



Stellar night for borough boxers

BOXING BY IAN COOPER

IT WAS a night to remember for Haringey Police ABC at the ABA Senior Boxing Championships in Wembley last Thursday night.

Four of the borough's fighters made it through the north-west divisional finals and will fight at the London finals at York Hall tonight (Thursday).

Hopes were high at a packed Brent Town Hall, and Erik Ochieng quickly powered his way through his 69kg semi-final against John Brennan of Dale Youth.

Over three two-minute rounds, Ochieng laid on some big hits in the second and third rounds, using his quicker movement to good effect, bobbing and weaving to come through and win on a unanimous decision before going on to win the final.

Mark McKray also survived a tough bout in the 60kg semi-final. Against Andy O'Neill of Hayes Amateur Boxing Club, Haringey's fighter had the advantage in both height and weight.

The referee was forced to stop the



contest in the third round after O'Neill was overpowered and took a standing count. McKray was awarded the win, and it was the same outcome in the final.

Ryan Taylor faced Islington Boxing Club's Carlos Moreno in the 64kg quarter-final, and the contest was stopped in the second round with Taylor declared the winner.

In the semi-final, Taylor came up against Marlon Mellish of Times ABC, and edged a high-quality fight to win on a majority decision.

He then had to wait until Saturday to enter the ring for the final, where he defeated Tommy Tear at a Tottenham & Enfield show to book his spot at York Hall.

Sam Ojomo made it an extra special night for Haringey's fighters on Thursday when he came through his 54kg final.

Ojomo had his opponent on the back foot in the second and third rounds, keeping Danny Rowe of Dale Youth on the ropes for long periods and winning the bout on a majority decision.

There was disappointment for James Easy in the 75kg category as he was beaten by Dale Youth's Louis Reid in the semi-final.

Ben Zarakani also made an early exit

■ **WEMBLEY WARRIORS . . .** Haringey's Erik Ochieng (right), Ryan Taylor (below right, left) and Sam Ojomo (below left) all won their divisions at Brent Town Hall in Wembley to advance to tonight's London finals at York Hall. Pics: Gerard Farrell.



from the competition in the 64kg class – the category that Taylor later won – when he was eliminated by Tommy Tear of Dale Youth, and Chris Evangelou also failed to make an impact in the same division.

But Haringey nevertheless had the winner in four of the weight classes, and Ochieng, Taylor, McKray and Ojomo will now go on to fight for a place in the national finals.

Haringey Boxing Club coach Gerry Willmott was delighted with the club's performance and believes they can repeat their success tonight.

"I think all four have got a great chance. They're all good enough and in this game one punch is sometimes all you need to end it," he said.



Boxergirl triumphs at York Hall

BOXING BY BEN PEARCE

LAURA Saperstein stretched her unbeaten record to seven professional fights on Sunday, winning all four rounds to outpoint Galina Gumliista from Sofia in Bulgaria.

Saperstein was due to face Larna Cooper at York Hall, but her Welsh opponent withdrew with flu three days before the bout, and a fight against Gumliista was hastily rearranged instead.

Tottenham's "Boxergirl" gave away 9lbs in weight against her new adversary, but she emerged victorious regardless,



winning on points by 40 to 32.

"I kicked some ass but not quite enough," Saperstein told the *Journal*. "I was close to stopping her in the second round but didn't quite manage it."

"She wasn't the opponent I'd prepared for and, although she wasn't ever a threat, she's had 24 fights and knew what she was doing – she certainly could take care of herself and I took some big hits."

Saperstein (*pictured*) admits she wasn't thrilled with her performance and, with a potential title fight against

Lindsay Scragg looming later in the year, the 37-year-old has a lot of work to do in the coming months.

"I wasn't totally happy, but it was my first fight back in England after 10 months away in Thailand and I haven't had much time with my new coach," she said.

"I need a couple of days to get my eyes going in the right direction again, but then I want to get back in the gym and work on a few areas which need improving."

"I'm definitely not feeling ready for a title fight, and I need to start fighting more rounds – I need to get up to six-round bouts because the title fight would be 10 rounds."

Race is last thing on Collins' mind!

ATHLETICS

ENFIELD & Haringey AC's Shaun Collins will represent England in the Under-20 Home Countries cross country international in Bangor.

Selected after his ninth place finish in the recent National CC championship at Parliament Hill Fields, he faces a lot more than just a trip to Wales to collect his first England vest.

Collins flew to Tenerife on Tuesday with the club's middle distance training group for a week of warm weather training before the coming season.

Having learnt of his selection long after booking the trip, Collins will return home late on Thursday night, compete in Bangor and then fly back to the Canary Islands on Sunday.

Kart champ is back on track

GO-KARTING BY SARAH ABEDIN

REIGNING British Easykart champion Oliver George started the defence of his title with a third placed finish in the first round of the 2009 championships in Daventry.

The 25-year-old from Cornwallis Square in Upper Holloway, who is proudly displaying the champion's number one emblem on his kart this year, made a solid start to his campaign and finished well out of a grid of 32 drivers.

"Whilton Mill is not my favourite track and I had a few minor brake problems, so I was pleased to have finished third. It's a solid position," said George (*pictured*).

Last year he came first in five of the eight rounds but, with new drivers coming through, George knows the competition will be even tougher this year – and he has worked out a game plan for the campaign.

"It's a long season and my best tracks are



in the second half, so consistent results in the first four races will be the key to retaining my title," he said.

Round two is in South Wales over the weekend of April 25/26, and George is quietly confident.

"Llandow has always been a good track for me, and I won there last year," he said. "I've had a promising start so I'll be looking for a repeat of that performance."