

Pomp and posturing at 'Waterfront' weigh-in

By Nancy Gay

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

A representative slice of the eclectic subculture of boxing — cocky fighters, mouthy trainers, assorted wannabes and suspicious-looking hangers-on — crowded around a smallish ring yesterday at Potrero Hill's World Gym, where the main attraction was an industrial scale.

This was the main focus of 21-year-old pugilist, model and University of Washington student Bambi Bertoncetto, who wandered around the stuffy room purposefully spitting into a paper cup.

Tobacco? Energy drink? Nope. Just saliva. Lots of it.

"I've got to weigh in today," explained the trim, photogenic 5-foot-6 Bertoncetto. "So I'm looking to drop every bit I can."

So it went at the weigh-in and official sign-up for today's "On the Waterfront" professional boxing card to be held at Pier 32 on the Embarcadero. The scene at World Gym was the usual pre-fight circus, with a local flavor.

Fighters stood on the scales in their undershorts, everyone talked big and Bay Area boxing promoter Peter Howes — who organized tonight's seven-bout event and landed a nice ESPN2 spot for it — readied himself for San Francisco's first major boxing show in nearly two decades.

"It's a great card, and there's something for everyone," said Howes, who brings the bouts to a large tent on the waterfront. Gates will open at 5 p.m., and the first bout should begin about 6 p.m.

Howe's show will feature traditional boxing — with male and female fighters — martial arts, live bands and the usual array of scantily clad ring-card girls and hostesses. ESPN2 will feature only the boxing portion of the card as the third installment of its two-hour "Tuesday Night Fight" series.

For the record, Bertoncetto made weight (134 pounds for the 135 women's bout) and will face the more experienced Susan Howard (5-2, two knockouts) of Novato. The women will fight four two-minute rounds.

Of local interest, San Leandro's Juakin Gallardo (10-0, three knockouts), the state junior welterweight champion, is scheduled to fight Salvador Montes (7-5-2) of Pomona (Los Angeles County), although Montes failed to show at the weigh-in. Howes said another boxer would be signed should Montes be scratched.

The picturesque Embarcadero location certainly will provide

On the Waterfront

■ **WHAT:** Professional boxing card of seven bouts, including former NABF heavyweight champion Robert Davis (24-1, 16 knockouts) vs. Terrance "KO" Lewis (29-8, 20 KOs); WBF junior light-weight champ Orlando Villafolor of the Philippines (18-0, 13 KOs) vs. Luis Lizarraga (30-24, 22 KOs) of Merida, Mexico; Susan Howard (5-2, 2 K's) of Novato vs. Bambi Bertoncetto (3-1, 1 KO), four two-minute rounds.

■ **WHEN:** Today. Gates open at 5 p.m.; first bout at 6 p.m.

■ **WHERE:** Pier 32

■ **TICKETS:** \$25 general admission, \$30 general reserved; \$50 Silver Circle; \$100 Gold Circle, \$200 ringside. Available at City Box Office (415) 392-4400; Tickets.com.

■ **TV:** ESPN2, 6 p.m.

ESPN2 viewers some eye candy, though it's hard to predict how scintillating the bouts might be.

Heavyweight fights always draw interest, and this event features an interesting pair of journeyman punchers looking for bigger exposure.

Terrance "KO" Lewis (29-8 with 20 knockouts) admits he knows nothing about his opponent, Army veteran Robert Davis (24-1, 16 knockouts) of Akron, Ohio.

"I don't watch tape of nobody," said Lewis, still full of bluster following his impressive April 6 knockout of heavyweight prospect Ed Mohone, a fight shown on ESPN. "I let my trainer do that, that way I don't let anything negative get into my head."

Lewis, who weighed in at 240 — seven pounds heavier than Davis — at least knew his opponent's record, even if he wasn't all that impressed.

"Sure, this guy has a lot of fights," Lewis said of Davis, "you tell me, but where's he been?"

Davis, who has beaten the usual array of club fighters and fringe opponents, had a huge year in 2000, picking up wins over better-known guys such as Keith McKnight, Charles Shufford and Greg Page. "This is the biggest fight of my career," said Davis, a Gulf War veteran. "I need this to get on the better cards."

E-mail Nancy Gay at ngay@sfchronicle.com.