

= Vijender Singh =

Vijender Singh Beniwal (born 29 October 1985) , better known as Vijender Singh is an Indian professional boxer and the current WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight Champion from Kaluwas , Bhiwani district in Haryana . He was educated in his village , after which he received a bachelor 's degree from a local college in Bhiwani . He practised boxing at the Bhiwani Boxing Club where coach Jagdish Singh recognised his talent and encouraged him to take up boxing . He was coached by the Indian Boxing Coach Gurbaksh Singh Sandhu .

Having won medals in different competitions at the national level , Vijender was picked to train and compete at several international level competitions such as the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics and the 2006 Commonwealth Games . At the 2006 Asian Games in Doha , he won the bronze medal after losing the semifinal bout against Kazakhstan 's Bakhtiyar Artayev . At the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics , he defeated Carlos G3ngora of Ecuador 9 ? 4 in the quarterfinals which guaranteed him a bronze medal ? the first ever Olympic medal for an Indian boxer .

After this win , Vijender was given a number of awards , including the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award ? India 's highest sporting honour and Padma Shri , the fourth highest civilian honour . In 2009 , he participated at the World Amateur Boxing Championships where he won the bronze medal . In the same year , the International Boxing Association (AIBA) announced Vijender as the top @-@ ranked boxer in its annual middleweight category list with 2800 points . Vijender represented India at the London 2012 Olympic Games .

On 29 June 2015 , Vijender Singh bid adieu to his amateur career by turning professional as he signed a multi @-@ year agreement with Queensberry Promotions through IOS Sports and Entertainment . This ruled him out of 2016 Olympics as he no longer remains eligible as an amateur .

= = Biography = =

= = = 1985 ? 2003 : Early life and foray into boxing = = =

Vijender Singh was born in a Jat family on 29 October 1985 in Kaluwas village , 5 kilometres (3 @. @ 1 mi) from Bhiwani , Haryana . His father , Mahipal Singh Beniwal , is a bus driver with the Haryana Roadways , while his mother is a homemaker . His father drove extra buses for overtime pay so as to pay for Vijender and his elder brother Manoj 's education . Vijender did his primary schooling in Kalwas , secondary schooling in Bhiwani middle from happy sr sec. school bhiwani and finally received a bachelor 's degree from Vaish College . In 1990 , boxer Raj Kumar Sangwan got the Arjuna Award ; so the craze for boxing in India increased . The sport became one of the main job avenues in India . In order to ensure a better life for their poor family , Vijender and his elder brother Manoj decided to learn boxing . Vijender was inspired by his elder brother Manoj , a former boxer himself , to join the sport of boxing . After Manoj succeeded in entering the Indian Army in 1998 with his boxing credentials , he decided to support Vijender financially so he could continue his boxing training . Vijender 's parents decided to not pressurise him to continue his studies , as they felt that he had a talent and passion for boxing . For Vijender , boxing quickly grew from an interest and passion to a career choice .

He practiced at the Bhiwani Boxing Club , where former national @-@ level boxer and Jagdish Singh recognised his talent . Working part @-@ time , he even tried his hand at modelling to financially support his coaching . The first recognition for Vijender came when he won a bout in the state level competition . Vijender won a silver medal in his first sub @-@ junior nationals in 1997 and went on to bag his first gold medal at the 2000 Nationals . In 2003 , he became the all @-@ India youth boxing champion . The turning point , however , came in the 2003 Afro @-@ Asian Games . Despite being a junior boxer , Vijender took part in the selection trials and was picked for the meet where he fought valiantly to win a silver medal .

His boxing style , hooks and uppercut are compared by the media with the style of actor Sylvester

Stallone as the character Rocky Balboa in the Rocky film series . Vijender cites him as one his primary influences , along with boxers Mike Tyson and Muhammad Ali , and boxing promoter Don King .

Vijender Singh is married to Archana Singh . The couple have one child Arbir Singh .

