

## Boxing

# Mesi gets minor title fight

by MATT KRUEGER  
Reporter

Four years after winning the North American Boxing Federation heavyweight title, "Baby" Joe Mesi will get the chance to strap more gold around his waist when he fights Rafael Pedro June 2 at LAuberge du Lac Hotel and Casino in Lake Charles, La.

The bout is for the World Boxing Council U.S. title, a minor belt sanctioned by the organization that ranked Mesi its No. 1 contender to the world title three years ago.

"It's one of those belts everyone makes fun of until you win a big belt," Mesi's father and manager Jack Mesi said. "Then everyone looks back and says, 'Look what he did.' We're excited about where this can take us."

Now 29th in the WBC rankings, Mesi is 6-0 in his comeback from a two-year suspension for suffering brain bleeds in his March 2004 win over Vassily Jirov. A win over Pedro would push his record to 36-0. He has 28 knockouts.

"I expect a bump in the rankings due to our accomplishments so far and this shot at a small belt," Jack Mesi said. "If we win, we should get another bump in the rankings. By the end of the summer, we could be back in the top 10, or at least knocking on the door."

Mesi won the NABF title with his first-round knockout of Robert Davis on June 24, 2003. He also won the New York State title with an eighth-round knockout of Anthony Green on Sept. 17, 1999. Both of those fights were held in Buffalo.

While not as experienced, Pedro (20-5-1, 14 knockouts) offers a challenge to Mesi (35-0, 28 knockouts) with his size. He's 6 foot 7 and usually weighs around 250 pounds for his fights. Mesi is 6 foot 1 and usually fights at 230 pounds.

"He's a piece of sculpted marble," Jack Mesi said of Pedro, who hasn't fought since knocking out Gary Butler a year ago. "He's an imposing, fabulous specimen of an athlete. And he has a world-class trainer. It's on."

Mesi's last fight, a first-round knockout of Ron Johnson on April 14, was the sixth fight in a year for the 33-year-old. He's won three of his last four by knockout, albeit against competition much softer than what he faced before his injury.

Now that he says he has worked off most of the ring rust he accumulated during his suspension, the Sweet Home High School graduate and his team are confident he'll climb back toward the upper echelon of fighters after this bout.

"If we win and get a bump in the rankings, then we can approach the big names and make some money," Jack Mesi said. "We've been contacted by a lot of ranked boxers who want to fight Joe."



**ON FIRE** — The Amherst Flames' girls U14 travel indoor soccer team defeated the Amherst U-13 Flames, 6-2, on Saturday, April 21 to win the Epic Center championship. Members of the team, sitting from left, are: Kristina Felber, Chelsea Greenway, Allison Dobos, Tori Kreuz, Lauren Cornell, and

Rachael Cohen; standing - coach Mark Haase, Kaitley Wozer, Sarah Schoonmaker, Lindsay Haase, Nicole Gjorgievski, Becky Fedak, Danielle LaPoint, Kaitlin LaBarge, Meghan Helm, Amanda Burns, Jen Jankowski, and coach John Dobos; missing from photo - Nina Sexton and Danielle Shatkin.

## Revolution wins girls indoor travel soccer U12 title

In the truest sense of team, the Amherst Revolution U12 girls soccer club continued its year long quest to play with unselfish teamwork and it showed. The Revolution won the indoor championship game in grand fashion defeating the Kenmore Spirit 7-1, Saturday afternoon at the Epic Center.

With seven different girls scoring one goal each and 18 girls playing for one cause, the Revolution ended the year with a perfect 12-0 record.

Defense was a key towards the Revolution's success. Goaltender Francesca Carra was particularly sharp in the first half, allowing only one goal. Christine Murphy stopped every shot the Spirit could muster in second half. Cathryn Mohan, Kaitlyn Neese and Alyssa Cartwright patrolled the defensive and midfield zones and controlled the flow of the game each time they were on the floor. Courtney Kramer and Morgaine Huston were magicians with the ball.

Angela Sobotka, Katie Cohen and Sara Eichhorn's non-stop efforts both defensively and offensively kept Kenmore on their heels.

Nikka Berrafato showed off her speed and powerful shot to score the first goal of the game.

After the Spirit tied the game, Margaux Gill made a great defensive play to gain possession of the ball, made a tremendous run down the left side of the field and put a thunderous shot past the Spirit goalie.

Carissima Cutrona scored with her left foot after leaving three Spirit players behind her. Annie Garcia scored the fourth goal with a powerful shot to the far side of the net. Hannah Dreger scored a beautiful goal after she received a crossing pass.

Kaitlyn Walsh made it 6-1 with a wonderful left foot shot from 20-feet out. Rounding out the scoring was last week's hero Alicia Girard.

