



**“Never underestimate the underdog.
Especially a Spartan one...”**



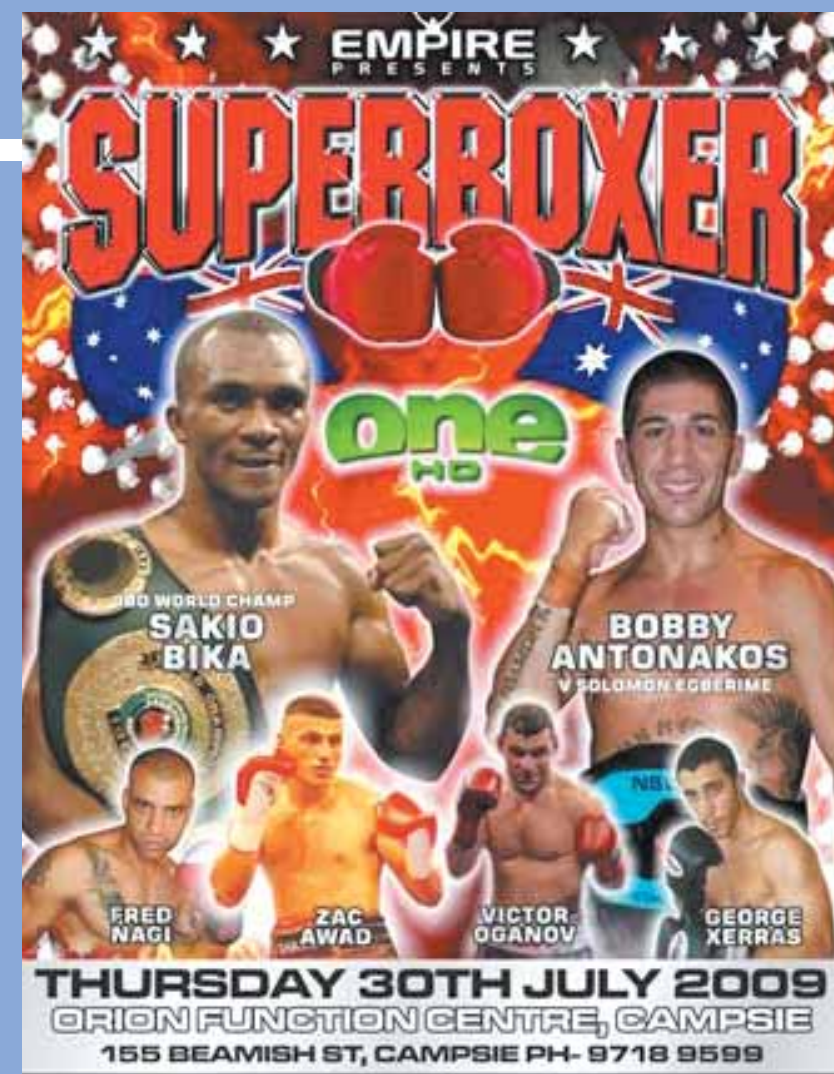
Bobby Antonakos

Don't miss out today Bobby Antonakos at the Orion Function Centre in Campsie.
The man who stands between him and the Australian title is Solomon Egberime a Nigerian who settled in Sydney after competing in the 2000 Olympics.



Interview: Anna Arsenis

Bobby fights tonight for the Australian title



Bobby Antonakos was born February, 19th 1978 in Australia. His mother is from Kalymnos and his grandfather (from his father's side) is from Sparti. Bobby is very proud of his Greek-Australian heritage.

I met Bobby, approximately a week ago. He is a very friendly person, with a great sense of humour, open minded, sensitive and strong. He introduced himself as Charalambos (Babis) Antonakos.

Bobby, have you been to Greece?
Yes. I have actually lived there for three years.