= = = 2004 ? 07 : Athens Olympics and Commonwealth Games = = =

Vijender competed at the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics , in the welterweight division , but lost to Mustafa Karagollu of Turkey by a score of 20 ? 25 . At the 2006 Commonwealth Games , he defeated England 's Neil Perkins in the semifinal but lost to South Africa 's Bongani Mwelase in the final , thus leaving with a bronze medal . He decided to move up in weight and Vijender took part in the middleweight (75 kg) division at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha , where he won the bronze medal in a lost semifinal bout against Kazakhstan 's Bakhtiyar Artayev with the final score of 24 ? 29 . Initially Vijender was not supposed to compete because of a back injury , but he recovered in time to win the tournament and qualify for the 2008 Beijing Olympics .

Among his preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympics was a period spent early in that year when he trained with German boxers in their own country . This training incorporated a tournament involving boxers from around Europe , in one event of which Singh won gold having beaten a German in the process . At The President 's Cup boxing tournament , which is touted as a dress rehearsal for the Olympic games , Vijender defeated Artayev in a quarterfinal bout . Speaking after this , Vijender sounded confident of his physical shape . Talking about his preparation for the Beijing Olympics , Vijender said :

" I did not do well the last time because then I was young and did not have the experience . I have just made it to the senior level and qualified for the Olympics . Now I have the experience . I have won medals at major tournaments like the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games . Recently , I also beat the 2004 Olympic Games gold medallist [Bakhtiyar] Artayev [in the AIBA President 's Cup] , so I have done quite well at the international level . So , definitely , everyone can expect a good showing from me in Beijing . "

" Now I have quite a lot of experience after competing at the international level regularly . I just want to say that Indian boxers are no longer a weak lot ; all are doing well at the international level . Our boxing graph is going up all the time and the rest of the world is now scared to face Indian boxers . "

= = = 2008 ? 09 : The Beijing Olympics and AIBA top rank = = =

After the wins in Germany , Vijender 's training for the Olympics continued in Patiala where Indian boxers going to the Olympics held a camp . Vijender was accompanied by boxers Dinesh Kumar , Akhil Kumar , Jitender Kumar and Antharish Lakra . The Indian Amateur Boxing Federation (IABF) sent a videographer to shoot extensively the bouts involving the likely opponents of the five Indian boxers . A team of coaches went through the video footage shot by videographer Sambhu of the National Institute of Sports , Patiala , and studied the technique of the boxers from various countries in detail , so as to prepare Vijender and the others regarding the opponent 's manoeuvres and fighting techniques .

At the 2008 Summer Olympics , he defeated Badou Jack of Gambia 13 ? 2 in the round of 32 . In the round of 16 , he defeated Angkhan Chomphuphuang of Thailand 13 ? 3 to reach the Middleweight Boxing Quarterfinals . He beat southpaw Carlos G3ngora of Ecuador 9 ? 4 in the quarterfinals on 20 August 2008 which guaranteed him a medal , the first ever Olympic medal for an Indian boxer . He lost 5 ? 8 to Cuba 's Emilio Correa in the semi @-@ finals on 22 August 2008 and shared a bronze medal . Vijender , and Indian wrestler Sushil Kumar ? who won a bronze at the men 's wrestling competitions ? were welcomed grandly to India after their victory .

In July 2009 , Vijender accompanied by Sushil and boxer Mary Kom were garlanded with the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award ? India 's highest sporting honour . It was the first time that three sportspeople were picked for the award ; the award selection committee decided to grant the award

to all of them , taking into consideration their performance for the cycle of 2008 ? 09 . Kom and Vijender were the first boxers to get the award which carried prize money of Rs 750 @, @ 000 and a citation . Both Sushil and Vijender were recommended to the Padma Shri awards committee , by the Indian Sports and Home Ministries ; however , they were denied the awards after recommendations were not fruitful by the Padma Awards Committee for 2009 winners . The denial of Padma Shri for them created a furore among masses with allegations of promoting only a few sports . Vijender later took up a job with the Haryana Police department which paid him Rs 14 @, @ 000 per month .

Vijender participated at the 2009 World Amateur Boxing Championships . He was beaten by Abbas Atoev of Uzbekistan in the semi @-@ final of the 75 kg Middleweight category , by 7 points to 3 and was thus awarded the bronze medal . Vijender won the first round of the bout 1 ? 0 , only for Atoev to run rampant in the second , landing five unanswered blows . The third round was evenly contested with both fighters scoring on a couple of occasions , but Vijender had already lost the match . In September 2009 , the International Boxing Association (AIBA) announced Vijender as the top @-@ ranked boxer in its annual middle @-@ weight (75 kg) category list . He topped the list with 2800 points .

