

Media Release

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Australian Boxers are taking it to the World

In the lead up to the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Delhi, Boxing Australia has sent our Games hopefuls to key tournaments and camps to prepare for selection onto the Australian team.

The process commenced at the 1st Selection Trials for the 2010 Commonwealth Games (CG) Team held in Fremantle WA 18-21 March.

For the first time, our boxers competing for a place on the Commonwealth Games Team (if they had finished in the final at Nationals 2009 or competed for Oceania in the 2009 AIBA President's Cup) were seeded prior to the draw. As a result our best boxers were drawn to meet in the final.

It was also the first time the new weight categories being used at the 2012 London Olympic Games were used in Australia. The two finalists from each weight category now make up the 'Shadow Squad' for the Commonwealth Games. On 4th July these athletes will box each other with the winner to be nominated to the ACGA for participation in Delhi.

Before they do battle in July each boxer will get invaluable experience competing against and training with some of the world's finest boxers. This systematic development of the team has seen the Winners of the first of the Commonwealth Games Trials compete at the "Konstantin Korotkov Memorial" Boxing Tournament in Khabarovsk, Russia.

The highlights from Russia included:

- Gold medal: Damien Hooper won the U75kg weight category.
- Silver medals were won by: Andrew Moloney U51kg, Ibrahim Balla U57kg, Luke Jackson U60kg, Cameron Hammond U69kg, Alexey Mukhin 91+kg.
- Bronze medals were won by: Jason Moloney U54kg, John Squillace U91kg.

From there they were joined in Guantanamo, Cuba by the Runners-up from Fremantle with the whole squad competing against boxers from all over the world, including India, Venezuela and the ever powerful host country Cuba.

In the end we won 7 medals but unfortunately none of them golden. The results listed below add that Alexey Mukhin apparently stood toe to toe with one of Cuba's best losing a points decision.

Silver Medal

Zac Dunn (75kg)

John Squillace (91kg)

Alexey Mukhin (91+kg)

Bronze Medal

Mark Pevinsky (60kg)

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Cameron Hammond (69kg)
Brendan Scally (81kg)
Jeff Taylor (91+kg)

Alexey was also awarded "Brave Boxer of the Tournament".

At the same time our Australian Youth Team competed at the World Youth Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan boxing against boxers expected to make future Olympic teams. Hopes were high as going into the tournament and our boys didn't let us down!

Queensland Middleweight Damien Hooper, who is still in contention for a Commonwealth Games spot, proved his Gold in Russia was no fluke making the Gold Medal round, losing a points decision to Ireland's Joe Ward.

Western Australia's 60kg fighter Brett Mather was put out in his semi final after being beaten by a Lithuanian who ended up losing narrowly to highly fancied Indian Krishan Vikas. His performance in winning a Bronze Medal ensured Australia enjoyed it's best ever World Championship by winning two medals.

The excerpt below was provided by the Australian Institute of Sport:

Australia had one competitor in the gold medal bouts, Damien Hooper (AIS/NTID) in the middleweight (75kg) division. Hooper was up against Joe Ward, Ireland, who is the current reigning Junior World Champion. Ward had a very tough draw to make it through to the finals. He defeated Albania (Referee Stopped Contest, Rd 2), Cuba (8:1), Russia (9:6) and Columbia (11:3). Hooper also had some close bouts KGZ (11:4), Germany (3:0), China (7:7) and Hungary (11:5). Unfortunately for Hooper, Joe Ward was too strong in the final running out to a 6:1 final score. Ward started strongly to lead 2:0 at the end of the first round. Hooper got on the board in the second, but lost the round 3:1. The final round there was only one scoring punch to Ward.

Australia's final results

Silver Medal - Damien Hooper AIS/NTID 75kg

Bronze Medal - Brett Mather 60kg

Top 8 - Jackson Woods 48kg

Top 32 - Brandon Ogilvie 57kg

Top 32 - Carlin Utia 69kg

Jayden Hansen (54kg) and Rohan Murdock (81kg) did not win a bout.

This is Australia's **best ever result** at any World Championships, open or age group.

Damien Hooper will now enter a training camp in Cuba where our Commonwealth Games hopefuls will train and spa with other World Class boxers. The team will then return to Canberra where they will continue their camp in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games Trials on July 4 2010.

Ends

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