

Retiring Undefeated by: Walter Robinson

March 12, 2008

Are you still shovelling? Too bad, so sad. This column has been filed from an undisclosed Caribbean location where I'm tanning, training and guzzling post-workout cervezas ... strictly for electrolyte replacement of course. Yes, I'm in training, for a sanctioned amateur boxing match no less.

On Friday, March 28, this scribe will put on protective headgear, pop in the mouth guard and slip on a pair of 16-ounce boxing gloves for a "white collar" boxing match against CTV Ottawa sportscaster Terry Marcotte at the Westin Hotel. It is part of an event called Fight for the Cure in support of the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation.

Mercifully for boxing enthusiasts, our white-collar bout is scheduled for three rounds of 90 seconds each — although it will feel like an eternity for Terry and me — and will take place in the midst of six real amateur bouts. A-Channel's Ken Evraire will act as celebrity MC and world boxing champion Joachin Alcine will act as a presenter. It is Ottawa's version of Friday night at the fights.

No doubt I will see some former political opponents and perhaps a few folks from city hall buying ringside tables and seats to see Walter take a few shots to the head. Oh well, it's for a great cause.

Now you just don't sign up for this experience and forget about it.

First, there was the pre-fight physical with my doctor and then the precautionary ultrasound to ensure my spleen wasn't enlarged.

Next up, the pre-fight media hype.

While Marcotte vs. Robinson is not in the league of Tyson, Holyfield, or Mayweather bouts, there was a local story on CTV news and Walter "trash talking, hey I grew up in Toronto, it fits" Robinson crashing Marcotte's local FM radio interview last week.

But the epiphany for me has been that no matter how fit you think you are -- and I run and workout four times a week -- as soon as you try a new sport, look out, muscle cramps, spasms, fatigue and a general physical unease are the result. This middle-aged, weekend warrior now has an even greater respect for the extreme level of fitness that elite and professional athletes must attain to perform and compete, day in and day out.

It is similar to putting on skates for the first time in five years and heading with your out-of-town visitors for a few hours on the canal. Or imagine how you felt this past weekend after shovelling all that snow? Shovelling after a big snowfall is one thing and to be expected in Canada; shovelling a record dump from Mother Nature that has not been seen in a generation is quite another.

"Pass the Myoflex rub please. Where is the heating pad? And dear, could you run me a hot bath with epsom salts? Please and thank you very much by the way." You get the picture.

Like any other type AAA male; ego, vanity, pride and a belief that I'm still 22 years of age are driving my sorry you-know-what to get up for that morning run on the

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beach, make that midday journey to the gym and commit to those afternoon laps in the pool. Not to mention skipping the Spanish coffees and dessert buffet.

And thank goodness the Canadian air transport security officials didn't confiscate that skipping rope in my carry on during the pre-flight security check. Hey Terry, my Ali-esque footwork is coming along.

At this point, I'm looking to retire after March 28 as an undefeated certified Canadian amateur boxer, with a stellar record of 1-0. I'm a columnist, lobbyist and political wannabe for sure, but boxing, I'll leave that to others.

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