

Boxing Facial Hair Scandal

We're all only too aware of the major controversy surrounding the fact that female Olympic beach volleyballers have to wear a "top and briefs or bathing suit" to compete (*I mean, shouldn't they have to play on a plastic court covered in banana custard? If only Singo was running the Games!*)

But that little storm looks pretty insignificant when compared to the outrageous regulation that has for years been put upon the already much-maligned Olympic boxers.

Now this rule doesn't affect a pugilist's chances of pizzerizing his opponent's face. We couldn't have that now, could we? No, this regulation has a potentially far more damaging effect because it concerns a realm many boxers (think pretty boy Anthony Mundine) deem more important than their left hook.

Their appearance.

The Olympic regulation states that boxers must be "clean shaven, although *moustaches* are permissible". What kind of judgment is this? You thought Olympic ticketing was a fiasco.

This discriminatory regulation makes it impossible for many members of our multifacial-haired community to compete in one of history's oldest sports, without having to plug in the Ronson.

Think about your average Conservation Department-field-worker-cum-Friend of the Earth-boxer-type. What a price to pay for Olympic glory to have to get rid of that full-blown, bread-crust infested beard he's been growing in the wilderness for 10 years.

Then there's your inner-city, *Rocky* meets *Raging Bull*-type. How could he live with having to shave off his goateé in order to step in the ring? He'd rather spit into the froth of his latté!

And while we're on inner city boxers, it's this kind of pugilist that Olympic officials have most clearly overlooked.

We all know and love a fighter who has the reverse moustache; the stubble "worm" that grows under the aforementioned's bottom lip.

Now, c'mon rule-makers! Think about it: *Does the worm qualify as a moustache or not?* Are we going to have the situation in Sydney of having a 'worm-adorned' fighter step into the ring only to be asked to re-enter the dressing room and shave it off? Or painfully remove the offending growth and place it appropriately above his top lip?

Haven't we had enough embarrassment leading up to these Games?

And, let's face it, the discrimination doesn't end there. Certain members of our community are clearly favoured by this biased regulation. Members of our highly regarded and ethical police force are clearly at an advantage. As are members of various bike clubs

and your average '70s porn star. And, of course, some thick-set and bike-handled members of our homosexual community are favoured above clean-shaven, Adonis-types in the same community.

I'm not even going to start on the prejudice this regulation metres out to all those Jewish fighters!

Finally - and perhaps worst of all for the sport of boxing - this discriminatory regulation recently forced an up and coming slugger, the neatly stubbled Brad Pitt, to go underground in his pursuit of a pugilistic career.

Olympic boxing has to get in step with community attitudes and either ban facial hair altogether or allow the full gamut! It's either that or we're all going to face the ugly prospect of bare-chested Brad Pitt look-a-likes slugging it out in the basements of buildings all over Australia, in "freestyle facial hair fight clubs".