

First day at the gym

Krauser PUA | 21 December, 2015 | by krauserpua

Little Scott turns up for school again, early one summer morning. He's twelve years old and he likes the lessons. Only problem is every now and then one of the other boys bullies him. It's not a persistent problem but every now and then he gets pushed around and occasionally punched on the back of the head and laughed at. It could be worse. The thing is, he's sick of getting into disagreements with the other boys. Any time he speaks his mind, one of the tougher boys will start escalating it. He knows where that eventually leads – shoves, punches and kicks. So he just nips it in the bud early and avoids disagreement. It doesn't feel right, bottling that up and letting people walk over him.

He sees boxing on TV. The local star has just won the British title and is being interviewed post fight. The champ says he got into boxing because he'd been bullied at school. Something clicks in Scott's mind and he pesters his dad to let him try out at the local gym.

A week later Scott shows up with his shorts and t-shirt. He's been freaking out about it all week, nervous about jumping into something so new and scary. Yet, immediately, he loves the atmosphere. There's the incessant rattle of the speedball rapping against the board. A rhythmic swish and clatter as an amateur fighter whips the leather jump rope under his feet round after round. Even the smell of dried sweat and aging leather is good. Scott loves it.

The coach comes over, makes a bit of small talk to put the new boy at ease, then sends him to get changed. The kids class is about to start. The coach knows when a boy has come in due to bullying or a general sense of physical inadequacy. What's new to Scott is just a hundredth time for the coach. Scott looks at him with a mix of hope and trust – this coach is an experienced guy who will show him the way to toughen up. Scott's ready and willing to work as hard as he must.

The group starts the warm up, stretching off. A bit of jogging on the spot, then star jumps, press ups and squat thrusts. Scott is struggling with the latter, getting his feet mixed up and clipping his heels. The coach walks over and has a look, but doesn't offer any technical advice. He'll figure it out for himself.

"Keep it up, Scott." he encourages.

Ten minutes later they are all in front of the mirrors, shadow boxing. Some of the other kids are bobbing and weaving in a rough approximation of the older more experienced boys. Scott is ill-coordinated and doesn't really know how to stand. Most of the boys have their left foot forward but a few have their right foot out instead. What's that about?

"Don't worry about it" says the coach. "Just stand however feels best"

So Scott awkwardly pushes his hands out in front in something looking a bit like a punch and tries bobbing his head. It's a bit tough. He falls off balance a few times. He tries left foot forward, right foot forward and also standing square-on.

Another ten minutes pass and now the boys have all pulled a pair of boxing gloves out of the communal box and are each standing in front of a punch bag. The round bell rings and Scott starts cuffing his a bit, then looking around at the other boys. One of the older lads, a competitive fighter, is punching away on the top-bottom bag, swaying left and right to dodge as it springs back at him after every punch. Scott turns back to his heavy bag and tries that. It doesn't move much – it's not the same bag, after all.

"Nice one Scott" says the coach and pats him on the shoulder. "Keep it up"

Twenty minutes later the coach is pulling a couple of boys out of training and sending them into the ring to spar.

“Scott” shouts the coach. “Let’s see how you look in the ring. Do you fancy a go?”

“Um, ok” Scott nervously replies.

He steps through the ropes and sees his opponent across the ring, a boy of similar size but who has obviously been training a lot longer. Scott had noticed him hitting the bag with fluid hard punches, sending it flying backwards with a meaty thwack. He’s a bit nervous.

“What should I do?” Scott asks.

The coach smiles, pats him on the shoulder again with a kind gesture.

“Don’t worry about technique. Just go be your self. Be natural.”

Ten minutes later, Scott wakes up on the table in the dressing room with a bloody nose and mild headache.

“I guess I’m not cut out for boxing” he concludes. “I’ll just put up with the shit at school.”

Archived from theredarchive.com