

1 Article : EDITORIAL | Putting Naoya Inoue, Other Athletes Behind Pay-per-view Walls a Bad Idea

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

Japan should discuss universal access. It will allow everyone to watch free of charge Naoya Inoue and other athletes' games of great public interest.

"Monster" Naoya Inoue has become the first undisputed bantamweight champion in professional boxing's four-belt era. He is only the ninth fighter in all weight classes to achieve this feat, and the first Asian to do so.

Undefeated in 24 professional bouts, "Monster" Inoue went into his December 13 bout in Tokyo with Englishman Paul Butler already owning the WBA, WBC, and IBF titles. Butler was the WBO champion until Inoue knocked him out in the 1th round.

All three judges had Inoue leading on their scorecards after 10 rounds.

The 29-year-old Inoue plans to move up a weight class in 2023. He is aiming to become a four-weight class champion. He has already won world titles at super-flyweight and light-flyweight championships.

The venerable United States boxing magazine Ring has named Inoue as "pound-for-pound" the strongest boxer across all weight classes. Moreover, he is expected to regain top ranking in the boxing world that he earlier lost to heavyweight Oleksandr Usyk (Ukraine).

The high-flying Inoue, who is already a Japanese treasure, can be expected to soar to greater heights in the days to come.

Naoya Inoue Achievements Out of the Public Eye

The significance of Inoue's achievement in unifying the bantamweight belts is that he has restored luster to the champion's crown. Competing sanctioning bodies with different titles had left the crown tarnished. Artificially contrived "battles" cannot generate genuine excitement.

Somewhat saddening, however, is the fact that the Inoue-Butler showdown could not be viewed on either terrestrial or satellite TV.

The video streaming service "dTV," which had broadcast rights to the match, [hastily](#) decided to let the public view the bout for free shortly before its start. But how many fans could have known that?

Nor was the exciting middleweight unification match between Ryota Murata and Gennady Golovkin in April broadcast live on TV.

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World Cup Qualifiers Also Limited Viewing

[Likewise](#), even during the Asian finals of the qualifying round for soccer's World Cup tournament, Japan's away matches could only be seen on video streaming services.

During the World Cup itself, in addition to terrestrial TV broadcasts, the streaming service ABEMA broadcast all the matches free of charge. But who knows what the situation will be during the next World Cup?

Fees for broadcast rights continue to soar as video distribution services with deep pockets enter the market. The day when we can [no longer](#) view the World Cup or the Olympics on TV is probably not far off.

Is Paid Access the Answer?

From the perspective of letting free market principles prevail, we cannot complain. Furthermore, high broadcasting rights fees may also serve to strengthen players. However, on balance, are they a good thing?

After all, won't pay-per-view broadcasts prevent access for a broad swath of the viewing public?

For example, Great Britain's revised Broadcasting Act of 1996 [enshrines](#) and calls for the protection of the "right to universal access." This allows everyone, regardless of whether they are rich or poor, to watch important matches of great public interest free of charge.

We earnestly hope that children will always be able to see sports events at their best, be it in the form of "Monster" Inoue in the ring, Shohei Ohtani playing in MLB in the United States, the excitement of the World Cup, or the emotional reactions of medalists at the Olympics.

Shouldn't Japan also address the question of universal access?

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

- 1. hastily** 急ぎよ、慌てて、急に
 - The government **hastily** lifted some COVID lockdowns.
- 2. likewise** 同様に、同じく、その上さらに
 - It was really nice talking with you.
— **Likewise**. Let's meet for lunch or something sometime soon.
- 3. no longer** もはや～でない、もはや～ではなくなる
 - Poverty is **no longer** an invisible problem for this country.
- 4. enshrine** 正式に記す、大事なものとして(法などで)保護する、
(神聖なものとして)祭る
 - The right to freedom of speech is **enshrined** in Japanese Constitution.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

- 1. How was the boxing match where Naoya Inoue unified 4 bantamweight titles broadcasted?**
- 2. According to the author, why is many sports events being seen only on video streaming services a problem?**
- 3. Do you use any video streaming services?**
- 4. Do you think broadcast television will disappear?**

日本語関連記事:【主張】井上尚弥の快拳 本物の興奮を伝えるには

プロボクシングの井上尚弥が主要4団体の世界バンタム級王座を統一した。全階級を通じて9人目、アジア選手では初の快拳だった。

WBA、WBC、IBF統一王者の井上はWBO王者のポール・バトラー(英国)を11回KOで下した。3人のジャッジが10回まで全て井上の優位と採点する完勝だった。29歳の井上は来年は階級を上げ、4階級制覇を目指す。

米国の老舗専門誌「リング」が選定する全階級を通じた最強ランキング「パウンド・フォー・パウンド」でも、ヘビー級のオレクサンドル・ウシク(ウクライナ)に奪われた1位に返り咲くことが見込まれる。日本が生んだ至宝の到達点は、さらなる高みにある。

井上の偉業の意義は王座の乱立で損ねたベルトの価値を崇高に蘇(よみがえ)らせたことだ。本物の興奮は、作られた戦いには生み出せない。

少し寂しく思うのは、この一戦が地上波でも衛星放送でも見られなかったことだ。試合を中継した動画配信サービス「dTV」は試合開始前に急遽(きゅうきょ)「無料開放」を決めたが、どれほどのファンがその事実を知ることができたろう。

4月の村田諒太対ゲンナジー・ゴロフキンの激闘もテレビ中継はなかった。サッカーのワールドカップ(W杯)アジア最終予選でも日本代表のアウェー戦は動画配信サービスの視聴に限られた。

W杯本戦は地上波放送とともに「ABEMA」が全試合を無料で配信したが、次の大会ではどうなるか分からない。

豊富な資金力を持つ動画配信サービスの参入で放映権料は高騰を続けており、テレビ各局は手を出しにくくなっている。W杯やオリンピックがテレビでは見られない日が近いのかもしれない。

市場原理からいえば文句はいえず、高額な放映権料は選手の強化にも充てられる。だが、それでいいのか。有料放送は幅広い視聴を妨げることにならないか。

例えば英国では1996年の改正放送法で、国民の関心が高く重要な大会は貧富の差にかかわらず誰もが無料で視聴できる「ユニバーサル・アクセス権」を定め、保護対象を指定している。井上や米大リーグの大谷翔平の活躍、W杯の躍動、五輪メダリストらの感動は、いつまでも広く子供たちの目に触れさせてあげたい。日本でも議論が必要ではないか。