

Barrys Look Forward to Golden Gloves In Mesquite

For Pat Barry, the Golden Gloves Junior Nationals July 22-24 at the CasaBlanca Resort and Casino in Mesquite may be the purest form of boxing.

With an estimated 400 competitors ages 8-16 competing in the CasaBlanca Event Center, the future of the sport will be showcased in a classic event.

"There is so much value in Golden Gloves," said the 57 year-old Barry, who with his wife, Dawn, runs Barry's Boxing Center at 2664 S. Highland Ave., in Las Vegas. "The sport instills discipline into young people while also giving them a sense of self-worth."

Barry speaks from experience as evidenced by a career which saw him mount a 12-8 record with five draws.

His biggest win came over Jessie Bender, who was the New England state middleweight champion in 1975.

"I took the fight on a two-day notice," Barry remembers. "I was between managers at the time. I didn't know Bender from Adam and my grandmother had just died and my mother was horrified about the fight. I won a six-round unanimous decision. That was my claim to fame.

"I loved boxing. The problem was that my shoulder kept popping out, so I say now that I loved boxing more than it loved me."

A former member of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department who spent 30 years (1978-2009) working as a detective in Patrol, Canine, Domestic Violence and Juvenile, Barry and his wife, Dawn, (she, too, retired from Metro where she worked in Detention Services and the Patrol Section) now spend their days running the boxing gym in Las Vegas.

"Youth boxing has always been my passion," he said, adding that the gym in Vegas is a non-stop facility of about 4,000 square feet. "We first opened the gym in 1984 at Spring Mountain and Decatur in Las Vegas. Now, we have both young men and young women competing and I really believe that boxing can save lives.

"The sport shows young people the responsible way of doing things rather than blowing their temper and doing something they will regret later. People many times learn to pick themselves up off the canvas. They learn to face their fears head-on."

Barry's own path to Las Vegas is very interesting.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., he journeyed to Las Vegas in 1976 for a chance to fight Michael Spinks who had just won the Super Middleweight title at the Olympics.

"I came to Vegas and my weight went under 148, and I was told I was too light to fight Spinks," Barry said. "The fight was all set for the Aladdin Hotel and on the week of the fight, I was told it wouldn't work. I walked into a gym, and saw some guy who told me he was actually fighting Michael."

After the fight with Spinks fell apart, Barry was going to return to Long Island.

After speaking with noted boxing gymnasium and fight manager Johnny Tocco, Barry decided to stay and eventually joined the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

While injuries stopped Barry's own boxing career, he stayed active in youth boxing in Las Vegas and you can bet hundreds of competitors and their families are thankful that he remained in the desert.

After retiring from the police department, he and Dawn, focused their efforts fully on the gym.

In fact, when he retired from Metro, the gym became an official first job.

"Retiring can be scary," Barry said. "Way too many people retire and then they die. Now, I'm at the gym to open the doors first thing in the morning and my schedule is full. My life really hasn't changed much at all. I'm still up first thing in the morning doing road work before heading to the gym.

"My day is full and I would not have it any other way."

Barry's professional coaching has included mentoring world champion contender Augie Sanchez from 1998-2002; World Champion Bones Adams from 1998-2000; and world champion contender Roman Ladon from 1997-99.

His amateur boxing has included coaching stints with Junior Golden Gloves champions Jesus Magdaleno (who also won the Senior Golden Gloves and USA Senior Golden Gloves titles), Haseim Rahman and Kevin Pimentel in 2007.

He also led USA National Champion Diego Magdaleno, who is now 16-0 as a professional; and Medalist Louie Padilla.

In addition, Barry's international coaching experience has included trips to Mexico, Canada and Milan, Italy.

He was also named the Coach of the Year for USA Boxing in 2007 while being named one of the top five volunteer coaches of all sports by the United States Olympic Committee.

Even with the many years of activity in youth boxing, the event at the CasaBlanca stands out as one of Barry's favorites.

"The location is excellent," Barry said. "There is so much for the kids to do in Mesquite not to mention the fact that the competition is incredible. The facility itself is first-class and perfect for the Golden Gloves."

Further information regarding the Golden Gloves can be found at www.juniorgoldengloves.com or by calling Dawn Barry at 702-368-2696.