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Sports

## United's Melee At The Met returns to support charity

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United Boxing Club will host its fourth annual Melee at the Met later this year.

The fourth annual Melee at the Met takes place later this year at The Metropolitan Theatre, but next month, those looking to grab a spot in one of the four featured bouts in the Corporate Challenge will get to work in the gym.

"They start out with boxing fundamentals and conditioning," said United Boxing Club (201 Scott St.) board member Andrew Bestland. "The idea is to take some regular Joes, train them and get them to compete."

To get there, those involved spend 12 weeks in an intensive training program. Participants will start off with the aforementioned fundamental and conditioning training before moving onto skill development, tactics and sport specific training, and then to competition strategies and sparring. The final week of training will taper off on the physical side while fighters prepare mentally for battle.

"It's a cool concept that attracts people who have no prior training in boxing or combat," said Ryan Savage, a former national boxing team member, vice-president of Boxing Canada and the president of the United. "It's a lot of work, they have to commit the time and energy. It's been well received so far and it's really taken off.

"We're trying to make it as cool an experience as possible. We want it to have structure to it like a typical training camp before a fight. We also have a performance psychologist affiliated with the gym who will work with the fighters."

The event started off four years ago to raise money for the gym, a not-for-profit organization. Now, with the gym doing well financially, they've decided to bring on a charity to raise money for. The gym will be supporting the Victoria General Hospital Foundation at the upcoming event with the goal of raising \$15,000 for the foundation.

"The money will go to the "For Her Heart's Sake" initiative, which is a unique and innovative inter-disciplinary project with one goal: to eradicate heart disease as the No. 1 killer of the special women in our lives — our mothers, daughters, sisters, wives and friends," Bestland said.

The event will also play host to an International Challenge, where top amateur boxers will compete in a Team Canada versus Team USA format.

All matches are fully sanctioned amateur boxing matches, which includes the presence of a ringside doctor and a referee. Not everyone who takes part in the training process will be on the card. Weight class and experience determine the participants.

"It's a difficult sport, for sure," Bestland said. "Some people pick it up quick. But from the first day they come in to the day they fight, there's a remarkable difference.

"Most people who have participated have seen a benefit and have continued their change of lifestyle. Some have moved on to other things like Muay Thai."

United also works with youth at risk, any community-based organizations that reach out to them, and have recently been working with groups with Parkinson's disease.

For more information, visit the club's new website at [www.unitedboxingclub.com](http://www.unitedboxingclub.com)