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'Gypsy Queen' boxer Ivy-Jane Smith beats all of England and has her sights set on the rest of the world



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Romany Gypsy Boxer Ivy-Jane Smith, 16, is creating a stir on the boxing scene and has just won her fourth national title, earning a place representing England in the Three Nations tournament which will take place in Wales in mid-March 2016.

Ivy-Jane, who trains with the Heart of Portsmouth Boxing Academy, swept the board with her three fights over the course of the three day tournament, ensuring her fourth national title win in Magna Centre, Sheffield this weekend.

Ivy-Jane was one of three Heart of Portsmouth boxers to reach the final stages of the National Youth championships, the other two were Bailey Fowler and Walid Adenas.



Heart of Portsmouth Head Junior Coach Paul Kapnisi explains how Ivy-Jane Smith won the title:

“In the finals Smith faced another experienced boxer in Tysie Gallagher from Luton. Gallagher’s come forward relentless Style, was subdued as Smith then went on the back foot, using slick and fast footwork to out maneuver her opponent by switching from southpaw to orthodox and using the ring to her advantage.”



“Q” Shillingford – the Head Coach of Heart of Portsmouth – was very impressed with the results and said:

“Smith put on a great exhibition of boxing as an art, moving and hitting, switch of attack, switching from orthodox to southpaw to frustrate and confuse her opponents”.

“We are all very proud of all the boxers in the championship. They all came and gave a fantastic account of themselves and the level of boxing we hold in the city of Portsmouth,” he added.

“All the boxers trained over the summer and Christmas as part of their preparation for the national championships. It was a great team effort as the Heart of Portsmouth Coaches are in the gym most nights supporting young people achieving their dreams.”

Ivy- Jane, having beaten all boxers in England at her weight and the weights above and below, is having to travel further afield to get the experience she needs. Recently she competed in the European Championships 2015, where she reached the Semi Final and was a Bronze Medalist.

Impressed with her record, England Boxing nominated Ivy for a Sports Aid grant, which awards young athletes between the ages 12 to 18 to help progress their sporting advancement. Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Cambridge, is the charity's Patron – a champion of future champions. The Sports Aid grant matches pound for pound her commercial sponsorship from Hour-Glass – a Portsmouth business run by local boxing fan Mr Peter Collins.

Back at Ivy-Jane’s home, the Smith family are “over the moon” as they talk to The Travellers’ Times.

“Her performance was beautiful,” says her mum Ivy. “She is going to go a long way.”

She says that when Ivy-Jane won one fight, a girl in the crowd got up and shouted “The Gypsy Queen!”

Her dad, John Smith, is equally proud of his high-performing daughter and described the atmosphere at the finals as “amazing.”

“You should watch the video of Ivy-Jane in the finals at the weekend,” says Mr Smith, who explains how the growing number of amateur women boxers are pulling no punches and are as just as good as the men. “Watch the video. Make up your own mind. Its outstanding boxing.”



Mr Smith also met two “Gypsy Kings” at the championships – the boxers John Frankham and Tyson Fury.

“I was with the both of them at the bar,” says Mr Smith. “Tyson Fury is a gentleman. He is the World champ.”

Ivy-Jane, who started boxing at three when her dad – a boxer himself – used to play-fight with her whilst teaching her the moves, has her sights set on an extraordinary goal.

“I want to represent England at the 2020 Olympics,” she says.

It's a dream that Heart of Portsmouth Head Coach "Q" Shillingford describes as eminently achievable.

"She has got so much discipline, determination and dedication," says "Q", who got his nickname serving in the Royal Navy and has other "promising" young Gypsy/Traveller boxers training at his Gym.

"She is always in the Gym or practising. Ivy-Jane will go far. She is one to follow."

The Travellers Times has covered the Smith family before when we told the story of Bill Smith junior's brave fight to get well after being born with breathing disabilities. Bill was in hospital just before Ivy-Jane's fight, but was out in time to help the family celebrate the good news.



Follow Ivy-Janes fight at the finals by going on to her Facebook page and watching the video.

Finals □□ Paul Kapnisi

Posted by **Ivy-Jane Smith** on **Monday, 15 February 2016**

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