

De Mori aims to be champ

■ By David Marsh

IT IS nearly half a century since WA has had a quality heavyweight professional boxer.

Steve Zoranich was one of the nation's best amateur boxers and then had a successful professional career in the 1950s.

Mark de Mori, 21, is now determined to become WA's first national heavyweight champion.

After a two-year retirement, the former outstanding amateur has moved to the Gold Coast to train under Les Wilson, who trained world heavyweight contender "Aussie" Joe Bugner to win the Australian heavyweight title in the 1990s.

De Mori attributes his enthusiasm to Danny Green's recent success.

"I wanted to fight professionally but didn't think it was possible to become a successful professional living in WA," he said.

"Danny has shown that it is possible.

"I remember watching him fight. He was the open light-heavyweight champion when I won the State novice and intermediate titles."

De Mori trained for a week with Wilson last month and was invited to return.

"I feel strong and am looking forward to trying out as a professional," he said.

His last bout was at the Arafura Games in Darwin, in May 2001, when at 19 he was the youngest heavyweight to represent WA at an international tournament. He impressed by winning the silver medal.

"I found it hard to find opponents in WA," he said.

"I had lost the passion for boxing and for training for fights that didn't happen."

De Mori, 188cm and 114kg, is confident he will match the nation's best heavyweights.

"I expect to get down to 110kg by my first fight," he said.

De Mori is likely to make his professional debut on the Gold Coast on February 13.

After retiring as an amateur, he resumed studies and graduated with qualifications in the fitness industry.

His impressive amateur career included winning State and Golden Gloves titles.



High hopes: Mark de Mori, a former outstanding amateur boxer, has come out of retirement hoping to become WA's first national heavyweight champion. PICTURE: IAIN GILLESPIE