

Alton Community Boxing Club Celebrates First Win

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - The [new Alton Community Boxing Club](#) is off to a mighty start with their first win last month.

Three boxers participated in the club's first competition on Nov. 17, 2023, and Josha Perkins, age 12, brought home a trophy. Perkins is the first of several Alton fighters who

will be competing in USA Boxing-certified competitions over the next few months through the local club.

“I was proud of myself,” Perkins said. “I was nervous before the fight, but when I got in the room, it just all went away.”

Joshua Young, the club’s coach, noted his pride in Perkins. Young and his fellow volunteer coaches started the boxing club a few months ago, and they have quickly become mentors to boxers like Perkins and his friends. They’ve enjoyed growing the boxers’ skills and friendships inside and outside of the ring. Young hopes to help the sport grow in the Riverbend area so they can reach more kids.

“Boxing is huge as a sport already internationally, but now that we kind of have access to it here, this is all beginning,” he said. “These guys are kind of treading new ground to hopefully help open doors for a lot of other kids too...So Josh the first in decades. He made us all proud that day.”

The next round of fighters includes Trane Davis and Ju’coby Womack, both 12, who will compete later this month and “kind of have the weight of the city on their backs,” Young said. They will be representing Alton and fighting for the first time.

Both boys said they are excited for the boxing match, if a little nervous. They were there to cheer on Perkins, and they are excited to have their friends behind them when they step into the ring, too.

“I’m a little nervous, but it’s like, I can’t back down now. It’s going to happen,” Womack said. “It’s kind of fun. It’s like having my teammates and my friends cheering for me. It’s going to be fun.”

The Alton Community Boxing Club serves over 100 boxers of all ages, but Travis Willis and Landon Vegh, both 13, round out this youngest dream team. They will compete in January.

Willis’s mother jokes that he has been trying to box since he was 3, so it was a natural decision for him to join the boxing club when it became available. The boys’ mothers all agree that it’s a little nerve-wracking to watch their sons box, but they have seen the boys grow a lot in the past few months of working with Young and the other coaches. They’ve also enjoyed watching the relationships between all of the boxers develop.

“I was like, I won a million dollars when he walked away with a trophy. But even if he hadn’t, he did really well in there. He was very confident in himself and he gave it his all and that’s all I ever expect him to do,” said Crystal Wilson, Perkins’s mom. “It’s

definitely like a family. If you see a clip of the actual individual fight with Josh or anybody else, I mean, the whole team was jumping and cheering and screaming. Everybody just loves each other, and it's nice."

This is exactly what Young and the coaches want to see happen. The Alton Community Boxing Club has been "empowering" for everyone involved, and they hope to keep it growing in the coming years.

Their next goal is to purchase a boxing ring, which costs \$5,000. The club is asking the community to consider helping out this holiday season by donating to the Alton Community Boxing Club through the YWCA. You can visit their [official website at AltonYWCA.com](http://AltonYWCA.com), call (618) 465-7774 or stop by the YWCA at 304 E. 3rd Street in Alton for more information or to donate. You can also keep up with the Alton Community Boxing Club at their [official Facebook page](#).

"This is something that if really supported and really given that city love, it could be something that would last lifetimes," Young added. "Once you start boxing and take a pathway like , it stays with you for your whole life. That first fight is life-changing. You just remember it for your whole life. It's something that hopefully you never forget. We're empowering our boxers."



