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Boxing club flourishes in the Valley

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September 3, 2014

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Tim Hayes, owner and operator of KV Golden Gloves Boxing Club in Quispamsis instructs sparring partners Kathryn Yeomans and Melanie Richard while Alicia Moore looks on. Many women have taken up the sport of boxing as an excellent way to stay fit.
Michael Stringer/Telegraph-Journal

QUISPAMSIS • The KV Golden Gloves Boxing Club is enjoying a year of firsts, and a quick conversation with owner/operator Tim Hayes brings to the ring an oft-used idiom, “you ain’t seen nothing yet.”

The 49-year-old believes the best is yet to come as the club prepares to stage its first-ever boxing card on Sept. 27 at the qplex. That follows on the heels of word that KV is the largest boxing club, by the numbers, in New Brunswick – a huge “first” for a club that’s only been around for six years.

If that’s not enough to put a cap on a successful year, Hayes believes its record membership total – 400 overall and 200 for boxing alone – will continue on a growth curve for the foreseeable future.

Soon, the club’s slogan may well be “Another year. Another record. Another first.”

“I knew this would be successful – I did not pick the valley by mistake when I opened the boxing club,” said Hayes, who operates in a 3,000-square-foot space in the rear of the KenVal Co-Op off Millennium Drive. “It was the fastest-growing community in New Brunswick at the time I did my research. Did I think we would set a record for having the largest boxing club in New Brunswick? No, I did not know we would do that.”

Hayes’ interest in the sweet science is genuine; he boxed during his boyhood days and moved on as a coach and trainer at the Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Club in Saint John for 10 years before launching his pet project in the valley. He also had a taste for martial arts, attaining a black belt in Tae-Kwon-Do, studying karate and aikido and training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

When he opened the club, his grand plan was to start with boxing as a foundation and build from there. It now includes a number of martial arts, including judo under Jason Murray, Brazilian jujistu under David McAlduff, Carey Murphy and Murray, Muay Thai kickboxing and core strength training under Joe Dupuis, as well as mixed martial arts classes.

“When I opened the gym I knew I would have to go into other avenues,” said Hayes. “When people contact me or come to the gym, it’s easy to direct them to the right program, once I know what they want to get out of their membership. We have something for everyone – I have children as young as five years of age as well as mothers and grandmothers.”

The club’s growth is a direct result of an influx of females - they make up the bulk of the membership and Hayes is not surprised the hand has played out this way.

“Women like the challenge – they are tired of doing the same thing when it comes to fitness training,” said Hayes. “Many women were not aware this option existed - boxing is very empowering for females and I have a number of women who are boxing well into their fifties. It doesn’t necessarily mean they’re competing, but they are training. And I’ll tell you, the ladies’ program is not easy – it’s the hardest program we have at the club. It’s hard-core... they are flipping tractor tires... I do not take it easy on them. They also learn real boxing. It’s not watered down – they’re learning the real thing.”

The program du jour is called Fight Like A Girl. It’s for females only and is a non-contact boxing class where participants actually get real boxing training. That’s not its only focus – Hayes likes its fitness component since it offers a full-body workout.

“It’s far and away our most popular program,” said Hayes, “and women were drawn to the club because we gave them their own program. Before we started this, we did not have female members. Now, it’s flourishing. In fact, when the Fight Like A Girl program is going on, no one else is allowed in the club. I don’t take it easy on them and work them extremely, extremely hard.

“When they start, I don’t drive them into the ground. I have elite athletes, but I also have grandmothers that just got off the couch. It’s important to accommodate all of them and make them feel welcome. I want them to come in and say ‘I can do this’. I tell right off the bat that it’s going to be hard, but I want them to go at their own pace. Do what you can, and when you have to rest, then rest... ease into it. I don’t want members to get frustrated and not come back – I want them to be successful.”

Women boxers will be among the featured bouts on the QPlex card. Hayes is jabbing for 12 bouts, but said it will be, at minimum, an eight-fight program. The card is not finalized, but Hayes expects KV boxers will be joined by athletes from around New Brunswick, and possibly Nova Scotia. With only 400 seats available, Hayes expects tickets - \$15 for adults and \$10 for children – will go fast. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the bell rings for the first fight at 7 p.m.

This will be Hayes’ first foray as a promoter staging his first boxing card. He believes it will be the first of many fight nights to come in the valley.

“This fight card has been planned to show residents of the Kennebecasis Valley that we have a boxing club,” he said. “We are growing, but I still don’t think a lot of people know we’re here. This is our formal introduction to the community. I see this as a coming-out party for our boxing club.”

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