

Goldstein gets kicks in the ring

By TERRY BELL
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If that old television show *What's My Line* is ever revived, Leah Goldstein would be a sure bet to stump the panel.

Goldstein would come out, sign her name on the blackboard and the panel would start asking her questions about her occupation. Chances are they'd never figure the petite, Vancouver teenager is a professional kickbox champion.

But that's exactly what she is. Goldstein is sweet, 16, and unbeaten in three full contact matches. Her last win, a unanimous decision over Cloverdale's Dayle Baykey-Lloyd before a raucous, standing-room-only crowd at the Royal Towers Hotel Feb. 2, earned her the Canadian women's bantamweight title.

"It takes a lot of courage to go up there in the ring, it takes a lot of guts," says Goldstein, a Grade 10 student at Eric Hamber who has been involved in martial arts for six years. She has a first degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do but has been involved in full contact karate for only one year.

"I've had a few bruises but I've never been hurt," she continues. "Knockouts are pretty rare in women's kickboxing. But the idea is to hurt the other person."

Goldstein doesn't look like the kind of person who'd hurt anyone. She's a clean-cut, soft-spoken 5'3" teenager,

and her friends at school think it's "really neat" that she gets her kicks punching and kicking in the ring.

"Just my good friends know what I do. I don't go around advertising it. At first when I tell them what I do most don't understand. They're afraid for me. But they enjoy coming to my fights."

Goldstein, who started martial arts because her mother thought it would be a good way for her to stay in shape and learn how to defend herself, trains five nights a week. Three practices are full contact sessions with kickboxer Al Cheng and two are in Tae Kwon Do.

Goldstein says Cheng is working on some deals with a group of Hong Kong moviemakers and if things go well she could be appearing in a martial arts film.

"That would be great," Goldstein says. "Al knows a producer and he's interested in me. I don't want to continue to fight much longer; it's not a career."

Goldstein says crowds like to see her on fight cards.

"It's a change for them and I think they like it. People become more attentive when we get in the ring. It's not common for women to be fighting full contact."

Sometimes, though, the male combatants get their noses out of joint.

"Sometimes I hear them say that I should be doing ballet. They're smiling but they mean it. I ignore them."

