

# From the boardroom to the boxing ring

## Ex-City lawyer is fighting to build new career

Pictures: TIM STEWART



**ELEGANT:** Laura, 36, dressed for work as a City lawyer

A CITY woman high flier who swapped her law books for boxing gloves is about to make her professional debut.

Laura Saperstein earned £75,000 a year as a mergers and acquisitions lawyer.

But the 36-year-old from Tottenham, north London, was lured into the ring three years ago when a boyfriend introduced her to the sport.

She left her firm to train full-time at the London Boxing Academy. She has won all 10 of her amateur fights and two years ago took the British lightweight championship.

Laura gained her pro licence from the British Boxing Board of Control last year and has her first professional bout in London on November 18, with ringside seats going for £50.

Laura, who comes originally from Australia, said: "From the first moment I tried boxing, I decided it was what I wanted to do. The will to fight is ingrained in some of us in spades.

"I grew up on a farm and was always a tearaway. I loved sparring.

By **Emma Bamford**

There were no other women so I had to spar with a 6ft tall guy, who burst my lip early on.

"I fought back the tears and said: 'Let's finish the round'. I kept going because I loved it so much.

"Luckily, I've won all my fights without being knocked down or badly hurt.

"I've found the boxing world incredibly welcoming. It's made a huge difference in my life to have a family of people who are interested in me and share the same passion."

### Crying

Laura won her first bout in just one minute. In another fight, her opponent got a standing count from a body shot, started crying and refused to carry on.

With promoters struggling to get her fights, Laura has launched a website, [boxergirl.net](http://boxergirl.net), to build up a database of women boxers. She said: "I don't miss the law. You earn a nice salary but you have to give up your life for your career.

"My first professional fight has

been a long time coming and I've been looking forward to this night."

Chris Hall, her trainer, said: "Ten years ago I wouldn't have thought women's boxing would take off, but it has and the standard has improved a lot.

"I prefer training women to men. They are friendly, articulate, more diligent in their training - and they smell nicer.

"Laura is very good. She's naturally strong and aggressive and we've polished her technical ability."

The Amateur Boxing Association's southern area coordinator Terri Kelly said about 200 women were boxing at all levels. She added: "Some of them are as tough and competitive as the men but, they also have to learn technical skills and think how to box clever to win."

**FEISTY:** Laura in preparation yesterday for her next bout

