



FOOTBALL TOP REF WARNS OF DANGERS WITH MSFL PITCHES

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Laura's a hit

JEWISH FEMALE boxer Laura Saperstein made it three professional bouts undefeated as she beat Kristine Shergold on a points decision at York Hall, Bethnal Green, writes Andrew Sherwood.

The Maccabi-GB sponsored lightweight was in commanding form in the four round fight and told the *Jewish News* how she was happy with both her performance and how the fight panned out.

She said: "It was a good competitive fight, she came to win and she surprised me a bit at the beginning but overall I felt I was pretty much in control. I'm proud of the way I boxed, I still have a lot to learn but each fight for me is part of a learning curve, I'm improving with each fight and am happy with how my boxing is going."

The referee awarded her the points in all but one round, highlighting her overall dominance of the fight. "I was pleased with the way I fought and thought I got some really good punches

on her," she said. "I thought at one point her manager was going to pull her out and was actually surprised she didn't go down on a couple of occasions, but she was very tough and a good competitor."

However, despite winning, Saperstein revealed there were aspects from the night that did frustrate her: "I was disappointed everything was rushed, I didn't even have time to really warm up beforehand while people who had come to see me fight weren't able to come in, which was very disappointing. I had received some criticism in my last fight, though performed much better this time round but there weren't many people around to see it. I'm in a sport where I really want to show how I can perform and although I felt I did, there weren't a lot of people there to see it!"

The 36-year-old still has one more fight under promoter Frank Maloney, and while he may not exactly be supportive to women's boxing overall, she did receive positive feedback from former WBO Cruiserweight World Champion Jonny Nelson: "He's a well-respected name in the game, was covering the card for Sky and was very complimentary about my fight. He invited me to spar with him at his gym and it really gave me encouragement."

Having now gone 13 fights unbeaten, Saperstein's next fight is scheduled for June with talk of a rematch against Shergold on the cards, such was the quality of the fight. Saperstein will also be in talks with her manager to change the day of her fights which would allow more Jewish supporters to follow her: "I want to feel the Jewish support behind me, and it will be great if I can fight in front of more of them at some point."

Picture: Philip Sharkey

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Euro boss hopeful of silverware in Spain

MACCABI GB's 11-a-side football team can achieve success in next month's European Maccabi Football Tournament – according to Head Coach Gavin Stollar.

Stollar (pictured) named his 14-man squad for the four-team event (including Spain, Russia and Germany) which takes place in Madrid on the weekend of 2-4 May, and is confident they can come back with silverware.

He said: "My assistant, Alex Gilbert, and I have assembled what we consider to be a perfectly balanced squad. We have youth and experience and all positions covered with healthy competition for places. The squad is packed with winners and players who are relishing the opportunity to represent their country, and with the squad I have at my disposal I am confident of bringing home some silverware."

A further incentive for his side to perform is

next year's Maccabiah, something that Stollar hopes can work in his favour. "It also gives a great opportunity for all involved to stake a claim for the Maccabiah in 2009," he explains, "something that without it, would perhaps have been more difficult due to the limited opportunities for players to perform on the European stage."

On a personal level, Stollar is relishing the task ahead, adding: "I'm delighted to be leading this side. To represent your country is always an honour and to have Maccabi GB place their faith in Alex and myself is quite humbling."

Squad: Matthew Davis, Ben Harris, Guy Morris, David Ossack, Elliott Espinosa, Josh Morris, Adam Hakimi, Danny Hakimi, Adam Levine, Gavin Factor, David Dinkin, Richard Fogelman, Daniel Gordon, Daniel Levenfiche

