

sports

Kevin Montano scores in the ring

By Jay Bedecarré
The Concordian

Kevin Montano gets straight A's in the classroom at Sequoia Middle School, assists at Queen of All Saints Church as an altar boy, plays the saxophone, flute and violin and helps organize community fund raisers. All of which belies the aggressive Concord athlete who has carved out a successful resume with the Community Youth Center boxing team.

Taken as a whole, the Concord youngster was recently named CYC Athlete of the Year, an award generally reserved for high school seniors, not 80-pound 12-year-olds in seventh grade.

CYC boxing coach Gary Sullenger, who has trained amateur and professional boxers of all ages for many years, says when Montano enters the ring, "he's there to win. You see it in his mindset. We work on his punch count and he overwhelms his opponents."

This aggressive style netted Montano the 11-12 age group Police Athletic League National Championship in San Antonio, Texas late last year.

Not resting on his laurels, Montano recently returned to CYC with the Oregon Golden Gloves 80-pound title after scoring 5-0 victories in the semi-finals over a Seattle boxer and in the championship bout against a Portland fighter. The little right hander began boxing at nine years of age. Next up

are the Junior Olympics where his age group competes up to the Regional level covering all of Northern California from Watsonville to the Oregon border.

Also coming home with an Oregon Golden Gloves crown was Erick Montano, Kevin's soon-to-be 20-year-old brother who won the 141-pound open division. Erick Montano is a student at Diablo Valley College and has been boxing for six years. He is also an assistant coach at CYC and joked with Sullenger about his championship belt, "This time dad couldn't just ask me 'how did your little brother do?'" Sullenger says of Erick Montano, "He's one of the best kids I've ever had in the program. He

cares about the kids he coaches and never has a bad word about anyone."

The veteran coach explains that boxers in the young age groups wear 10-ounce gloves ("that's lots of padding").

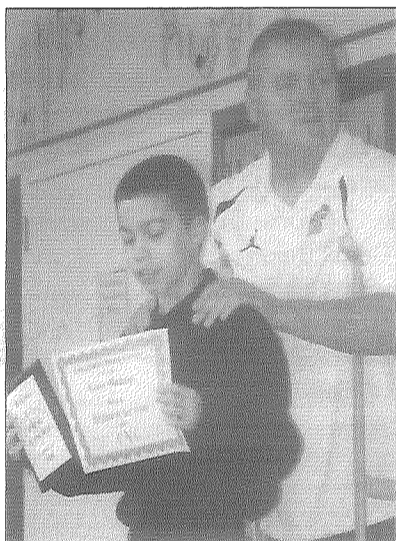
"Between the gloves and new headgear the sport is much safer. The fears parents had about their children boxing have been greatly lessened by these measures." At his age the younger Montano boxes three 90-second rounds.

CYC Campus Manager Nick Schweickert says of his "impressive" Athlete of the Year, "Kevin is an outstanding young man

with a bright future. He is talented academically and athletically, and at such a young age he is already giving back to the community."

Valeria and Erick Montano Sr. were on hand to see young Kevin named Athlete of the Year at the end of January to climax the fifth annual CYC Awards Night.

For more information visit www.communityyouthcenter.org or www.Facebook.com/CYCFans.



Photos courtesy Community Youth Center
Kevin Montano displays his awards for excellence in the boxing ring.

