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**BENGAL
BOUNTS**

Feduska continues to contribute to Bouts despite injury

By KELSEY MANNING
Sports Writer

Senior captain and Bengal Bouts co-president Collin Feduska has been an Irish graduate in waiting ever since he took his first steps on Notre Dame's campus.

"I was indoctrinated pretty early on," he said. "I actually took my first steps here, which is kind of funny. I have the picture of me taking my first steps. It's very triumphant too, with me holding my hands up and everything."

Though that was undoubtedly his first epic moment on campus, Feduska cited a couple other epic moments in his four years at Notre Dame — namely his favorite memory from fighting in Bengal Bouts.

"The first two years, [my favorite moment] was definitely waiting for my fight the first night, sitting there with your robe up. The priest comes over and gives you the blessing, your heart rate starts going up as you stand up and start walking toward the ring, the lights are on you. That was definitely my favorite part," he said. "Even sometimes sitting in class I get flashbacks and my heart will start going again, so that was an awesome experience."

Unfortunately those flashbacks are the only way Feduska can experience that feeling again, as a recurring shoulder

injury has prevented him from participating in the tournament for the last two years.

The Pennsylvania native and Keough Hall resident suffered the first injury to his shoulder during a soccer game in his sophomore year of high school. Though he went through surgery the following summer, the problem recurred.

"It got pretty out of hand my sophomore year when the dislocations started happening a lot more," he said. "I had a couple my freshman year, but it wasn't anything I was really concerned about. But sophomore year I couldn't go most days without having it happen."

Feduska started his boxing career at Notre Dame in impressive fashion, reaching the finals of the 140-pound division his freshman year only to fall to a four-time Bengal Bouts champion, then-senior Kris Perez. Even when his shoulder dislocated during his third round bout his sophomore year, Feduska managed to power through the fight.

"My sophomore year I was wearing a brace in my fight, and it was the third round and I dislocated it," he said. "Nobody really noticed because I was able to get it back in and you couldn't really see it at all because I had the brace. So I continued fighting. I lost in a split decision."

Feduska was asked to be a captain for his junior year, but the season ended in a disap-

pointing fashion as he threw out his shoulder in a spar the week before the tournament began.

"It was a little bit disappointing," he said. "It happens and it's just a total system shock. You don't expect it. I had the surgery and everything was supposed to be fine, and then you kind of get your world turned upside down on you."

But despite the injury and the certainty that he would not be able to fight his senior year, Feduska said the decision to return was a no-brainer.

"I was a junior captain, so once you're a junior captain not only are you kind of expected to stick with it but at that point you really want to stay with it," he said. "You went through everything the first year and you really want to come back and do the teaching. So it wasn't a hard decision at all. I was also asked to be co-president with [senior Kevin Ortenzio] so that was a really big deal for me and I couldn't turn that down. It was not a hard decision at all for me to want to come back and help out this year."

Though actually participating in the tournament is not an option, Feduska still plays an integral role in training his fellow boxers. In fact, the senior is often the first person in the gym for conditioning and the last to leave, putting in roughly 12-14 hours of training per week.

"I can do pretty much everything except get into the ring

with guys, so that's pretty much where I draw the line," he said. "I still do all the training, all the conditioning. I came into it wanting to be pretty active, so I'm usually one of the first guys down there when I can be and I usually leave probably a half hour after the actual practice ends."

Feduska's work ethic has not only paid off in the gym, but in the classroom, as the pre-med student has been accepted to Temple Medical School and waitlisted at Jefferson Medical School, both in Philadelphia. With a growing interest in orthopedic surgery thanks to his own medical struggle, Feduska said he will definitely be attending medical school back on the east coast, ensuring that Feduska will be near his family after graduation.

"I have a lot of family in Philly, so it'll be nice to be able to go there whenever I need mental support," he said.

Family and tradition are clearly major influences for Feduska, as his father and two older brothers all participated in Bengal Bouts.

"[One of my brothers] was a senior when I was a freshman, so he kind of showed me the ropes even before I got into Bengal Bouts," Feduska said. "It wasn't anything major, I'd just be throwing punches with him. One day he asked if I wanted to give it a shot, and I said 'yeah.'"

Though his Bengal Bouts expe-

rience may have gone differently than planned, Feduska said that he has a new favorite aspect of Bengal Bouts.

"After I found out I couldn't fight anymore, [my favorite part about Bengal Bouts] definitely shifted towards just being able to sit in the corner for people — especially when friends come through — and cheering them on, being an active participant right there in the corner telling them what to do," he said. "That's pretty cool."

The senior said he is always more than willing to support any of his fellow boxers.

"I'll always be jumping around," he said. "If there's an open corner I'll just jump into it. Even if I don't know the guy at all I'll still jump in and get really into the fight, just be pounding on their backs and yelling stuff at them. It's not hard to get wrapped up in the fight of somebody even if you have no idea who they are."

Looking back on his time at Notre Dame as a whole, Feduska said his favorite moment in college is his favorite moment of Bengal Bouts — just sitting there waiting for his fight. But Feduska added a few other memories to his Notre Dame highlight list.

"There have been some really good Friday nights — a lot of really fun Friday nights."

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VP Bortolotti uses martial arts training to his advantage



TOM LA/The Observer

Senior Nick Bortolotti, right, throws a punch during his quarterfinal win over junior Charles Lee on Feb. 22. Bortolotti, the Bengal Bouts vice president, has advanced to Saturday's finals.

By MATTHEW DeFRANKS
Sports Writer

You might think it is the months of training. You might think it is the bloody noses and black eyes. You might even think it is the ordeal of making weight.

But according to senior captain and club vice president Nick Bortolotti, the hardest thing about Bengal Bouts is the long wait before the fight.

"You get all wrapped up and taped up and ready to go," he said. "There's usually about 15 or 20 minutes until you step in the ring and it's the worst part."

