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Son Conor could follow Nigel Benn into ring

Former world middleweight and super-middleweight champion Nigel Benn says his son could follow in his footsteps and become a successful boxer.



Benn is now an ordained minister

Conor Benn, 15, has been working out with his father in the ring.

Benn, who was at the British Military Martial Arts Centre in Telford, told BBC Radio Shropshire: "I can't stop him. He wanted to do this years ago.

"He has it in him already. Wow, it's frightening. He's determined and he's fast and he's hungry and passionate."

Born-again Christian Benn hopes that his son will not be tempted by the pitfalls of fame.

"Conor is determined. I can't stop him boxing, but he knows all about my life and I'm there to direct him the right way," he added.

"I'm wary of what could happen because of my own experiences. Fame and fortune bring all the gangsters, the drugs, the sex, the rock and roll, and you get caught up by it. You think it's the best thing since sliced bread.

"You listen to all the hype there is about you, and you run with that.

"I worry about Conor, because it's not just the boxing - it's the lifestyle that goes with it.

"That's why I have to be there for him, as a loving father."

After turning professional in 1987, Benn clinched his first world championship three years later, knocking out Doug DeWitt in Atlantic City.

He lost the title later that year in Birmingham when going down to a ninth-round knockout by British rival Chris Eubank.

In 1992 Benn took the WBO super-middleweight crown with a technical knockout against Mauro Galvano, and kept the belt for four years until losing to Thulani Malinga in 1996.

He then tried twice in that same year to take the WBO super-middleweight title from Steve Collins but failed in both attempts before retiring after the second bout.

Benn appeared in the ITV reality show *I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here* before becoming a born-again Christian.

The 48-year-old, who spent four years in the Army before taking up boxing, was in Shropshire to support the national British Military Martial Arts group, which specialises in training ex-servicemen and women to become martial arts teachers.

He confessed: "I did martial arts as a teenager back in the 1970s before I started boxing, and I preferred it. But to be honest, in those days there was no money in it, while there was in boxing."

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