



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **JOHNNY NELSON FIGHTS FOR BRITISH SHOWJUMPING**

Former WBO Cruiserweight Champion, Johnny Nelson has stepped in to back British Showjumping in their fight for podium success.

Holding the Cruiserweight World title for six years which he successfully defended thirteen times, Johnny is just the man to put his weight behind a sport that is tough, demanding and incredibly competitive. Showjumping, he believes, has every attribute and he's an extremely passionate spokesman which may surprise those who think equestrianism is no sport for a hardened boxing champion.

Johnny explains "People often raise an eyebrow when I tell them I ride, that I love horses and that I really think it's one of the toughest sports out there. I'm sure they often think I'm just pulling their leg – so my response to this is always that they should just get on a horse, try it and then tell me if they think it's soft!

"I rode as a teenager, then had a break during the heights of my boxing career before picking it up again a good few years ago. It really is a tough sport and one that you can make as demanding as you want it to be. Showjumping for me is the ultimate equestrian sport. It's fast, easy to understand, the bravery of the horse and rider are unquestionable and the stakes are high.

"People don't realise the work that goes on in the background to get these horses at peak performance. The riders are continually travelling the world giving their horses the experience they need to go out and compete with a Union Flag on their saddlecloths. It's a fabulous sport and one that I'm proud to be aligned with.

"You then have the grass roots side of the sport, which is where I started as a teenager and am still extremely proud to be part of it. The achievement I feel when I've tackled something new in my weekly lesson still gives me a buzz. How many sports can do that for you after thirty years? It was this, along with the way the sport is strategically working towards delivering success for Great Britain that made me jump at the chance of supporting them publicly as an Ambassador – a role that I feel honoured to accept".

Maria Clayton, Head of Communications for British Showjumping commented "We feel extremely fortunate to have Johnny giving us such public support and we can't thank him enough for accepting the role of Ambassador. I'm sure many eyebrows will be raised when they hear him say that the sport is as hard as the one in which he had global success – I'm hoping as a result it will attract new spectators to the sport".

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Johnny made his debut appearance as a British Showjumping Ambassador at the Yorkshire International Show (YISE) press launch where he was also announced as Ambassador for the event. He will also be attending key events during the year supporting the Great Britain in their campaign for podium success.

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Johnny Nelson born 4<sup>th</sup> January 1967 is from Sheffield and held the WBO cruiserweight World Champion title for over six years having defeated Carl Thompson in 1999 and then successfully defended the title thirteen times.

Since his retirement from professional boxing in 2006, Johnny has spent time working with young students taking to show them how the choices we make in life can effect the way we live. He also works as a Sky Sports pundit and presenter. Johnny is still based in Sheffield where he lives with his wife Debbie and daughters Bailey and India where they live a rural life which heavily involves their horses.

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