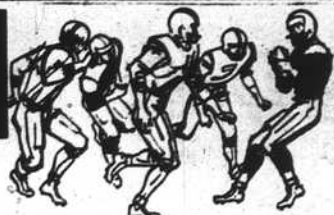


SPORTS



Chuck Harris

SONNY LISTON, former heavyweight champion of the world, trains daily at the All American Boys Club, and it really is amazing to see a man of his size with such wonderful coordination... To date, the former champ's training has been limited, for the most part, to body conditioning. His rope-skipping exercises to the recording of JAMES BROWN'S "Night Train" is a joy to the eyes. He also shadow boxes from 5 to 7 rounds, and as he beats out a rhythmic tune on both the speed bag and the heavy bag with all those LISTON knock-out blows, at each bang of the bag, you have to look up to see if it has fallen from the hinges... This man has much power; he is one of the greatest punchers of all time and, mind you, he has been training only a few days--Give him a little more time and Look-Out, all heavyweights, for the "Champion-to-be" (once again).

Middleweight JIMMY LESTER, who has been billed as "another" RAY ROBINSON, lost a decision against CARL MOORE in his local debut Thursday at the Fremont. I am sorry to say that it appeared to me LESTER has few attributes to warrant comparison with the great fighter and former champion, Sugar Ray... However, RED WILLIAMS' pride and joy of the squared circle, HENRY BANKS, is one of Nevada's leading middleweights, and is training daily to start out the new year in winning fashion... Stop by "The Place" (across the street from BOB BAILEY'S "Sugar Hill"), and mention to 'RED' that his HANK looks like a future champion--he just might issue you a little taste on the house.

Los Angeles columnist "DOC" YOUNG, whose sports column periodically appears in the Las Vegas SUN, recently took issue with Heavyweight Champion MUHAMMAD ALI for

labeling FLOYD PATTERSON and ERNIE TERREL "Uncle Toms". YOUNG opined "Show me a bigger Uncle Tom than CLAY, and I'll show you Cleopatra in the living flesh" which, to me, was belittling one of the greatest, if not the greatest fighter, of all time... I would like to ask DOC what is an Uncle Tom--he sure sounded like one in his statement about World Champion MUHAMMAD ALI. (Editor's note: You don't have to go that far, Chuck, to have Uncle Tom defined for you--and as far as Doc Young is concerned, rest assured he is anything but. Not only is Doc a fine sportswriter, but a more militant one (where Negroes are concerned) would be hard to find).

Our own JOHN DAVIS goes to Phoenix, Arizona, this week-end, to compete in the World Drag Races which take place the 27-28-29, and where he will challenge some of the country's best Drag Racers... JOHN will be driving a Chevy 2 Funny Car in which he has reached the speed of 137 miles an hour, so far. He hopes to hit a speed of 150 or more--Best of luck, JOHN, all the hometowners will be pulling for you.

Both Saturday's AFL All-Star game, and Sunday's Pro Bowl game were played in the rain... Whether or not, the weather was more advantageous to the players in the Eastern divisions of the AFL and NFL leagues would seem a ridiculous premise, however, the results of the games were interesting... The East won in Saturday's AFL All-Star game '30-23, and in Sunday's Pro-Bowl game, the East also emerged the victor by a score of 20-10.

Boston Celtics edged the Los Angeles Lakers in a bang bang overtime basketball fracas 121-120.

TATUM HAD IT ALL

By CHARLES J. LIVINGSTON
NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

NATURALLY TALENTED

They called him a basketball clown, but he was much more than that. He played before popes, presidents, kings and emporors, and millions of just plain Joe Blokes, all of whom praised him mightily--but only because of his clowning. They fastened onto him such titles as "Court Jester," "Clown Prince," and "Mr. Basketball."

WHILE THEY reflected recognition of the man's showmanship, none of the titles pinned on Reece (Goose) Tatum truly reflected his talents fully. To put it another way, Tatum's clowning far overshadowed his natural talents; his endowments as an athlete.

A quick-witted athlete with superb coordination, Tatum had natural talents to burn, both on the basketball court, where he made his name, and on the baseball diamond.

There is, by no means, any effort to "fault" sports fans generally for rewarding Tatum solely for his clown's role. While Tatum himself didn't have the privilege of cashing in on his natural talents, sports fans as well never had a chance to learn of his more serious and patent qualities as an athlete, particularly as a baseball player.

But those in the know, the experts and serious students of basketball and baseball will tell you frankly that Reece had the natural talents to match most of the greatest stars in those sports. It is a pity, therefore, that people generally did not know this and went to the Harlem Globetrotters games mainly to see Tatum cavort as a basketball clown. These people didn't know that Tatum could have made it big without the buffoonery--on just his natural talents.

Why didn't he, then? Did he prefer the clown's role? I doubt it; Reece, I believe, was one of those gifted but unfortunate Negro athletes who developed too far ahead of their time, and for expediency, were forced into roles that did not provide full outlets for their talents.

THEREFORE, AS much as one hates to belabor the point, there is no denying that race prejudice in sports restricted the success of Reece Tatum, as it had others of his race. You just can't get around it.

Tatum, who died of an apparent heart attack last week in El Paso, Texas, had the talents to go to the very top in baseball and basketball without resorting to the clown's role, had fate not been so cruel to him. In fact, it seems safe to speculate that, had he first reached stardom after baseball's color bar had been broken, he would have become another Willie Mays, would have commanded the same high salary, and the world would not have known him as the top clown of basketball.

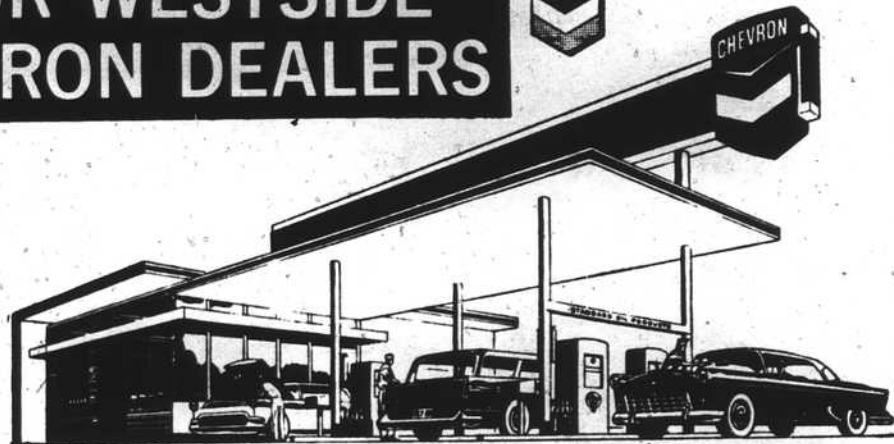
Tatum, you see, had made his mark in baseball long before he became famous in basketball. In fact, it was on the baseball diamond that the late Trotter owner-coach, Abe Saperstein, discovered him starring with the Cincinnati Clowns of the then Negro American League.

SAPERSTEIN WAS impressed by Tatum's dexterity with the gloves, particularly in making fancy catches behind his back with his unusually long arms. But when I saw Tatum in baseball uniform (unfortunately at the ebttide of his career), I was far more amazed by his natural talent. The man was fabulous.

Tatum could do everything with a glove at first base. But to me, his greatest attributes were his superb timing and his sense of anticipation. Simply by noting the size, stance, or grip of the bat of a batsman, Tatum knew exactly where the ball was going to be hit and positioned himself to field it. Few other baseball

(See TATUM, page 11)

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