

Thai-ed up: Stephen lets loose with a kick during a recent bout. Now the 23-year-old is hoping to advance through the stages at the up-coming event at Braehead.



The history

THAI boxing is an ancient martial art which has been used by the army for centuries.

It is the most comprehensive and full contact ring sport and is currently the world's fastest-growing past-time.

The actual fight involves two competitors fighting over five rounds of three minutes each.

No padding apart from gloves and groin guard are worn and although fighters must not attack the spine or head but they can use fists, elbows, feet and knees.

Famous people who partake in the sport for exercise include Sisqo, DJ Trevor Nelson and Pink.

Box clever

TOP martial art exponents from across the globe will be in action at Braehead next month.

The Power of Scotland event will feature 20 bouts of Thai, kickboxing and mixed martial arts involving fighters from Scotland, England, Belarus, Slovakia and Thailand.

Among those competing in an eight-man knockout tournament for a £3,000 prize is Clarkston's Stephen Meikle.

The 23-year-old is Scottish welterweight champion having won the title in October.

With a perfect record in all 12 professional fights Meikle is stepping up his training ahead of the March 4 show-down.

He told The Extra: "I am one of the underdogs in the tournament but the favourite to progress among the Scottish fighters. I am confident as I've done excellent preparation with my coach Guy Ramsey.

by **Fulton Ross**

"He's a sports science graduate so the training has been very intense and sport specific with plyometrics, interval and sprint training, endurance and sparring."

Meikle believes his walk-through style is well suited to quick-paced bouts and fired out a warning to the other competitors: "I won't be afraid to stand and go toe-to-toe with my opponent.

"Each of the fighters has a distinctive style and it will probably come down to who is drawn with who. Anything is possible in a tournament."

Having graduated with an honours degree in business management from Caledonian University last year Meikle now works as a logistic manger in the automotive industry.

But his heart remains in the ring: "Unfortunately there's not enough money in the sport to fight full time so it remains a hobby for me."