

# What a knockout!

It's one of the most primitive of sports and possibly the most misunderstood. What is it about boxing that makes a man enjoy getting punched in the face? Serene Lim steps in for some ringside action.

## **Kane Bennet, 33**

*Environmental risk manager*

**What made you take up boxing?** Once I got nominated by the guys at my Australian footy club to compete in the International Financial Services (IFS) White Collar Boxing Tournament, I had no choice! But I didn't mind as I wanted to see what it's like.

**Is the white collar boxing phenomenon akin to the *Fight Club* scenario, where your life as an office worker is so sterile, you need to feel pain and violence?** I don't think I live a sterile life, but I agree there's a masculine desire to feel that raw energy and competitive spirit. It makes you feel alive.

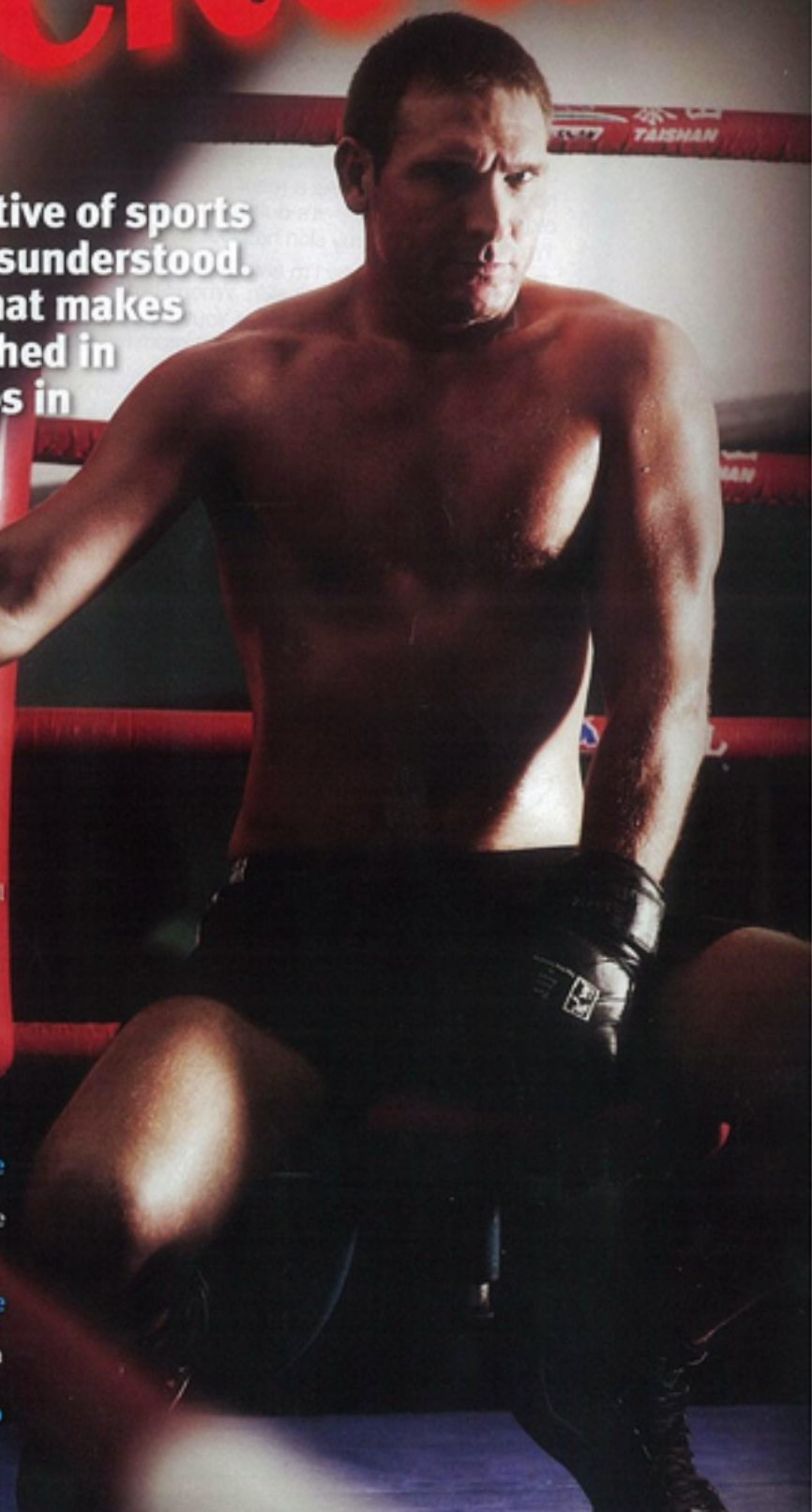
**What is it about boxing that attracts you?** The level of fitness it entails. I do a lot of sports — I train for triathlons and play Australian football — but boxing works different muscles and involves different types of cardiovascular work. Plus, I get to hit people!

