



## Forget Last Year

There's an important ability that every baseball player, and really anyone in sports, must learn. That's the ability to forget, to put things behind you. Baseball is a game where you can't let yesterday interfere with what's taking place today. I include the great accomplishments as well as the mistakes, off-days and lousy seasons.

Every day in sports is a new day and every season is a new season. Yesterday's hero can easily be tomorrow's bum. You go out there today and hit four home runs and you are a hero. Tomorrow you may strike out twice and be a bum. The heroics of yesterday are forgotten. That's over and done with. The newspapers that headlined the four homers are now wrapping fish heads.

Football is a bit different because you have a week to prepare for the next game. In baseball, there's no time to think about it. You can go 0 for 4 in the first game of a double-header and the manager may stick you right back into the lineup. If you let that first game affect you, you'll be in terrible shape. Put it behind you and concentrate on what you can do to win the next ballgame.

The same principle applies to baseball seasons. Last year's pennant winners will have to work harder to repeat in the new season. Players on pennant-winning clubs quickly get the feeling that everyone is gunning for them. That's not being paranoid. That's the truth. Everyone is gunning for them.

Playing last year's champion always brings out the best in every opponent. A team that tries to rest on its laurels will end up as flat as a leftover glass of last year's champagne.

Teams that had a bad 1987 may improve dramatically in 1988 because of trades, young players maturing and key personnel staying injury-free. Each and every team is full of hope and optimism in the spring.

Everyone knows that ultimately there will be just one winner. As much as we would all like to win consistently every year, that won't happen. Teams, like water, seek their own level during the course of the season. All each player can do is go to spring training and prepare to do his personal best to help his team finish as high as it can in the standings. Teams and fans expect that from players and they deserve no less. **ll**

Hank Aaron is the top home run hitter of all time with 755 homers. A member of baseball's Hall of Fame, Hank is vice president of the Atlanta Braves.

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## LOW IMPACT AEROBICS CLASS AT DOOLITTLE

A low-impact aerobics class is being organized by the City of Las Vegas Doolittle Community Center.

1901 North "J" Street. The free class will begin April 4 and will be offered in two sessions, Monday and Wednesday from 5-6 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m.-12 noon.

For more information, call the Doolittle Center at 386-6374.

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## LAS VEGAS' JEFF FRANKLIN TAKES ON TRACY HARRIS PATTERSON IN GRUDGE REMATCH AT CAESARS PALACE APRIL 8

Las Vegas Jeff Franklin will take on Tracy Harris Patterson, adopted son of former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson, in a 12-round bout for the vacant U.S. Boxing Association featherweight title at Caesars Palace on Friday evening, April 8.

Fighting out of his hometown New Paltz, N.Y., Patterson has a ring record of 22-1 (13 KOs). He suffered his only professional loss when he dropped a decision to Franklin last October 9 in Las Vegas — a bitter 10-round main event. After the bell both sides claimed victory. On the scorecards, Franklin was ahead 98-93, 96-94, 96-94.

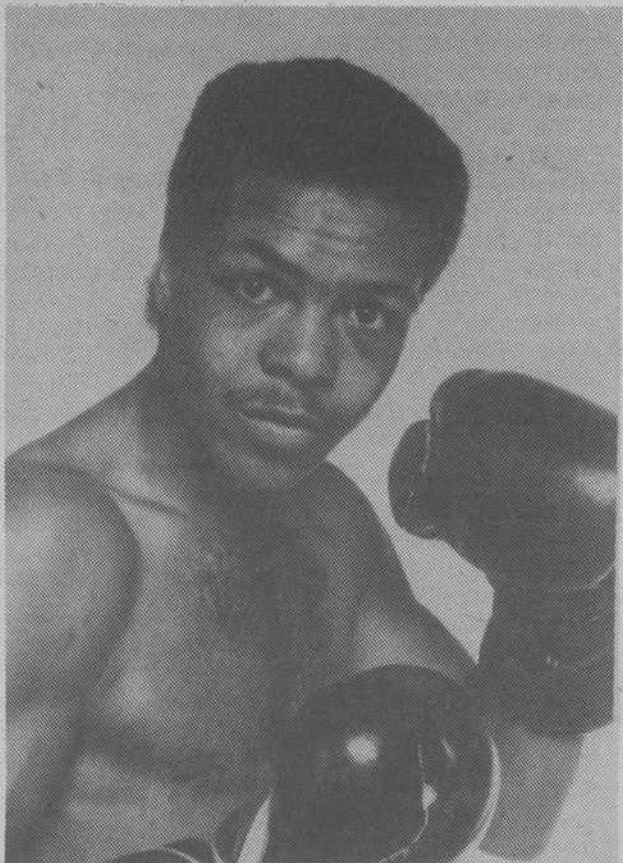
Franklin's current ring record is 18-2-3 (7 KOs).

