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A photograph of Barry McGuigan, a middle-aged man with a goatee and balding head, wearing a blue polo shirt. He is leaning forward with his hands on a dark, reflective table. The background is a blurred boxing gym with a grid pattern.

BOXING CLEVER: BARRY McGUIGAN STEPS INTO THE FINANCIAL RING

The 'Clones Cyclone' is behind a new company that aims to train the next generation of boxing superstars

Former WBA featherweight world champion and 'hall of fame' boxing legend Barry McGuigan is reluctant to give away the secret to spotting new talent but he is willing to share the benefits of their success with committed investors.

'You can just see it,' says McGuigan, when asked the secret to picking out raw talent. '85% of the best pros are the best amateurs.'

And McGuigan, or the 'Clones Cyclone', should know. In 1983 he became European Featherweight Champion and British Featherweight Champion, and in 1985 became the WBA World Featherweight Champion, the Founder and Chief Executive of Cyclone Promotions.

It is at the Cyclone Promotions HQ that GB Investments meets him to talk about his move into the investment arena. It's probably the first, and

only time, an interview about a new company will be conducted in a boxing gym to a backdrop of grunts and punches being thrown.

Indeed, the Boxing Advantage Company (BAC), which is being run as a Seed Advantage EIS fund, is the first of its kind.

The fund will act as an incubator for new boxing talent, which are selected by McGuigan as being potential stars.

The boxers are then brought into the McGuigan camp where they are trained, mentored and promoted to become 'superstars' of tomorrow.

McGuigan is planning to sign five boxers to the fund initially and has his first signing in sight - kickboxer-turned-boxer Chantelle Cameron. Although she failed to qualify for the next Olympics, McGuigan believes she is destined for great things.

The boxers are paid a sign-on fee, a regular monthly income, and have the cost of their training, nutrition, doctors, physiotherapy and fight costs covered by the company. In return, the boxers sign over the fees they receive from sponsorship and advertising for the first three of their career to the company. This revenue makes up the returns to investors.

McGuigan's company will develop the media presence of the boxers, their brand and fan base, with short and long-term sponsors already identified, as well as TV link-ups with Channel 5, ITV, Sky Sports, Showtime Sports and CBS in the bag.

Boxing is a sport which attracts serious money. In 2015, the Floyd Mayweather versus Manny Pacquiao fight generated more than \$400 million in pay-per-view revenue alone.

On top of this are opportunities for sponsors to pay for advertising on shorts, gowns, training gear, as well as brand endorsement and product placement opportunities offered by social media sitting alongside more traditional corporate events and personal appearances.

Giving Back

Barry McGuigan and Cyclone Promotions like to give back to the community and are involved in Laureus Sport for Good and is the founder of the BMBA.

The organisation aims to use sport to end violence, discrimination and disadvantage, and supports more than 100 sports-based community programmes in 35 countries. It works with disadvantaged children to help change their lives.

McGuigan says he has been involved in bringing boxing to 'troubled kids' in London's East End. Through the charity, McGuigan is hoping to spread his boxing ethos wider.

He is famously known for being a friendly and upfront boxer, and family man who eschewed trash-talking at the height of his fame.

'We have a social conscience and a standard of beliefs that are acceptable,' he says. 'Be nice to people, try your best, and never insult your opponent.'



BAC, which is managed by Amersham Investment Management, is aiming to raise £5 million. Investors are being asked for a minimum investment of £5,000 and the fund will target a return of £1.20 for every £1 invested, to be delivered after a three year period.

Investors may also benefit from other opportunities, such as meeting the boxers, watching them train and having behind-the-scenes access to them.

A Family Affair

Cyclone Promotions, which is based at The McGuigan Gym in South-West London, is a family organisation.

Shane McGuigan is maybe the best known of Barry's sons. Although he is just 28 he has made his mark on the boxing world and has been awarded Trainer of the Year 2016 by the British Boxing Board of Control, Saturday Night Boxing, The Boxing Writers Association of America, and Ring 8 Boxing Awards.

It was under Shane's stewardship that Carl Frampton won his IBF super bantamweight title, making Shane the youngest trainer in history to train a world champion.

Shane also trained George Groves in his successful fourth attempt to win a world title, help him become WBA super-middleweight world champion.

McGuigan described his son as a 'remarkable' trainer who takes a 'multi-faceted approach' to training the boxers, taking on the strength and conditioning training as well as the nutrition and tactical aspects of coaching.

'Only certain guys can get it right,' says McGuigan, and Shane has certainly proved his credentials.

