

Matt Godfrey Starts Year with a Bang

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PROVIDENCE (December 20, 2005) – USNBC cruiserweight champion Matt “Too Smooth” Godfrey (10-0, 4 KOs), already rated No. 27 by the World Boxing Council, has outgrown his native New England and he plans on making more noise nationally in 2006.

Matt, 24, has displayed poise and ring generalship far beyond his age, and he was recently named the No. 4 prospect in the world for fighters with 10 or less pro fights by Boxing Monthly magazine.

“I’d give myself an A- grade for 2005,” the well-spoken Godfrey said. “I was able to go from four-round fights to eight and quickly to 10 and win a title in my ninth fight. I may not fight as frequently next year because I’ll be in eight and 10-rounders against guys with at least 15 or 20 wins. I want to bring my power back that I had as an amateur. Even with puffy gloves and headgear, I knocked out people as an amateur. I had more time to spend on weight training as an amateur, but as a pro I did a lot more running and boxing. I’m now working with a fitness trainer and I’ll be working a lot more with weights.”

Godfrey has been fighting professionally for 19 months. Only nine fights into his pro career, Matt captured the World Boxing Council-affiliated USNBC cruiserweight title this past August with a near shutout performance (99-91, 98-92, 98-93) against Willie Herring, who was coming off of an impressive nationally televised draw versus highly-touted Shaun George, in Matt’s first 10-round match.

“We want Matt to have a shot at another title this coming year,” Godfrey’s manager Brent Hallenbeck remarked. “By the middle of the year we hope he’s fighting for the NABF title or a similar belt. I think that by the time we can get him to around 20-0, Matt will be fighting for a major title, hopefully in 2007.”

Godfrey’s most impressive fight was against former NABO champion Jermell “The Truth” Barnes (17-8), a high school science teacher Matt took to school, winning every round en route to a unanimous eight-round decision (80-72 three times).

“The first time I really stepped-up I won every round against Barnes and then I beat Herring for the title in my next fight,” Matt added. “And I just closed out the year (WDEC6) against a tough opponent, Billy Willis, who had knocked out my first opponent as a pro (Glen Morgan), something I couldn’t do. I would have graded an A or A+ if I had a couple of more knockouts in 2005.”

“Too Smooth” has tremendous upside and many believe he will be a better pro than amateur because of his sound, smooth boxing style, which led to his new nickname. A consummate boxer, he possesses incredibly quick hands and feet, particularly for a 200-pounder, as well as a complete set of boxing skills developed during his outstanding amateur career.

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Matt started boxing at Manfredo's Gym in Pawtucket (RI) with Peter Manfredo, Jr., a finalist in the recently concluded reality television series, *The Contender*, and his current stablemate, 2004 U.S. Olympian Jason Estrada.

Godfrey's 194-23 amateur record included six national championships, four open tournaments including the 2004 Everlast U.S. Championships, plus two in the Junior Olympics. He was a Bronze medal winner at the 2001 Pan-American Games, Silver medallist in all four of the 2004 national major tournaments – National Golden Gloves, PAL (Police Athletic League), U.S. Championships and U.S. Challenge – and six-time New England Golden Gloves champion.

The second heavyweight alternate on the 2004 U.S. Olympic Boxing Team, Matt decided to turn pro May 14 (2004), winning a unanimous four-round decision against Morgan.

Over the years as an amateur, Godfrey defeated many boxers who today are outstanding professional fighters such as Randy "The Gentleman" Griffen (22-1-2, 22 KOs), Lenard "Haitian Sensation" Pierre (18-1, 13 KOs), Devan Vargas (7-0, 4 KOs), Chazz "Mensa With Muscles" Witherspoon (9-0, 6 KOs), Corey "Black Ice" Cummings (14-0, 11 KOs) and John Johnson (10-0, 9 KOs).

Although he has started his pro career fighting as a cruiserweight, Matt probably will grow into a legitimate heavyweight within a few years. "I will not have any heavyweight plans until after I have a major cruiserweight title belt around my waist," he concluded. "I have no business fighting as a heavyweight until then."