



It has been a while, but I'm back. I have not been writing recently because I have been busy with other things and because the state of the Philadelphia sports scene has me in a slump.

Around this time of the year I usually am excited about the Philadelphia Flyers, but with the NHL lockout that is not an option. I began to focus on the Eagles, but they should not even be mentioned the way they are playing. The Sixers? Does Andrew Bynum ring a bell? I don't think the local sports scene has been this bad in decades.

I always end up refocusing on the sport I love most, boxing. Philadelphians should not take it for granted because my sport is the only thing keeping them on the map.

Boxing comes home to Philadelphia on Saturday evening, Dec. 8, on the NBC Sports Network. Every time people talk about boxing in Philly they associate the sport with the Legendary Blue Horizon, which is great except the Blue Horizon has been closed for more than two years. Not to worry since we are bringing the sport back just a few blocks north of the Blue Horizon when undefeated **Bryant Jennings** defends his USBA heavyweight title in a 12-rounder against **Bowie** **Tupou**, of Tonga, in the 12-round main at Pearson/McGonigle Halls at Temple University.

Jennings, who could walk to Temple from his gym, has a unique story. He played football and basketball at Ben Franklin High School and he did not even start boxing until his mid-20s. He is a full-time father to his pride and joy, his 4-year-old son, Mason, and he still works his full-time job as a mechanic at the Federal Reserve Bank building at 7th & Arch.

BAM On Boxing

Written by The Sweet Science
Wednesday, 28 November 2012 17:57

Jennings is ranked No. 5 in the world by one organization (IBF) after 17 amateur fights and 15 pro fights. He is an inspiration to everyone who knows his story, how his parents abandoned him when he was in high school, how he lived alone and raised himself with help from his grandmother, how he maintained after-school jobs while playing sports at Ben Franklin and how he would love to be an architect one day and build buildings.

Jennings also has a physique which reminds you of heavyweights of the past, always in shape and ready to go. For the record, Jennings is 15-0, 7 KOs; Tupou is 22-2, 16 KOs.

The Dec. 8 card is full of exciting fighters. In the junior lightweight co-feature, many people were expecting **Teon Kennedy** to battle undefeated Mexican fighter **Jerry Belmontes**. When Kennedy injured his knee, another Philadelphia fighter, **Eric Hunter**, stepped in without hesitation. Hunter was an outstanding amateur with a record of 187-4 and he was a USA Olympic alternate in 2004.

Before the injury people were hoping Kennedy still had what it takes, but those same fans are expecting Hunter to walk away with the win.

Hunter (right) who has not fought above 126 pounds since 2007, decided to accept the fight at 128 pounds just to get the opportunity to shine, not only in his hometown but also on NBC Sports Network. Belmontes has fought as heavy as 134 pounds and, at 5-foot-9, has a three-inch height advantage over Hunter but only a one-inch advantage in reach.

Hunter is 16-2, 9 KOs, while Belmontes is 17-0, 5 KOs.

My mentor, J Russell Peltz, has been known to say that “fighters back in the 70’s and 80’s didn’t have to get in shape, they stayed in shape.” Jennings and Hunter are two of the few around who stay in shape and just need to switch their training into fight mode. These two have the heart and dedication of Philadelphia fighters of days gone by. It should be an intense night.

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This fight card is huge for Philadelphia boxing; it is putting boxing back where it belongs, in North Philadelphia right on Broad Street. It feels like history is ready to restart itself.

The author is a Temple University graduate who is now a part of Peltz Boxing. Follow us on twitter @Peltzboxing and our intern @BamBoxingInc Thanks to phillyboxinghistory.com for the photo of Hunter and Christoneyphotography.com for the one of Jennings.