained an Olympic diploma for fourth place (Aguilera & Rosell, 2009; Barbero, 1989; COE, 2012c).

Although none of them won any awards at those Games, the selected boxers had a high boxing level that was remarkable at that time. Luis Martínez Zapata, in particular, was one of the few Spaniards known internationally. He had obtained in 1947 in Chicago the "*Golden Glove*" equivalent to the World Championship of Amateur Pugilism, which gave some prestige to the Spanish National Team (Aguilera & Rosell, 2009; El Mundo Deportivo, 1964; Meyer & Girard, 1966). For that victory, having beaten Robert H. Holliday on points, the Spanish fighter received, in addition to various trophies, a gold ring valued at 5000 pesetas³ and a commemorative plaque from the newspaper that organised the evening (Barbero, 1989).

Spain had no boxing representation at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics or the 1956 Stockholm Olympics. In 1960, Spain selected eight boxers who made a sports concentration in the Casa de Campo in Madrid weeks before the Rome Games: Eusebio Mesa Lasso (flyweight), Alfonso Carbajo Fernández (bantamweight), José Luis Biescas García (featherweight), Fernando Riera Ros (lightweight), Carmelo García Alfonso (superlightweight), Andrés Navarro Moreno (welterweight), Cesáreo Barrera Moya (middleweight) and Manuel García González (heavyweight) (COE, 2012d; Barbero, 1989).

As a consequence of certain facts considered to be clearly unfair that had occurred in previous editions of the Olympic Games, the President of the Spanish Boxing Federation, Vicente Gil García, decided to ask the International Boxing Association (AIBA) to ensure that the judges they would appoint to the bouts in which Spain participated did not come from Eastern European countries. Despite his request and the fact that the Spanish representation in this sport was, in that 1960 edition, the most numerous in history, most of the Spanish boxers were eliminated in the first fight. As an exception, two of them reached the semi-final of the championship, although without any success (Tamayo Fajardo, 2005). After those events and as a sign of protest, the FEB decided not to take part one year later in the European Amateur Boxing Championships held in Belgrade.

In 1964, Spain selected four boxers who were concentrated in the Madrid municipality of Colmenar Viejo, located at the foot of the Sierra de Guadarrama. After a period of about two or three months in Colmenar, the National Amateur Boxing Team moved to the El Pardo Palace, the official residence of the Head of State, General Francisco Franco, where they had specific facilities for them. The boxers who competed in the Tokyo Games in 1964 were: Agustín Senín Díez in bantamweight, Valentín Loren Bustos in featherweight, Domingo Barrera Corpas in lightweight and Miguel Velázquez Torres in super lightweight.

³ The peseta was the legal currency in Spain from 1868 to 1 January 1999.

All the boxing matches were held in the first days of the Games. All but two of the Spanish fighters were eliminated in the first match. Domingo Barrera achieved two victories that allowed him to pass to the semi-finals, the phase in which he was eliminated having disputed a total of three combats. For his part, Valentín Loren disputed two combats. In that edition, there was special Spanish expectation about boxing for several reasons: the directors of Spanish boxing were especially sensitive, since in previous editions they had been indignant because they considered that the referees had made unfair decisions and, again, in those Games it was considered that Spanish boxers were disadvantaged against their rivals (García, 1964; Velázquez Torres, 2017).

XIX OLYMPIAD (1964-1968): OLYMPIC GAMES IN MEXICO IN 1968

In the Casa de Campo in Madrid, in a residence for sportsmen, the Spanish boxing team was concentrated to prepare the international championships that was a preparation for the Olympic Games. In February, Vicente Gil, through the SBF sent a communiqué to the Peruvian federation to contact Ignacio Ara, who was living in the Andean country at that time. He asked for his help as a coach of the national team. He accepted and gathered around twenty boxers. Figure 1 reproduces an original and unpublished photograph in which it is possible to identify the group that, since February 15, 1968, concentrated in Salamanca for the specific preparation for the Games (ABC, 1968d; ABC, 1968b; China Hernández, 2017; Durán Pérez, 2016).