**So you're drawn to the blood and gore of the sport?** Not at all. It's more about the release of energy and a test of your own ability. If anyone has ever done boxing or tried sparring, you'll realise it's quite humbling. There's always someone better than you.

**You seem really soft-spoken. Don't you have to be aggressive to do well in boxing?** No, boxing is more a test of ability to maintain your composure. You're more likely to lose a fight when you let your guard down and throw silly punches instead of sticking to your tactics.

**How true is the old wives' tale that you can't have sex before a big match because you need to store up your aggression?** It's rubbish. I'd have sex before a match cos I don't think it will affect my performance.

**What gives you courage when you're walking into the ring?** Biology does it for you — sheer adrenaline. You get a massive rush from standing in the ring. The fight or flight syndrome kicks in, and you go from there.



## Darragh Lenihan, 27

Broker

**You took part in the IFS White Collar Boxing Tournament but lost your match. Was it worth it?** It was a really good experience. Everyone who's done it doesn't regret it one bit. And it's for a good cause cos we're competing for charity.

**Why did you decide to try it in the first place?** I'd never boxed before, so it was like a personal test. People say it takes a lot of guts to box, and it's true. I also thought I'd never get into the ring but as soon as I fought inside and even though I lost, I was encouraging everyone I know to get into the ring. It's not as scary as it looks.

**What's the deal with men, boxing and violence?** I think we're all drawn to it. Men and women. When I was getting hit in the ring, I could hear girls screaming stuff like, "Hit him harder!" But though I love contact sports, I'm not an aggressive person. It's quite cathartic to get hit sometimes, whether it's on a rugby field or in the boxing ring. No one holds it against you.

**So you've never fought outside of the ring?** I'm Irish, so yeah, I've been in a brawl or two. But I was sticking up for my friends! One drunkard broke a bottle and pointed it at my friend, so I went over and punched him. Anyone would do it for their mate.


**What is it about Irish that makes them such fiery characters?** We're quite passionate by nature, it could be the Guinness we drink. We love a bit of a scrape.

**Does that mean you disagree that real men walk away instead of fighting it out?** No, I agree

it's very easy to throw a punch, and it's hard to control cos I'm not one to back down from a fight. It's like an argument, it's easier to keep quarrelling than resolve the issue.

**How do women react when they find out you box?** They think I'm crazy. Heck, guys think I'm crazy. But women are more receptive once they get over their initial surprise. In fact, I had women coming up to talk to me at the after-party of the White Collar Boxing Tournament instead of saying go away like they usually do! [Laughs]

**Have you been badly injured in your fights or trainings?** I've gone into the office with busted lips and I nearly got my nose broken. I still can't breathe normally like I used to. I've two friends — a doctor and a plastic surgeon — and they were fighting over who's going to reset my nose!

**Diesel's new scent for men, Only the Brave, features a bottle in the shape of a fist. What do you think of it?** It's quite good. I might use it since I've been wearing the same perfume for six years. It was a gift from an ex and I've been too lazy to switch! 



## Are you brave enough for **the scent?**

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BOX TO SUMMON UP SOME COURAGE WITH DIESEL ONLY THE BRAVE. THESE GIRLS TELL US WHAT THEY THINK OF THE SCENT.



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"It's musky and masculine. It's great for classy, manly males — like Hugh Jackman!" - FAIZAL RAHIM, 23



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"This is a very versatile scent; any regular man on the street would be able to wear it." - JOYCE, 23

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"It's very strong, perfect for masculine guys." - DORCAS, 26