

Francis Roberts

FIRST ABORIGINAL TO GAIN OLYMPIC SELECTION

Francis Roberts (21), a former resident of Cubawec Aborigines Reserve, is the first boxer of Aboriginal blood to win selection in an Australian Olympic Games team.

The Olympic Games will be held in Tokyo in November.

Roberts, who now lives in Sydney, has had a remarkable rise to fame in boxing.

He left Lismore a year ago, and at his first attempt won the State and National welterweight amateur titles.

The *Lismore Northern Star* reported of Francis Roberts:

“Boxing had to be in his blood. He is a relative of Alby, Aub, Cyril, Steve, Harold and Tommy Roberts who all achieved fame in professional fighting.

“Alby fought such notables as Fred Henneberry and Ron Richards.

“Francis, a shy, good-looking boy, became a boxer after he had walked into Allan Daley’s Sydney gymnasium.

“Under Daley’s care he won three points decisions to take the State welter crown this year and then on to Melbourne where he won the national crown with two points decisions.

“This assured his Olympic selection.

“Last April Francis went to New Zealand with a troupe under Bill McConnell and dropped a disputed points decision to Wally Coe.

“Coe won a gold medal at the Perth Empire Games.

“Although born in Sydney, Francis came to Lismore as a child and was reared by Pastor Frank Roberts, Senior. He attended Lismore High School.

“He has had 25 amateur fights for 20 wins and five losses.



Francis Roberts

(Photo courtesy “Lismore Northern Star”)

“His selection in the Australian Olympic Games team has brought a rare honour to the Richmond District.”

After leaving Lismore last year, Francis went with his uncle, Fletcher Roberts and two cousins, John and Fletcher Roberts, Jr., to live in Newtown, Sydney.

Francis is not the only member of this group to distinguish himself in the ring. Fletcher Roberts, Jr., an amateur middle-weight, has had 10 fights and only been beaten once. He defeated the Canberra middle-weight champion in a non-title fight. Fletcher is 18.

Johnny Roberts (20), Fletcher’s brother, is rated third in the State in the professional light-weight division.