Figure 1. National Team Boxers at a pre-Olympic rally in Mexico in 1968. Coach Ignacio Ara on the right in light pants. Image from Antonio Rubio Fernández's personal file (Rubio Fernández, 2017).

Later on, they concentrated on El Rollo, a Galician village in Spain. Marcos China, one of the protagonists, remembered in the interview that they had a shortage of sports equipment. They only had the punching bag, the ring and not much else. The photographs from the personal archive of Antonio Rubio, have been graphic sources, which, contrasted with the testimonies, have allowed us to recover definitive information about the

trainer Ignacio Ara and about the fighters who at that time were part of the National Team. The analysis in Figure 2 supports the conditions of austerity and scarce material in which the National Team trained.



Figure 2. Boxers of the National Team in one of the training sessions before the celebration of the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968. Image from the personal file of Antonio Rubio Fernández (Rubio Fernández, 2017).

According to Marcos Chinae's testimony, at that sporting concentration they had all the expenses of board and lodging covered. In addition, because they were part of the Olympic Team, they received financial aid of 1000 pesetas a month. Chinae recalled that this amount was sent by the boxers, partly, if not entirely, to their families. The situation in which they carried out their daily lives meant that it was a very important amount of money for the austere economic conditions of their families, a very common situation among the Spanish population at that time (Chinae Hernández, 2017).

During the concentration in Salamanca, the pre-selected boxers participated in various team competitions with national and foreign boxers. Through the newspaper sources and the testimonies collected we have been able to rescue some places where some of those meetings took place, which were: Burgos, Lisbon, Bilbao, Gijón and Barcelona (Chinae Hernández, 2017; *El Mundo Deportivo*, 1968). In January of the same year, several regional federations asked the SBF to hold the fortieth edition of the Spanish Generalísimo⁴ Amateur Boxing Championships. It was held in May, and the group travelled to Palma de Mallorca. This event caused an added challenge to the selected ones: if they lost in that championship against other boxers they

⁴ During Franco's dictatorial regime, important sporting events referred in their editions to the protocolary treatment and popular appointment that Francisco Franco coined.

would have lost the opportunity to go to the Games (ABC, 1968a; 1968e; China Hernández, 2017; Durán Pérez, 2016).

The previous month, before going to Mexico, they moved from Salamanca to Alto Campoo in the Picos de Europa in Spain, directed by Ignacio Ara, who had already made concentrations in that place when he competed as an amateur boxer. Moisés Fajardo remembered that half of the boxers in Los Picos de Europa were pre-selected due to the results of the matches held with other teams in the previous months. That training at altitude, during the last month of concentration prepared them for the conditions they had later in Mexico (ABC, 1968c; China Hernández, 2017; Fajardo Pérez, 2017).

The boxers selected by coach Ignacio Ara to attend the Games were: Ramiro Suárez García in bantamweight, Andrés Martín Rodríguez in featherweight, Marcos China in lightweight, Mariano Pérez Martínez in super lightweight, José Durán Pérez in welterweight and Moisés Fajardo Pérez in super welterweight (Barbero, 1989; Durán Pérez, 2016).

From October 10th, before the opening ceremony, all the boxers had to undergo an official weighing to be able to decide in which category they would compete. From the opening ceremony to October 19, all the bouts of the Spanish boxers were celebrated. The first of them, on the 13th at eleven o'clock in the morning, faced Marcos China and Jonathan Dele. Marcos China remembered that his opponent was tremendously strong, coming from Nigeria. Although he was defeated only one day after the start of the Games, the most important thing for him was to be able to live that experience. The experiences he lived were unthinkable for him, if it had not been for the practice of boxing (China Hernandez, 2017).

The next day at noon, Moisés Fajardo fought his first match against Boris Lagutín. In the second round the referee decided to stop it because of the superiority of the opponent. Moisés remembered that event with admiration. To this day, he still expresses his agreement with the verdict of that time. As he told us in the interview that we had with him: *"in the Olympic Games it is not like in other places, there is not that abuse nor those beatings, once they see the manifest superiority, they already give it as a winner"* (Fajardo Pérez, 2017).

