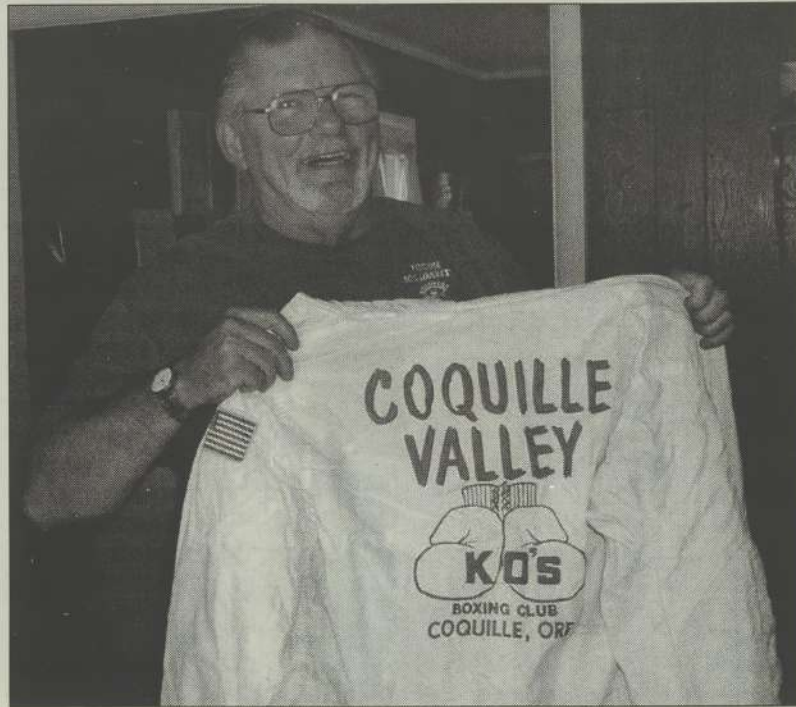


HEAVY Hitters

Coquille's Boxing Club rules the roost during the 1970's



A JACKET OF MEMORIES -- John Frazier admits the memories flooded back as he held the jacket he wore when he coached the Coquille Valley KO's, a youth boxing club that enjoyed much success and earned even more respect in the 1970s.
PHOTO-Jake Wilhelm

BY JAKE WILHELM

"Everyone knew if they came to Coquille, you better come ready to box!"

That's how John Frazier of Coquille sums up the reputation earned by the Coquille Valley KO's in the 1970's. The youth boxing club was a key part of Coquille life from 1972 to 1977, bringing yet another way for local youngsters to learn how to be the best they could be.

Youth boxing clubs were a big thing in the 1970s, says Frazier, who coached the KO's for much of this club's five years in the ring. Clubs across America kept young fists flying -- in a good way, that is. As long as youngsters between the age of six and 16 had the desire, these clubs were there to serve.

Coquille's KO's had plenty of competition from as close as the Bay Area, Roseburg and as far away as Eugene, Grants Pass, Portland, Albany and Crescent City; the boys

even traveled to Southern California, Nevada and Missoula, Montana. Belonging to this group was the "in" thing; at any one time, 20 to 25 boys belonged to the KO's and one season saw 52 youngsters on the roster.

Matches were well attended, too. Frazier remembers an average crowd of 300 to 400 people at the matches the club held in the big auditorium at the Coquille Community Building. That's because the kids were passionate, the fans were passionate. Youth boxing was such a big deal in Coquille, the KO's sponsored the Junior Olympics Boxing Competition in 1976. Take their reputation as great fighters, throw in the fact bouts were televised once in a while and always written up in the newspaper, the boys had a lot to be proud of.

That pride started with them, Frazier said.

"We had great boys. They had discipline, they had desire, it's as simple as that," he said.

It was easy to see that desire and talent play out in the ring as youngsters made the right hits, the right moves that helped the KO's amass individual and team awards

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