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5 questions for a Golden Gloves champ

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Earlier this month, local boxer Skylar Lee captured the novice super heavyweight championship at the 2010 Vermont Golden Gloves, a divisional tournament that draws amateur fighters from New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine.

The 27-year-old Penacook resident, who stands 6'4" and weighs 213 pounds, wouldn't have been given much of a shot a year ago; in March 2009 he underwent major back surgery. But the training staff at Averill's Martial Arts Academy in Concord whipped Lee into fighting shape. After beating three opponents in three weeks to win the divisional title Feb. 6, he lost a close decision last week in the first round of the all-New England stage.

We caught up with Lee yesterday to discuss the sweet science.

You had back surgery less than a year ago? I had a herniated disk. I just woke up one morning and my back was hurting me, and six months later I was on the operating table. They had me slated for six months of rehab, but . . . I was back to my boxing classes in seven weeks.

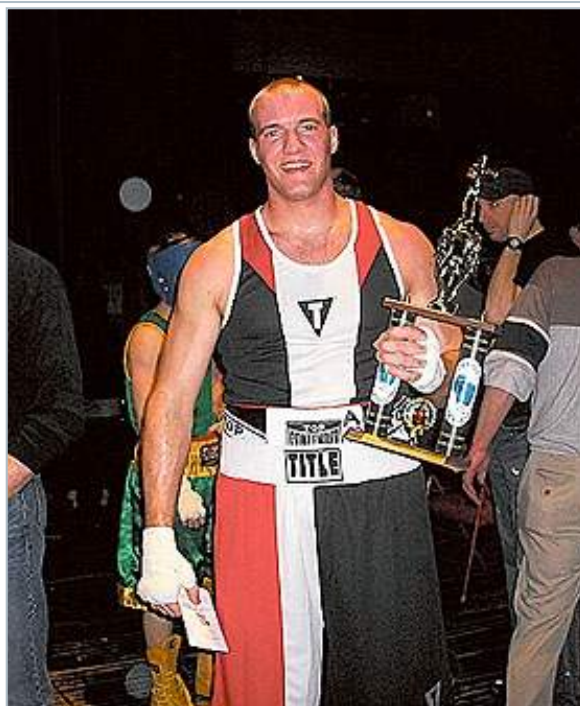
Why did you switch from martial arts to boxing? I kind of discovered that I like boxing better. . . . I lost a little bit of flexibility, but it was mostly just a choice because boxing is more refined.

What's it like training at Averill's Martial Arts Academy? It's like being with family. The students and the instructors are kind of a tight-knit group. My trainer, Paul, is a genius. When it comes to fighting and marital arts, you'll never find anyone who knows more than Paul Averill.

Did you think you could win in Vermont? We went in expecting to see the best in amateur boxing in our area. It's nerve-racking. The place we fought at seats 2,500 people, and it was a packed house all three weeks. . . . The second guy that I fought was probably 6'8". I broke his nose and knocked him out.

How did you react to getting the winning decision in the championship fight? I felt like I was on top of the world. The place erupted, you know? . . . Amateur boxing is all about the glory; you don't make any money off of it. It's all about respect and it's all about the glory, and I earned both.

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Skylar Lee wins the title at the Golden Gloves.

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