



HEAVYWEIGHT BOWIE TUPOU TRAVELLING THE HIGH ROAD TOWARD PHILLY AND TITLE FIGHT WITH BRYANT JENNINGS

- NBC SPORTS NETWORK FIGHT NIGHT -

- DECEMBER 8 - MCGONIGLE HALL, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY -

LAS VEGAS - Heavyweight boxer, Bowie Tupou, 22-2, 16 KOs, has traveled many miles over the course of his lifetime. He was born in the South Pacific Kingdom of Tonga, grew up in Australia, moved to Los Angeles for his boxing career, then relocated to Las Vegas to improve his chances as a professional fighter. Next week, Tupou will log another 2,500 miles when he travels from Vegas to Philadelphia for the biggest fight of his boxing career, a December 8th match with Philly's Bryant Jennings, 15-0, 7 KOs, for the latter's USBA heavyweight championship. The 12-round main event will be nationally televised by NBC Sports Network as part of its Fight Night boxing series. The telecast will begin at 10PM ET.

Tupou lived in Tonga until he was eleven years old.

"It's just one little island," Tupou said of his homeland. "It's not that big. You can walk the whole country, the whole island, in half a day."

His family left Tonga for Australia in 1993. Bowie, one of six children, spent his early days playing sports, and attending school. "When you're young, you just want to do something to keep active," he said. "I was playing a bit of rugby. That's mostly what we do in Australia."

Eventually he became a professional rugby player, but that career didn't last long. He found himself running around with his friends and not really applying himself to

the sport.

"I didn't play professional for that long," he said. "I was just hanging around with my buddies not really focused on what I was supposed to do. Suddenly I found life was not going the way I planned."

Tupou wasn't getting himself in any real trouble, but he didn't feel like he was growing up either. Eventually he met the woman who would become his wife, Georgia, also a Tongan living in Australia. She became a catalyst for many things in Tupou's life.

"I proposed to my wife when I was 19," Tupou said. "I wanted to stay out of trouble, and I needed to straighten out my life. That's why I married so young. I settled down. It was something to keep me straight."

Married and working various construction jobs, Tupou was putting food on the table and living a rather settled life, but he was still getting into an occasional street fight. That's when his wife pointed him in a life-changing direction.

"Why don't you go try out boxing?," Georgia asked him. "It may help you mentally."

"I was a physical guy," Tupou said. "So I said, okay, I'll have a go at it."

Georgia had grown up in the same neighborhood as legendary boxing trainer Johnny Lewis, instructor of Down Under ring greats like Kostya Tsyzu and Jeff Fenech. So she made the introduction.

"I started with Johnny Lewis," Tupou said. "Once I started training, I said, 'Oh Yeah! I kind of like this'. So I always tell everybody that my wife talked me into boxing."

Lewis insisted that the sometimes unfocused young Tupou dedicate himself to training for at least one year before scheduling any fights. Bowie complied, patiently working and applying himself as he'd never done before. The young version of himself probably would have grown restless waiting around for a match, but Tupou was becoming a new man.

"There's a lot to learn in boxing," he said. "You're not going to pick up boxing in one day. It takes time. In fact, you never stop learning about boxing."

So after a year's "apprenticeship" in the gym, Tupou finally got into the ring for the first time as an amateur boxer.

"I didn't have a long amateur career," Tupou said. "I only had one amateur fight. Then he (Lewis) put me through to the pros."

Tupou rattled off nine straight victories as a professional in Australia. However, he kept working his construction job on the side, learning that boxing paydays in Australia are nothing to live on. It was at this point, 2007, that Tupou and his wife packed their bags and moved to Los Angeles.

He found his way to Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym and resumed his boxing career in the States.

"California, it was a new experience for me," Tupou said. "A different lifestyle, but I knew my purpose. I knew the reason I came here."

And so Bowie continued to fight and to win. The restless teenager was nowhere in sight. Tupou was living the life of a professional boxer and finally had a real goal to pursue.

"That is the dream of every fighter out there," he said. "To win the heavyweight title."

Four years ago, Tupou moved his base to Las Vegas and began working with Jeff Mayweather, the low-key link in the wild and wooly Mayweather boxing clan. Although he is still learning his trade, the time has come for him to make a real move toward his dream. Enter Bryant Jennings, and the December 8th title fight.

"I don't know much about him," Tupou said of his opponent. "But I know he has the USBA title. It will be a good fight. It will be a good night. And as they say, let the best man win."

Tupou's hard-earned maturity won't allow him to trash-talk the least bit.

"Anything can happen during the fight," he said. "My wish and my dream is to win this fight and to move on. We will both fight our fight and we'll see who wins on that night. It should be a good night."

ABOUT DECEMBER 8TH

Pearson/McGonigle Halls, a 4,500-seat venue at Temple University located at 1800 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19121. It has hosted both professional and amateur boxing in the past, but when NBC Sports Network broadcasts the sixth installment of its Fight Night series on Dec. 8, it will be the first professional boxing event held at Pearson/McGonigle Halls in over 19 years.

Eight bouts are planned for the Philadelphia card. The doors open at 6PM, first fight is at 7PM. The card is promoted by Main Events, Peltz Boxing, and Goossen Tutor Promotions in association with BAM Boxing. For ticket information, contact Peltz Boxing at 215-765-0922, www.peltzboxing.com. Tickets also are on sale at www.comcastTIX.com

2012-2013 NBC SPORTS NETWORK FIGHT NIGHT SCHEDULE

(All times ET and subject to change)

Saturday, December 8	10 p.m. – 12 a.m.	NBC Sports Network	Temple University, Philly
Saturday, December 22	4 p.m. – 6 p.m.	NBC	Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem
Saturday, January 19	9 p.m. – 11 p.m.	NBC Sports Network	Mohegan Sun Casino, CT
Saturday, February 23	10:30 p.m. – 12:30 a.m.	NBC Sports Network	
Saturday, March 9	10 p.m. – 12 a.m.	NBC Sports Network	
Friday, June 14	9 p.m. – 11 p.m.	NBC Sports Network	

To find the location of the NBC Sports Network on your local cable, satellite or IPTV provider, click here: <http://www.nbcsports.msnbc.com/id/30092015/ns/sports/>

Tweet the link to NBC Sports Network Fight Night channel finder: bit.ly/175UuU

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