Tell me a few things about your family.
I have a sister, she lives in Kalymnos. My mother is currently in Greece. She enjoys singing. At the moment, I am living with my grandparents (from my father's side). My grandfather came to Australia when he was fourteen. My father is an Electrical Engineer

How does your family feel about your boxing career?
... They support me but they would rather see me do something else. They are proud of what I have achieved but they have a point. I should look into my future.

How do you feel about your grandparents.
They are great support. I respect them a lot. I spend time with them, go to the shops with my yiayia. Sit and have a beer with pappou.

So do your grandparents spoil you a lot?

Yes. Actually yiayia is helping me a lot with my diet as well. She knows what I can eat during my training and what to avoid... She is a lovely person.

It sounds as if dieting is very important for you.
Definitely. I have to be very careful with my diet before a fight. Once the fight is over I can eat anything. I have actually put on 5 kilos overnight!

Do you eat Sweets...
I have a sweet tooth.

How often do you train?
Twice a day. Total 3 hours.

Thursday is a big day for you. How

do you see yourself after this match.
I take one step at a time. I have a few options in mind, but ...let's wait and see!

If you had to stop boxing tomorrow, how would you feel?
I would feel bad, but health is number one. Boxing is a dangerous sport.

Do you fight fair?
Yes. My opponent's safety is very important.

Has an opponent tried to hit you slyly?
Yes. It's happened once... I have been bunt headed. That hurts a lot.

What's your goal?

My realistic goal is the Australian Title. I started boxing pretty late. So, even if I had to hang my gloves the next day I would be happy.

You said you started pretty late. What were you doing before that.
Soccer. I was playing soccer since the age of five.

What made you give up soccer?
Politics. I got sick of the politics that go with soccer.

What made you choose boxing?
I have always loved boxing. It was just that my parents tried to keep me away from it.

How do you see boxing?
Boxing has to do a lot with the individual. If you don't train hard you cannot blame anyone else. You have only yourself to blame. It is a very mental sport.

In a recent interview with Southern Courier you mentioned you've had fourteen professional fights. How many fights did you win out of the fourteen.
Eleven. I lost two. One draw. I have won the NSW title twice.

Do you remember anything from one of the two fights you lost?
... I lost my first fight. I wasted five years. I was not with the right trainer. They switched opponents. Even the commentators said I should have won that fight...

Which was your best moment on the ring.
When I won my first fight. I didn't expect it. My nose broke, my eyes went watery. I thought it was all over... I fought back and I won.



Have you had a 'fight' with a Greek?
Yes. Spanidis. Last year.

Did you win that fight?
Yes.

Has there ever been a time when you wanted to pull out of a fight?
Yes. I was in a bad state. I should have pulled out. I lost and after that I packed my bags and went to Greece for 4 months. I had in mind to drop boxing. But I had my gear with me to train... and I changed my mind. I called my trainer and said to him that I would be getting in the ring again.

Is your trainer Greek?
No. My first trainer was Steve Christodoulou

How do you cope with pain?
I can handle it up to a point.

Tell me a few things about Thursday's fight.
I will be fighting with Solomon Egberime. He is a Nigerian who settled in Sydney after competing in the 2000 Olympics. He is a technical fighter. He's got the title so I have to take it off him.

Do you feel ready for this fight?
Yes. I have trained a lot. There is nothing much I can do.

Deep inside, do you feel you can win on Thursday?
Yes. I have a lot of chances. The pressure is not on me. It is on Solomon. He will have to keep his title so he is fighting with pressure.

Do a lot of Greeks watch your fights?
Yes. And the feeling of supporters being there for me is of major importance.

When fighting, do you hear them call out your name?
Even though I am focused, in the back of my head I can hear them. And it makes me feel very proud and determined to win.

If you had an offer to continue boxing in Greece, would you consider it?
I would love to do this in Greece. And yes, I would take up the offer.

Do you feel there is enough support from the Greek community?
Not as much as I would like.

Why do you think this is happening. You've won 11 out of the 14 fights which makes you a really good fighter.
I think it has to do with boxing. Not many people like it.

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