During the wait, the senior finance major said he tries to keep his head clear and stay focused on his opponent. The approach has worked well for Bortolotti thus far, earning him a spot in Saturday night's finals.

The Elmhurst, Ill. native was a martial arts enthusiast in high school, claiming a black belt in Hapkido, the Korean martial art of self-defense. Bortolotti said the skills he learned in Hapkido have transferred over to the boxing ring.

"It definitely helped out just having the general motions and being able to know how to throw a punch," he said. "There were still plenty of things I had to learn about some of the

more technical aspects of boxing and the defense."

Bortolotti said his experience with martial arts factored into his decision to become involved with Bengal Bouts.

"Boxing was still a martial arts type of sport, but it also had the whole social mission and it was a good way to get back in shape," Bortolotti said.

While some boxers would rather brawl than box, Bortolotti said he prefers a more technical approach in the ring. "I'm a pretty technical boxer," he said. "I don't like to stand there and brawl. I like to put on a good boxing match, to the delight of some fans and the disgust of others. Some people are just there to see a gladiator match."

Bortolotti, who is also a Sorin College Resident Assistant, said his style predicated on quickness and defense can easily frustrate an opponent.

"I like to move around a lot," he said. "I like to slip punches, not get hit. It's really tough on someone if they're throwing a bunch of combos and they're landing maybe one out of every five or six punches."

Bortolotti did not compete in the tournament a year ago because he was studying abroad in London during the spring semester.

"It was a tough decision to make, but four Notre Dame football seasons while I was a student was pretty important so I sacrificed a year of Bengal Bouts," he said.

In his first two years of fighting, Bortolotti advanced as far as the semifinals during his sophomore year before losing. During his experience with the boxing club, he said he has learned to respect his opponents.

"I definitely learned to re-

spect every other fighter for who they are," Bortolotti said. "You really have to respect every guy out here in this program and be wary of their abilities. [You] need to go into the ring with a healthy dose of fear instead of walking around like you're invincible."

Bortolotti described each fight as a terrifying challenge during which you learn what you're made of.

"You're just going in there, putting yourself up against another guy and squaring off in one of the most barbaric ways," he said. "That's always been a scary thing."

Despite missing a year of the tournament, Bortolotti was named the vice president and a captain for this year's Bengal Bouts. In this role, Bortolotti has helped out with the women's annual Baraka Bouts, run practices and taught different boxing techniques.

In addition to the physical aspect of the job, he has also sent letters to Bengal Bouts alumni asking for donations, set dates for the tournament, drawn up weigh-in procedures and designed posters and advertising campaigns.

After Notre Dame, Bortolotti said he would like to work with people as a financial analyst or a manager.

"It's been a great experience to not only come here for a great education, but also the social atmosphere and the dorm culture," Bortolotti said. "I've learned more outside the classroom than inside. It's a place to come where you can really grow up and learn about yourself."

Bortolotti will face sophomore Will Peterson in the finals.

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Bouts legend Mike Lee inspires Fessler to begin boxing



SARAH O'CONNOR/The Observer

Senior Andrew Fessler, right, lands a right hook on freshman Pat Gallagher during Fessler's preliminary victory on Feb. 22. Fessler has not decided if he will continue with Bengal Bouts next year.

By VICKY JACOBSEN
Sports Writer

If you ever need a suggestion for a good television show, senior Bengal Bouts captain Andrew Fessler is the one to ask.

"I'm telling you, I watch a lot of TV. I mean, I gave up Internet TV for Lent," Fessler said. "I can't wait until 'Mad Men' comes back. But the best TV show of all time is 'Arrested Development.' Without a doubt."

And if you ever need boxing advice, "Fess the Mess" can help out there as well.

Fessler, who worked with Baraka Bouts in the fall in addition to his captain duties, said one of the highlights of his Bengal Bouts experience was sparring against a novice boxer and watching him improve in the weeks leading up to his first fight.

"I was a lot more experienced than he was, but then I helped him out afterwards, trying to tell him what he was doing wrong and help him improve, and he ended up winning his first fight," Fessler said. "He improved so much since the beginning of the semester. I thought that was really cool — see-

ing those kids improving and coming back and still wanting to be a part of the program."

Before Fessler was a mentor for younger fighters, a Bengal Bouts legend persuaded him to give boxing a try.

"I heard about Bengal Bouts when I was in high school and I came out to visit my older brother," Fessler said. "He was really good friends with (alumnus) Mike Lee — they lived at a house together when I was a sophomore — but [Lee] convinced me my freshman year."

While Lee, a professional boxer and three-time Bengal Bouts

champion, and his endorsement certainly helped, Fessler said he was also attracted by the prospect of joining a new team.

"I really like the whole camaraderie aspect of it," Fessler said. "As a former football player, that was definitely something that was appealing to me when I heard people talk about Bengal Bouts."

Fessler said his family and friends back home were generally supportive of his new hobby.

"A lot of people thought it was cool. They were kind of jealous that they would have had to do club boxing at some of their schools, and a lot of people didn't want to put that much time into it," Fessler said. "As for my parents, they weren't too concerned. I've always done contact sports — I wrestled, I played football, and they were like, 'You know what, go for it.' Though my dad doesn't really like watching my fights."

Although Fessler enjoyed his new sport, it was not always smooth sailing in the ring.

"In my freshman fight I got paired up against a former champ in the first round," Fessler said. "I wasn't a very good boxer back then, so my goal that fight was just not to get knocked out. I accomplished that goal, but I definitely did not win that fight."

Fessler improved his sophomore year, reaching the second round. Though he did not fight his junior year due to scheduling conflicts, Fessler returned this year with a vengeance.

"Knocking a kid out in the first round this year — that was pretty cool," Fessler said of his first round

victory over freshman Pat Gallagher.

