

Mbenge receives a Heroes' Welcome.

New IBO Welterweight Champion, Tulani 'Evolution' Mbenge arrived to a heroes' welcome at OR Tambo International fresh from London where he defeated Micheal McKinson from United Kingdom by a unanimous decision at the Copperbox Arena on Saturday evening.

The three judges gave the South African the fight by 116-112 x2 and 117-111 to hand the Londoner, McKinson only his second defeat in his professional career.

For the 33-year-old Mbenge, a two-time South African welterweight champion, who lost the IBO title to Sebastian Formella back in 2019, it was time to bounce back and add his name to the annals of South African history as one of South Africa's most decorated boxers in recent times.

Welcoming him at the airport on behalf of Boxing SA was the Chief Operations Officer, Mandla Ntlanganiso who expressed his joy welcoming yet another champion into the country, "Thulani 'Evolution' Mbenge has made us proud dictating the fight from round one (1) to the last round. You could see even the crowd at the Copperbox changed allegiances and supported him (Mbenge). This shows that in South Africa we have talent, we have boxers to take us to greater international heights.

"We are grateful that we managed to get another title within five (5) days and if you count world champions in South Africa they are growing. This calls for all stakeholders in boxing South Africa to work together to grow the sport from development to the professional ranks," said Ntlanganiso who had joined the enthusiastic crowd at the airport early hours of Monday to welcome the new IBO world champion.

Boxing SA had brought a welcome gift for the triumphant boxer who was all smiles as Tournament Officer, Lebohang Morebudi handed him the welcome gift on behalf of the Regulator.

Speaking to Boxing SA Media Mbenge said, "I do not know how I am feeling now, arriving here to this welcome is something I cannot put it into words. I am still trying to process everything that has happened in the past 48 hours or so.

"I am incredibly happy because these are exciting times for me, my Team, and my Family. I have the belt now, and I am rated no. 7; it is exciting times for us,"

Mbenge also reflected on the frustration having waited for a while to get a chance to challenge for the title; "I will not lie, it was frustrating but then again, boxing is a sport that demands patience. Moments like this take time, I was always confident that my time will come. Together with my Team, we manifested this,"

“If you remember in 2018, I fought for World Title at Emperors Palace on the 18th of October, this year same weekend, the 19th of October I fought for the title. It is all about the aligning of stars and mindset.

Mbenge took time to congratulate both Phumelela ‘The Truth’ Cafu and Sivenathi ‘Special One’ Nontshinga who also received a warm welcome on their arrival in South Africa a couple of days ago, “I would like to congratulate (Phumelela) Cafu on his title and Sive (Nontshinga) too. It is motivating to see the lads fighting at this level.

“It is not easy going out and fight these guys in their own backyard and dominate. It is really inspiring for us as a country, to young people, the aspiring boxers and to us as colleagues.

What is for the future? “(laughs) too many options. We are getting an option to fight in December and there is an option to fight in February next year (2025). We will have to sit down, choose what is best for us. It is exciting times. These guys want a fight now (laughs),” added Cafu.

Once again, Boxing South Africa extends its warm congratulations to the new IBO Champion and Sean Smith, a Trainer and Manager to Tulani Mbenge for job well done.