

Sports

See the Sports Section at ngea.com

Jones goes out as 4-time World Champion

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@ngea.com

Orlando, Fla - On Saturday, July 23, Blairsville's Travis Jones woke up as a 41-year old. He went to bed as a 4-time world champion.

While celebrating his birthday at the IKF Kickboxing World Classic, Jones won his fourth world title by TKO, just 39 seconds into the fight.

Afterwards, Jones excited the ring for the final time, retiring with a 24-10-1 career record with 9 wins coming by knockout.

Winning the world title on your birthday in your final fight is memorable. But celebrating it surrounded by family and friends is a memory Jones will always cherish.

"This one means a lot to me for sure," he said. "I think the reason being, is the fact of knowing that I turned 41, and I was still able to get in the ring and do what I love."

"Having friends and family there watching and supporting me was definitely a big boost in both my preparation and my fighting. What made this one different, though, is knowing that it was the last time I would ever fight, but I was able to win the title and that meant a lot."

Prior to the title bout, Jones defeated another Georgia fighter, Luis Gutierrez by a unanimous decision in the prelim round.

Following three rounds, the fight was turned over to the judges scorecards and the first two gave all three rounds to Jones - both scoring the fight 30-27.

The third judge scored things a little closer at 28-27, but still in favor of Jones.

After defeating Gutierrez, who was 10 years younger, Jones faced 35-year old Murray Turner in the Super Middleweight finals.

The training for these events begins months in advance for Jones, and the preparation involves much more than what you see on the big screen during a Rocky montage. It's definitely not for the weak of heart. And don't think for one second Jones uses his age as an excuse to cut corners.

"You have to be so men-



Travis Jones surrounded by family and friends following his championship fight in Orlando, Fla last month. Jones also celebrated his 41st birthday the same day.

tally focused on what you're doing and why your doing it," he said. "I think said of his pre-fight training routine. "It can get so tough and physically challenging if you don't keep your eye on the prize."

According to Jones, when he began preparing for his final fight, he needed to drop 31 pounds to make weight. But when it comes to his diet, watching what he eats is beneficial to the training regimen in more ways than just shedding pounds.

"Your diet has to be spot on and not just for cutting weight," he said. "It helps with your energy and helps keep you injury free during training. You have to train hard 6 days a week, whether you feel like it or not, in order to be in top condition. It has to be the whole body that is conditioned not just a couple areas."

"This is the most physically demanding sport ever. You could never do any of this without good training partners and support from your family and friends."

Entering the title fight, Jones' conditioning paid off

after going three rounds in his previous fight.

However, when you need less than 40 seconds to knockout your opponent, it's more about skill than stamina. And what better way to ride off into the sunset than with a first round TKO.

"I really don't know what the future holds, but I do know this was my last fight, I have said this for a couple years now," he said. "It's time to give it up, my body just can't take the abuse or the physically demanding training anymore."

"I would like to train my two sons and still enjoy the sport through them. Maybe I'll open up my own kickboxing gym someday. I'm just not sure yet. The one thing I know is, I have really enjoyed and cherished all four of my world titles in different ways because of how hard each one was to get."

Jones also wanted to thank the ones behind the scenes that played a vital role in his success.

"Ben Kiker has been my trainer for all of my titles and he's the best trainer that anyone could have.

"I would like to mention assistant trainers Gary Bishop and Ronald Watkins, as well. They are great and I can't say enough about them."

Kiker also trained Jones' teammate, Thomas Seabolt of Ellijay, who took home the Heavyweight World title at the same event.

Seabolt needed an extra round during his title fight after the first three resulted in a split-decision draw. He would win the fourth round by unanimous decision to bring another championship back to North Georgia.

As for Jones, he began his martial arts journey 23 years ago, and while four world titles would be more than enough to hang your hat on, they're not his only championships.

He's a two-time Southeastern Regional champion, and a 186-pound Valor Fights champion.

Jones is also a 3rd Degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do, a 1st Degree Black Belt in Hamaudo and fought on Team USA, defeating South Africa to claim a team world title.