= = = 2010 ? 14 : Padma Shri , Commonwealth Games and Asian Games = = =

In January 2010 , Vijender was awarded the Padma Shri for outstanding contribution to Indian sports . Later , he participated in the invitational Champions of Champions boxing tournament in China , and won a silver medal , losing 0 ? 6 to Zhang Jin Ting in the 75 kg middleweight final . At the 2010 Commonwealth Boxing Championship held in New Delhi 18 March 2010 , he along with five other fellow Indians won gold medal . Vijender defeated England 's Frank Buglioni 13 ? 3 .

At the 2010 Commonwealth Games , Vijender Singh was beaten by England 's Anthony Ogogo in the semi @-@ finals . Leading 3 ? 0 on points going into the final round , Singh was twice given a two @-@ point penalty by Canadian referee Michael Summers , the second for coming just 20 seconds before the end of the bout , leading Ogogo to win by 4 points to 3 . The Indian Boxing Federation (IBF) launched an unsuccessful appeal , leaving Singh with a bronze medal . IBF Secretary General P K Muralidharan Raja said , " The jury reviewed the bout and came to the conclusion that Vijender was holding his opponent and the referee was right in warning him . When the Indian team pointed out that even Ogogo was holding Vijender , the jury felt it was not the case . " Singh lashed out saying that the penalties were " harsh and unfair . The warnings were unfair and harsh . If the referee thought I was holding Ogogo then he should have penalised this guy as well . He was also holding me . It 's a joke that somebody has won by scoring points just out of warnings . " One month later , in November , he won the 2010 Asian Games shutting out Uzbek two time world champion Abbas Atoev 7 : 0 in the final .

Although previously denied by him , Hindustan Times reported that the boxer took up a role in the part real part fictional Bollywood thriller tentatively titled One , to be directed by South Indian director Anand . The film was later revealed to be named Patiala Express , which is produced by Percept Limited . Shooting for the film was supposed to begin in early 2011 . However , on 17 May 2011 , Vijender got married to Archana Singh , a software engineer with an MBA degree , from Delhi . The wedding was solemnised in Delhi in a simple ceremony , and reception was organised at his native place Bhiwani . However , the wedding prompted the filmmakers to drop him from the project , as they felt that Vijender would not enjoy the same popularity among female fans . The film ? s launch was widely reported in March 2011 , and actor Govinda had confirmed Vijender ? s debut with his daughter . Vijender refused to confirm if he has indeed been dropped from the film , saying that " I have to concentrate on my boxing . Wait before you see me in films . "

At the 2012 Summer Olympics , he beat Danabek Suzhanov of Kazakhstan 14 ? 10 in the first round of men 's middle @-@ weight 75 kg category Boxing event , to advance to the round of 16 of the games . He then edged out American Terrell Gausha 16 ? 15 to win the pre @-@ quarter finals bout . He lost to Abbas Atoev of Uzbekistan in quarter final with a score of 13 ? 17 .

In the 2014 Commonwealth Games , Singh claimed the silver medal after being defeated by England 's Antony Fowler by unanimous decision .

== Drug controversy ==

On 6 March 2012 , during a raid conducted on an NRI residence near Chandigarh , Punjab Police seized 26 kilograms of heroin and other drugs , valued at ? 1 @. @ 3 billion (US \$ 19 million) . They also recovered a car registered in the name of Vijender 's wife from outside the home of alleged drug dealer Anoop Singh Kahlon . Later in March , a Punjab Police statement said , " As per investigation conducted so far , Vijender Singh consumed the drug about 12 times and Ram Singh (his sparring partner) about five times . " Singh denied the allegations and refused to give his hair and blood samples for testing . NADA (National Anti @-@ Doping Agency) refused to test Vijender claiming protocol did not allow it to test an athlete for that drug when he was out of competition . However , on 3 April the Sports Ministry of India directed NADA to conduct a test on the boxer since these reports were " disturbing and may have a debilitating influence on other sportspersons in the country " .