But Fessler's season ended in the quarterfinals when he lost to sophomore Joel "Hashtag" Hlavaty by unanimous decision.

"I definitely didn't fight my best. I gave it my all, but my head wasn't in it and I couldn't get comfortable in the ring," Fessler said.

Fessler said although he will appreciate the free time he has now that he is no longer practicing and competing, it was a disappointing way to end something that was such a large part of his life.

"It really stinks losing, but there's also a sense of relief when you're done, because of all this work and time you've been spending," Fessler said. "You obviously want to see it through to the end, so it's bittersweet in the sense that you're free to go on about your life again, but without so much commitment."

"But it stinks losing, and that was the last time that I'm going to be able to compete, so it was definitely more bitter than sweet."

The accounting major will return to Notre Dame next year for the MSA program. Though Fessler has another year of eligibility left, he has not decided if he is going to use it.

"I've thought about it because I have another year of eligibility, but I don't know. We'll see how the workload is," he said. "It's half a semester, and as much as it's worth it, I don't know if I'm going to be able to go through that again. But we'll see."

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National football champion Arnold comes to Bouts

By BRIAN HARTNETT
Sports Writer

As Bengal Bouts is a taxing competition of physical endurance, it comes as no surprise that many competitors are impressive athletes who can list numerous athletic achievements.

Third-year law student Nate Arnold, however, boasts one unusual accomplishment — he was a member of an NCAA national championship football team.

The Edmonds, Wash. native attended Linfield College in McMinnville, Ore. for his undergraduate studies. While at Linfield, Arnold spent four years on the football team as a defensive tackle, helping the team win the NCAA Division III national championship his freshman year.

Arnold said while the skills needed for football don't necessarily translate to boxing, his experience as a football player instilled in him a strong work ethic — one he now applies to his boxing career.

"Just as you have to put a lot of time and dedication into football, you have to devote a lot of time to boxing," Arnold said. "I'd say that the dedication required for boxing is even greater, since you need to train somewhere around 10,000 minutes just to be prepared to fight one minute of a boxing match."

Arnold continues to pay homage to his alma mater with his unique nickname — "Catdome."

"Catdome" is a saying used by my undergrad football team, similar to how "Roll Tide" is used by Alabama," Arnold said. "It's a thing that Linfield alumni say to each other, and

it embodies the Linfield football spirit."

After Arnold began law school at Notre Dame, he looked for some sort of athletic activity to fill the void left by football. After devoting his first year of law school to adjusting to the increased workload and more strenuous academics, he decided to take the advice of several of his fellow law students who were involved in Bengal Bouts and started competing in the program last year.

Arnold concluded his first year of competition in Bengal Bouts last season with a strong second-place showing in the heavyweight division, falling in the finals to then-senior Kevin Crepeau. Despite losing his final bout, Arnold said that he was pleased with the results of his first experience with boxing.

"Going into last year, I hadn't done an individual sports since high school wrestling, and I had no boxing skills, so I didn't really have high expectations at all," Arnold said. "I would have liked to have won all my matches, but I exceeded my own expectations at least."

With one Bengal Bouts tournament under his belt, Arnold said he spent much of the last year focusing on boxing-specific training. His daily training regimen includes a short run in the morning, followed by a session in the Pit in which he practices on the heavy bag or uses focus mitts. Afterward, he usually spars with other boxers and then caps his evening with another short run or a swim.

Training is difficult enough for any Bengal Bouts athlete, but Arnold said heavyweights must observe different precau-

tions in their training due to their unique style of fighting.

"For heavyweights, the thing that makes you different from other fighters is that you have to be a little more cautious and defensive, since one big punch from another heavyweight boxer can end a fight pretty quickly," Arnold said.

These precautions, however, are not the only caveat in Arnold's training regimen. Arnold also faces the obstacle of balancing his Bengal Bouts training with the intense workload and pressures of his final year of law school. He said these two commitments have forced him to be incredibly efficient at managing his time.

"I think that what really gets sacrificed is my social life, since there's so many responsibilities I need to meet," Arnold said. "I just have to manage my day down to the hour to make sure I'm getting all my work done and getting all the training hours I need."

Fortunately for Arnold, his dedication to both facets has yielded great benefits, as he will be working in commercial litigation at a Seattle law firm after graduating from Notre Dame.

He hopes this same dedication will yield similar results in his athletic career over the next few weeks, as he seeks to claim the Bengal Bouts heavyweight title this year.

Arnold has gotten off to a good start in this year's Bengal Bouts, defeating sophomore Rob McKenna in his quarterfinal bout and law student John Rompf in the semifinals. He was uncharacteristically quiet when asked about his expectations, but revealed his rather

simple strategy.

"My strategy is just to stick to my training," Arnold said. "We have good coaches here at Bengal Bouts that teach us a lot, so I plan to just stick to what I know and keep going for the victory."

In the end, though, Arnold said his Bengal Bouts experience would not be defined by how many victories he earned, but by the lifelong friendships

he will take away from the program.

"I think that just bonding with the other captains has been my favorite memory," Arnold said. "I've developed some friendships that I think will be life-long through boxing and, best of all, I've done it all for a good cause."

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KARLA MORENO/The Observer

Third-year law student Nate Arnold stares down sophomore Rob McKenna during his quarterfinal win over McKenna on Feb. 22.

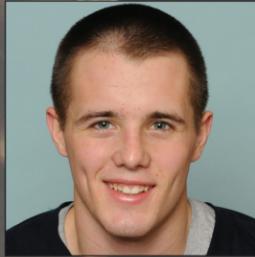
133 pounds Jack Lally vs Niels Seim



PATH TO THE FINALS

Lally
def. James Doan in quarterfinals
def. Joe Decker in semifinals

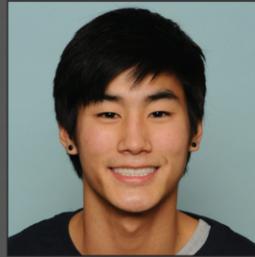
Lally's defensive and opportunistic style and impressive, quick footwork allow him to easily evade a punch. He can dodge but also put himself in position to immediately counter. He also has surprising power and quickness on the attack.



