



29 August 2020

## Women Months for Women in Boxing

Each year in South Africa during the month of August, formally referred to as Women's Month, the country celebrates and pays tribute to millions of South African women who selflessly contributed to the liberation struggle and who continue today to make their voices heard and raise their hands in the building of our nation; women from all walks of life.

As we come to the end of this historic month, Boxing South Africa (BSA) reflects on the past year and the past few months and its developments. Certainly none of us would have anticipated that just three months into the year our country would be forced to join many countries around the world, who were forced to shut down all their activities, thus their economies in an effort to fight a common invisible enemy; the Coronavirus.

South Africans is just emerging from a 5 months lockdown which has had a significant negative impact, socially and financially, to many people. For many professional athletes the shutdown meant no income as not events took place during this time. The last boxing tournament was on 15 March which means many of our licensees have not had benefited from tournament purses; even longer for female boxers who generally do not get as much opportunities for fights as their male counterparts.

With the recent move to level 2 lockdown and looking at the situation to date it brings hope that a better tomorrow is on the horizon and that we shall soon be back to what we love; boxing. The world has however changed during the pandemic and what we have always viewed as normal has been challenged and we are now faced with adapting to the 'new normal'. The wearing of masks in our daily activities, virtual meetings and lifestyle adjustments are all part of our new normal. We either adapt or we are left behind as the worlds moves with the times.

BSA has had to adapt to the new ways of doing things with the hope however that in the long-term the changes would benefit the sport. We thus, amongst other things, embarked on digitalizing some of our processes. We unfortunately have had to readjust our other annual plans which included, amongst other things, a focus on the Women in Boxing Program through various initiatives including, but not limited to,

- An all-female tournament
- Women in Boxing Seminar.
- Profiling of female boxers, and
- Relaunch of the Women in Boxing brand

As we are unable to host tournaments at the moment, BSA has taken a decision to rather postpone all planned activities to a later date possibly in the last quarter of the financial year with the hope that the current restrictions would have been lifted by then. In the meantime though we will continue with some of the activities that can be implemented whilst remaining complainant and observing the Covid-19 safety measures in order to ensure that none of our licensees are unnecessarily exposed to its risks.

We are excited of the next few months in female boxing.

Whilst during this month women of our country were acknowledged and celebrated for the contribution they continue to make in making South Africa great, unfortunately many women violently perished at the hands of men; many who were supposed to be their protectors. As BSA we are therefore not ignorant of the persistent challenges that continue to affect women and children especially gender-based violence.

A year later we remember one of our own, Leighandre 'Baby Lee' Jegels, whose life was cut short as a result of gender-based violence. We are grateful for her journey as she left her footprints for many other young women to follow and come make their mark as she did in the sport of boxing. Her legacy lives on and her triumphant stories in the ring for many generations to hear about. As we forge ahead we encourage women to speak out and report incidents of domestic violence. We equally, if not more, call out on men to hold each other's violent actions against women and children to account. Silence is a killer.

BSA stands against gender-based violence and we say #NotInOurName

### Ms. Cindy Nkomo

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