



Boxers sweating it out in the ring.

Offenders let off steam in boxing championship

Youth offenders from all regions celebrated Youth Month in style by gauging one another's strength and agility at the National Offender Boxing Championship held at East London Correctional Centre on 28 June.

The championship formed part of the Youth Month celebrations. Sixty offenders aged between 19 and 25 years participated. They made it to the national championships after winning in their regions.

In opening the derby, National Commissioner Tom Moyane told the contenders that former President Nelson Mandela, who is now fighting for his life in a Pretoria heart hospital, had been a boxer who also spent time in incarceration. He said, "It is fitting that we celebrate our Youth Month by stag-



ing the boxing championship in honour of a man (Mandela) who has made all things possible for us. I wish you all the best and may the games begin."



Offenders throw punches in celebration.

The championship was attended by some of the most respected boxers in the country. Among them were former world boxing champions, Vuyani 'The Beast' Bungu, an IBF Junior featherweight and Masibulele 'Hawk' Makepula, a WBO junior flyweight and WBU junior flyweight. Also in the mix were Ms Noni Tenge, former WBF welterweight and IBF welterweight champion in the female category as well as Lwandile Sityatha, a former offender who is the current flyweight champion of South Africa.



SIGN OF VICTORY: The referee raises the arm of a victorious boxer

The boxing greats had one more opportunity to take to the ring, this time, to teach offenders about the importance of making sensible decisions and to channel their anger appropriately. Mr Tenge told the offenders that her upbringing was not any rosier than their upbringing and she used boxing to change the plight of her family. Mr Bungu told them that he grew up in a volatile family and whenever he reached boiling point he released his anger on a makeshift punching bag, which evidently helped him becoming a boxing champion. He told them that no amount of motivation will change them if they did not want to change.

Current South Africa flyweight champion Mr Lwandile Sityatha, a former inmate at Mdantsane Correctional Centre, with Ms Majori Time, an official at Mdantsane.