

## Smith has featherweight aim

BY FRANK SMITH

HARROW WEALD's Mitchell Smith is confident he could land the British featherweight title before the end of 2015 after deciding to drop down in weight.

The 'Baby Faced Assassin' has impressed on his way to winning all ten of his professional fights at super featherweight but comfortably came in just two pounds above the 9st featherweight limit for his last fight in November.

The 22-year-old has so far stopped four of his pro opponents and picked up the English title and WBO European strap on the way but understandably believes his power will take him further at a lesser weight.

He said: "It might be a little tougher to make weight but I believe I am quite small for super-featherweight (5ft 4 1/2ins tall) so if I drop down four pounds then I should be stronger and bigger at that weight."

Coincidentally, a knee operation just after Christmas meant Smith only returned to the gym in February so he is carrying excess pounds at present and will enter the ring on Friday night above the usual super featherweight limit.

He is not expecting Croatian opponent Antonio Horvatic (4-16) to be too competitive at York Hall, Bethnal Green, in what is merely a six-round tune-up for Smith but he plans to remain composed. If the knockout comes, it comes he said.

Smith will be appearing on the same card as ex-Bushey Boxing Club team-mate Miles Shinkwin and the pair still share the same trainer, with Jason Rowland now in charge of their



Mitchell Smith is hoping his decision to drop down a weight will be vindicated in 2015.

Picture: Action Images

development.

Shinkwin is Southern Area light-heavyweight champion and Smith said: "If we can both get a British title this year, which is very likely to happen, then you would have two fighters out of Bushey Boxing Club with British titles which would be great."

Smith is already English champion at super featherweight and would be reluctant to fight at the same level at the lighter weight. He wants a summer showdown with the winner of Ryan Walsh versus Samir

Mouneimne for the British belt.

Smith has just returned from a 12-day training camp in Monaco where he sparred with talented bantamweight prospect Ryan Burnett, who has top trainer Adam Booth in his corner. Smith said it was ideal preparation for his drop down in weight after regularly sparring with the heavier welterweights and light welterweights in the past.

The camp was primarily for Andy Lee ahead of his WBO middleweight world title defence against Peter

Quillin next month and Smith, as he has stated in the past, is confident he will reach that level.

When asked if he was hopeful of one-day becoming a two-weight world champion, following his drop down to featherweight, Smith said: "You hear of fighters moving up in weight and it is definitely something that we will look at in the future but at the moment I have my goals set and I'm staying focused. One world title will do at the moment and then we will go from there."

## Wealdstone boss Bartlett frustrated by 'naive' decision

Wealdstone boss Gordon Bartlett felt his side were naive in their game management as they lost 1-0 to Conference South title hopefuls Boreham Wood on Saturday.

A Ricky Shakes goal on the stroke of half-time did the damage, with the goal arriving after the Stones gave away possession from a quick free-kick just before half-time.

Bartlett said: "Our game management was a little bit naive because we took a quick free kick, gave it away and they scored 30 seconds later."

"It is a learning curve and we need to take every lesson we can."

"I am a little bit disappointed because I don't think there was a great deal in it."

He continued: "We certainly did not play badly. That is a side playing for the title. It is testament to how far we come since the early part of the season and they are the first team to do the double over us which is not too bad."

Defender Sean Cronin has joined Grays Athletic on loan after growing frustrated at his lack of first-team opportunities, whilst 17-year-old midfielder Dean McDonnell has signed first-team forms.

Cronin, 28, joined the Stones in 2010 and has been a stalwart at the heart of the backline since.

However, the former Cardiff City trainee has been left out of the side recently with Tom Hamblin and Wes Parker the preferred central pairing.

"He is very much part of my thinking for next year but it was in the best interests of everyone," explained Bartlett.

The Stones travel to third-placed Basingstoke Town on Saturday.

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