

BOXING.

Seldom has an important boxing match been the subject of so much diversity of opinion as exists in regard to the recent McVea-Langford fight. Australian papers to hand disagree as to which of the coloured principals should have been awarded the verdict, while some boxing authorities are to be found arguing that "Snowy" Baker should have declared the contest a draw. In evenly-fought contests where the referee is called upon to decide the winner on points dissatisfaction frequently occurs, and while "Snowy" Baker may have been confronted by a hard task in having to give his decision one way or the other, except, of course, he thought fit to declare the match a draw, there can be no question that his verdict in favour of McVea has been accepted by the majority of ring followers. McVea's advantage in height and weight made itself felt during the battle, Langford being unable to land his punches so frequently as the "Parisian Idol." Still the smaller man is given credit for great cleverness and for varying his blows more than McVea, who persistently used a straight left. However, Langford was not in the best condition for lasting a twenty-round encounter, and during the concluding rounds he was plainly fatigued, while McVea, who earlier in the fight also displayed signs of weariness, appeared to pull himself together for a final effort in the remaining rounds. McVea and Langford have been matched to fight again on January 26 in Sydney, when it is expected that the question of which of the pair is most entitled to the world's

championship will be decided in a manner calculated to give satisfaction on all sides.

Jack Lester's opponents are surely becoming less and less formidable, for from Sam McVea to Dave Smith was a wide gulf, while at latest the young American had contracted to meet "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson last night (Wednesday). Smith proved too hard a nut for Lester to crack, but then it must not be forgotten that the ex-New Zealander besides putting on much weight since he fought as a middleweight, is a vastly improved boxer of late, and without doubt head and shoulders above Johnny Thompson. Lester evidently thinks so too, for he regards his match with the "Cyclone" as a cinch, and it certainly appears as though both men are fighting out of their class.

American wrestling authorities are very severe in their criticism of George Hackenschmidt's showing against Frank Gotch in the recent match for the world's championship, one well-known writer commenting on the contest as follows:—Memories of Reno, Nevada, and a sorry spectacle enacted there on a certain Fourth of July danced ghoulishly through the minds of thousands of fight followers who, for the lack of something better to do sat by the ringside Labour Day and watched George Hackenschmidt do his neatly staged quitting act under the persuasive clutches of Frank Gotch. Jack Johnson prolonged the agony in Jeffries' case by playing with the erstwhile champion for several rounds before he put on the finishing touches. Gotch completed his task

quicker, but for the short time he was in evidence Hackenschmidt gave every whit as superb an exhibition of yellowness as that offered the disgusted spectators by the discredited "white man's hope." Had Gotch been a negro athlete the parallel would have been complete. As it turned out, however, the Russian Lion fully demonstrated his right to a lifelong membership in the "Gamboge Brotherhood of Bunk Heroes" of which James J. Jeffries justly is the celebrated Grand Master.

Jim Barry, the young American heavyweight, who passed through Auckland a couple of weeks ago en route to Sydney, is to meet Bill Lang at the Sydney Stadium on January 24. When Lang recently suffered defeat at the hands of Jack Lester, it was thought the Melbourne boxer had just about fought his last important match, but, like "Farmer" Bill Squires, he is certain he can "come back" and his forthcoming contest with the American Barry will give him an opportunity of demonstrating that his past form "was all wrong." However, should Lang meet with another reverse, his career as a fighter will be about sealed, especially as there is plenty of first-class heavyweight material in Australia just at present to keep the sporting public well provided for in the way of good contests.

The defeat of Jack Lester at the hands of Dave Smith in Sydney last week without a doubt disposes of the young American as a world's champion proposition, and it would seem that Lester is hereafter destined to take his place among the "White Hopes" who have flickered out after hopeless-

