The U.S. Olympic boxing team has been taking its licks for the past two decades with only three gold medals since 1992. Sometimes it's politics, coaches and Olympic scoring that have kept our boxers from exceeding.

Early Saturday morning in Beijing the Olympic boxing tournament begins and America sends its best.

None of the boxers come from a wealthy background. They're all a bunch of kids with big dreams and a lot of heart.

Take Javier Molina for example.

Fighting out of the tiny Commerce Boxing Club located on a park just across the Santa Ana freeway from East Los Angeles, that tiny facility has been home to a number of the best male and female amateur boxers in the last eight years.

Molina was trained by Roberto Luna, a 35-year-old former U.S. Army Airborne who's been working in the small facility and producing a number of startling boxers who snuck up on not just the Southern California region but the entire country.

It should be no coincidence that a number of fine amateur boxers are coming out of Commerce, California, a splinter of East Los Angeles. That whole area has been pumping out boxers for more than 100 years.

The second reason is a number of boxing trainers like Luna who work eight hours a day, then drive to small boxing gyms to tutor boys and girls in the art of boxing.

"These kids have been in the gym for years," said Luna, 35, a strict but amiable boxing teacher. "They were young when they started and I think it's our time to start making some noise."

Inside the Commerce Boxing club, that exists in Bristow Park, elite amateur boxers are churned out on a regular basis, boys and girls.

Javier Molina, 18, is the newest boxer from that gym to arrive on the world scene. His twin brother Oscar Molina nearly made Mexico's Olympic boxing team but was beaten in the finals.

"It's amazing to see this kid grow up to be an Olympian. It's pretty amazing," says Luna who began teaching Molina and his brother when they were eight years old. "They've accomplished a lot for their age."

Winning national titles and awards has suddenly become part of the tiny boxing program's identity.

It started when a kid named Francisco “Panchito” Bojado with lightning combinations and powerful punches opened eyes while boxing for the Mexican Olympic team in 2000. The East Los Angeles boxer was trained by Alfonso Marquez who is the mentor for the entire Commerce Boxing Club including Luna.

“What I learned, I learned from him,” said Luna about Marquez.

After Panchito came Carlos Molina, the older brother of the Molina twins who is currently fighting professionally. He was a decorated amateur fighter with multiple national titles and awards.

It was a female boxer Liliana Magana who captured the first national amateur title for the Commerce Boxing club.

“Lilian was my first national champion in 1999,” Luna said. “I remember I was all excited.”

She was followed by the tall and statuesque Elizabeth Quevedo, who captured the U.S. Amateur titles as a welterweight and junior welterweight a total of five times.

“I’ll never forget those years,” said Quevedo, who is now a prizefighter. “Those were great years.”

Now there is Patricia Manuel, who’s dominated the featherweight division with four national titles.

“We took her to Fort Lauderdale and she just destroyed everybody,” said Luna about Manuel’s recent national amateur title run. “She’s a workhorse and incredibly talented.”

Sadly, because female amateur boxing is not an Olympic sport, none of those girls mentioned were able to compete in the Olympics. Manuel will be turning professional before the end of the year.

Otherwise the Commerce Gym is producing some phenomenal results for a city with a population of only 14,000 that also draws youngsters from East Los Angeles and other small industrial cities nearby.

Frank Espinosa, a renowned boxing manager who represents the eldest Molina as a professional, says: “They’re doing some good things in that gym.”

When school is in session the youngsters eagerly go from the classroom to the gym located inside a gray and blue building that also houses a library, crafts room, and administrative offices. There are no signs posted that indicate one of the most successful boxing programs is located inside.

“Nobody knows 'cause were kind of hidden. It’s a small, little gym but it works and it’s effective,” Luna said. “We’ve had a lot of kids come and go, but the ones that have stayed, had a pretty

good time."

Luna's Olympic protégé Molina, though the youngest member of the team, has suddenly become the focus for the small city. Fund raisers held by various local organizations have gathered enough money to send Luna and others from the boxing club to watch Molina participate in the games that begin Saturday Aug. 9.

Will Molina win an Olympic medal?

Who knows?

It's really a strange scoring system loaded with Eastern Europeans and the judges are not very good. But one American is as good as the other when this speed-chess style of boxing commences.

"If I had to swim to China I wouldn't miss this," says Luna, who is now in China to support the US Olympic team.

Numerous boxing stars have emerged from the Olympics, such as Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard and East L.A.'s Oscar De La Hoya.

Will any American emerge as the star?

2008 U.S. Olympic boxing team

Luis Yanez, 19, is a 106-pound light flyweight from Duncanville, Texas known for his technical prowess.

Rau'Shee Warren, 21, is a 112-pound flyweight from Cincinnati, Ohio known for his blazing speed. He was also a member of the 2004 team that went to Greece.

Gary Russell Jr., 20, is a 119-pound bantamweight out of Capitol Heights, Maryland with a ton of amateur experience.

Raynell Williams, 19, is a 125-pound featherweight out of Cleveland, Ohio who captured numerous amateur titles.

Sadam Ali, 19, is a 132-pound lightweight out of Brooklyn, New York with superior speed and experience.

Javier Molina, 18, is a 141-pound light welterweight from Commerce and is the youngest member of the team. He's a technical boxer who prefers to counterpunch.

Demetrius Andrade, 20, is a 152-pound welterweight out of Providence, Rhode Island and has captured many national titles.

Shawn Estrada, 23, is a 165-pound middleweight from East Los Angeles who is known as a power puncher who can box. He likes knockouts.

Chris Downs, 33, is a 178-pound light heavyweight from Fort Carson, Colorado and the oldest member of the team. He was a member of the U.S. Army boxing team.

Deontay Wilder, 22, is a 201-pound heavyweight from Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He only has two years of amateur experience but is six feet seven inches tall.

Michael Hunter, 20, is a super heavyweight out of Las Vegas, Nevada. He has fast hands and good agility for a big boxer.

These are all terrific boxers and all have astounding stories to tell. One or more may emerge to become a star as a professional, but for now, the world is their stage as they step in the ring.

Television

The boxing tournament begins on Saturday at 2 a.m. and can be seen on CNBC.