

1976

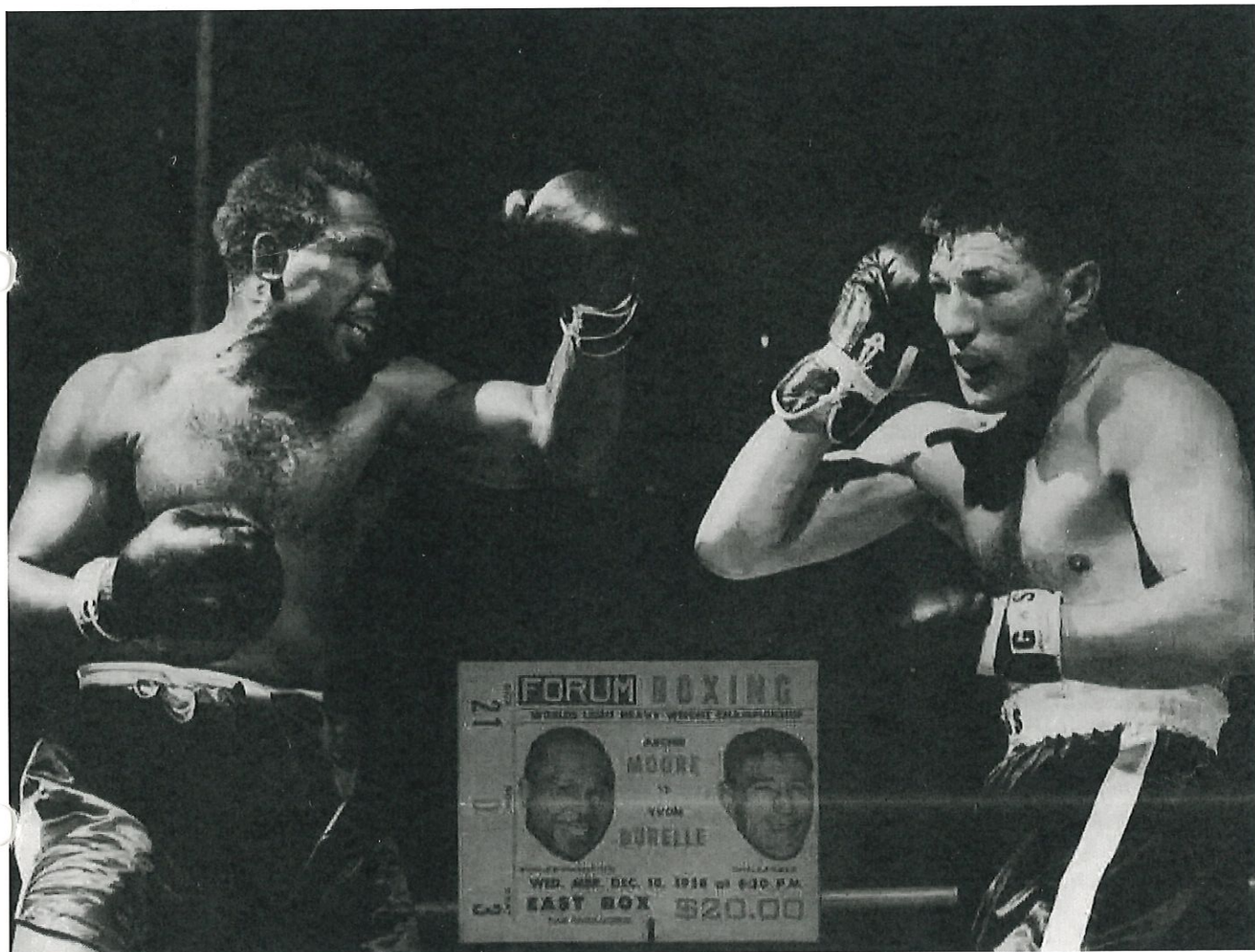
Montreal Olympics: African boycott left Archie Moore without boxers to coach



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Archie Moore, left, who was an assistant coach with the Nigerian boxing team that boycotted the 1976 Olympics, retains his light-heavyweight title with an 11th-round knockout of Yvon Durelle at The Forum in Montreal on Dec. 10, 1958. *DAVID BIER / GAZETTE FILES*

Archie Moore received some shocking news when he arrived in 1976 after an 18-hour journey from Lagos, Nigeria, to Montreal.

The former light-heavyweight champion was an assistant coach with the Nigerian Olympic boxing team and had high hopes for his young fighters, including heavyweight Fatai Ayinla Adekunle, who won a bronze medal at the world amateur championships two years ear

But shortly after arriving in Montreal, he learned that Nigeria had joined other African nations in boycotting the 1976 Olympic Games (<http://montrealgazette.com/news/1976->

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Maj. Gen. Olufemi Olutoye, then-president of the Nigerian Olympic Committee, announces his country's withdrawal from the Montreal Olympics in **Montreal on July 16, 1976.** *LYNN BALL / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

The African nations were upset over a decision by the New Zealand rugby team to tour South Africa, generally shunned by the international sporting community because of its apartheid policy. The Africans called for New Zealand's expulsion from the Games, but the International Olympic Committee rejected the idea.

Most of the athletes from the boycotting countries had already arrived in Montreal when their governments decided not to compete. The Egyptian team marched in the opening ceremonies before withdrawing a day later. Iraq and the tiny South American nation of Guyana joined the mostly African protest to bring the number of boycotting nations to 33.

The boycott (<http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-olympics-african-boycott-of-1976-games-changed-the-world>) resulted in cancellations and rescheduled events, and organizers issued refunds totalling \$1 million.

Among the top athletes denied an opportunity to compete were John Akii-Bua of Uganda, defending Olympic champion and world record-holder in the 400-metre hurdles, and Tanzania's Filbert Bayi, world record-holder at 1,500 metres.

A showdown between Akii-Bua and American Edwin Moses was expected to be one of the highlights of the track competition. Moses won gold medals in Montreal and in Los Angeles in 1984, but was deprived of a third chance for Olympic gold when the United States boycotted the 1980 Games in Moscow over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.