

SPORTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 2006

Former boxer making an impression

CONCORD
MIKE ARIAS
who got into boxing
one of the top super
featherweights in the world.
In his young career at
the Community Youth Center,
he hopes they never have to un-
der two words.

Arias became one of the
top boxers in the world — he
lost by an eighth round PKG to
Joel Casamayor in 2007. In a
he elimination bout — even
though he didn't start boxing
until he was 21.

"The best guys I was fight-
ing all started boxing by the
time they were 6 years old,"
Arias said. "And when I finally
did start boxing, I was working
that whole time before I went
to trial."

"I'll those kids how grate-
ful they should be to be in this
kind of sport. They should
over anything for that."

Arias, 35, was hired by Con-
cord coach Gary Sullenger to
be an assistant coach in July.
Sullenger trained Arias to a
7 record and a career and a
30-3-1 record as a professional.
Arias lost to Casamayor in the
on "he underpart of the Mike
Arias-Lewis bout. He
also lost a 12-round decision to
Jesus Chavez for the NABO
featherweight title in 2001.

"I didn't have enough expe-
rience for those big bouts,"
Arias said. "But I love this sport
that changed my life. Now I
want to motivate these kids as
to the kind of experience they
can have in boxing."

One of those experiences
will be tonight when the CMC



MIKE ARIAS
Boxer

located at 2251 Canyon Court
hosts some of the top boxers in
Northern California. Doors
open at 7:30 p.m. and pay-as-
you-wish admission is \$10. The show will
feature eight to 10 bouts and
will include Sacramento's
Brandon Gonzalez, who is
ranked No. 2 in the country at
light-heavyweight. He will face
Randy Rogers of Miami, Fla.
Over

Several CMC boxers also
will be featured on the card.

"I'll those kids, they can
change their life," Arias said.
And it's not just through box-
ing, but all the sports they see
here at the Community Youth
Center. Any sport here will
teach them that they have to
train hard and training that
will help in the rest of their
lives.

Although boxing often is
viewed as a brutal, nasty sport,
Arias said he disagrees.

"I got to travel through box-
ing and I got to see so many
things and I got to meet so
many different people. It's not
like everyone says, that it is
bad for you. People just don't
know. I did very well in boxing,
and I got a lot more than I ex-

pected. I started this sport
though I loved the sport since I
was a child, because my
mother didn't want it. She did
not want to see me go hit.

But when I came to the
USA (as a 16-year-old from
Silveta in Jalisco, Mexico) and
started training, Gary Sullenger
saw something in me and told
me I could be a fighter.
Through boxing, I got confi-
dence in myself. I proved to
myself that I could do things
through hard work. My career
gave me great opportunities.

"Friends of mine told me,
'you were a lucky guy.' But they
didn't see all the years that I
was training and dreaming."

Arias' message to his boxing
students is to grab the opportu-
nity and go with it. "That's
what it is all about," he said.
"Time goes so fast. Before you
know it, you are 20, and it's too
late."

After ending his pro career
with a PKG victory over Nelson
Ramon Medina in 2002, Arias
bought a home in Danfield and
got a job in an auto body shop.
He thought his boxing career
was over until he talked to Sul-
lenger about coaching.

"This is like a dream for
me," he said. "I didn't reach the
world title, but now I have a
second opportunity to start with
young kids and teach them the
mistakes that I made. I will pass
along little things from my ex-
perience. Don't do this or
that was bad. And, of course,
they will be learning from Gary,
who is a great coach."

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