

USA Female Boxing Team Is Ready For the Olympic Games

Written by David A. Avila
Friday, 27 July 2012 11:56



Queen Underwood, no matter if she wins a medal or not, will always be able to say she was in the first class of females to box in the Olympics.

Never before have women boxed in the Olympic Games despite its existence for centuries. That all ends when female boxers around the world enter the boxing ring on Saturday.

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One of the countries with a female boxing contingent is the United States of America, which sends flyweight Marlen Esparza, lightweight Queen Underwood and super middleweight Claressa Shields. All three will be participating in London for the Olympic Games.

CNBC begins televising the boxing tournament on Saturday 8:30 a.m. ET.

Esparza was the very first woman selected to the U.S. Boxing team and has a vast amount of international boxing experience. The Houston, Texas native still can't believe the dream has come true.

"It's an amazing feeling," said Esparza by telephone. "But my goal is still winning gold."

The many trials Esparza and the other two women endured was a gauntlet of tournaments and eliminations that seemed would never end. The final eliminator was the International tournament that saw the Texas fighter qualify first. But not without some hiccups.

"In the states we fight more professionally with more power punching than slapping versus the international style which is in and out, lateral movement, and a lot of bouncing," said Esparza. "Everything is about being quick."

Esparza's international experience helped her survive the different scoring system.

Underwood and Shields had a bit more problems adjusting, but they qualified. Now all three can't wait to engage with the other countries.

"When I get in there and smash those girls they're going to be surprised," says Michigan's Shields.

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The teen smashed her way to the Olympic team and is confident she can repeat her performance in the Olympic Games.

“Is there a better word than confident? Cause that’s what I am,” proclaimed Shields, who was raised in Flint, Michigan.

Underwood is a five-time National Champion as a junior welterweight and this year as a lightweight at 132 pounds. The Seattle amateur boxing standout has an abundance of international experience including previous bouts against the favorite to win the lightweight division, Ireland’s Katie Taylor.

“I know how she (Taylor) fights. She’s good, but she’s beatable,” says Underwood, 27, who received the last spot on the U.S. Boxing team. “I made so many changes and sacrifices to get here and chase my dream. I definitely gambled it all to get here.”

The U.S. team has a big hurdle to leap. Aside from the worldwide talent, there’s the weird scoring system to battle.

Esparza and Underwood have experience in the international scoring system.

“In the US you stay flat and hit with power. Outside the U.S. you try to bounce and be quick,” explained Esparza about the difference in amateur Olympic style boxing to professional fighting. “I’ve been fighting internationally since I was 16. I made the US team when I was 16. I’m extremely familiar with the majority of the girls especially the very good ones.”

Will the women be able to adapt?

“I’m not worried,” says Shields. “They said I wouldn’t make it this far.”

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Men's Team USA Boxing

The men's boxing team is comprised of South El Monte, California's Joseph Diaz, 20, who is fighting at featherweight 123-pound limit; Rau'Shee Warren 114-pound flyweight; Jose Ramirez 132-pound lightweight; Jamel Herring 141-pound junior welterweight; Errol Spence Jr. 152-pound junior middleweight; Terrell Gausha 165-pound super middleweight; Michael Hunter 201-pound heavyweight; and Dominic Breazeale super heavyweight.

Olympic Boxing Coverage

CNBC – NBC Universal's fully distributed cable business channel -- will serve as the home of Olympic boxing this summer, including the debut of women's boxing. The channel will televise 73 hours of coverage over 16 days from elimination bouts to the men's and women's finals. Same-day coverage will air from 2-5 p.m. PT during the week, with six hours of live coverage airing each day on the weekends.

Fights on television

Fri. ESPN2, 6 p.m., Hank Lundy (22-1-1) vs. Raymundo Beltran (25-6).

Sat. Showtime, 7 p.m., Robert Guerrero (29-1-1) vs. Selcuk Aydin (23-0).

Sat. Telefutera, 10 p.m., Ronny Rios (18-0) vs. David Rodela (16-6-3).

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deepwater says:

go usa! the lil guy from china zou is a lil ali in there. I enjoyed his fights the most last olympics

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Radam G says:

In very boxing way, Queen Underwood, is a Queenbeast. Da gal can fight. Her game is quite tight. And I hope all three gals win that gold and sneak off into the night. That will be outta sight. And yall kno' dat I'm right. Holla!

MisterLee says:

Eggs!