

Inala boxers take on the world

By [Luise Straker](#)

A team of young men from Inala, coached by committed adults, is taking the boxing world by storm.



It's not the most glamorous of gyms, but in the Inala PCYC boxing room, a pair of committed and inspiring coaches is quietly training a new generation of champions.

Currently the highest achieving junior amateur boxing club in Australia, the Inala PCYC team boasts a bronze medal from the junior world championships (held in Armenia last year), as well as the top-ranked 81kg lighthheavy contender for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

The 40-strong club welcomes all nationalities and age groups - one of their champions, CJ Coxon, is an 11-year-old who claimed the Queensland, south-east Queensland and Wide Bay titles, all in his first year of boxing.

However, coach Russell Finn believes that such success is not the sole aim of the Inala PCYC Boxing Club.

"Everybody's dream and hopes are different - not everyone is going to be a champion boxer, but because of the training and discipline they put into the gym, they will be champion people in whatever avenue they take in life," he says to 612 ABC Brisbane's [Phil Smith](#).

Russell grew up in Inala himself and now wants to give his charges the best possible opportunity for success.

"I'm from this area - I was brought up in Inala, I was raised in Inala, so I realise that at the club level we need good coaches.

"We've got top guys at the AIS and state level, but at club level we don't have very good coaches - so that's where I get my enthusiasm to make it as good for these guys as possible, and to help them reach their goal."

Russ is ably supported in his coaching role by 'Uncle' Wes Nicholls, who also believes their club is about more than just boxing.

"There's a lot of stuff that Russ teaches in the gym and it's not just about boxing. Everybody there is well mannered and I think they take that out into the community," he says.

"Young Willy over there," Wes indicates a 13-year-old New Zealander, "he was just hanging around the PCYC - he's a bit of a larrikin sort of a boy, but he could be anything in this sport - his whole attitude's just changed around.

"He was getting in a little trouble at school but now he feels part of the team and he hardly ever misses a training session."

Wes' son, 16-year-old schoolboy Joseph 'Joey' Nicholls, is one of the club's champions. He's been boxing for four years, and last year brought home a bronze medal from the Junior World Championships.

"I was pretty scared going over to Armenia, but I just stuck at it and won a few fights," he says of the experience.

Another top boxer, twenty-five-year-old Dane Mulivai is one fight away from a Commonwealth Games berth later this year. He's just returned from Russia as part of his preparation, and squeezes at least 20 hours of training each week around his full-time job.

Dane enjoys the solo nature of boxing. "It's an individual sport," he says. "That way there's no one to blame but myself, so instead of playing rugby where you'd hear on the field, 'what are you doing mate?' - in the ring, it's just me.

"It's all about the individual."

But while each boxer fights as a individual, they train as a team. "They're always pushing each other along and trying to beat each other... which is great," says Russ.

And while many people think of boxing as a brutal and violent sport, Russ says self-discipline involved creates genuine, respectful gentlemen.

"There's nothing like a fight to be a leveller - a lot of people who are aggressive and bad-tempered, they can't really fight, they just can't control their temper.

"Once they train hard enough and fight somebody who can beat them, it brings them back to level pegging, so they think, 'oh, this guy can beat me, I should put more effort into my training, I should change my attitude in life, I shouldn't be so aggressive and outspoken, I should listen more and try a little bit harder'," he says.

And ultimately, that's what it's all about. "Not only are these guys representing Australia, but some of these guys who don't represent Australia are going to be better people just by participating in sport," Russ says.