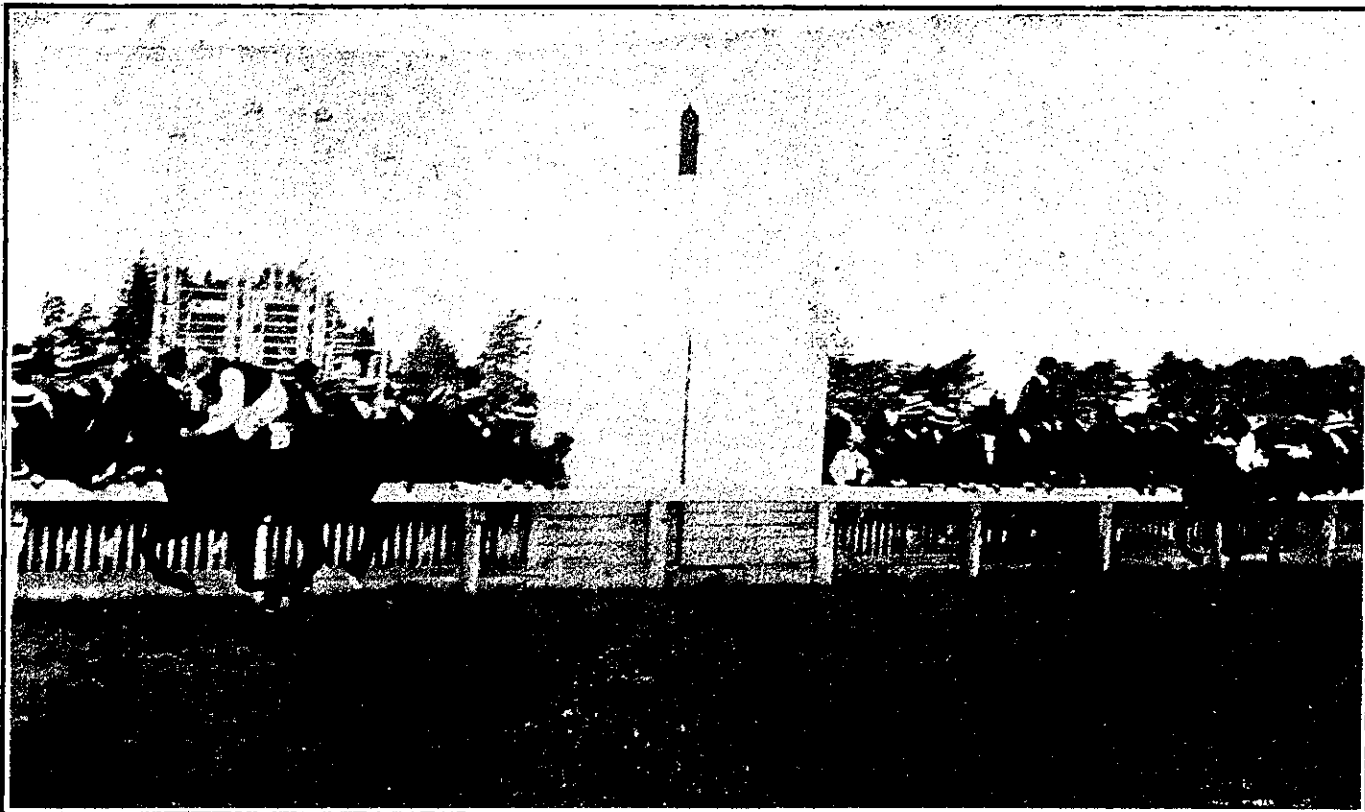
ly failing to "make good" in the heavyweight division. Though the youngest of the white aspirants for world's championship honours since Johnson became the holder of that title, Jack Lester has won considerably more fame than any of the other white boxers, for included among his latest engagements was a battle with Sam McVea, the now recognised world's champion. McVea, of course, was far too experienced a boxer for the American lad, and it was no surprise to find the clever coloured heavyweight win all the way. In all of his contests in Australia Lester has demonstrated that he possesses grit and endurance, but is lacking in speed and skill as compared with boxers of the Johnson and McVea type. Owing to their marked similarity in height and weight, a proposed match between Sam Langford and Jack Lester was expected to provide Sydney fight fans with a strenuously contested battle, but now that Lester has had his colours lowered by Dave Smith it is improbable that the American will be given a chance at Langford, for the financial side of boxing matches is one of the chief considerations nowadays, and a practically certain defeat of a white boxer by a negro means small gate receipts. Lester, whose weight when he fought Smith last week was only 12st 2½lb, must have weakened himself training down so fine, but as Smith was the more active and resourceful boxer of the pair the only chance Lester had of winning was to score a knock-out. The opportunity to do so, however, never came his way, and he was compelled to acknowledge defeat, for in the fourteenth round when the points were well against him, he struck Smith in breaking away from a clinch, and referee "Snowy" Baker had no option but to award the fight to Dave Smith. Tommy Burns, who was so greatly handicapped by his weight, fought all of his world's championship battles, with the exception of that against Johnson, at close on 13st, and it was only his quickness and superior ringcraft that enabled him to emerge victorious in all but his last great fight, so that Jack Lester, who resembles Burns so closely in physique, but does not possess the agility, modern boxing methods and ingenious brain of the ex-champion, has a very remote chance, indeed, of following in the footsteps of the "Canadian Wonder."

The well-known Sydney writer "Boxing Major," in giving particulars of each round in the McVea-Langford battle, states that McVea outpointed his opponent in rounds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 19 and 20, while honours in rounds 8, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18 were even. Langford, in the opinion of the writer in question, did not hold the advantage in one round of the fight.

The brutal assault upon Richard Arnst, champion sculler of the world, by several ruffians in Sydney, has laid the New Zealand oarsman aside for a time at least, and though a speedy recovery is anticipated, Arnst will probably give the sculling game a lengthy spell before going into heavy training again.



BLERIOT (H. Gray) winning the Sylvia Handicap (6 furlongs), for two-year-olds, from HASKYNE (L. Wilson), with LANNACOST (Emmerson) third.



PRESENTLY (A. J. McFlynn) winning the Auckland Hurdle Race (two miles) from SOL (Tutchen).

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