

During the national pandemic of 2020, Perry Rodriguez opened the gym that he had been dreaming of since he was a kid. Rodriguez Boxing Academy opened in March of 2020 until COVID-19 forced everyone to shut down. RBA was opened as a way for Coach Perry's fight team to have a gym to call home. From 2018 to 2020, Perry coached a fight team of five local guys from the Summerville area at local gyms. The journey to this dream has been a long one for Rodriguez, but he has been and still is determined to prove the gym's worth in the boxing community.

Rodriguez began taking taekwondo at the age of 12 and really liked the idea of coaching and running a gym one day. Due to some amazing coaches in his beginning years, Perry understood early how important coaches can be in someone's life and how they can be a mentor to their members. While growing up in the martial arts, Rodriguez was also smaller than the rest of the kids his age, but groups were done by age and not size during that time. He was always good at the sport, but struggled in fights due to not being able to protect himself from the same lengths as other kids his age. Though he was involved in martial arts, his grandfather who raised him watched the boxing Friday Night Fights on ESPN and the Tuesday Night Fights on other local channels. This was a connecting moment for him and his grandpa and when he was around 15 years old, Rodriguez switched to kickboxing and cross-trained with Coach Lonnie Chapman until going to boxing full time.

The gym has been a place for Coach Perry to help kids and adults excel physically and emotionally, while also being a safe haven for those who need a good mentor in their life. A huge reason for opening the gym, besides his original five fight team guys, was to be a pillar in the community, be a good role model to his kids, and to be a good husband. Now, the gym hosts people from all walks of life from police officers to former drug dealers and allows them to better themselves in many ways.

In the three short years that RBA has been open, the boxers have shown their strength and won over 20 titles, with some of those titles being held by his own son. When asked, Rodriguez said that a huge part of these titles being taken by members of his team is just the energy that he puts out attracts these types of fighters. Being super competitive himself, Rodriguez uses that energy to get the team fired up about winning. While he said that winning a title is the goal, it is also about living up to their potential. Perry said, "If you live up to your potential, the winning part is easy."

Rodriguez Boxing Academy has become a staple gym in the Summerville community in just a few short years. As the gym continues into its third year, Rodriguez hopes to continue to push his fighters to live up to their potential and know that there is always room to grow. I found RBA when I was going through a tough time in my life and can attest to the community that Coach Perry has created in just a short period of time. Follow Rodriguez Boxing Academy on Facebook and Instagram to see their continued journey as a staple gym in the Lowcountry.