

# SENTINEL SPORTS

## Nunn's return to Goossens renews confidence in ring

By W.G. Ramirez  
Sentinel-Voice

Return of the living dead is one way to describe it. Resurgence may be another.

Two-time former world champion Michael Nunn simply says that his hunger has returned and he is on his way back.

Wednesday afternoon, Nunn appeared at the final pre-fight press conference at Arizona Charlies for his meeting with Warren Williams this Friday night.

The 10-round super middleweight bout headlines a six-bout Top Rank card that will be televised live on ESPN at 5:30 p.m., however is scheduled to be blacked out in Las Vegas.

Nunn (44-3, 28 KOs) seemed comfortable, confident and ready for another obstacle in his comeback course, which he and his camp are hoping will lead directly to Roy Jones, Jr., considered by many as the best boxer pound-for-pound.

Nunn's restored confidence has been sparked by a reunion of he and his original trainer and manager, brothers Joe and Dan Goossen.

"My mind just wasn't focused," said Nunn. "I didn't have no substantial trainer, I didn't have one guy to stay on me like Joe did. We got back

together and things are different now. The love is back."

The Davenport, Iowa native said that he once again enjoys getting up every morning and hitting the pavement for a 4- or 5-mile jaunt and that his intensity in the gym has increased since the reconciliation.

"I get up and run four or five miles, then I go to the gym in the afternoon and spar eight to 10 rounds a day with three different sparring partners. I hit the heavy bag, the speed bag, the jump rope and do a lot of calisthenics.

"My motivation to work hard is back. The last four years I've been going back on my own and doing what I wanted to do, which wasn't always the right things as far as my training."

Four years ago, at 36-0 and on the brink of being claimed the best boxer pound-for-pound, Nunn made a bold move by abandoning the Goossens. He decided he'd handle his own affairs and eventually was lured by controversial promoter Don King.

All the hoopla ended in May 1991 when Nunn was flattened by a little known fighter at the time named James "Lights Out" Toney.

Six months later, Nunn debuted at the super middleweight level and

recovered from the loss by winning the North American Boxing Federation title over Randall Yonker. He defended that belt five times before suffering another setback, this time in London to unheralded Steve Little.

He fought once more, a first-round knockout of Salvador Maciel, before attempting to regain the World Boxing Association crown against newly-crowned champ Frankie Liles just seven months ago. Liles served Nunn another defeat, but most importantly, a much needed wake-up call.

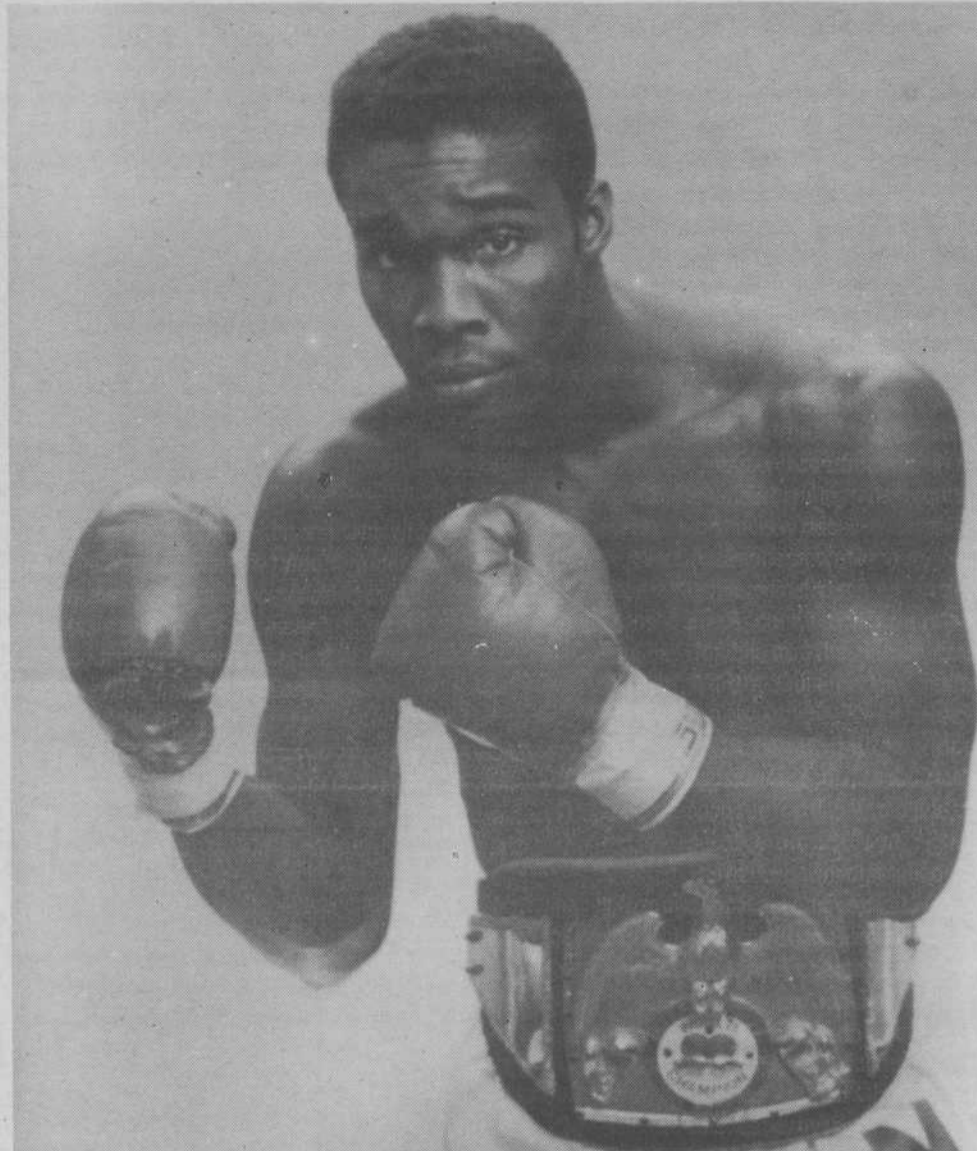
"When I was gone (from the Goossens)," Nunn said, "I used to get up and I used to drag myself out of my bed to run or go to the gym. Now, it's like a joy to me. I feel like I'm 21 years old."

