



NOTES ON SPORT

Boxers In The Forces + Heeney And Jarvis + An Argument About Athletics

ANOTHER boxer who has offered his services to the Army is Darcy Heeney, the well-known Gisborne boxer, who defeated W. Little, of Auckland, at the National Championships at Invercargill last year, and won the welter-weight title. Darcy, who is the son of Jack Heeney, ex-professional middle-weight champion of New Zealand, has had a brilliant career as an amateur, and some years ago represented the Dominion as a member of the boxing team which competed at the Games in Sydney.

The Maori boxer, F. Phillips, who won the Wellington provincial light heavy-weight title last year after only six months' tuition in boxing, is at present with the Forces in Egypt. Norm. Jenkin, brother of the late Stan Jenkin, is also overseas with the First Echelon.

It is now clear that there is to be no Strickland-Richards fight in the Dominion. Since Strickland's return there has been much speculation about



Light-weight champion Jack Jarvis, who is negotiating for another bout before he goes overseas with the Third Echelon. Jarvis was not long in camp before he was given his first stripe

a match as a fitting finale to the Centennial sports.

As Mr. Aldridge stated on his return from Australia, Richards is much too firmly rooted and too securely held by contract. Strickland, who is in hard training, will need to pack his bags once again and visit Sydney if he wants to fight Richards.

Mr. Aldridge has returned from Australia with the firm opinion that the control of boxing in this country is far superior. It seems that managers and promoters "over there" run things as they see fit.

Henry Armstrong is considered by present-day critics to be a fighting machine of some quality, but one old-timer, Abe Attell, who saw him in action against Lou Ambers differs in opinion. "He couldn't carry the water bucket for the fighters of my day," is how he sums up "Dynamite" Henry.

To the Editor,
"The Listener"

Sir,—Right from your first issue I have been an interested and contented reader of your sporting page. Therefore your scribe's article in the issue dated March 21, headed "Pageantry at the Basin Reserve," was a very unpleasant surprise to me. I consider it, sir, a most misleading article to the many thousands of your readers who were not able to be present at, perhaps, the finest athletic meeting this country has ever staged.

Re "Weichart's attempts on the Pole Vault record," his and Grey's jumping on the second day were NOT attempts on the record. Attempts on records can be made only during competition.

In regard to the broad jump pit being dug the wrong way for public interest, I agree; but I do not agree that had it been dug any other way that "it could have been very useful to fill in waits as the programme dwindled and was held up for the arrival of Austin." As Austin was only seven minutes over schedule in arriving at the Basin, and as the programme was kept strictly up to time (most unusual you'll agree), these seven minutes were taken up by description of the broad jump, a three-mile cycle handicap, and a bandsmen's race. Actually, the only time a wait occurred was when word came that Austin was only a few hundred yards away from the ground. "A wait" can be excused under such a circumstance, surely.

Your sporting rep. also lets himself go in regard to the Olympic Ceremonial. If "... the tiered stand ... resembled little too closely a pile of petrol cases" to his critical eye, did these cases de-



New Zealand amateur welter-weight champion, Darcy Heeney

tract anything from the glory of the athletes posed on them? They would still have been acclaimed as the champions of their particular branch of athletics if they had stood on dust-bins.

I differ from him, too, in his references to the ground announcer. Congratulations were showered on him after the meeting. One example should suffice (I overheard this myself): "As a one-eyed Aucklander I want to congratulate you on the finest announcing I have ever heard in forty years of athletic meetings." Should this catch the "one eye" of the Aucklander, I am sure he will be pleased to know that I, at least, heartily endorse his statement.

The announcer gave much information to the crowd, which stimulated interest in the events, refrained from flippancy, and had every event well up to time—something that has been lacking in the past. In fact, sir, so well did he know his job that I am at a loss to know why the powers-that-be in broadcasting do not snap him up as a sporting announcer and commentator. I enjoyed his "Kordad-out-of-touch exhortations."

So far as "The Lighter Touch" was concerned it must be admitted that even the most dramatic of dramas is relieved with lighter touches without detriment to the highly paid stars in the cast. I submit that our athletes suffered nothing by the introduction of one or two humorous interludes at the Basin. In fact I can personally vouch for many of

the lads enjoying these diversions immensely. Did the genuine laughter and appreciative acclamation of the crowd suggest that these lighter touches were cheapening the show? NO, SIR!

As for the improving of athletic standards, etc., I feel sure that the N.Z.A.A.A. is doing all in its power to improve everything it can to the limit of a rather shallow purse.

On the whole, the article in question was not in accord with previous efforts of your sporting writer. I can only conclude that he was feeling a little "out of touch" on March 8 and 9.

Yours, etc.,
"OLD CROCK."

Wellington,
March 23, 1940.

(The author of the sports article "Pageantry at the Basin Reserve" makes these comments: "Weichart was doing his very best in difficult circumstances to exceed the New Zealand record, even if his jump could not have been officially accepted. The excellent announcer said as much through the microphone. Weichart started his New Zealand season with this in view, and finally managed to set a new best New Zealand performance at a Taranaki meeting, where he vaulted 12ft. 4 1/2 in. The previous best performance in New Zealand was the Australian Winter's 12ft. 3in. J. H. Opie's 11ft. 5 1/4 in. was the best performance by a New Zealander. Weichart opened his season by strolling on to New Plymouth's Pukekura Park early this year during an evening meeting. Without changing, he crossed the bar at 10ft. 10in., with F. S. Barracough (New Zealand champion at that time with 11ft.), wondering what would happen next. In the Taranaki Championships a little later, Weichart cleared 11ft. 6in., and since then has worked continuously to set a better figure than Winter's.

"The jumping pit was dug the wrong way, and jumping could have been used to fill in the almost idle hour of the meeting between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. After the 440 final there was no notable event until the delayed cycle event was held after a long delay and false starts. The hop, step, and jump was scheduled to start at 4.15 p.m. As a programme item it proved useless. There were waits. They were not entirely the fault of anyone, but they could have been enlivened if the arrangement of the pit had made the jumping work watching. Obviously, the correspondent has been thoughtless. The cycle event was over two miles, and not three, unless the programme was misprinted and all the Dominion's newspapers made the same mistake. The correspondent wrongly suggests that this writer was attempting to find fault with petty points of detail. The meeting was excellently managed, except for the items mentioned in support of a contention that it could have been better managed. His argument, even if it cannot be substantiated, merely belabours unnecessarily a point which was treated in its proper perspective in the original article.

"The question of the ceremonial was a matter of opinion. The announcer was excellent as a sporting announcer. As a Master of Pageantry he was hampered by circumstances.

"In his comments on the N.Z.A.A.A.'s shallow purse, the correspondent confuses cause and effect."—Ed., N.Z.L.J.)