This time Franklin says he'll score a knockout.

"We beat Tracy Harris Patterson before in a decision," says fight trainer Eddie Futch. "Now Jeff will stop him."

"I really thought Tracy had won, although in my heart I knew it was close," said Floyd. "Right before they announced the decision, I pulled Tracy into my chest and said, 'This is very close — it can go either way, but remember, we're fighting in Jeff's hometown.'"

Futch noted, "Patterson was lucky Jeff didn't knock him out the first time. We're only fighting him again to capture a (USBA) championship, which Jeff surely deserves. We are absolutely convinced of a knockout win."



Jeff Franklin



**COACH OF THE YEAR** - Temple University's John Chaney was honored by the Associated Press Friday as college basketball's Coach of the Year.

No one works harder in the ring than Jeff."

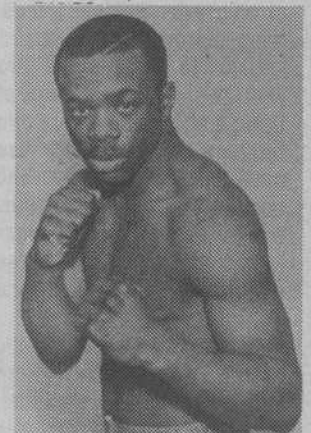
Futch said he spotted "an unusual pattern" in Patterson's fighting style.

"Patterson fought in sports, working real hard two or three times a round," said Futch. "We told Jeff to hustle hard for all three minutes and to work even harder after Patterson threw one of his combinations. We were relentless — and Jeff had the conditioning, drive and determination to pull it out."

Floyd Patterson said, "Franklin really is a hustler; hes' so busy. And the only way to beat those kinds of fighters is to be busier yourself. I think we all know that Tracy is a strong puncher with quicker hands. There's no question who is the better fighter."

The April 8 Franklin/Patterson card also features a scheduled 12-round fight for the USBA junior featherweight title with champion Jesse Benavides, of Corpus Christi, Texas, defending against Aaron Lopez of San Antonio. Benavides, who fights for the Kronk boxing team in Detroit, is 20-0 with 13 KOs. Lopez is 20-4-2 with 13 KOs.

Benavides was 320-20 as an amateur, winning National Golden Gloves titles at 106, 112 and 119 pounds. He was a member of the 1983 U.S. World Cup team, which



Tracy Harris Patterson

competed in Rome.

"I accomplished almost everything I wanted as an amateur except for going to the Olympics," Benavides told Ring Magazine.

Benavides recently took the USBA title, out-pointing Greg "The Flea" Richardson.

"When you win a title, you should defend it any time, in any place, against the most qualified opponent," Benavides told Ring.



**BIT SHOTS**—Superstar Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls, honorary captain of the 1988 McDonald's All American High School Basketball Team, presents an award to Raymond Thompson of Chicago. Thompson is one of the 25 high school seniors selected to the 1988 team. The McDonald's game will be telecast live by ABC Sports on April 17. The players are featured in an ad in the April issue of *Ebony*. Jordan was a member of the 1981 team.

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