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Dunne's preparations intensify for Poonsawat clash

WBA Super Bantamweight Champ **Bernard Dunne** is leaving no stone unturned as he enters the final stages of preparations for his first World title defence at The O2, Dublin later this month. Dunne will put his WBA World Super Bantamweight title on the line against number one challenger **Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym** from Thailand when he headlines the Hunky Dorys World Title Fight Night at The O2, Dublin on Saturday, September 26th.

Dunne began training for the bout in July and as each week goes by he's cranking up the intensity of his work as he bids to see off the challenge of his Thai opponent. The Dubliner has enlisted the help of some world class sparring partners to help him prepare for Poonsawat who has lost only once in 39 professional fights.

The latest arrival at the champions training camp is 2008 Olympic Games Silver medallist Khedafi Djelkhir. The 25 year old Frenchman joins world rated Canadian Oliver Lontchi in Belfast with former Dunne opponent Cristian Faccio also due to renew acquaintances with his old foe.

Lontchi is coming off a defeat to Juan Manuel Lopez in June for the WBO World title while Faccio has won three fights on the trot since his defeat to Dunne in Castlebar last November. Djelkhir is another major addition to the camp given his hugely successful amateur career prior to switching to the pro ranks following last year's Olympic success.

Dunne's trainer Harry Hawkins believes the top quality sparring will pay dividends in the ring against Poonsawat. "Djelkhir is an excellent little fighter and in terms of his physical attributes he's quite similar to Poonsawat so he should be good work for Bernard," revealed Hawkins. "He was very impressive in the Olympics last year and he's expected to go on and do very big things in the pro ranks.

"Lontchi is very fast and has proved to be an excellent sparring partner as well and obviously we're very familiar with Faccio from his fight with Bernard last year."

Hawkins believes that Dunne is capable of improving on his sensational title winning effort over Ricardo Cordoba in March and he's been very pleased with the way his charge has gone about preparations for his first defence.

"Bernard is hungrier than ever right now and that's been reflected in his training for this fight," said Hawkins. "It's one thing to win a World title but it's another thing to defend it and establish yourself as one of the very best and that's what Bernard wants to do. We're under no illusions, Poonsawat is a truly world class operator and all the other champions have been avoiding him but Bernard isn't interested in ducking anyone. He wants to prove he's the best and beating this guy will make another big statement."

The undercard for the Hunky Dorys World Title Fight night continues to take shape with unbeaten Cavan star **Andy Murray** defending his European Union Lightweight title against former Italian Champ **Pasquale Di Silvio** in the chief supporting contest.

A mouth watering All Irish clash between unbeaten Light Heavyweight prospects **Jamie Power** and **Michael "The Storm" Sweeney** has also been added to the undercard. The duo who have yet to taste defeat in a combined total of 14 pro fights will put their unbeaten records on the line in what promises to be classic All Irish duel.

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Reigning Irish Welterweight champion, **Stephen Haughian** has also been added to the action packed card while two of Dublin's favourite fighting sons will also step between the ropes with current Irish and IBF International Featherweight champ **Patrick Hyland** and former Irish Lightweight champ **Oisín Fagan** featuring in separate bouts.

Hyland will face former Commonwealth title challenger **David "Silent Danger" Kiilu** while Haughian and Fagan's opponents will be announced shortly.

Tickets for the Hunky Dorys World Title Fight Night are priced from €50 and are available from Ticketmaster (phone 0818 719 300 or visit ticketmaster.ie). Tickets are also available from Ticketmaster outlets nationwide.