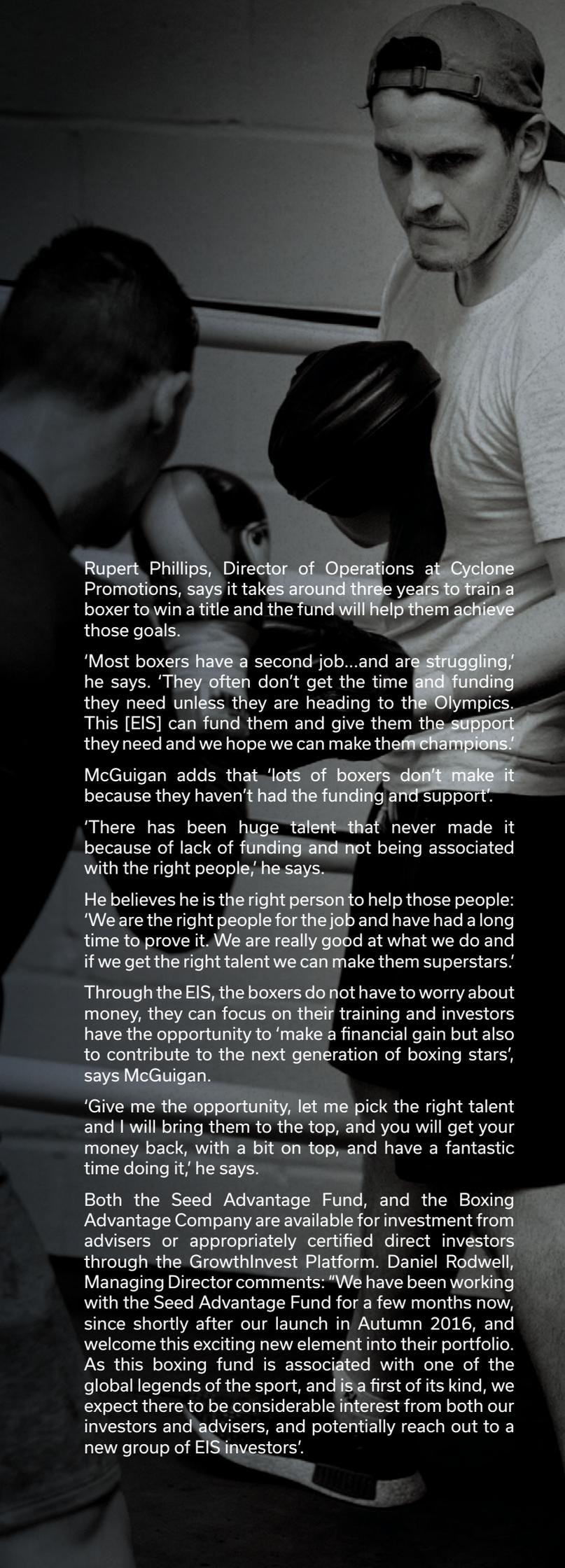
Although Shane won't be training all the boxers signed to the fund due to time constraints, the McGuigan team will use trusted trainers across the country to help train the boxers. There will also be opportunities for the signed-up boxers to come to the McGuigan gym for bootcamps and additional training.

It isn't just about the training however, and the rest of McGuigan's family is working behind the scenes to benefit their boxing fraternity. Blain and Jake, McGuigan's other sons, are hired as consultants and are the promoters in charge of building the social media aspect of the boxers' careers, something that is increasingly important - and financially lucrative - in this digital world.

'[My family] grew up with a PhD in boxing...they grew up with knowledge of the game...and they are all passionate about it,' says McGuigan. 'They are a very important part of the circle.'

Next Generation

Family is the basis of Cyclone Promotions and the boxers who are brought into the camp are treated as family, one that aims to help one another, and the money raised via BAC will help McGuigan to help more boxers realise their potential.



Rupert Phillips, Director of Operations at Cyclone Promotions, says it takes around three years to train a boxer to win a title and the fund will help them achieve those goals.

'Most boxers have a second job...and are struggling,' he says. 'They often don't get the time and funding they need unless they are heading to the Olympics. This [EIS] can fund them and give them the support they need and we hope we can make them champions.'

McGuigan adds that 'lots of boxers don't make it because they haven't had the funding and support'.

'There has been huge talent that never made it because of lack of funding and not being associated with the right people,' he says.

He believes he is the right person to help those people: 'We are the right people for the job and have had a long time to prove it. We are really good at what we do and if we get the right talent we can make them superstars.'

Through the EIS, the boxers do not have to worry about money, they can focus on their training and investors have the opportunity to 'make a financial gain but also to contribute to the next generation of boxing stars,' says McGuigan.

'Give me the opportunity, let me pick the right talent and I will bring them to the top, and you will get your money back, with a bit on top, and have a fantastic time doing it,' he says.

Both the Seed Advantage Fund, and the Boxing Advantage Company are available for investment from advisers or appropriately certified direct investors through the GrowthInvest Platform. Daniel Rodwell, Managing Director comments: "We have been working with the Seed Advantage Fund for a few months now, since shortly after our launch in Autumn 2016, and welcome this exciting new element into their portfolio. As this boxing fund is associated with one of the global legends of the sport, and is a first of its kind, we expect there to be considerable interest from both our investors and advisers, and potentially reach out to a new group of EIS investors'.

The McGuigan Stable

The boxers in the McGuigan stable already hold a string of titles.

Carl 'The Jackal' Frampton

Frampton, 28, who was awarded an MBE in 2015, has lost just one of his 24 fights - 14 of which were knockouts.

The Northern Ireland native is a former two-weight world champion, holding the unified WBA (super) and IBF super bantamweight titles between 2014 and 2016, and the WBA (super) featherweight title from 2016 to 2017.

Josh 'The Tartan Tornado' Taylor

Scottish Taylor, 26, turned professional in 2015, competing in the super lightweight category, after an amateur career that included winning gold at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Since then the former junior taekwondo champion has won all of his nine fights, with eight ending in a knockout.

Conrad 'Mr Dynamite' Cummings

As a fellow Northern Irishman, 25-year-old Cummings has been described as the next Frampton and his fight record backs up that accolade.

The middleweight boxer has fought 11 bouts, lost one, drawn one and racked up five knockouts.

Josh 'The Punisher' Pritchard

Portsmouth born featherweight Pritchard is just 21 but remains undefeated.

He has fought five fights, winning all five - two of which were knockouts. The first of Pritchard's fights came on the undercard of stablemate Frampton's fight with Chris Avalos in Belfast.

Recent signings

Chantelle Cameron

Nothampton based Chantelle made her debut this year winning her first two professional bouts.

Chris Billham-Smith

A Bournemouth based English heavyweight boxing champion who will make his debut later this year.

Find out more

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