

Team USA Begins Workouts Here

BY DONNIE COLLINS
THE SCRANTON TIMES

MOOSIC — They came from California to New York, from Georgia to Texas.

Now, they're hoping to make history in Scranton.

The 18-member Team USA began training this week for the first-ever Women's World Amateur Boxing Championships, which will begin with preliminary bouts Nov. 27 at the Scranton High School gymnasium.

Finals in each of the 12 weight classes will be held Dec. 2.

Twelve members of the team will compete in the world championships against about 180 athletes from 42 different countries

that have pre-registered for the event, Lackawanna County spokesman Bill Risse said.

The other six members of Team U.S.A. will be alternates and will help train their teammates.

Bill Kellick, the director of media and public relations for USA Boxing, said the inaugural event is expected to become an annual event that will gain more and more worldwide recognition. Next year, it is scheduled to be held in Turkey, he said.

A recent push has been made for the International Olympic Committee to make women's boxing an Olympic sport before the 2008 games.

U.S. women show off their patriotism

By Maureen Manzano
TRIBUNE REGIONAL STAFF

You could say they wear their patriotism on their sleeves.

Red, white and blue jackets easily catch the eye as members of the USA Boxing Team arrive in Scranton to fight in the Women's World Amateur Boxing Championship.

But besides fighting for a title, the boxers are fighting for American values they believe in.

Boxing

Bill Kellick, director of media and public relations for the USA Boxing Team, said he believes the athletes are taking the representation of their country to heart, especially in light of what the country has gone through since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"I think anytime they represent the United States is meaningful, but I think it has more

meaning now when they wear the jackets," he said.

Lightweight boxer Amber Gideon, 31, said she is awed by the thought of representing her country.

"It is a lot of responsibility to bear," she said. "It puts a lot of pressure on us. I feel a lot more determined to express the American pride and power after the last couple of months of sadness."

"We have a chance to do something," said Faye Jacobs Hollins,

27, a light heavyweight. "We are in a blessed nation. I feel this is an opportunity to pay back for all we have."

Jeaneene Hildebrandt, team leader from Evansville, Ind., said she believes the competition is a positive way to express patriotism.

"Most of them feel we would like to solve our problems with athletics and try to join our hands in peace and unity throughout the world," she said.