

Namibia Today Sport

Tobias lives, breaths boxing

By Kayele M. Kambombo

Nestor Tobias, cognomen Sunshine is the main brain behind the successful story of boxing in Namibia. He is one of the most consistent, formidable and top trainer, manager and boxing promoter Namibia has ever produced.

Tobias is a veteran in boxing and has 29 years of boxing experience. He lives it. He breathes it. He believes it. It's part of his soul.

Born and bred at the village called Edundya in the northern part of Namibia, Tobias is the owner of 'Nestor "Sunshine" Tobias Boxing Academy' that he has established 10 years ago and eventually produced reputable boxers and world champions such as the former WBA lightweight champion of the world Paulus "The Hitman" Moses with a telling record of 26-25-1 fighting record and 18 knockouts; invincible WBO Africa champion Bethuel "Tyson" Uushona; Paulus "The Rock" Ambunda WBO Africa bantamweight champion; Vikapita "The Beast Master" Meroro, WBO Africa light heavyweight champion; Martin Haikali, WBO Africa champion; former but retired WBO Africa welterweight champion Ali Nuumbembe; former WBO Africa lightweight champion Jatoorora "The Sting" Tjingaveta; former WBA Pan African Champions Jason "Taks" Naule and Frans "Rambo" Hantindi, with the latest prospects such as Sacky "Izinyoka" Shikukutu and Immanuel "Prince" Naindjala, to mention but a few.

First champion from NSTBFA

Hantindi was the first ever champion to come from the Nestor "Sun-



shine" Tobias Boxing and Fitness Academy (NSTBFA).

Tobias proved himself worthy of the title of number one boxing promoter in the Land of the Braves, as Namibia is affectionately known by its inhabitants, by being the dominant force in the boxing ring for 10 years. Tobias was exposed to the world of boxing at the tender age of 10.

As he was growing up, after his exposure he began training and quickly gained an impressive ama-

teur boxing record by capturing both the South Africa Boxing Union (SABU) championship as gold medalist and acquired Springbok colours.

During the apartheid era, Tobias represented South West Africa/Namibia in South Africa and was crowned a triple winner in the South African Open Boxing championship in 1987-1989 under welterweight and light middleweight categories.

Boxing has taken him around

South America in a conquering mission to countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile where he won all his fights.

Tobias was an excellent fighter in his prime time.

He later joined another camp of the late Allen Toweeel who was a coach-cum-manager in Johannesburg from 1993-1994, promoted by Rodney Bergman's Golden Glove Promoters for professional boxers, where he (Tobias) was engaged in seven fights of which he won six and lost once in the middleweight category.

In 1994 Tobias joined the stable of Raymond Slack where he fought five successful fights and became the number one lightweight boxer in South Africa. He was a threat and could not get any opponents in the entire SADC countries.

Patriotism

Tobias was requested to change his citizenship to become a South African but refused. He was patriotic to his motherland and vowed to remain Namibian. He was adamant not to change his citizenship for anything. In 1999 he was offered a fight in junior middleweight International Boxing Organisation (IBO) eliminator organized by Knockout Promotion which he won comfortably.

Tobias demonstrated his excellence in the ring with an impressive amateur boxing record of 168 fights 156 wins 12 loses with 142 knockouts.

Tobias boasts of 19 professional fights, 13 wins, four loses, one technical draw, one no content and 12 knockouts.

Tobias returned to Namibia and started sparring with Harry Simon but accidentally hurt his eye and the left shoulder. That injury forced Tobias to retire as a boxer but he had a vision – to plough back the experience that he gained in boxing to his fellow countrymen.

He has been the very benchmark by which all professional athletes are now measured not only in Namibia but also in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). He is the epitome of what is good in sports. There are many men that are affected by the times in which they live but there are very few that actually shape them. Tobias is a legend in his own time. He has shattered many records, seemingly with ease.

Boxing academy

In 2002 he established a boxing academy in the heart of Katutura where he engaged young pugilists to join his stable. Tobias' growing influence soon attracted the attention of the Namibian government and the nation start taking notice of him.

Tobias earned the love and admiration of the athletes he came in contact with, taking particular pride in personally knowing the boxers by name and background. They knew he would protect them with his ethics, thorough understanding of the rules of the sport and his tactical knowledge.

Not only did Tobias love the sport of boxing, but appreciated what it does to save the boxers from life on the mean streets of Namibia, by instilling pride, discipline, self-respect and confidence.

Boxing has given him a happy and successful life, which he wants to teach the athletes around him, by striving to be a positive influence and helping his young athletes contribute to society.

He cares much for them to become World Champions, and would rather strive they have a successful and happy life. Boxing gives them dedication, determination, and discipline to be the best they can be.

To top it all off, Tobias became the head coach/trainer/manager and promoter for his private boxing gym, called Nestor "Sunshine" Tobias Boxing and Fitness Academy and have never charged any athlete for nine years.

Tobias has been involved in boxing for almost a decade as a coach/trainer-cum-manager and promoter. His involvement is for the unemployed youngsters and for the love and betterment of a great sport. Today, the Founding Father Dr Sam Nujoma is the Patron of Tobias' boxing academy.

Product from hard-core ghettos

A product of the hard-core Tsumeb and Windhoek ghettos, he beat the system to become the Namibia's greatest promoter. Through the internationally recognized and reputable boxing promoter, Don King of the United States of America, Tobias' name has been featured in the tabloids of the world as one of the best promoter Namibia has ever produced.