Although Nunn added that there were a few promises King never kept, they had nothing to do with him returning to the Goossens after suffering the third loss of his career.

"I felt like I was just another fighter there," said Nunn, who compared being a part of the King camp to working on an assembly line. "It was like I was working for General Motors or something. At least back with Goossen, everything is basically hands-on but it makes you feel like your somebody."

Nunn's wake-up call reminded him of a motto he'd imbedded into his head when he first started boxing.

"I always told myself I would never just be out there fighting if I couldn't be the best," said Nunn, who turned 32 in April. "(After the Liles fight), I just felt if I'm gonna continue to fight, I'm gonna have to get myself in tip-top condition and gonna have to go back to Joe."



Two-time former world champion Michael Nunn continues his drive toward a third title and a meeting with Roy Jones, Jr., when he meets Warren Williams at Arizona Charlies Friday night.

Nunn has never lost under Joe Goossen, who missed Wednesday's press conference, and once again displayed the skills that vaulted him to the pinnacle of boxing 4-1/2 years ago against Earl Butler on a USA telecast on June 13.

Dan Goossen said Wednesday that Nunn already has another fight tentatively scheduled for August 15 and that after seeing his fighter against Williams (11-6-1, 4 KOs) on Friday, he'll get a clearer picture of when it'll be time to challenge Jones.

"The key thing is that we've got to get him into tip-top shape," said Goossen. "When he's at that point, then we'll pursue Roy Jones."

Even though Nunn lost to Toney, who was far from being considered pound-for-pound the best in 1991, Goossen feels that a matchup with Jones, who soundly beat a well-seasoned Toney last November, would be no problem for his fighter after two or three more fights.

"I think everything is defined by hunger," said Goossen. "Roy had that hunger, James had been making the million-dollar plus paydays, and sometimes it takes that hunger to get you prepared. ... That was Roy's first big shot and he overcame all the

different obstacles that were in front of him.

"With Mike, Toney wasn't in his prime but he was probably a lot hungrier in 1991. (Now), the roles have been reversed. Toney is actually hungry again, Nunn is hungry as seen on USA. So, Roy's gotta keep that intensity up and if there is one thing tough to do, it's keep that intensity when you're on top of the world."

"Nunn in his prime, when he was in tip-top shape, I don't think anyone could've beaten him. The question is, can Nunn reach back and gain ninety-five percent of what his strengths were back then? If he can, he's gonna be a tough man for anyone to beat again."

Nunn said that while he is perfecting his ring savvy, he'll be taking his time en route to a meeting Jones.

"I'm not gonna put any timetable on my career because look at George Foreman," said Nunn. "I'm not saying I want to fight 'til I'm 45 years old, but I just have to wait and see how things go. I'm not taking no physical abuse, I'm not taking no punishment, not getting beat up. I still have my defensive skills and the better condition I'm in, the better I'll be able to execute my speed."

Though much of the talk

Wednesday surrounded a matchup with Jones, Nunn said he's taking it one fight at a time.

"It's not like I just want to jump in and say 'Okay I wanna fight the guy.' When I fight him I don't just wanna fight him, I want to beat him. I'm gonna take my time, get my weight down, get my sharpness and get my skills back to where they got to be, to be one of the best fighters in the world."

"I think it's gonna be a great fight when the time comes for it. I don't even want to focus on that fight until I cross that bridge. My focus is on Warren Williams."

**■ UNDERCARD** — San Diego's Juan Luis Torres (12-6, 8 KOs) will meet highly-regarded Erik Morales of Mexico (16-0, 14 KOs) for the NABF Junior Featherweight Championship, in a 12-round bout just before the Nunn-Williams fight.

In a series of six-rounders, flyweights Carlos Hernandez (1-1, 0 KOs) and Joey Dimino (5-0, 2 KOs) meet; Junior welterweights Joel Garcia (5-6-1, 1 KO) and Johar Lashin (20-1-1, 17 KOs) clash; Sergio Macias (3-1, 1 KO) and Ricardo Fuentes (4-0, 2 KOs) battle in a junior lightweight bout; and lightweight Tony Ridges will face a yet to be determined opponent.

*"... baseball can be the most profitable sport to wager on. It definitely provides a nice bankroll for football."*

Vegas Sports Advisors

Heard weekly on national radio talk shows

**Vegas Sports Advisors**

1-900 786-0786

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE WINNINGEST SERVICE AROUND, Call: (702) 223-7435

Must be 18 years or older to call

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING PAYS FOR ITSELF IN THE LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE**  
Call today 383-4030