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FUTURE OF WOMEN IN BOXING BRIGHT – SYLVIA MOKAILA

By Vusi Kama

She may not have made the Female Ring Official of the Year award hers two times in a row, but North West's boxing shining star Sylvia Mokaila is far from bitter. She believes the game is moving in the right direction when it comes to women officiating in the male-dominated game.

This is despite the fact that at the Boxing SA Awards held in Port Elizabeth last weekend she was one of the favourites to romp home with the title she had won the previous year in Durban. The honour this year was taken by Pumeza Zinakile.

Her perception of the future of the game is based on the fact that other two nominees for the 2017 honours, Zinakile and Namhla Tyuluba were relatively new and young in the industry. She points out to the fact that two had made significant strides since they were part of a workshop in Durban last year.

The said workshop was conducted by Mokaila and Siya Vabaza-Booi, under the auspices of Boxing SA. The event was geared at empowering women officials on how to be referees, as well as scoring bouts as judges.

"For me, it was never about winning, but about where the game is going," said Mokaila. "With such young talent being nominated and winning in such important awards is a positive step for women in boxing."

She can be said to have gone where very few women in the world of boxing have gone. The manner in which she criss-crosses the ring as a referee in top-flight boxing fights across the world instils confidence and gives the game a beautiful complexion and rich texture.

The Mahikeng Village girl is richly-decorated, having won awards across the globe. She is no stranger to nominations and ultimately winning medals and trophies. From school level to international stages, she has won accolades in both athletics and boxing.

She grew up as an athlete, competing at school, as well as national and international levels in events such as 100m, 200m and 400m, both flat and hurdles.



The ring official is registered and licensed with various international organisations in boxing, such as the International Boxing Federation (IBF), World Boxing Association (WBA), World Boxing Council (WBC), World Boxing Federation (WBF); as well as the African Boxing Union (ABU) and Boxing South Africa (BSA).

As the only person from the North West to be registered and licensed by BSA, she has become a shining light and an example of excellence in both her community and women in South Africa generally.

In her international engagements, she has become accustomed to hobnobbing with boxing royalty such as Don King, George Foreman, Sugar Ray Leonard and Evander Holyfield.

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