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Academy have first-ever Scots champion

by

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HIGHLAND Boxing Academy have their first-ever Scottish champion after Donald Macphee lifted the light welterweight title at the Scottish Novice Championships.

Two victories on points were enough to see Macphee become the first winner of a major prize for the academy, which was only set-up earlier this year.

The 23-year-old, whose last competitive spell in the ring prior to the championships at Meadowbank Sports Centre, Edinburgh, came two years ago, was part of an eight-strong squad from the city club that made the journey to the two-day event.

Despite no other successes for the academy, head coach Liam Foy was pleased with the application and performances of all his boxers.

"There were clubs from all over Scotland at these championships, some of which are very well established, so for us to take home a Scottish champion is tremendous," he said.

"I was hopeful that we could have perhaps had more than one, but I'll happily take it as some clubs can go for years on end and never have a Scottish champion.

"Donald was absolutely brilliant. Right from the first round of the opening fight through to the last round of the final, you could see him getting stronger.

"The tendency for most boxers is to tire in the latter stages of a bout, but Donald just got better and he absolutely commanded his opponent in the final.

"It was a great win for him, but all our guys fought well and gave their all. It was a fantastic experience and one I am sure will stand them all in good stead for the future.

Macphee overcame Craig Scouller, of Durie's ABC, 17-13 on points to reach the final where in a devastating display of boxing, he defeated Barn ABC's Brian McGinness 24-12 to become the Scottish Novice light welterweight champion.

Another Highland Boxing Academy member, Carl Davis, was fighting in the same division as Macphee, but his competition ended when he lost 13-10 on point to Michael Love (Partick).

Davis (21), who was contesting his first competitive bout, battled hard throughout before tiring in the final round that allowed Love to force his way back into the fight and eventually win it.

In the heavyweight category, Kevin Doig found the going difficult against David Smyllie, of Holyrood, who had a superior reach advantage.

The 28-year-old, who impressed for the academy at a show in Castlemilk last month, had no answer and despite a spirited showing, bowed out after losing on points.

There were contrasting fortunes for super heavyweight John MacKenzie (22). He was keeping Alloa's David Theus behind a stiff jab right up until the final round and looked like he would progress when disaster struck and he dislocated his shoulder, forcing his retreat from the bout.



Liam Miller was clinical in his dispatching of Martin Harvey (Aberdeen) courtesy of a first round stoppage and he moved closer to glory in the middleweight division by then defeating Chirnside's Mark Watson 10-6 on points.

In what was a very competitive category, however, the 21-year-old had his hopes of success ended with a 17-13 loss on points to Kingdom's Greig Sinclair.

The first fight of the tournament featured Highland's Darren Ravenhill and the welterweight made a good start with a 12-7 points triumph at the expense of Steve O'Neil (1314 ABC).

The 22-year-old then faced up to Thomas Dickson, of Leith Victoria, and can consider himself unfortunate to have gone down to an 11-8 points defeat.

Lightweight Matt Quinn did well against Lochend's Ian Keys, but the 26-year-old eventually succumbed to a unanimous points decision against him.

Highland's youngest competitor at the championships was 17-year-old Mitchell Dalton. He was scheduled to fight Inverness City ABC's Alister Moffat to decide the winner of the light heavyweight title, but prior engagements meant Moffat was unable to attend.

The next event for members of the academy are the Northern District Championships, which take place at Inch next month.