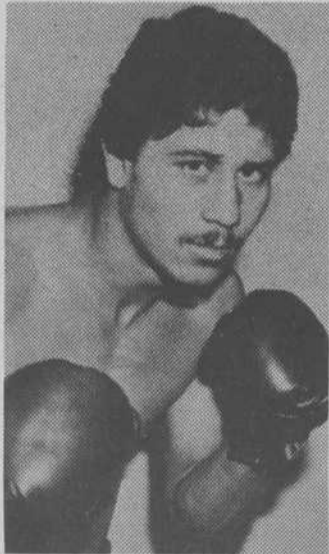


## SPORTS

# THEUS: BLACKS ARE NOT RUINING NBA POPULARITY

## Gomez Humiliates Holmes



GOMEZ

It was purely a case of humiliation in the WBC super bantamweight championship battle last Friday night at Caesars Palace Sports Pavilion between the champion Wilfredo Gomez and Derrik Holmes.

In Gomez' 14th title defense he not only made Holmes his 12th straight knockout victim in title defenses, but humiliated the New Carrollton, Md., challenger.

Gomez had Holmes down seven times, five times in the fourth round before referee Joey Curtis stopped the fight at 2:29

of the fifth.

Holmes won the first round and was holding his own during most of the second until Gomez crashed a vicious right to Holmes' jaw. That blow came after Holmes staggered Gomez with a looping right. The game Puerto Rican battled his way out of trouble and dominated the balance of the fight.

"Holmes great fighter. He need some more experience. He too new," said Gomez through interpreter Don Cahn. Holmes said he thought his jaw was broken.

By Joe Cross  
SENTINEL Writer

Last basketball season, the news media — especially in New York City — made a big thing about dropping National Basketball Association attendance, claiming the preponderance of black players played a role.

Not so, feels one NBA star, former University of Nevada, Las Vegas standout Reggie Theus, who plays for the Chicago Bulls.

"The media and people of that nature say it's so," Theus said when he was in town for the recent UNLV Alumni Association game against Notre Dame. "But I think that for the most part, fans just want to see their team win. That's what matters the most."

However, he said, that "from a class on identity that I took at UNLV," he found that white fans identifying with black players "could have something to do with it (the attitudes)."

Theus added, though, that he feels that in the long run, the fact is that "little white kid and little black kids" can gain from the way things are because, as he sees it, "by identifying with players of a different race,



THEUS

they could grow up with better feelings about other people."

As far as prejudices among athletes themselves, Theus put it simply.

"I've never seen a guy turned down in the gym if he can play," he said. "The only prejudices among each other (players) is if a guy can't play well, he's no good." Another well-rounded "fact" that pro ball clubs lean toward finding more white players could have some validity, at least Theus thinks so.

"I hear that (rumor) a lot," he said. "And I think it still holds true to a certain point. They (NBA teams) are looking for good white ball players — and if two players, one black and the other white, are very close in ability, the white player may have the edge."

"But," he added, "real fans don't care — as long as they are backing a team that wins."

Actually, Theus feels,

the media plays a very big role in keeping the racial thing alive.

"If there is a fight, it's just a fight," he said. "But if it is black and white, then it's a racial thing in the media. After all, we're all 'victims' of the media — what other source of information do we have?"

The fights, and other attitudes, he feels, give the public and the media the chance to see whatever they want to see in it. "Of course, there are fans who say they don't want to see a 'nigger' play and there are those who don't like to watch 'white boys,' either. But we, as players, don't 'see' what the people in the stand are watching — or thinking."

Though he realizes the issue is "very, very touchy," Theus also pointed out that despite all the talk and stories, "the attendance was up last season in the league and I really think it (racial problems) is an unbalanced kind of thing as far as the stories went last year."

Theus also took note of a "part" of the NBA that is important to Las Vegas and tourists when he said, "as far as the bettors go, they don't give a damn" about a player's color.

## Local Sports Roundup

Jackie Robinson, former UNLV basketball star, has turned down Coach Jerry Tarkanian's offer to be his assistant coach next year.

"If it had been any other year I'd be more than happy to say yes, I've always been close to Tark," said Robinson at last week's press conference for the UNLV-Notre Dame alumni game.

"But I've been a ballplayer all my life and worked toward this goal (to possibly play with the Detroit Pistons) and when an opportunity like this

comes, I can't just throw it up in the air."

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In a warm-up game prior to the UNLV-Notre Alumni matchup, the Las Vegas Sporting House beat the Las Vegas Stars, 169-154, in last week's exhibition game featuring several ex-Rebel players. Sam Smith led the Stars with 56 points and Reggie Theus had 41 points and Jackie Robinson added 37 points for the Sporting House.

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Holiday International Casino downtown may soon get into the boxing business. It is reported that International Leisure and Casino Inc. of Las Vegas will announce soon that they'll be joining forces with Muhammad Ali to telecast boxing from the casino downtown.

Reliable sources indicate that the fight will be telecast from the club's spacious former bingo room with Ali providing the ringside color commentary.

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