CHAMPION: Travis Jones (Blairsville, Georgia, USA, 24-10-1/8, 174.2, 6', **40, 7-23-76, Ben Kiker, (706) 273- [REDACTED] defeated Murray Turner II (Eight Mile, Alabama, USA, 3-2/1, S: 1-0, AB: 1-0, 174, 5'11", 35, 2-7-82, Murry Turner Sr, (251) 679- [REDACTED]) By TKO at :39 seconds of round 1.

SATURDAY PRELIM ROUND 1

- Travis Jones defeated Luis Gutierrez (Martinez, Georgia, USA, 2-3, 173, 5'8", 31, 10-22-85, Tommy Seigler, (706) 231- [REDACTED]) by unanimous decision, 30-27, 30-27 & 29-28.
- (**) Murray Turner II has been issued a 30 day medical suspension due to the TKO until August 22nd, 2017.
- (**) Travis Jones' Advanced medicals were cleared on 6-29-17.
- Stevie Warren (Melbourne, Florida, USA, 4-1, AMMA: 4-2, 175, 6'4", 25, 7-28-91, David Diqullo, (321) 368- [REDACTED]) did not make weight - registered for PKB.
- Almut Azbellah (Houston, Texas, USA, 0-0, 175, 5'11", 27, 6-2-90, Tony Comcopcih, (832) 907- [REDACTED]) NO SHOWED!



Jones with teammate Thomas Seabolt (left).



Jones has accumulated an impressive trophy collection during his 23 years in martial arts.

NEW Start Smart Basketball Program

Union County Recreation Department
2017 Start Smart Basketball Program
Ages: 3-5

Beginning this fall, Union County Recreation Department will now be offering Start Smart Basketball! Your child can learn the beginning fundamentals of the sport of Basketball in a fun and safe-noncompetitive setting.

All Start Smart sports beginner programs are led by a highly qualified Program Director for Union County Recreation Department.

Session One Registration begins on July 5, 2017 and ends August 3, 2017 at the Recreation Office (310 Wellborn St.) Registration can be completed in person or online! If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer at (706) 439-6074. Season runs from September 5 through October 12 with 15 sessions.



2017 VARSITY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---------------------------|------|
| August 17 | H | Rabun Gap (Scrimmage) | 7:00 |
| August 25 | A | Gilmer County | 7:30 |
| September 1 | A | Hayesville, NC | 7:30 |
| September 8 | H | Andrews, NC | 7:30 |
| September 15 | H | Banks County | 7:30 |
| September 22 | H | Greater Atlanta Christian | 7:30 |
| September 29 | A | East Hall | 7:30 |
| October 6 | H | Dawson County | 7:30 |
| October 13 | A | North Hall | 7:30 |
| October 20 | | OPEN | |
| October 27 | H | Fannin County | 7:30 |
| November 3 | A | Lumpkin County | 7:30 |

Junior Varsity Schedule

| | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|------|
| August 31 | H | Gilmer CO. (9/10) | 5:30 |
| September 7 | A | Fannin County | 5:30 |
| September 14 | A | White County | 5:30 |
| September 21 | A | Rabun County | 5:30 |
| September 28 | H | Dawson County | 5:30 |
| October 5 | A | Chestatee | 5:30 |
| October 12 | H | Lumpkin CO. (9/10) | 5:30 |

Butternut Creek Ladies Golf Association presents 32nd Sadie Hawkins Golf Tournament Saturday, August 12, 2017

Ladies, it's time to 'Pick your Partner' and sign-up in our Annual Sadie Hawkins Golf Tournament at Butternut Creek Golf Course. Let's make it another 'special day' for our heritage golf tournament - the 32nd this year! What a history!

Sign-in 12:30 - Lunch 1 PM - Play at 2 PM
Deadline for signing up - August 5th
Cost \$45 Per Person - Prizes for 'Closest to pin' along with Flight Winners and a 'Surprise Winner'

Format: Couples Select Shot
Make Checks payable to BCLGA Sadie Hawkins Golf Tournament and send check to Betty Taylor, P.O. Box 295, Blairsville, GA 30514 or call Betty Taylor at 706-745-2248; cell 706-781-9910 or Lilly Adams at 706-745-2725; cell 706-781-4529 by August 5, 2017 or you may sign-up in Pro Shop - 706-439-6076.

| Player Name | HDCP/GHINN# | Telephone |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |