Written by David A. Avila
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Eric Fowler feels right at home in Los Angeles despite being more than 1,000 miles from his Texas roots.

“I love boxing,” says Fowler, 22, who is originally from Conroe, Texas. “California is the best place to box.”

Fowler is one of more than a dozen members of the Los Angeles Matadors boxing team that participates in the new World Series of Boxing league. On Thursday, Jan. 13, the team returns home at Nokia Theater to face the Miami Gallos team.

The Matador team is comprised of various outstanding amateur stars that have all garnered

national titles of some type and now box professionally. The one difference is all of the boxers maintain eligibility to participate in the upcoming 2012 Olympics in London.

For those not familiar with the World Series of Boxing, there are teams from North America, Europe and Asia.

The Americas Conference consists of Los Angeles, Miami, Memphis and Mexico City. Asia Conference has Baku, Astana, Incheon and Beijing. Europe Conference has Paris, Milan, Istanbul and Moscow.

It's truly an international setting with worldwide talent participation.

So why isn't it hooking on more?

Honestly, the matchmaking is superior to most boxing cards because there is parity in the league. Each team has multiple national and international stars on its rosters.
Fowler is one of them.

The eager beaver lightweight boxer from Conroe has blitzed through competition with his "take no prisoners" fighting style. When he last fought in Los Angeles he burrowed through his opponent like it was his ticket to free food. In a sense, it was.

"Most fighters are not hungry," says Fowler, whose attacking style reminds of Aaron "The Hawk" Pryor. "When I was a kid we used to have to look for food in the trash."
After years of living day to day without a secure household, Fowler and his family were helped by a man who pointed the youngster toward boxing. It grabbed hold of him and never let go.

"It's a more gentleman sport," says Fowler who tried mixed martial arts too. "There's no kicking and fighting like little girls."

The 132-pound boxer speaks his mind, even theologically.

"A lot of people don't have faith," said Fowler who is very religious. "You got to be humble. Lots of boxers come from hard backgrounds. I want to be centered."
Inside the ring, however, Fowler has other ideas.

"I'm trying to break the dude down," explains Fowler about his fighting philosophy. "Every man is beatable, even me. So I have to work harder than the other guy."

Fowler is just one of maybe 16 other fighters on the Matadors team and each one of them has a story. And each one is ratcheting up the punch ratio to keep pace with competition that doesn't allow for blow out victories.

The Miami Gallos arrive with their squad that is led by Ireland amateur star John Joe Joyce and famed trainer Pat Burns who formerly trained Winky Wright. It's a formidable outfit that stands in second place.

Fowler loves competing even when sparring in the California boxing jungle.

“Sparring is great here man. They’re trying to take you out and I’m trying to take them out too,” Fowler says excitedly. “I love it here.”

Check out the World Series of Boxing.

For more information go to www.worldseriesboxing.com

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Radam G says:

Wow! I'm going to really enjoy this old type -- now above ground -- officially legal amateur professional boxing. It is about time that amateur boxing quit hypocriting and face the facts that PAY is the only WAY that the best of the best will PLAY and STAY! There has ALWAYS BEEN a underground of so-called "World [and U.S. states and selected countries] Series of Boxing". Some of the greatest PAID amateur boxers on the planet fought on those types of teams in the 1970s out of California, Colorado, Texas, Ohio, Louisiana, Florida, Maryland, Michican, Washington D.C., Nevada, Virginia, Japan, Taiwan, Guam, the Philippines, the U.S. armed forces' services of the Army, Navy, Marine Corp. and Air Force. As I've said, "Everything that is old is new again." Somebodeee oughta QUIT da bulljiving. The top guns of the amateurs have always been getting PAID! Makin' dat MOOLA!

A gentleman named Bill Ross use to bring "American-living-overseas-civilian" and Pinoy fighters from the Philippines to fight in All Navy and All Air Force competition, so that he could get a better chance of winning the Interservice championships. [All the backroom players of amateur boxing knows about the legend of BILL ROSS.] Amateurs have always been able to fight in up to five-round bouts for turn-your-head-the-other-way PAID. The elite of the amateur boxers were making so much money in the 1970s that the AAU banded them from fighting on undercards of professional bouts. So they just went to states that didn't have a commission, neighboring countries and "trips" overseas and started doing it. Don King even got into trouble for going overboard for having some of his fighters, who were in a "Wide World of Sports" television tournment, with wins over some of these amateurs, who were still offically fighting amateur. [Everybody joked about certain amateurs on the "pro-ams circuits back then. Ain't callin' names. These now old farts can step forward and tell their own stories. It will make some good copy.] And then in the late 1970s/early 1980s, BIG-TIME CROOK Harold Smith and his fake-rich wife started MAPS -- Muhammad Ali Productions and Sports and PAID all the top amateurs (especially on the Muhammad Ali Boxing Club) with electronic stolen moola from Well Fargo [shoulda been far-gone fargo] Bank. And then other big-money people started just paying amateurs to stay amateur than sign with them after the Olympic Games. OMG! Money was like paper being thrown away to every elite boxer and his momma, brotha, sista, pops and pets during doing the 80s and early 90s. Money Moguls. Casino owners, dictators, the mafia, fast-money crooks and the networks ABC, NBC, CBS, USA, and FOX were apple pie and ice

cream for pugilism.

Amateur boxing powers that be tried to kick Fernando Vargas out of amateur boxing for signing a contract and taking money, to name one situation. [In that past crooked-arse era of amateur boxing, lawyers were everywhere willing to help amateur boxers pro bono publico, who they got caught up in a legality jams about there amateur status.] Trainer Kenny Adams -- then a U.S. Army Sgt. Major -- counterfeited papers to allow civilian amateur fighter Kennedy McKinney, who became a world champion, to room and board and train with pay with the All-Army athletes at the best military facilities. In recent years, the powers that be have tried to clean up amateurs sneaking around and fighting pro for BIG PAY [or taking under-the-table money] by giving the top ones a stipend and/or room and board at U.S. Olympic training centers or college dormitories for those who also wanted to go -- or front going -- to college.

YUP! This World Series of Boxing is good for about 90 percent of these pro-ams who be taking a big pay cut by going to the pros. Most of these guys would not make it there. Then again, most of them will not make the Olympic Teams in 2012. There are hotshot kids who are going to EXPOSE them and amateur boxing latest GIG of politics and bulls***. These suckas in power should make it like pro basketball, where pros and amateurs get a chance to REPRESENT in da O Games. Holla!