

Fighting

By Zac Metcalfe

There was much anticipation before the second game of the State of Origin Rugby League series of 2013. New South Wales had won the first game against the invincible Queensland side. Could this be the year they stop the rot? But the score at the end of the game was not what everyone was talking about. They were talking about the punch up between Nate Myles and Paul Gallen that took place in 39th minute of the first half. “It was a great origin moment”. “Something we had all come to see”. “The highlight of the match”. One man punch another man unexpectedly in the face. Great.

There is this thrill around a fight or punch on, which we as spectators just love. But is it ok? Is it just part of the game? How as Christians should we view it?

When you decide to play a contact sport you are expecting to at some point get hurt from a big tackle or contest, within the rules. It is just part of the game. But you should not have to expect a purposeful punch in the face (although sadly in this sin twisted sports culture it is expected). In this game Gallen lost control of his anger and emotions, which is rage. In his explanation to the referee it was obvious that the hit was revenge for the way Myles treated him in previous tackles. These things are characteristics of the old self (Colossians 3:8). They are sinful, and not included in the way God designed sport to be played.

So from a spectator's point of view, where does this leave us? Well us cheering this behaviour on is condoning what has happened. As Christians it is our job to redeem sport. Redeeming sport is striving to participate in sport the way God intended it to be played, without sin. When we are cheering on a fight or except it as part of the game we are not doing this.

It's hard not to enjoy a fight and a couple of right arm haymakers because we are fallen humans. In fact for us it's impossible to beat a craving for sin. Thankfully Jesus has released us from its hold.

What a blessing it is to participate by watching and playing contact sports, but it is also important that we do it with a biblical perspective in mind and to bring glory to God.