Siem
def. Mark Frego in quarterfinals
def. Tony Lucisano in semifinals

Seim wants to make the fight a close bout but is willing to close the gap and take a punch. He is strong and quick in tight spaces and patient enough to find the weakest parts of his opponent's game.

154 pounds Sunoh Choe vs Garrity McOsker



PATH TO THE FINALS

Choe
def. John Gawey in preliminaries
def. Calvin Hemington in quarterfinals
def. Keegan Somers in semifinals

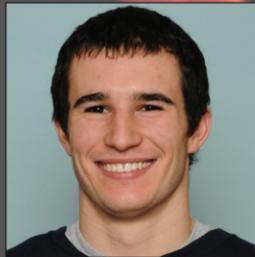
Choe, a calm and collected fighter, prefers to keep the fight at his pace so he can exhibit his technical prowess. When he is on the offensive, Choe is a powerful attacker that can overwhelm an opponent.



McOsker
def. Robert Carter in preliminaries
def. Josh Whalen in semifinals
def. Joel Hlavaty in semifinals

McOsker, a freshman, lacks experience but moves well in the ring and is an aggressive boxer. McOsker packs a powerful punch with each connection stunning the opponent.

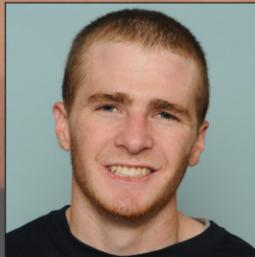
142 pounds Nick Bortolotti vs Will Peterson



PATH TO THE FINALS

Bortolotti
def. Charles Lee in quarterfinals
def. Nick Rowek in semifinals

Bortolotti's desirable combination of strength and quickness allows him to break down an opponent's guard with quick combinations. If he can push his opponent to the rope, look for him to unleash huge punches.



Peterson
def. Will O'Laughlin in quarterfinals
def. John Garvin in semifinals

Peterson, a defending champion, is not afraid to go for the big hit but is also patient enough to read his opponent's weak spots. He has a strong right hook and uses it often when he goes all out looking to finish the fight.

158 pounds Greg Cunningham vs Joey Kim



PATH TO THE FINALS

Cunningham
def. Dan Shapiro in preliminaries
def. Mark Felder in quarterfinals
def. Sean Mullen in semifinals

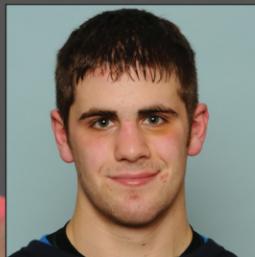
Cunningham waits for his opponent to punch, especially body shots, then takes advantage of the break in defense with one of his strong jabs. Once one jab penetrates the defense, he unleashes a series of jabs, usually head shots.



Kim
def. Jake Wrigley in preliminaries
def. Nick Yulan in semifinals
def. Danny Leicht in semifinals

Kim has a long arm reach, so he tries to keep opponents at bay while he figures out their defenses. He is strong on defense and waits for the opponent to let their guard down, then uses his long arms to unleash a series of punches.

148 pounds Kevin Ortenzio vs Ben Eichler



PATH TO THE FINALS

Ortenzio
def. Alex Calderon in quarterfinals
def. Ryan Power in semifinals

Ortenzio's quick movement allows for him to dodge and then throw punches from advantageous positions. He does not seem to tire easily, so the later rounds are where he has the most impact. His quick duck opens up the body and head for a jab following the dodge.



Eichler
def. Tighe Beach in quarterfinals
def. Casey Allare in semifinals

Eichler, a showman who looks for the exciting hit, is accurate but powerful. He wants to control the fight using his aggression and strength. When he senses a victory, Eichler's killer instinct kicks in and he goes for the spectacular finish.

165 pounds Inoh Choe vs Alex Oloriz



PATH TO THE FINALS

Choe
def. John Ryan in preliminaries
def. Murphy Lester in quarterfinals
def. Daniel Griess in semifinals

Choe feigns punches and waits for the opponent to throw a punch then dodges quickly and counters. From here, he keeps punching the body and transitions quickly to throwing head shots. He dodges well and packs a powerful punch.



Oloriz
def. Alex Yurkowski in preliminaries
def. Alex Grace in semifinals
def. Dallas Bunsu in semifinals

Oloriz, a quick fighter, dodges a lot, mainly to the right and sweeps punches out of the way with his left hand. He jabs with his right and goes into a combo of body shots followed by powerful uppercuts to the head.

171 pounds Ryan Alberdi vs Jake Joe



PATH TO THE FINALS

Alberdi

def. Zach Harris in quarterfinals
def. Patrick Spittler in semifinals

Alberdi, strong on defense, does not have the most movement but throws strong calculated punches when he sees the chance. He blocks both body and head punches well, then exploits the opening.



Joe

def. Bryan Cooley in quarterfinals
def. Jeff Ulrich in semifinals

Joe returns to the finals after finishing second in the 167-pound division last year. Joe is an aggressive fighter who wears opponents down by throwing many punches and maintaining a high intensity throughout the fight.

204 pounds Bart Dear vs Brian Salat

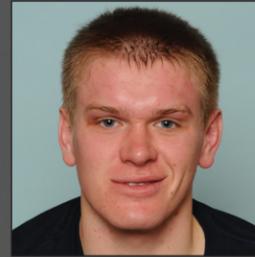


PATH TO THE FINALS

Dear

def. Ricky Neville in quarterfinals
def. Reid Paape in semifinals

Dear uses his smaller build and low stance to counter his opponents with an array of body shots. He shows a unique ability to anticipate his opponent's next move, allowing him to protect his body and outlast other fighters over the course of the bout.



