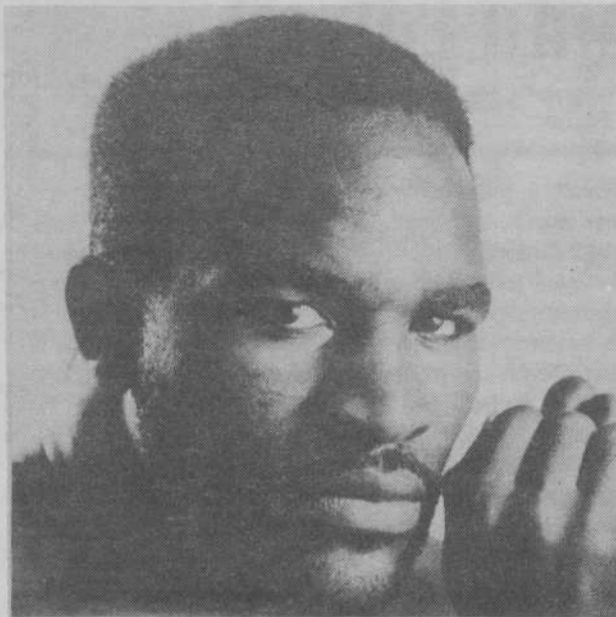


IF ANYONE DEFEATS HOLYFIELD, IT'LL BE HIMSELF



Has Evander Holyfield lost his "Eye-of-the-Tiger"?

By W.G. Ramirez

Evander Holyfield has fought 28 professional fights, (28-0, 22 KO's), he is in the prime of his career, is the undisputed heavy-weight champion of the world and still must face his toughest opponent yet - himself.

Since knocking out James "Buster" Douglas, October 25, 1990, when he captured the title, Holyfield has been everything but impressive in his three title defenses. Although winning all three of them, he just has not accomplished the job in "Holyfield fashion."

Holyfield was winning his bouts, on the average, by the fifth round before facing former world champion George Foreman.

The champion defended his title successfully, yet needed a decision to keep his title. He then stopped Bert Cooper, in his hometown, Atlanta, with a technical knockout in the seventh round, which didn't come easy. Cooper stunned the champ early on.

Last Friday, Holyfield, again, had to get he distance to conquer another former world champion. Larry Holmes proved he could withstand Holyfield's punishment, which was not much, avoid being knocked out and possibly win the title back.

The 42-year-old Holmes led in seven of twelve rounds on at least one of the three judges scorecards and also delivered the champ's first cut during his boxing career.

In three title defenses, Holyfield has defeated his opponents, on the average by the tenth round and has yet to knock one out. Why does it take the champ twice as long to dispose of his opponents now? He does it to himself.

Holyfield has become accustomed to fighting with a strange

Through seven rounds, both fighters remained against the ropes and traded punches.

Holmes said he finally came to the center of the ring succumbing to Holyfield's original fight plan and also giving the crowd what they came to see, a good fight, but that couldn't seem correct on either part. What boxer, in their right mind, fights for the crowd, or the other boxer for that matter.

Holmes too was getting hurt. Holyfield's vicious body shots, analyzed by USA Today reporter Jon Saraceno, is what brought

Holmes off the ropes.

So now the champ has his prey right where he wants him, in the center of the ring, and what happens? Arguably, Holmes wins three of the last five rounds of the fight.

It just doesn't make sense that Holyfield, as dominating as he could be, can't put his opponents away the way he used to.

Are the opponents that strong, or is Holyfield that weak?

With upcoming opponents such as Riddick Bowe, Lennox Lewis or Razor Ruddock, it could be advisable for Holyfield to

regain that "Eye of the Tiger" or whatever it was that drove him to knock 9 of his first 25 opponents out in the first three rounds.

A November 13th date, is not definite, but has been tentatively set for Holyfield and the winner of the Razor Ruddock/Lennox Lewis fight, according to promoter Dan Duva.

Duva's father, Lou, who is Holyfield's camp coordinator, says that they want Riddick Bowe.

But if Holyfield couldn't knock out two 40+ year-olds, how will he handle these hungry, up-and-

coming fighters that want nothing more than to destroy the champ.

They have nothing to lose and will fight all out to get what they want.

Holmes, at the post-fight press conference, sent a message to all challengers - "Beware Of Holyfield!" It just may be Holyfield that should beware, because at the rate he is going, his next fight may conclude with the ring announcer saying - "...and the new undisputed heavyweight champion of the world..."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ SPORTS BRIEFS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NFL NOTES

The Philadelphia Eagles increased their chances at reaching the Super Bowl this season by acquiring former Heisman Trophy winner Herschel Walker.

The Eagles can now oppose NFC East rivals Washington and Dallas with great offensive threats as QB Randall Cunning-

ham will be returning to the lineup.

Cunningham was sidelined after the first game in '91.

MAJOR LEAGUE REPORT

The Los Angeles Dodgers woes continues as they have lost 10 of 11 games on this last road trip while their division rivals, the Atlanta Braves, have

won 20 of 23. Barry Bonds was placed on the 15-day disabled list. It was the first time the 1990 NL MVP has been on the list since joining Pittsburgh in 1986. He has never missed more than 18 games during his career.

PREP HOOPS NOTES

Marcus Brouschke scored 22 points and pulled down 11

boards to lead the all-star basketball team from Las Vegas to a 65-64 victory over Iolani (Hawaii) High School in the Hawaii Sun, Surf and Slam Tournament at Honolulu.

Isaac Gornichec added 18 points for the LV all-stars, now 2-0 in the round-robin tournament.

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