Andrés Martín Rodríguez, Mariano Pérez Martínez and Ramiro Suárez García were eliminated in the first fight. José Durán was the only one who beat Koo Il Park in the first fight. In the interview we had, Durán remembered a very simple fight, in which he barely had to make an effort. But that circumstance changed in his second match. He faced Ukrainian boxer Vladimir Andreyevich Musalimov, who beat him five points to zero. As a result of his first win, José Durán was able to enjoy his stay at the Olympic Village until the closing ceremony. The other boxers did not have the same privilege because they had to return to Spain on October 19, eight days before the end of the Games (ABC, 1968f; Durán Pérez, 2016).

Although the victories of the Spanish boxing in those Games were very scarce, it must also be considered that the reality that the boxers of the National Team were living was very different compared to other sportsmen. José Durán said in the interview that we maintained that one of the reasons why that team did not have much success was its economic precariousness. The veterans who were part of the Olympic boxing team at the Tokyo Games in 1964, due to the lack of economic resources in the SBF, had made their debut as professional boxers in order to have a higher income. As a result, the Olympic Team had to be formed with boxers with little international experience and no Olympic experience, which had a negative impact on the next Olympic edition (Duran Perez, 2016).

If we analyse the conditions and circumstances surrounding Spanish sport in general and the boxers of that time in particular, attending the Olympic Games was an almost unattainable goal. José Durán, Marcos Chinaea and Moisés Fajardo chose this sport because its practice was free and all the materials they needed, although in very precarious conditions, were provided by the SBF to the local boxing gyms. The only financial contribution they had to make for practicing this sport was the annual sports insurance fee: 250 pesetas, as José Durán recalled.

From the testimonies of the boxers who have been oral sources in this research, we have rescued the circumstances in which their training sessions and the daily life of their gyms took place. Marcos Chinaea recalled the situation in his gym in Tenerife:

The gym gave us the punching bag, the gloves and the mittens. The rest we had to buy with sacrifice because there was no money. Other materials were made by us, like dumbbells. We took a piece of pipe, (water tubes) we filled them first with cement; we filled those cans with condensed milk, we poured cement on them, and the next day, we turned it over and put it back on the other side, with cement. And that already served as a dumbbell for making weights (Chinaea Hernández, 2017).

The precarious economic situation in his family environment, awakened in Chinaea the hope of being able to achieve, through boxing, a more affluent life and thus learn to read and write, since he had not had the opportunity to learn during his childhood. This hope was fulfilled at the age of forty. Chinaea said that, in the situation in which his family lived, boxing gave him *"the illusion of competing, the hope of getting ahead, the hope of having a chance, the hope of being known"*. He said that being an Olympian gave him some respect in his hometown and helped him find a job after the Olympics. It also allowed him to start his own business sometime later (Chinaea Hernández, 2017).

In Madrid, in a gymnasium located in El Palacio de los Deportes, José Durán attended training. He remembered the everyday circumstances of that time: *"now everyone has their own gloves, has their own punching bags. Before, we didn't have, before we didn't have money to buy our boxing gloves, nor our helmets, that was up to the trainer"*, he also said: *"I became a boxer to travel, because I had never left Madrid. I saw the sea for the first time when I was 18. I got to know the sea thanks to boxing, and I started to get to know the world"* (Durán Pérez, 2016). He remembered that the boss of the factory where he worked while he was an amateur boxer, was supporting him economically while he trained for long periods with the boxing pre-selection in Salamanca. That helped his family to be able to afford the necessary daily expenses.

The testimonies of those boxers who managed to become Olympians, remembered as usual in those years the gyms that, in their different locations, opened until ten o'clock at night so that all the boxers could attend, after completing a rather long shift of work. The testimonies regarding the fact that in the different places the showers in the gymnasium were non-existent and, on the occasions when they had running water, the water was very cold, were recurrent (Durán Pérez, 2016; Fajardo Pérez, 2017).

