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Going for Olympic Gold

By THE EDITORS



Left to right: Schalk van Zuydam/Associated Press, Pablo Porciuncula/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images, Jeff Haynes/Reuters

Left to right: Australia's James O'Connor, Uruguayan Chris Namus (left) fighting Colombian Leli Luz Flores and Spain's Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano.

The International Olympic Committee's executive board voted last Thursday to include women's boxing in the 2012 Summer Games in London, and recommended that rugby and golf be included in the program for the 2016 Games, rejecting baseball, karate, roller sports, softball and squash. The news was greeted with cheers and jeers.

But does adding golf or rugby make sense? Should the board have said yes to women's boxing after eliminating softball? What exactly should be the criteria for choosing which sports to add to the Olympic program?

- [Huw Richards](#), author
- [Jennie Finch](#), two-time Olympic medalist in softball
- [Frank Thomas](#), former U.S. Golf Association official
- [Lisa King](#), female boxer and commentator
- [Will Leitch](#), sports columnist and author

A Fighting Chance



Lisa "The Black Widow" King is a champion full contact Muay Thai fighter, martial arts instructor, ring announcer, fight matchmaker and commentator. She was featured in the ESPN documentaries "I'd Do Anything" and "Ring Girls" and "Fight Girls" on the Oxygen Network. She has been inducted into the Black Belt Hall of Fame and the Masters Hall of Fame.

Admittedly, I'm biased, but in my opinion, there's no question that women's boxing should be added to the Olympic program. Indeed, with the growing demand and viewership of female fighting, it seems absurd that it's taken this long to be introduced and approved.

Now that women's boxing has been introduced to this great sporting event, the debate is focused on the fact that the competitors will have to fit into only three weight classes. (No other Olympic combat sport has so few weight divisions.) More weight classes should definitely be added as there is plenty of talent out there in all weight classes. But as with anything else, once these women show the world what they have to offer, I am confident that the International Olympic Committee will open the doors to other weight divisions and fighting styles.

In general, however, I think the criteria for determining what sports will be added to the Olympic program should be reviewed. Why not give the viewers what they want? It would be relatively simple to study viewership, ticket sales and even sponsorship for spectator sports and use that as the basis for introducing new sports to the Olympics. As we all know, fans would clearly follow their favorite sport in the Olympics, creating more revenue for the event and sponsorship opportunities for the athletes.

Sports should be added to the Olympics based on viewership, ticket sales and sponsorship.