

Boxing – Simmons challenges for IBF title at Meadowbank



Stephen Simmons gets the star treatment outside the press conference venue. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Edinburgh's Stephen Simmons has suffered a late change of opponent in one of the headline bouts on Capital Collision at Meadowbank on Friday.

He was due to challenge Matty Askin who was scheduled to make a first defence of his British Cruiserweight title.

Askin has a shoulder injury and now the 33-year-old nicknamed Monster faces Simon Barclay for the vacant IBF East/West Europe Cruiserweight title.

Corby-based Barclay has come in at late notice but revealed he was in training for a fight when he got the call.

The 27-year-old who is nicknamed Sparky has fought nine times losing once and lists one knockout.

The ambitious Scot has fought 17 times, lost twice but won seven inside the distance and gutsy Simmons said: "If I win it sends me up the rankings and my eventual aim is the win a world title.

"I also want to take the title home to my little boy Ethan who is just 17 weeks old."

Meanwhile, joint headliner, Gary Cornish stands on the brink of Scottish boxing history but the man nicknamed The Highlander only has one thought in his mind when he headlines the Capital Collision bill.

The Scot warned Norwich-based boxer Sam Sexton that he will be doing everything he can to take the coveted Lonsdale Belt home to The Highlands.

Inverness-born Cornish has registered 12 knockouts in his 24-fight history. He has suffered one defeat.

If the 6ft 7in fighter wins then he will be the first Scotsman to lift the British heavyweight crown.

Cornish, who lost to Anthony Joshua for the vacant Commonwealth heavyweight and WBC International heavyweight titles at the O2 in London two years ago, told a packed press conference in Edinburgh that he has trained extra hard for the fight.

And he believes he has ironed out the faults noted by his trainers in his previous contest.

The 30-year-old said: "A large contingent of fans are coming down for the fight. There will also be a great amount of Scots in the arena and the atmosphere will be terrific but, at the end of the day, once you are in the ring it is you and him."

He added: "I've wanted the British title since I started boxing and all that matters to me is taking the win on the night."

Sexton, who is five inches shorter and three years older than Cornish, said predictions were "bu**s***" but added: "I'm strong, fit and can punch. I feel great and I've had no distractions in training."

The former Commonwealth title holder added: "I've boxed in a hostile environment before.

"The fans can shout all they like but it is two guys in the ring at the end of the day."