The Revolution begins its outdoor season this week in the Western New York U-13 division.

## Mathewson McCarthy

# 'AAA' Cardinals defeat Red Sox, 9-7 in season opener

The Mathewson McCarthy "AAA" Cardinals and Red Sox opened the season at Wehrle 3 on a rainy evening on Thursday, April 26.

The weather wasn't going stop these two talented teams from battling each other as the Cardinals came away with a hard-fought 9-7 win.

The Cardinals and Red Sox each had their fair share of excellent hits and plays in the field. Leading the offensive charge for the Cardinals with two hits were Nathan Berke and Michael Steffan. Shawn Barbalato scored three runs. Strong pitching performances for the Cardinals were provided by Steffan, Berke, and Patrick Irving.

The play of game occurred in the last inning. Daniel Guercio hit Berke with a cutoff throw from the outfield. Berke wheeled around and made a perfect throw to Nick Valenti at third base for a crucial out.

The Red Sox's offensive stars were Riley Cott, Jordan Brown, Mitchell Perelstein and Jack Verdi, who each had nice hits. Paul Jager, Luke Eberhard, and Jordan Buell pitched very well for the Red Sox in the loss.

### Majors West Red Sox 8, Royals 2

The Red Sox and Royals opened their season Thursday evening, April 26, in the rain with the Red Sox capturing the win.

The Red Sox struck quickly, posting a three-run first inning. AJ Aquilino, Francis McGowan and Jimmy Honsberger all scored runs. McGowan recorded the first extra base hit of the year with a solid double.

The Red Sox pitching held the Royals at bay all game as Honsberger, McGowan and Matt Mcomber all

pitched two effective innings, allowing just two hits and striking out 12.

Phillip Gourney and David Archer pitched a nice game for the Royals while Dennis Gilbert quarterbacked the Royals from behind the plate.

Chris Mussachio, Dante Sparcino and Stephen Tarabolletti all had good defensive games for the Red Sox. The Red Sox closed the game with a four-run sixth. Drew Sember capped the scoring with a walk which led to an eventual run.

### Major East Royals 9, Red Sox 7

The Major East Royals started the season the way they finished last year, with a win over the Red Sox.

In a game that saw five lead changes, it was not a surprise to see the game come down to the final inning as the Royals scored four runs in the top of the sixth to keep the lead for the win.

Down by two runs, the Royals got a one-out single by Brenden Chambers who scored when Matt Jungier's grounder forced an errant throw to first base.

Rob Paslaqua's grounder to third was mishandled and put two runners on base. Starting pitcher Timmy Coulter then sent a ball deep to left center for a double, scoring Paslaqua and Jungier with the game tying and game winning runs. The Royals

added an insurance run when Coulter came home on a wild pitch.

The Red Sox scored three runs in the bottom of the first. Tommy Kline's double plated two runs and he later scored on Blake Schneider's sacrifice grounder.

The Royals got two runs back in the top of the second. Michael Geiger's double split the outfielders, scoring Coulter, who led off with a single, and Matt Prangel, who walked.

The Red Sox got one run back in their half of the inning to retake the lead. In the top of the third, Richard Schwartz led off with a single up the gut and scored on Chamber's smash down the line for a double. Chambers then stole third and came home on Paslaqua's base hit to take the lead. Coulter then shut down the Red Sox's heart of the lineup in the bottom half of the inning.

After cooling down the Royal bats in the fourth, the Red Sox retook the lead. Two consecutive walks put Schneider in scoring position as Todd Huber's sacrifice grounder to second brought him home.

The Royals tied it up in the fifth. Jake Berke led off with a walk, stole second and third base and came home on a passed ball.

The Red Sox scored two runs the hard way. After getting the first two runners of the inning thrown out at

home by fine defensive plays, Dan Sturniola and Nick Swain scored off the bat of Kline to give the Red Sox a two-run lead again going into the sixth.

After the Royals scored four more runs to take the lead, Paslaqua retired the next three batters, in order, to get the win on the mound.

Todd Huber's diving catch in the sixth prevented the Royals from adding more runs in that inning. Chambers was a force behind the plate, nailing a runner attempting to steal second base to close out the third. Jungier caught the last three innings for the Royals and made two excellent tags at the plate for outs.

### Sports brief

**The Blue Jays** defeated the A's, 22-4, in Mel Ott "AAA" action. The A's put up a great defense, but the Blue Jays' hitting was unstoppable. Jason Malloy went 4 for 5 with two doubles. Kevin Torrilio, Billy Stryker, and Jason Malloy pitched well on the mound. Josh Logiudice, Malloy, Drew Mankowski, Cody Orcutt, Steven Patterson, Jack Stelianou, Stryker, Torrilio, Ben Warda, and Jeff White played well.

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