Salat

def. Robert Hammer in preliminaries
def. David Fosselman in quarterfinals
def. Chris Sarkis in semifinals

Salat utilizes a quick and powerful jab-hook combination. He also features a strong uppercut that he uses frequently and is strong on the defensive end, showing an ability to keep his opponent at bay by deflecting many punches.

180 pounds Joe Garrity vs Connor Skelly

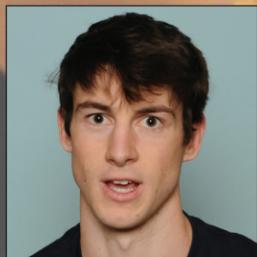


PATH TO THE FINALS

Garrity

def. Peter Ingallinera in preliminaries
def. Eric Palutsis in quarterfinals
def. by Brian Salvi in semifinals

Though law student Brian Salvi defeated Garrity in the semifinals, Garrity will be fighting in the final due to a scheduling conflict for Salvi. In the preliminary round Garrity displayed his strength, causing multiple stoppages.



Skelly

def. Steven Kraska in semifinals
def. Nick Grasberger in semifinals

Skelly, a veteran boxer, has relied on a mix of strong defense and aggressive punches thus far. He blocks well against opponents' punches and then uses his long reach to launch high attacks, showing an ability to land many headshots.

Heavyweight Nate Arnold vs Daniel Yi



PATH TO THE FINALS

Arnold

def. Rob McKenna in quarterfinals
def. John Rompf in semifinals

Arnold, who is surprisingly quick, looks to get his opponents backpedaling by charging with furious punches and powerful hooks. He fights aggressively and likes to attack first with his deadly combination of agility and strength.



Yi

def. Mike Voge in quarterfinals
def. Brian Ellixson in semifinals

Yi is nimble for the heavyweight division, but he also has the expected strength. He has an impressive dodging ability and has quick hands. He is able to attack his opponent with both jabs and hooks that can catch the other fighter by surprise.

188 pounds Adrian Moreno vs Chris Salvi

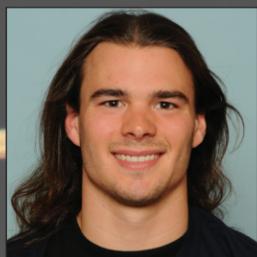


PATH TO THE FINALS

Moreno

def. Tim Crowley in quarterfinals
def. Frank Conway in semifinals

Moreno possesses an ability to finish strongly, as he has run away with both of his previous matches in the final round. He relies on his strength to defeat his opponents, attacking them with a series of well-timed powerful punches.



Salvi

def. Carl Ianiro in semifinals
def. Brian Tower in semifinals

Salvi, a Notre Dame football player, has simply overpowered his opponents thus far. Salvi uses his muscular build to pound his opponents with powerful punches, but he also demonstrates great quickness in the ring.

Bengal Bouts Finals

Saturday, March 3 | Purcell Pavilion | 7 p.m.



Skelly grows from sophomore novice to senior captain



XULE LIN/The Observer

Senior Connor Skelly, left, exchanges blows with senior Nick Grasberger during his semifinal win Feb. 28. Skelly will fight in the finals against senior Joe Garrity on Saturday.

By ISAAC LORTON
Sports Writer

A tall, lanky, laid-back California surfer might not be the first image that comes to mind with the word "boxer." But senior captain Connor "Skellator" Skelly makes those two worlds collide.

"I'm from San Diego, so I just surfed in high school and I never wrestled or boxed until I did Bengal Bouts," Skelly said.

Although starting late in the Bouts — he was a novice as a sophomore — Skelly has come a long way since then.

"I actually didn't fight my

freshman year, but a lot of older guys who I looked up to in the dorm did," Skelly said. "I went to the Bengal Bouts tournament and saw a friend fight, and I wanted to try it out."

With difficult extra training before and after practices, Skelly has overcome the missed year and become an accomplished Bengal Bouts boxer.

"Practice is from 4:30 to 6 [p.m.] every day, but the gym is open from 4 to 7," he said. "I like to come before and get some extra training in and then stay late after. I also try to spar every day. The more you spar, the better you get. Out-

side of the training sessions and sparring, I have been trying to swim lately. It's a great work out."

During Skelly's sophomore year, he broke his nose in the preliminaries and was unable to continue fighting. He almost did not return his junior year, but he liked Bengal Bouts too much. In his junior year, Skelly won two bouts before losing in the semifinals. This year, Skelly sets his eyes on winning the 180-pound division.

"My goal this year is to win," Skelly said. "But I have just enjoyed hanging out with the guys, working with the novices

and being down in the pit — the little things. I'll miss it."

Skelly plans on using his height and long reach to his advantage this year.

"I'm a tall guy with long arms, so I always try to keep guys at a distance from me," Skelly said. "I feel like because of my height, my strengths are my jabs. This is also my weakness when guys get inside on me because it's hard for me to uppercut. Boxing is like a chess match. You always have to keep thinking about how you'll get the best punches in and what your opponent is going to do and how you'll counteract them."

This year as a captain, Skelly has taken extra responsibilities. He has a variety of duties, including organizing practices and work-outs, calling coaches, selling shirts and performing other small tasks. He jokes about some of these duties, but nonetheless takes them all seriously and realizes their value towards developing a good year of bouts.

"It's a totally student-run thing and the captains have to organize everything," he said. "I have been typing up a lot of emails lately. I didn't realize before all the little things I had to do as a captain, but I'll do whatever I need to in order for Bengal Bouts to be the best. My duties as captains don't go against my training though. As captains, we prepare a hard work-out and then do the work-out with everyone else."