By mid @-@ May 2013 , the Olympic bronze @-@ medalist was given an ? all @-@ clean ? certificate by the National Anti @-@ Doping Agency .

== In media ==

After his 2008 Olympic win , Vijender emerged into mainstream media prominence in India and became the latest pin @-@ up boy . Apart from boxing , Vijender took part in ramp shows also . However he commented that with partaking modelling , he wished to " bring the game [boxing] in the limelight , make it as popular as possible and catapult it to its deserving place at the top . " He has regularly spoken against the bias that Indian media has promoted only cricket as the sole game in India . In an interview with The Kolkata Telegraph , he commented :

Thanks to the media , people have started taking boxing seriously over the past two years . Everyone knows my name now because my achievements have been highlighted . Lekin boxing ka toh kuch promotion hi nahin hota India mein . (But boxing is still not promoted in India !) We don ? t have boxing academies , we don ? t even have proper boxing rings . I have lost count of the times I have approached the government and the sporting authorities for support , but nothing has happened . [...] In this country , everyone is hung up on cricket . Forget about boxing , India is doing so well in other sports too . Saina Nehwal is a great badminton player , the Indian tennis team has just won a Davis Cup tie , lekin hamare liye support kahan hai ? (but where is the support for all of us ?)

Before the 2012 London Olympics , Vijender spoke to The Wall Street Journal about the increasing government bias to boost cricket . " I still fail to understand why only cricketers are given perks like free land , and so on . Come on , we boxers aren ? t that bad either : We ? re smart , intelligent and decent looking too ! I ? m working really hard to make my country proud . I hope someday my turn comes , too " he clarified . Vijender was approached by Percept Picture Company to act as a guide and counsellor to participants taking part in the Indian version of the boxing reality show The Contender , which follows a group of boxers competing with each other in a single elimination style @-@ competition . He agreed despite being still contractually obligated with Infinity Optimal Solutions (IOS) , a celebrity management firm who dealt with his media appearances and ramp walks as a male model . IOS successfully petitioned the Delhi High Court to bar him from entering into any deal with Percept .

Vijender appeared on Bollywood actor Salman Khan 's game show 10 Ka Dum . He was accompanied by Bollywood actress Mallika Sherawat . Other appearances includes the fourth season of the Indian dance reality show Nach Baliye with actress Bipasha Basu . Vijender is credited by the critics and the media for bringing the sport of boxing back into the limelight in India . His rise to the top rank of the boxing world has been an inspiration for the younger generation and has brought more aspirants and followers , to the sport .

Vijender was one of the judges on the MTV Reality TV show Roadies X2 .

= = = Bollywood debut = = =

Vijender made his Bollywood debut as an actor in film Fugly , released on 13 June 2014 . The film is produced by Grazing Goat Productions , owned by Akshay Kumar and Ashvini Yardi . The film got above average review .

= = Professional career = =

Singh turned professional as he signed a multi @-@ year agreement with Frank Warren 's Queensberry Promotions through IOS Sports and Entertainment . On 10 October 2015 Singh fought his first professional boxing match . He defeated his opponent Sonny Whiting by TKO . On November 7 , Singh knocked British boxer Dean Gillen in round 1 at the National Stadium in Dublin . In his third pro fight , Singh fought on the undercard of Lee @-@ Saunders on December 19 . Singh defeated Bulgarian Samet Hyuseinov via technical knockout . On March 21 , 2016 Singh knocked out Hungary 's Alexander Horvath in round 3 on the Flanagan @-@ Matthews undercard . Singh defeated French boxer Matioze Royer at the Copper Box Arena on April 30 via 5th round TKO . The fight was halted due to Royer suffering a cut above his left eye . On May 13 , Singh fought at Bolton 's Macron Stadium against Polish Andrej Soldra . Singh won via 3rd round TKO , knocking down Soldra in round 5 to mark his 6th professional win in a row , all coming by way of knockout . Singh defeated Australian Kerry Hope for the vacant WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight title on his home soil in India , marking his seventh consecutive win by unanimous decision , thus ending his 6 fight knockout streak . Two judges scored it 98 @-@ 92 , while the third judge had it 100 @-@ 90 .

= = Professional boxing record = =

= = Titles in boxing = =