

## **THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING – CAFU**

Phumelela Cafu has told *Boxing SA Media* that his victory against Japanese, Kosei Tanaka that landed him WBO junior-bantamweight title earlier this month is only just the beginning.

Cafu (26) who went to Japan had an impressive record of 10 wins, eight via knockouts, and three draws, was awarded the WBO title at the Ariake Arena, Tokyo, Japan by a split decision and that he dropped the champion, Tanaka in the fifth round could have done him a world of good.

He arrived back in the country to a warm welcome at OR Tambo International Airport and that was followed by an emotional welcome, arriving at home at the King Palo Airport, in East London.

The King Palo Airport where he was welcomed by boxing legends, Welcome Ncitha and Vuyani Bungu was abuzz, and brought East London on standstill as he was paraded on the streets following his arrival.

It has been now a couple days since he was crowned the new, WBO junior-bantamweight title, and took time to reflect on his victory and how his life has changed ever since.

### **That “Champion” feeling**

“It is all starting to sink in now. It is really a good feeling,” he told *Boxing SA Media* earlier this week.

“I received a lot of affection from boxing fans and sporting people on my arrival back in the country. A lot of people, want to see me. They want to talk to me. The interviews, also, non-stop,” he said.

“It was a dream growing up in Duncan Village to be a champion one day. I remember then thinking that if you are an SA champ, you have made it. I realized when I turned professional in 2018, that there is more. I told myself, I want to be a “World Champion.”.

Cafu said that he knew what steps he needed to take to realize this dream; “I knew that I needed to keep my feet on the ground. Stay humble. Work hard. Stay prayed up. I knew that God would make it possible, if I remain focused,” he continued.

### **Living a religious life.**

Affectionately known as, ‘The Truth,’ Cafu grew up with his grandmother who encouraged him to go to church on a regular basis.

“I grew up at church basically, my grandmother, maMkabane made sure. She would take me to church everyday and I am always grateful for the foundations that church taught me.

“There were trying times during my career, and every time I faced a challenge I would pray, as I no longer go to church as often as I did when I was younger.”

### **No room for failure.**

Cafu showed his mantle and resilience beating Tanaka in front of a hostile crowd in Japan “I knew that I cannot fail. I had to do it for my mother, and everyone at home. My mother, a single mother, did well to provide for myself and my brother, Thabiso growing up. I want to give back to her and provide for her now.

“I was also in the best shape; I have ever been before my fight with Tanaka. I had never trained like; I did before that fight. I was confident and focused,” he continued.

### **Hobbies and favourite dish**

Cafu added that despite his busy schedule especially ahead of the fight, he still found time to enjoy his hobbies; “I like to relax and play video games to take my mind away from everything. I listen to music, Hip Hop, R n B and soul music.

“I enjoy a dish of Macaroni & Cheese and as often as I can, I eat porridge and Amasi (African salad),” added Cafu.

### **Kaizer Chiefs or Orlando Pirates**

Cafu was recently seen wearing both a Kaizer Chiefs’, gold and black and Orlando Pirates’, black and white recently, with both boxing and football fans revealing that he might be following both teams, and he clarified, with a smile.

“I am a Kaizer Chiefs fan, Khosi 4 Life. I was gifted the Orlando Pirates jersey, and I had to wear it,” he said.

### **What is next?**

With title in the bag, question on everyone’s mind is what is next for WBO champion, “I am not sure, and I will in the next couple days meet my Team and we discuss options that we have on the table. Whatever the option, I just want to defend my title!

Rematch with Tanaka or Roman Gonzalez, bring it on. I will be ready! I want to become one of South Africa’s finest boxers and one of the best in history locally,” added Cafu.

### **Gratitude**

Cafu paid a tribute to his Team led by Colin Nomakanjani, “Thank you to my Team; Colin Nathan, Sharon Strydom, uncle Larry (current promoter), Shaun Ness, Uncle Riyaz, Uncle Benny and Mike. I cannot thank them enough for what they have done for me.

I also want to thank my former trainers; Mapetla Mzamo, Thulani Mhlubulwana, Showtime Sityata, Mnyamezeli Sosha, Khangelani Jack and former promoter, Ayanda Matiti. I thank South Africa, boxing fraternity for the love,”

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