Tobias/King promotions have entertained billions around the globe. His life has been devoted to staging the best in international boxing championships.

Tobias' promoted events have given the sports and entertainment world some of its most thrilling and memorable moments, particularly in Southern Africa, Japan is no exception. Nothing makes him happier than to promote a fight card with boxers from different countries: the fighters, the corner men, the media, the business people, politicians, name them. The thrill comes when these people, who would never normally come into contact with one another, work together on an event.

Tobias' career as a promoter spans 10 years and includes a reasonable number of international championship fights.

'Rumble in the Namib Desert'

Tobias and The Hitman Moses hit it off to Japan for the fight against Yusuke Kobori whom he dethroned on July 3, 2009, and a new era began in boxing.

The next thing was the Hitman to defend his title in the much-vaunted 'Rumble in the Namib Desert'. The reigning WBA Lightweight Champion Moses defeated his challenger Takehiro 'Samurai' Shimada also from Japan. He won on unanimous decision over 12 rounds in Windhoek.

'The Judgment Day'

The Hitman versus Shimada fight shattered all previous viewing records for a boxing event in Namibia, recording over 6 000 people in a humongous tent, while screened live to domestic households in addition to a massive global audience. The fight became the most watched one-day event in sports history in Namibia.

In April 2010, Tobias went to Miami, Florida in the USA to meet Don King to negotiate a deal for the Hitman's second title defence.

Tobias and King through Don King Promotions inked a fight between the Hitman and Miguel Acosta from Venezuela, Latin America. Tobias proved the doubters and critics wrong by staging one of the greatest fights in history on the Namibian soil, which he baptized "The Judgment Day". Unfortunately The Hitman lost his belt that he grabbed from Kobori and defended against Shimada only to relinquish it through TKO in the sixth round to Acosta, after 26 fights with a single loss.

Tobias has gone on to set new high-water marks in the boxing promotion business. Many individual boxers have earned thousands of Namibian Dollars, under Nestor Sunshine Tobias Productions-promoted events.

Hitman's return to the ring

Late last year, Tobias organized the Hitman's return to the ring after he lost his WBO lightweight title to Acosta. This time around was him to fight against Sergio Omar Priotti, a challenger from Argentina whom The Hitman defeated by TKO in the fourth round scheduled for 10.

Tobias made a commitment to provide quality fight cards as he staged a fight in Walvis Bay, Namibia headlined "Quadruple WBO Africa Boxing Bonanza" (featuring four world championship bouts on one night). The public responded positively as thousands of fans flocked to the Municipality Hall. Not just once, but many times, Tobias has promoted fight cards with three world-title fights.

"Best Coach of the Year"

Among his proudest moments was when Tobias has been bestowed with an honor of "Best Coach of the Year" with the Hitman taking home the "Sportsman of the Year" award at the MTC Sports Award 2009 organized by Namibia Sports Commission in Windhoek.

He gives full credit for his rise to the then first Prime Minister of Namibia, Dr Hage Geingob, who according to Tobias has always come for his rescue whenever the need arose.

He thanked President Hifikepunye Pohamba, the Founding Father of the Nation Dr Sam Nujoma and the Ministry responsible for sport for their unflinching support throughout the years, as well as all his sponsors such as the Government, Nampower, Telecom Namibia, Windhoek Country Club Resort and Casino, Read Bite Meat Market.

Tobias also extended a word of appreciation to the entire Namibian media for their overwhelming support over the years in his career as boxer, promoter and manager.

Flames burn Warriors

By Kayele M. Kambombo

Namibia's Brave Warriors succumbed to the Flames of Malawi by 2-1 in a FIFA International friendly on Wednesday night at the Sam Nujoma Stadium in Windhoek.

The hosts took the game to visitors, with Wilko Risser drawing the first blood in the 35 minutes of the first stanza. The goal came as a result of a goalmouth scramble in a waterlogged pitch.

The Malawians equalized just a couple of minutes before the end of the first half (45 minutes), as Peter Wadabwa record his name on the scoreboard.

In the dying minutes of the second half, in the 87th minute, Benard Harawa chipped-toed the ball over the Namibian defenders' heads inside the net. The Namibian goalkeeper Athiel Mbaha was found flat-footed.

Brian Isaacs, the Warriors caretaker coach with his assistants and his entire entourage are not to be taken lightly.

Yes, the Warriors lost but with dignity. The hastily put together national team performed above expectation judging from the strength of their opponent point of view.

Isaacs demonstrated maturity in his game plan. He reminded this



Wilko Risser, Namibia's goal scorer

writer of the golden old days when football was played with five strikers (2-3-5 system). He had virtually four strikers in Wilko Risser, Tangeni Shipahu, Rudolph Bester and Henrico Botes running the Malawians amok. This was a real attacking football all Namibians have been yearning for rather than the defensive system his predecessor was applying.

However, Isaacs registered his disappointment about the result but the "performance was excellent".

"Our defence was good and the organisation was also excellent. This is a good side. If they keep more pressure it will be an excellent future team for Namibia", said Isaacs after the match.

This was indeed a good beginning. Hopefully Razundara Tjikuzu and Collin Benjamin will reinforce the team when they will be travelling to Burkina Faso for the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers on March 26 in Burkinabe.