

## Sports

# Fury, Wilder kept apart after sparks fly at press conference

**LAS VEGAS:** Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder were prevented from a face-off as insults and expletives filled the air at an ill-tempered final press conference on Wednesday for their heavyweight world title fight. Fury puts his World Boxing Council heavyweight belt on the line in Las Vegas on Saturday when he meets Wilder for the third time, 20 months after knocking out the American in their second fight.

Wednesday's press conference - broadcast live on US television - saw profanities and sparks fly as Fury taunted Wilder over the circumstances of his defeat to the self-styled "Gypsy King" last year. As the barbs escalated, the host of the press conference sought to bring both fighters together for a traditional face-to-face stare-down-only for Fury's promoter Bob Arum to veto the confrontation.

Fury and Wilder - who clashed at a press conference ahead of their first fight in Los Angeles in 2018 - were hustled off the stage shortly afterwards. It brought an end to a fractious encounter at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, which turned ugly when Fury confronted Wilder over the American's accusations of cheating by Fury during the last fight.

Wilder has accused Fury of tampering with his gloves for the second fight - where Fury dominated to score a seventh-round knockout - to inflict more damage. Wilder had also accused former trainer Mark Breland of spiking his own water, as well as blaming a heavy costume used during his ring walk for making him tired. Wilder stood by his various

cheating claims when quizzed on them Wednesday. "I will go to my grave believing in what I believe in," Wilder said. "I know things for a fact. I have confirmation and clarity over a lot of things. Men lie, women lie, but your eyes don't lie what they see."

## 'Weak mental person'

But Wilder's comments were dismissed by Fury as the words of an "unwell person". "He accused me of everything, accused his team, his trainer, the suit, injuries. Who else did he accuse - oh yeah, the Nevada State Athletic Commission, they were in on it as well. And the referee," said Fury (30-0-1, with 21 knockouts). "Maybe if he'd come out with one of these excuses it would have been believable - but not 15, come on. "He can believe what he wants. But what it tells me is that he's a weak mental person, who I will knock spark out on Saturday night."

Asked for his final comments, Wilder, replied: "I just tell you guys to prepare yourselves for the battlefield and get ready for war." Fury meanwhile returned to his earlier theme, zeroing in on Wilder's comments about the circumstances of his loss in the second fight. "Wilder said I only won the second fight because I cheated," Fury said.

"But then he goes and changes his whole team and training, says he's training as hard as ever. "So I have to ask the question 'If I only won because I cheated, what was the point of changing everything?' Can anyone answer that question? I know he can't because he doesn't have the brains to,"

text each other," said 18-year-old Jake McNerney. "We'll just see each other out there."

## Logjam

More than 300 personnel are involved in the emergency response to the spill, which has been traced to a pipeline near Long Beach. Dozens of container ships are anchored off the harbor there - one of the world's busiest container ports - waiting for a berth in a pandemic-sparked shipping logjam. The Los Angeles Times cited a federal investigator as saying a misplaced anchor from one of these ships was the most likely cause of the pipeline's rupture.

Officials said almost 5,000 gallons of crude have been recovered so far, and more than a dozen birds covered in oil have been rescued. Clean-up crews in protective gear could be seen on Newport Beach, further down the coastline, with weather patterns pushing oil south.

## School

Powder blue skies and warm sunshine offered perfect beach weather on Wednesday, but stores and restaurants that rely on visitors were empty. "Probably 50 percent of our business we probably lost so far," said Sakal, whose father has been selling the surfboards he makes in their family-run store for five decades. October is prime surfing time. "It's the best for surfers, and it's best for people that live here. The weather's really nice during this time," said Sakal. "It gets hot in the inland areas, so they all come to the beach on the weekends, but they can't come to



**LAS VEGAS:** British boxer Tyson Fury (left) and challenger US boxer Deontay Wilder attend a press conference for their WBC heavyweight championship fight on Wednesday at the MGM Grand Garden Arena ahead of their Oct 9, 2021 fight. —AFP

Fury said, gesturing at Wilder.

"He says he wants to do bad things to me, and hurt me and he's got all this anger and malice and aggression. I don't want to hurt Deontay Wilder. I just want to beat him in a fight. He knows what he's saying

is lies. And deep down in his soul, he knows that he lost. He lost the first time, he lost the second time and he's going to lose the third time. And afterwards he'll be back working in that fast-food chain that he was working at earlier in his career - retired." —AFP

## Surfers sidelined as California races to clean up oil spill

**HUNTINGTON BEACH, California:** Beaches normally thronged with the bronzed torsos of surfers are deserted as California races to clean up a huge oil spill. Up to 131,000 gallons of crude could have leaked into the Pacific Ocean on the west coast of the United States when a pipeline ruptured at the weekend. Authorities are investigating whether a ship's anchor could have ripped open the pipe, dragging it more than 30 m along the seafloor.

A 24-km stretch of coast has been closed to the public - including some prime surfing spots that are usually packed with boarders. "It's weird to see no surfing out there for miles. It's very strange," said Shawna Sakal, manager of a surf store just yards from Huntington Beach pier. "There's always people surfing, they're doing it year-round. The ocean is full of surfers, especially on the north and south side of the pier."

Huntington Beach revolves around surfing. Equipment rental and sales stores jostle for space with surf schools. But almost all of them are now shuttered. For the tight-knit community of surfers, that's tough. "We have a bunch of friends that just surf, so sometimes we don't even



**HUNTINGTON BEACH, California:** Surfers who planned on surfing look at oil on the beach on Oct 3, 2021, after a pipeline breach connected to an oil rig off shore started leaking oil. —AFP

the beach now because of the oil spill."

The disaster has also put a hole in the curriculum of one local school, where surf skills count as a credit towards graduation. "We had just begun our competitive season the week before the spill," says Lisa Battig of Fountain Valley School, located just minutes from the beach. "All five teams also operate as classes and students receive PE (physical education) credit. "We will

be staying out of our local waters until we receive the all clear from the agencies."

In the meantime, students will be practicing on land, she says, and traveling out of the area to surf at the weekend. But they will be doing their part to help speed along the clean-up. "When and if it is safe and reasonable, the students will also get involved with clean-up," she said. —AFP