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Olympic boxer pulls no punches on life in the ring

NATHAN DELONG Telegraph-Journal

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Olympic boxer Mandy Bujold, left, coaches Emily Ingersoll as she practices her punching technique during Bujold's high-performance training camp Saturday at the KV Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Club in Quispamsis.

Photo: Nathan DeLong/Telegraph-Journal

QUISPAMSIS • Mandy Bujold may have represented Canada in the boxing ring in 35 different countries, but one thing she hasn't forgotten is where she comes from.

The Olympic boxer, who grew up in Moncton, admitted she took a drive to her old stomping grounds Friday before leading a high-performance training camp Saturday and Sunday at KV Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Club in Quispamsis.

Bujold, who moved to Kitchener, Ont. with her family when she was 15, also attended a meet-and-greet and fundraising dinner Saturday night at the Joshua Group.

The Joshua Group is a Saint John charity which helps underprivileged children and families.

"It's great to share my experiences and get [the young boxers] motivated and say 'hey, I was in your position at one point,'" said Bujold, an 11-time Canadian national champ. "Now I'm travelling the world and I've gotten all kinds of these opportunities, and that is possible for them as well.

"I want them to see that I'm no different than they are."

Bujold, 30, began boxing at age 16 in Kitchener. She has won back-to-back gold medals at the Pan-American Games and a bronze at the Commonwealth Games.

Bujold finished fifth in the women's flyweight (51-kilogram) class at the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil.

She chatted with the Telegraph-Journal about her career and mentoring young athletes after a few hours of coaching Saturday morning at the KV Golden Gloves facility.

Telegraph-Journal: How old were you when you started boxing?

Mandy Bujold: I started when I was 16 after we moved to Kitchener. My older brother joined a boxing club, and I wanted to do what he was doing. He always came home and was excited about what he was learning. After he moved away, I decided to try it. I wasn't much of an athlete before, but I found my passion when I walked into a boxing gym.

TJ: How much has the sport grown since you first took up boxing?

MB: When I started, women's boxing wasn't even an Olympic sport. That's something we've pushed for. We finally got it in back in 2012, which was great. Now we're seeing more females getting into the next Olympics [in Japan] with a few more weight classes being added.





Fifteen aspiring boxers took lessons from one of the world's best Saturday in Quispamsis as Olympic athlete Mandy Bujold led a high-performance training camp at the KV Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Club.

Photo: Nathan DeLong/Telegraph-Journal

TJ: What was it like to compete in the Olympics?

MB: It's an amazing experience. You get to walk alongside people like [American tennis star] Serena Williams and [Jamaican sprinter] Usain Bolt. It's surreal to be side-by-side with those people."

TJ: How does it feel to be leading this camp in Quispamsis?

MB: It's awesome. I love doing this type of training camp and going to different cities to share the knowledge I have. I've run a few camps in Kitchener and had quite a few people come out. I actually had Emily [Ingersoll] from [KV Golden Gloves] come all the way to Ontario one time I ran a camp, which shows the dedication these young athletes have.

TJ: What kind of skills are you teaching these athletes?

MB: I'm trying to show them the training I do and the stuff I've learned when I've gone international and done training camps in different countries. I've broken down the workouts into specific areas, like the technical side, speed, agility and reaction drills and endurance. I hope to teach the kids some things they can continue using in their own gyms and training.

TJ: How often do you train?

MB: I typically train two or three times a day. I spend six to eight hours in the gym each day. It's a full-time job.

TJ: How often do you fight?

MB: Every year is a bit different. I've had anywhere from 10 to 20 fights a year. I usually get sent to three or four countries a year to represent Canada and get that international experience.

TJ: What would you say is the most important part of getting where you are?

MB: The biggest thing is dedication. It takes a lot to not just get to that level, but stay there. Having the consistency of being in the gym, being a good planner and making sure you can focus 100 per cent on your sport has always been important for me.

Note: Bujold's responses have been edited.

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