DeWit devoted Canadian

Sports View
By
Doug Rowe



For the first time Canada has two world amateur boxing champions.

Congratulations should be given to amateur boxers, Shawn O'Sullivan and Willie deWit for the show of courage and performance they put on last Fiday night in Reno, Nevada.

Not since Paul Henderson scored his winning goal in the 1972 Canada-Russia series, has Canada had more reason to be proud of its athletes.

DeWit a native of Grande Prairie, now living in Calgary, is as dedicated an athlete as there is.

He is heavyweight champion of Alberta, Canada, North America and now the world.

We watched deWit at the Lethbridge Labor Club in January, knock out highly rated U.S. fighter Lionel Washington halfway through the first round. But I am sure none of us knew that two months later he would be world champion.

Twice deWit has lost close decisions to world class opposition. Once to super heavyweight Francesco Damiani of Italy, the man who last year defeated three time Olympic champion Teofilo Stevenson of Cuba and once to the world amatuer heavyweight champion Alexander Iagubkin of the Soviet Union, the man he fought Friday night.

In Reno it was deWit's turn to take a close decision from Iagubkin.

DeWit lost the opening round, suffering a cut above his right eye that was caused by a butt from the Russian. But deWit came back to dominate the fight and take the last two rounds.

Two judges had it 59-58 deWit, a third judge scored 60-57 deWit, the fourth judge had it 59-58 Iagubkin and the final judge had it even 59-59.

DeWit has had many offers to turn professional but has decided to wait for the Olympics.

At 21 years of age with about 60 amateur fights, deWit can only get better and has a good chance at the '84 Olympics, while Iagubkin with 300 fights will only get older.

When deWit decides to turn professional you can bet he won't be a white hoax like Gerry Cooney or Duane Bobick.

O'Sullivan thrilled us last year in Montreal when he came from behind to defeat Cuban Armando Martinez in a world cup tournament. At that time we thought there could be no greater come-from-behind victory by a boxer. But on Friday night O'Sullivan proved us wrong.

He came back from a cut over his eye in the first round, a second round knockdown and a standing-eight-count, to win the third round and the fight by forcing the referee to give defending champion Alexander Koshkin of Russia a standing-eight-count.

Having now defeated three of the top amateur light middleweights in the world, Koshkin, Martinez and Tom Corr of Ireland at the Commonwealth games, O'Sullivan has a good chance of winning the gold medal at the Olympics.

Setting right goals important — de Wit

By DOUG ROWE
of The Herald

GLENWOOD — Setting goals is a very important part of a happy life said the former world amateur heavyweight boxing champion at a Glenwood 4-H Dairy Club dinner Wednesday night.

"The tough part is not setting the goals it is setting the right goals," said Willie de Wit in front of close to 60 people (mostly youngsters) at the LDS Cultural Center in Glenwood. "It is very easy to set goals that are easy to achieve.

"But when you achieve them you don't get the satisfaction out of it."

In his early twenties and already having won a world championship plus receiving over $1 million for signing a professional contract, the club obviously picked a successful achiever to deliver the message.

De Wit, who was accompanied by Alberta Dairy Princess Margot Schnell, said his next major goal is to win the world professional heavyweight boxing championship. The trip which included a tour of the elementary school and cheese factory was the third visit to Glenwood for Schnell and the first for de Wit.

"The real thing is to set goals that will test you and then give you satisfaction when you achieve them," said de Wit "The thing is not to be lazy about it. It takes a lot of hard work to get there."

"Your really have to strive towards these goals and make sacrifices."

De Wit said people used to classify him as a dreamer but he was able to prove them wrong. "I always thought deep down in my heart I would be champion. But I never told anyone that because they would have laughed me out of town."

The worst thing de Wit said is setting goals and then never trying to reach them. "You will never know if you could have made it or not."

He also added it is not important to achieve all your goals as long as you give it your best shot.

"I know it has happened to me. My goal at the Olympics was to win a gold medal and I didn't do it."

"Believing in yourself is the important thing," he said. "As long as you're prepared to give 100 per cent, you have won before you started."



Herald photo

CANADIAN BOXER WILLY de WITT and Alberta Dairy Princess Margot Schnell had some fun with Glenwood and Picture Butte 4-H Club members at a banquet Wednesday night. The two guests spoke to about 60 club members.