Marcos Chinaea reflected on the social and economic substratum to which the young people who made up the boxers' collective belonged in those years. Thus, he noted:

A person who had money couldn't think of getting into boxing, because nobody liked getting into boxing and getting hit in the face. The important thing for us was to win (Chinaea Hernández, 2017).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Pugilistic practice was introduced in Spain in the 19th century after its boom in Barcelona, due to its proximity to France. According to Astor & Riba's conclusions (2016), the increase of the working class, as a consequence of the internal migratory processes towards the big cities, was definitive in its success. Later, according to the historiography that has focused on this period, the practice of boxing spread to other Spanish cities such as Bilbao or Madrid. The creation of boxing halls, pugilistic evenings and specific clubs increased (Meyer & Girard, 1966; Barbero, 1989; Vitoria Ortiz, 2004). The great reception by the Spanish workers' sector was favoured by the support and funding of certain aristocrats who financed their public exposure in various championships (González Rodríguez, 2007). The national boom led to fights by internationally known foreign boxers. Thus, boxing was socially accepted and recognized in Spanish sporting structures from 1920 and in international ones in 1924.

Until the beginning of the civil war and the break in Spanish sport in general, Spanish boxing achieved prodigious victories. Its practice was encouraged, exclusive boxing facilities were built, and many evenings were promoted. Astor & Riba (2016) claim that the end of the convulsive period that was the Spanish Civil War and the beginning of Franco's dictatorship meant the exile of many Spanish boxers who never competed again.

The resurgence of Spanish boxing began in the late 1950s. Under socially accepted criteria related to the use of force to achieve victory as a manly virtue, boxing was a popular and socially accepted sport. According to (Calle-Molina & Martínez-Gorroño, 2018 & 2019) its practitioners generally came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their training places were very precarious and rudimentary, and they generally had to train after exhausting workdays. Their labour insertion was very premature, taking into account the scarce resources of their families, which were the usual ones in Spain at that time. However, the practice of boxing was practically free. This was one more incentive for those young people from depressed environments to start boxing. The material and personal resources in those small places where the boxers started were very scarce. In addition, the economic and social opportunities that were evident in the careers of the leading figures in Olympic and professional boxing, were an incentive for the boxers who were starting.

We can conclude that the sporting conditions of the boxers who managed to participate in the Olympic Games were indeed precarious, both in terms of scarce sporting equipment and unhygienic and unconditioned facilities. Preparation and training depended on voluntary trainers who did not charge for it. On the positive side, however, they all recognized that, at that time, the practice of this sport was within the reach of every social and economic condition.

During the Mexican Olympics, the national team had limited resources to prepare its boxers. The concentrations were scarce and not very long. Those conditions implied a lack of preparation in the selected boxers, and the lack of national and international experience and, therefore, a lesser guarantee of success in the Games. Even though their expenses were covered during the rallies, the little or no economic remuneration meant that many of them abandoned the national team.

In the testimonies collected and, with the perspective conferred by the passing of the years, the oral sources of this investigation stated that attending the Olympic Games was a milestone in their personal and sporting lives and a unique circumstance considering their environments of origin.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors' contribution to the article is described below:

| Author | Contribution |
|--------------------------------|--|
| María Teresa Calle-Molina | Collection of information, design, analysis and comparison of data and elaboration of results and conclusions. |
| María Eugenia Martínez-Gorroño | Collection of information, design, analysis and comparison of data and elaboration of results and conclusions. |

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ORAL SOURCES AND PERSONAL FILES

Antonio Marcos Chinaa, personal interview held on January 14, 2017 in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain.

José Manuel Durán Pérez, personal interview held on 11 November 2016 in Madrid, Spain.

Moisés Fajardo Pérez, personal interview held on January 15, 2017 in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain.

Antonio Rubio Fernández, gave his personal file in a personal interview held on October 27, 2017 in Barcelona, Spain.



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