Skelly put a lot of emphasis on the team aspect of the Bengal Bouts and said his favorite task is helping novices. He said he hopes he can be a positive influence on the younger fighters and emulate what the older

fighters did for him.

"My favorite thing about Bengal Bouts is the team aspect," Skelly said. "I know everyone comes to the tournament and that's exciting, but we've been training since October. I like working with the guys. A lot of my good friends I have met through Bengal Bouts. I want to keep that going with the novices and then have them keep it going. I want them to have the same experience of camaraderie I had and continue this tradition with future fighters."

Skelly said he has learned numerous lessons throughout his years of Bengal Bouts and wants to share these lessons with the other fighters, especially the novices.

"I think you gain a lot of self-discipline," he said. "Also, working as a team is a big quality gained. Although boxing is an individual sport, all of the workouts and sparring together build teamwork."

The San Diego native was never a combative person and said his family has expressed mixed feelings about his boxing career.

"My mom hates it, but the rest of my family thinks it's really cool," Skelly said. "I send videos of my fights to them and they usually enjoy the fights. I always bring home shirts for my brother and cousins, and they like me boxing."

Skelly will fight in the 180-pound weight-class finals against senior Joe Garrity with his eyes on the prize, but more importantly, the senior said he is happy passing on the tradition of Bengal Bouts.

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Children aided by Bengal Bouts inspire captain Oloriz

By ERNST CLEOFE
Sports Writer

In the ring, nothing else matters. The crowd, the distractions and everything else are left in the darkness outside the ropes. It is the two fighters pitting their skill against one another, and that's it. To junior captain Alex Oloriz, the beauty of Bengal Bouts is this simplicity.

"When the lights are on you, everything else is dark," Oloriz said. "You're in your own little world of canvas with leather gloves and your opponent."

Though boxing has its critics due to its violent nature, Oloriz sees the sport in a very different light.

"My favorite thing about being inside the ring is that I'm alive fighting another person that's alive, and we have one purpose," he said. "I can put aside everything else, because for those two minutes all I need to do is box. It's like nothing else, but the simplicity of it is beautiful."

Oloriz, who plays the blues harmonica, even compares the fight to a symphony. In that case, Oloriz has almost achieved world-class composition during his last two tournaments.

As a freshman, Oloriz made it to the finals of the tournament, despite his inexperience. In the final round, Oloriz was pitted against then-senior captain John Maier. Inexperience finally caught up with Oloriz, as Maier won the title.

"Freshman year in the finals, I was fighting a captain and I was

thinking, 'Is this guy going to kill me?'" he said. "I was scared and nervous with all my friends out in the crowd as I walked up."

A year later, he made another run at the title. Last year's final pitted Oloriz against another then-senior, Matt Enzweiler, where Oloriz suffered another finals loss due in large part to Enzweiler's seven-inch height advantage.

"The first year I didn't really know what I was getting into," he said. "But during the past two years the captains kept on telling me to be confident."

For most people, a chance to make it back to the finals and win would be enough motivation. But for Oloriz, there is more to it than just winning. Oloriz said he dedicates his time and effort to his family and the people in Bangladesh.

"The mission for Bengal Bouts is to put on a good fight, but even though there's a little bit of glory for you, there is a higher purpose," he said. "You want to help support Bangladesh by bringing in more people to see good fights. And you want to make your parents proud."

For Oloriz, Bengal Bouts have just added to the many experiences he shares with his family. His fights and training have become a common discussion topic. Last week, when the junior's family attended his quarterfinal win for the first time, it was an incredible moment for Oloriz.

"[The quarterfinal fight] was the first time my parents were able to see me fight live and there

was something magical about that night," Oloriz said. "For them to see the result of the time and work that I put in, it meant to world to me. After the fight, I went over to my dad and just hugged him for a solid three minutes."

Although there are outside motivators like individual accolades, Oloriz said he takes pride in raising money for a greater purpose, while doing something he loves.

"Every year in boxing is a blessing because I know it's more than fighting," he said. "We get to go out there and fight for a higher purpose."

Recently, the training room walls were decorated with various letters from children in Bangladesh expressing their gratitude to the boxers. The visible manifestation of Bengal Bouts' impact has only enhanced the meaning of the fights for Oloriz.

"I went through all of them to post a couple on the website and the thing that I can be most proud of is that the biggest reward is seeing that you are really making a difference," he said. "In all of them they say, 'I send you all of my love,' and it's inspiring to have a little bit of Bangladesh around."

This season, Oloriz has used that inspiration to return to the finals, defeating junior Dallas Bunsu in a unanimous decision. He will look to take his first Bengal Bouts crown as he takes on senior Inoh Choe in the 165 lbs. final Saturday.

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MACKENZIE SAIN/The Observer

Junior Alex Oloriz, right, attempts to dodge a punch from MBA student Alex Grace during his quarterfinal win Feb. 22.

Ulrich fights for people of Bangladesh and family

By PETER STEINER
Sports Writer

Going into this tournament, Bengal Bouts already had meaning for junior captain Jeff Ulrich. As one of the few boxers that actually traveled to Bangladesh and interacted directly with the people Bengal Bouts supports, Ulrich knew exactly whom he was fighting for.

But a phone call the day of the quarterfinals added even greater significance to this year's tournament. Ulrich now had a second motivation, another person to fight for.

"My grandpa died on Wednesday, the morning of the quarterfinals," Ulrich said. "That [was] a huge motivation for me fighting this year. I [was fighting] for him and for our family."

Growing up with four younger brothers and sisters, family has always been an essential component of Ulrich's life. Then three years ago, when he came to Notre Dame from New Jersey as a freshman, Ulrich developed a new family, part of which includes his Bengal Bouts teammates. Clearly demonstrating the importance of family for the junior, many of Ulrich's best memories at Notre Dame are the moments when these two lives intersect.

