

## Notre Dame's Mike Lee Fighting In Las Vegas On Friday

Written by The Sweet Science  
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Not all prizefighters come from the gritty streets of urban jungles or shacks without windows. Some times a Mike Lee comes along who is simply born with a will to fight.

Raised in a boxing town like Chicago might have something to do with Lee's penchant for putting on the gloves, but if you ask him he just likes trading punches with another guy to see who is better.

"I'm in love with it," said Lee, who comes from a college football background.

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Chicago's Lee (4-0, 3 KOs) meets Tucson's Gilbert Gastelum (0-1-1) on Friday, May 6, at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. The Top Rank fight card will be televised on ESPN, but this fight may not be included on the televised portion.

What better college than the "Fighting Irish" of Notre Dame University could a football player transition from the gridiron to the boxing ring, where speed, power, stamina, and will are tested without prejudice. One blow can win or lose a fight.

"You can't take a fight lightly," said Lee, who trains in Houston, Texas with Ronnie Shields' crew. "You got some strong guys that can punch."

After his first fight, which Lee won by unanimous decision, three opponents have been stopped before the scheduled end of four rounds. The former defensive back has brought his hitting power to pro boxing.

"I've always loved contact," said Lee, who played safety for Notre Dame.

Lately, in the Houston gym, Lee has run across contenders like Cuba's Guillermo Rigondeaux and left the ring with newfound admiration for things other than power.

"I learned so much under Ronnie Shields and I spent a lot of time with Guillermo Rigondeaux. He does things that nobody else does. He's opened up my eyes with his technique."

All of the drills on footwork, working angles and emphasis on defense have also opened up his eyes on the ever learning process of prizefighting.

"I don't care if you're a world champion, you can get better," Lee said.

The professional prize ring has called Lee and he really intends to discover if he can advance to the upper tier. He doesn't know why he loves boxing but he's not leaving until he reaches his full potential in a sport not known for allowing a learning period.

Lee's followers have attended in full force for all of his previous fights. He expects the same in Las Vegas.

"One thing is, my friends have been supportive," said Lee, 23, adding that both school and neighborhood friends have attended his fights. "Plus, there are a lot of Notre Dame fans here as well. They're so loyal."

Lee is just as loyal to his trainer Shields, who he follows to the letter of each command.

"There's nothing he hasn't seen," Lee said.

Las Vegas will see Notre Dame's Lee on Friday night.

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