

# first gig



## **Kostya Tszyu, Boxer**

"My first job was boxing. I'd been boxing since I was nine and I started to get paid like a professional at 15. I was living in the Soviet Union and spent 250 days a year in a training camp and out at the competitions.

I was representing my country so I would train five or six hours a day. I learned from a young age that to be first you have to work harder than anyone else.

There were 150 people in the national team camp, so it was a huge change from living at home. I'm still mates with many of them and when I'm in Russia we get together.

I was very well paid. My first pay at 15 was 120 roubles a month, which was more than my mum earned (50 roubles a month). So I learned to be responsible for my family from a young age. We had a rule that all the money brought to the family had to be shared.

The mid-1980s were very difficult times in Russia but my job gave me very good privileges. It wasn't that easy to buy proper food. If you wanted to buy bread it was a two-hour line but I had a letter that allowed me to go to special shops for food.

Because I became famous young, I saw others in my situation get a chip on their shoulders and become difficult to others. I learned from a young age from my trainer and my parents that you have to be yourself."

**Sue White**

*Kostya Tszyu is a professional boxer.*