"My favorite times are when my family comes and visits," Ulrich said. "Junior Parents Weekend was definitely one of my favorite weekends. And then there was a football weekend sopho-

more year when about 18 people in my family came and we all had post-game Mass and then post-game dinner together at North Dining Hall. New Jersey is not the farthest people come to school, but I'm still well enough removed from my family for it to be kind of a separate life so I like when those two worlds get to come together.

"When my New Jersey family gets to join my Notre Dame family and meet each other and spend time together, that's my favorite."

From New Jersey to Indiana, Ulrich's circle has undoubtedly expanded over the past three years. But last summer his circle expanded even further, this time to Southeast Asia.

"I loved my time in Bangladesh," Ulrich said. "I was there for two months ... We were mostly teaching English, but also we traveled around to 45 villages. We had Mass every day with the Holy Cross priests who were over at the missions there and we lived with the priests. It was great."

After serving the Bengali people and understanding the impact of Bengal Bouts on the area, Ulrich brought back his experience back to Notre Dame in a way that continued to serve the mission in Bangladesh. One of Ulrich's main responsibilities as a captain this year was marketing and advertising for Bengal Bouts.

"The captains thought it would be valuable to have me on the team helping out and being able

to share some of that experience, especially because they put me in charge of marketing," Ulrich said. "I had to go out and have a hundred meetings with different people. I always get to talk about being in Bangladesh, which is helpful for marketing and advertising."

Even though Ulrich has been busy fundraising for Bengal Bouts, he has also worked hard preparing for the tournament. With two years of experience under his belt, Ulrich now understands the importance of training with the team.

"Since from appearances, it's a very individual sport — you are fighting by yourself against one other person — it would seem to some people that it's all about you," Ulrich said. "You worked hard, you see your own results. But you learn that even in such a seemingly individual sport, the more you are coaching other people, the more you learn yourself. The more you are working out with other people, the more you are working out yourself, the better you get."

Ulrich has demonstrated that improvement since his freshman year, when he lost in the preliminary round of the 163 lbs. division. Last year, Ulrich competed in the 157 lbs. division, reaching the semifinals before falling in a close split-decision contest to then-sophomore Paul Hayes. Ulrich moved up a couple weight classes this year, but unfortunately met a similar result,



SARAH O'CONNOR/The Observer

Junior Jeff Ulrich, left, exchanges punches with MBA student Tik Ishizuka during his preliminary win Feb. 12.

falling in a split-decision contest to junior Jake Joe in the 171 lbs. semifinals.

But despite the loss, Ulrich knows he had one fan cheering hard for him from up above.

"[My grandpa] has never been to one of my boxing matches," Ul-

rich said.

"He's watched videos, but he [got] to watch from heaven this year and I [got] to have an extra fan."

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Lally looks to take home third consecutive championship



JULIE HERDER/The Observer

Junior Jack Lally, left, throws a left jab at junior Joe Decker during his semifinal win Feb. 28. Lally will fight junior Niels Seim in the finals Saturday.

By BRENDAN BELL
Sports Writer

Junior captain Jack Lally returned from studying in London last semester with a greater sense of focus, as well as a different perspective on boxing thanks to his new role as a leader.

"Coming back, everyone else was already in full stride," Lally said. "It was a matter of getting used to how things work. All of a sudden I come back from being abroad and have different position as a captain."

Lally, a resident of Keough Hall from Saint Louis, Mo., says that his past experience has made the adjustment back to Bengal Bouts in the spring semester easier.

"I was at first nervous about this year, being away for so long and coming back," Lally said. "But it was also nice coming in and knowing what I am capable of,

knowing the sport and having two years of experience."

That experience has helped Lally continue to win this year, defeating senior James Doan in the quarterfinals and junior Joe Decker in the semifinals of the 133 lbs. division. Though he has met great success in the ring over his three years in Bengal Bouts, Lally said he did not initially have a great interest in the sport of boxing.

"It seemed like it was just yesterday I was learning the sport, and there was a time I contemplated quitting boxing freshman year," Lally said. "Boxing is one of the most difficult sports to learn because it is such a great mix of attributes.

"It is unbelievable how much goes into being a good boxer. It is tough to develop those skills as a novice, and it just takes time. There are so many ways you can improve, though."

A part of his reason for continuing to fight, Lally said, was the encouragement from captains during his freshman year.

"I looked up to those senior and junior captains and talked to them about it and they said just keep coming in, shadow boxing, getting in the ring and eventually the skills start compounding and building up," he said.

Lally humbly admitted his success during his novice year, winning the 124-pound catch-weight division. In his sophomore year, he moved up to the 134-pound division and won his weight class once again.

"Sophomore year was a 100 percent commitment to make myself as good as I could get," Lally said. "In boxing, you really have to focus a lot on every single aspect. It isn't a sport where you can go from 4:30 to 6 and then do whatever else you want the rest of the

day — it is a lifestyle."

When Lally came to Notre Dame, he was not familiar with boxing, but he said his past athletic experiences helped speed up his development.

"In high school I was a big-time soccer player and that was my passion, I also picked up hockey goalie and ran track toward the end of my high school career," Lally said. "I ran the 400-meter and 800-meter, which is convenient because it is one to two minutes of endurance training, much like boxing."

His personality fit well with the sport, too.

"I am a competitive individual so when I really just wanted to try something new, I heard it was fun and it would keep me in shape," Lally said. "It is much easier to push yourself physically when there is a competition involved."

While Lally has been successful in the ring, he realizes his role as a captain goes beyond the scorecard decision at the end of the day. As a captain, he said he sees the true value in being a Notre Dame boxer.

