

# Aboriginal Boxers in Sydney

Australian middleweight champion Tony Mundine, scored his 14th knockout in 19 fights on Tuesday night, 9th June, at the Sydney Stadium. You might say that it was a double knock-out that night. Tony Mundine flattened his opponent, Filipino Ravallo, in the second round with a right rip to the body. In another sense, the Eastern Suburbs railway, equally convincingly, knocked out the old Stadium after 62 years. It was the end of an era in Sydney boxing.

Over thirty former boxing champions provided some sentimental moments for the crowd as they were introduced from the ring. They included names like Vic Patrick, Jackie Green, Jimmy Carruthers, Rocky Gattellari, George Barnes, Jack Hassen, Clive Stewart, Alf Blatch, George Bracken, Carlo Marchini, and Tony Madigan—all were there to take their cheers from the crowd.

After the fight, Tony Mundine's trainer, Ern McQuillan, announced that Tony was to go after the British Empire titles. He added that he was hoping that one of Mundine's fights leading up to the Empire crown would be against New Zealand's Kahu Mahanga. Mahanga was the only fighter who had beaten Mundine in a professional bout.

Both Ern McQuillan's and Snowy Robbin's gyms have a large proportion of Aboriginal boxers. Some of the Aboriginal fighters who train at McQuillan's Newtown gym include Ted Bonner, Les McHughes, Tony and Kevin Mundine, Bobby Taylor, and Ricky McGrady.

The other major "Aboriginal gym" is that of Snowy Robbins, opposite the Rose of Australia hotel in Erskineville. It is run by Mick Fernandez and Jack Fliedner. About 80 per cent of the men who train there are Aboriginal and include Roger Carroll, Fletcher Roberts, Lindsay Roberts, Dinky Davis, Stan Bolt, and Sam Bracken.

Snowy Robbins' gym is one of the oldest boxing centres in Australia. It was used regularly by men such as Johnny Famechon and Ralph Dupas whenever they were in Sydney.

I asked trainer Mick Fernandez why there are so many Aboriginal professional boxers. He replied, "Because of their natural ability. They seem to be more adapted to it than most Europeans. Mind you, they're harder to train than the white fellows; they don't take it seriously enough. For example, some of my boys will train hard for five days, but not seven. That's not good enough. So the problem is to get them to go all-out, to reach maximum performance. One thing about Aboriginal boxers though, if you get a good one, he's **really** good."

"Professional boxing has received a great boost from the television fights. In the past, boxers got little monetary encouragement—unless they got to the big-time. But now that club fights are televised, the professionals get a minimum of \$50 for a 4-round fight and \$70 for a 6-rounder. The price for main fights is arranged, and can go very much higher. It is still true that at these rates of payment only main event fighters can command enough money to be able to live by their boxing earnings. But nevertheless, the fees paid are a terrific incentive for young boxers. Professional boxing, "Mike Fernandez concluded," will get a great deal bigger yet—thanks to television."



1. Stan Bolt (professional) 1 fight, 1 win
2. Fletcher Roberts (professional) Former amateur champion with an amateur record of 17 bouts 17 wins
3. Les McHughes (professional) Les has won 4 out of his last 6 Sydney fights
4. Dinky Davis (professional) Shadow boxing. Has had 5 fights and has won them all. He is very popular in the clubs and on TV. Was awarded the \$100 Ampol TV Encouragement Award
5. Roger Carroll—the "Dancing Boxer", who kept his N.S.W. Bantamweight title in a fight at Marrickville R.S.L. Club on 22nd June. He outclassed the challenger, Willie Leslie, 48-40, in a very close, tough fight