

Laila Ali, left, poses with her father, boxing great Muhammad Ali, after her win against Erin Toughill, on Saturday at the MCI Center in Washington, D.C.

## Ali wins first WBC title in knockout

WASHINGTON (AP) - Her dad came to watch, and Laila Ali did him proud. With Muhammad Ali at ring-side Saturday night, Laila Ali pounded Erin Toughill into submission in the third round to remain undefeated and become the first woman to win a World Boxing Council title.

Muhammad Ali got into the ring, hugged his daughter and gave her tender kisses after she stopped the out-classed Toughill at 1:59 of the third round. Toughill took about 20 consecutive punches in her corner before referee Joseph Cooper stepped in to stop the fight.

Laila Ali, who is generally recognized as the top woman in boxing, improved to 21-0 by winning the super middleweight fight against a fighter with far less experience.

"It's wonderful anytime my dad is there," Laila Ali said. "It lights a fire in me."

Ali had promised to give Toughill a beating, and she did just that in the fight on the undercard of the Mike Tyson-Keyin McBride fight.

Toughill had only eight professional fights in five years, and four of those were against women who had never had a fight.

"She talks like me," Muhammad Ali said.

"I back it up, too, don't I, Daddy?" Laila replied.

Toughill did land some effective punches in the first round, mostly left hooks. But Ali's speed and power were too much and she began taking a beating in the second round.

By the end, Toughill (6-2-1) could not punch back.

"People are not used to seeing me hit my opponent like that," Ali said. "She was cowering in the corner."

Muhammad Ali was impressed not only with his daughter's speaking ability, but her fighting ability.

"She's bad," Ali said. "It runs in the family."

As the ring was clearing out after the fight, Muhammad Ali was formally announced, and he responded by throwing a few punches in the air to the crowd.

In another fight, former 140-pound champion Shamba Mitchell ended up a winner even though he quit after a vicious head butt in the fifth round of his fight with Chris Smith.

Mitchell, fighting for the first time since being knocked out in November by Kostya Tszyu, turned his back on Smith and held his left eye in obvious pain after the two unintentionally butted heads 16 seconds into the fifth round. Mitchell, fighting in his hometown, could not continue so the fight went to the scorecards, which Mitchell was winning on all three. Smith and his promoter both protested that the fight shouldn't have been stopped since Mitchell's only cut was below his eye.

Mitchell said there was no way he could continue.

"When we came together our heads met and it felt like my eye exploded," Mitchell said.

## Snub

(Continued from Page 15) co-captains Luqman Jaaber and Ralph Brown. The Senator gave the Panthers a special welcome and recognized their accomplishments. The Panthers put on their best face, expressing appreciation for the invitation.

In a telephone interview, Sen. Allen said that he had written the president a letter and "a personal note talking about how Virginia Union is a wonderful university." Sen. Allen refused to say whether he thought the invitation gave the impression that the

Panthers would see the president.

"I didn't know what to expect," he said. "I'm trying to be diplomatic on all of this."

But he accentuated what he considered the significance of the visit: "We heard some great inspirational music," he said, "but I especially like the (basketball) string music of the Virginia Union Panthers."

Rep. Bobby Scott, Virginia's lone Black congressman who also attended the event, said the snub ap-

parently stemmed from imprecise communications. Nevertheless, Scott added, "You cannot downplay the honor of the invitation. A presidential invitation is an honor that very few people ever receive in their life," he said.

In the East Room, the president recognized the presence of Rep. Scott and Sen. Allen. Terone Green, a veteran Republican from Richmond who also attended the musical program, was less understanding. He said he, too, based on press cov-

erage, thought the Panthers would be given the same treatment as other championship teams invited to the White House. He said he saw excitement and pride on the faces of the VUU players turn into faces of disappointment.

Green witnessed how "perplexed" the VUU invitees were. "I assumed that the White House would acknowledge them. But I guess the acknowledgment was, 'We gave you the opportunity to be on the front row with the president.'"

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