

Producing champions

INTERVIEW WITH TIMUR KULIBAYEV

PRESIDENT OF THE KAZAKHSTAN BOXING FEDERATION

In addition to your work in the field of economics and business, you are also President of the Kazakhstan Boxing Federation. What attracted you into this area of management?

I was delighted to accept the invitation to become President of the Kazakhstan Boxing Federation because I believed that my management experience would be of benefit to the Federation. The highly competitive nature of modern sports requires integrated management systems to help produce winners.

I have always had a special relationship with boxing – my father Askar Altynbekovich was very closely involved in this sport and he passed his love of boxing to me. I have always closely followed the developments in national and international boxing.

So before actually agreeing to assume this post, I was determined to build a professional coaching and umpiring system based on transparency and fair play. Boxing is one of the most popular sports in Kazakhstan – every schoolboy dreams of victory in the boxing ring and repeating the outstanding achievements of our compatriots. Kazakhstan is blessed

with many boxers of worldwide acclaim but sometimes the lack of professionalism on the part of the umpires can have a negative impact on the athletes' motivation.

What are the immediate goals of the Kazakhstan Boxing Federation?

Modern boxing is changing rapidly and the professional side of the sport has become an integral part of boxing. The Kazakhstan Boxing Federation cooperates closely with AIBA in implementing innovative initiatives such as the World Series of Boxing (WSB) and AIBA Professional Boxing (APB). 100 Olympic licences will be offered in the professional leagues allowing boxers to continue their careers in professional boxing without losing the right to participate in both the World Championships as well as the Olympic Games. It also allows the national federations to provide funds for training and maintain welfare funding at the end of athletes' boxing careers.

The World Boxing Federation aims to improve the current system of training to prepare boxers for both the professional and

amateur formats. Kazakhstan is pursuing these objectives and the successful performance of our national boxers at the London Olympic Games and the victory of the professional team 'Astana Arlans' in their third season of the WSB is evidence of the team's hard work over the past three years.

This year, the Boxing World Cup will be held in Almaty. Is AIBA's decision to hold the World Championship in Kazakhstan a recognition of the achievements of Kazakhstan in the boxing arena?

Since Kazakhstan's independence, our boxers have won gold medals in every Olympic Games and Kazakh boxers – Vassiliy Jirov, Bakhtiar Artayev and Serik Sapiyev – are the current holders of the Val Barker Cup, the most prestigious trophy in amateur boxing.

Kazakhstan's School of Boxing is world-renowned and Kazakhstan's first world champion, Valery Rachkov, won the title in 1978. Kazakhstan has hosted many major competitions under the auspices of AIBA – so we have a distinguished boxing history. Kazakhstan is therefore rightfully hosting the World Championship and will do so to the highest of standards.

A World Boxing Academy is currently being built in Almaty – what is the aim of this interesting initiative?

This is a joint project with AIBA and The Boxing Academy is being built in the picturesque foothills of Trans-Ili Alatau in Almaty. The Academy will become a centre for excellence for representatives of the national federations – members of AIBA. It will be a sports complex with classrooms, training rooms - all equipped with the most modern facilities, providing the perfect training environment for athletes as well as preparing a wide range of professionals including coaches, judges, doctors, sports managers and administrators. This Academy will be officially opened during the World Championships. **E**

Kazakhstan's Serik Sapiyev after winning gold at the London 2012 Olympic Games