"With that experience and the role as a captain comes responsibility," Lally said. "I had never done an individual sport before boxing, but at the same time there is a very strong team element to this program. I'm training for bigger things."

Lally said being a captain this year helped him realize the club's "greater capacity for good."

"At first, it's about the boxing and staying in shape and the pushups and it's about you," he said. "This boxing club, though, is unlike any other club in the country because of the teamwork we promote and the fundraising mission of our program."

"Those two aspects came to the forefront and I realized that I'm not boxing for me, I'm boxing to set an example, help develop those

skills in others and get people excited about the sport of boxing in the same way those captains before me did."

Lally hopes to apply the values of Bengal Bouts in his career, as he is striving to become a doctor. He plans to apply to medical schools this spring and will be taking the MCAT in April.

In the same way Lally looked up to the captains in the boxing ring during his freshman year, he said he has a role model for his professional career. Dr. Tom Dooley went to the same high school as Lally before going to Notre Dame, and then became a doctor who worked in the jungles of Laos and served those who could not afford basic health care.

"He dedicated himself to the health and well-being of others and I hope I can do something similar to that in my career," Lally said.

Thinking big picture, Lally recognizes how special the opportunity to participate in Bengal Bouts has been.

"Boxing at Notre Dame has been such a blessing. It has enabled me to befriend and enjoy the company of some of the best people I know," Lally said. "Boxing at Notre Dame calls for people to commit to something greater than themselves."

"Being a captain is an honor, but we all realize that being a captain is a position of service," Lally said. "I went to a Jesuit high school and we always say that we strive to be men for others. Bengal Bouts has probably been the greatest highlight of my Notre Dame experience because it has enhanced my desire to be a man for others."

Jack Lally will look to claim his third straight Bengal Bouts championship as he takes on junior Niels Seim in the 133 lbs. final Saturday night.

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Ortenzio serves as co-president in his final Bouts



TOM LA/The Observer

Senior Kevin Ortenzio, left, prepares to throw a punch at junior Alex Calderon during his quarterfinal win Feb. 22.

By MIKE MONACO
Sports Writer

For a right-handed fighter like senior co-president Kevin Ortenzio, the jab — the fundamental punch in the sport of boxing — is thrown with the left hand. Thus, it would be seemingly impossible to fight without a left arm.

For Ortenzio, this reality hits close to home, as his boxing career was almost brought to a screeching halt before it even

started.

As a high school freshman, Ortenzio was hospitalized with a bacterial infection known as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). The bacteria cause something similar to a staph infection but, as the name suggests, are resistant to many commonly-used antibiotics. In Ortenzio's case, things got so bad that he was days away from having his arm amputated.

Ortenzio, an avid high school

wrestler, eventually survived the perilous situation and used it as a learning experience.

"After I recovered, I used what I learned from [the experience] to take that move forward and keep going on with life," Ortenzio said. "And that's what I did with my wrestling season and with my schoolwork."

Now seven years removed from the scare, Ortenzio is in full control of his left arm every time he unleashes a quick jab. However, that hasn't stopped him from realizing just how blessed he is, Ortenzio said.

"God has blessed me with good health up to this point and I thank him each day for the doctors that were there seven years ago," Ortenzio said. "[I] feel so blessed and now I try to take advantage of it and make the most of it because you never know when the opportunities will go away. You never know when you could lose an arm or be sick or very ill."

Ortenzio has certainly made the most of his opportunities through his four years of participating in Bengal Bouts.

As a freshman, Ortenzio won his preliminary fight before getting eliminated in the quarterfinals by one of the then-senior captains. During his sophomore campaign Ortenzio made it all the way to the finals before losing by split decision to then-senior Kieran Bulger. Last year as a junior captain, Ortenzio took the next step and won the 148-pound division championship.

Ortenzio is hoping to defend his title this year and got the ball rolling in the quarterfinals with a victory over junior Alex Calderon. Despite the unanimous decision, Ortenzio said he saw some room for improvement in the fight.

"That fight went very well but I still have a few things to work on," Ortenzio said. "[Calderon] put in all three rounds against me. I was able to stick it to him in the end but we both had fun and he landed a couple good blows at me. So it's something I need to work on for [the semifinals]."

In addition to the boxing side of things, Ortenzio has become more involved with the service aspect of the club both as a junior captain and a co-president. The native of Siegfried Hall and Camp Hill, Penn., had the opportunity to travel to Bangladesh last summer and see firsthand where the Bengal Bouts proceeds were going. Ortenzio said the experience, organized through the International Summer Service Learning Program, has changed his outlook on the boxing club.

"Through that experience I knew my mission for being part of this club," Ortenzio said. "My sole intent of going to practice and working out with the guys and doing the whole fundraising aspect has really changed. It used to be something really competitive — boxing one-on-one you think of it as being the whole intense thing — which it still is, but it's a lot different perspective now."

That perspective includes the realization that he is in a tremendous position to provide charitable service to those in need, Ortenzio said.

"Being so blessed here — not only health-wise, but also financially and being from a great nation like the United States and with a great family and everything — the first thing I want to do is give back," Ortenzio said. "Not only that, but I can discover what others are going through and just realize that my life here is not the only life."

During his time in Bangladesh, Ortenzio realized the connection between boxing in South Bend and helping others in Bangladesh, he said.

"It's through the level of training and the commitment you make to this program and the time you commit which is, spiritually speaking, the whole suffering aspect," Ortenzio said. "That sort of translates well for me as I apply it to the Bangladesh setting. I witnessed all those people and even though they're suffering, they're suffering all together and they're happy doing it. They appreciate the small things which is the same thing here — you appreciate the small things like 'I landed a pretty good jab today.'"

Fortunately, Ortenzio still has his left arm for all those jabs.

Ortenzio will face sophomore Ben Eichler in the finals Saturday.

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