

# MAURICE HOOKER

**Hometown:** Dallas, Texas

**Birth date:** August 7, 1989

**Weight class:** Welterweight (147 lbs)

**Stance:** Orthodox

**Height:** 5-11

**Record:** 27-1 (18 KOs)

**Trainer(s):** Brian McIntyre, Red Spikes, Esau Dieguez

**FORMER WBO SUPER LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION**



Maurice Hooker may not be the typical outspoken, trash-talking fighter, but the proud Dallas native speaks with both hands when he steps into a boxing ring. He's bounced back from the lone loss of his professional career with help from one of the top training teams in the business and he's primed and ready for both a new weight class and his 2021 debut against a highly touted prospect.

Like many boxers, Hooker's ring activity was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. He will step into the ring for the first time in 15 months when he faces fellow Dallas-area native Vergil Ortiz on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Dickies Arena. It is the longest layoff of Hooker's nearly decade-long career during which he has stayed consistently active.

Yet his previous longest layoff, a nine and half month ring absence in 2017-18, resulted in an upset world title victory over Terry Flanagan. Hooker entered his first world title fight in Flanagan's hometown of Manchester, England as the underdog and he will fill the same role in his next bout with Ortiz. Being doubted doesn't faze Hooker. In fact, he relishes the chance to surprise the fans and pundits and introduce the boxing world to the best Maurice Hooker they've seen yet.

Hooker has been boxing since childhood when his stepfather first took the rambunctious youngster to the boxing gym. An all-around athlete, he played multiple sports as a kid from soccer and football to basketball, his favorite sport outside of boxing. Yet it was the sweet science that stuck with him.

During his extensive amateur career, Hooker had over 100 fights before entering the pro ranks. He made his professional debut in 2011 and began the road to a world title. That opportunity finally came in 2018. As he'd seen fellow American fighters such as Terence Crawford and Errol Spence do, Hooker traveled across the pond to claim a world championship. He silenced a raucous British crowd in a victorious performance, defeating the previously unbeaten Flanagan to claim the WBO Super Lightweight title.

Over the next year, Hooker made two successful title defenses of his WBO crown, beating two more previously unbeaten foes in Alex Saucedo and Mikkel LesPierre by stoppage and unanimous decision, respectively.

Those victories set up a showdown with Olympian and fellow undefeated World Champion Jose Ramirez up the road from Hooker's hometown in Arlington, Texas. Looking back, Hooker recognizes that he fought his opponent's fight and he dropped a sixth-round stoppage to Ramirez.

Following the loss, Hooker made the move to the training team of Brian "Bo Mac" McIntyre, Red Spikes, and Esau Dieguez, best known for their work with World Champion Terence Crawford. Hooker had the chance to train alongside the three-headed training squad earlier in his career during his training camps in Colorado Springs, so the transition to his new team was seamless.

Hooker made a successful return to the ring with his new team in December of 2019, winning a first round TKO over Uriel Perez.

While he didn't compete in 2020 as he'd hoped, Hooker got the opportunity to work with his new team throughout the year, participating in multiple training camps in Omaha, Nebraska and Colorado Springs. His new team includes not only a highly skilled trio of boxing trainers but also strength and conditioning coach Jamie Belt and a stable of current and former world champions. He enjoys the chance to train alongside Crawford, reigning WBO world champion Jamel Herring, and former world titlist Robert Brant in the family atmosphere of his new stable. Every element of camp is a competition and they consistently push each other to get better every day.

Although he hasn't fully had the chance to show off the results of the hard work with his new squad quite yet, he plans to put them on full display on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Outside the ring, Hooker is a proud father of eight children and says that the title "Dad" will always supersede any accolade he can win in a boxing ring. They are his biggest motivation and he loves seeing them grow and have fun with their siblings. He stays in touch with them during his time away at training camp and a group text with his older kids keeps him engaged and laughing daily.

The Dallas native is an admitted clotheshorse and sneakerhead and fancies Fendi, Chanel, and Gucci. He particularly loves Jordan Brand and will go to extremes to get the newest pair of Jordan (for himself and his kids) on the day they launch. He loves the chance to show off his fashion sense any chance he gets and dresses up whenever possible (a rarity during COVID).

Hooker says that when he retires from boxing, he will dress up daily for work. He plans to explore real estate and possibly owning a trucking company when his pugilist days are over.