

SPORTS

Holyfield, Ruiz try to sell Heavyweight title fight

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Evander Holyfield doesn't just believe his upcoming fight with John Ruiz is a legitimate heavyweight title fight.

He also believes he should still be the undisputed heavyweight champion.

Never mind that the judges in Holyfield's fight last November with Lennox Lewis decided otherwise.

"Everybody knows I won," Holyfield said last week. "The fact is, I was the champion and I was the most aggressive. I'm the one who made that fight."

The 37-year-old Holyfield isn't about to apologize for taking the June 10 fight with Ruiz that will be for the WBA version of the heavyweight

title taken from Lewis for not defending it against the top-ranked challenger.

To Holyfield, it is not only a true heavyweight title fight, but an opportunity to regain what he believes was unfairly taken from him.

"My goal is to be the undisputed heavyweight champion once again," Holyfield said prior to a news conference announcing the fight at Caesars Palace.

Both Holyfield and Ruiz used last Saturday's fight between Lewis and Michael Grant to press their point that Ruiz, the No. 1 WBA contender, should have rightfully been given the title shot Grant got against Lewis.

Promoter Don King, of course, couldn't resist add-

ing his own verbal jabs about a fight that lasted less than two rounds.

"I guarantee you this fight will be a better world championship fight than Lewis and Grant," King said. "That fight was a farce."

Ruiz, a fringe heavyweight despite his ranking, said he considered Holyfield a better fighter than Lewis anyway.

"I think he's a true cham-

panion," Ruiz said. "He's not holding belts now, but I think he's the better of them."

Ruiz (36-3, 27 knockouts) doesn't have much more of a claim to fame than Grant, who was undefeated in 31 fights, but was exposed for his amateurish ways by Lewis.

The Boston-based fighter has faced no serious contenders outside of David Tua, who knocked Ruiz out in the first

round in March 1996, although he is riding an 11-fight winning streak since then.

But Ruiz does have the top ranking, and since Holyfield is No. 2, they will meet for the vacated title in the scheduled 12-round bout at Caesars Palace.

"The name alone makes me want to fight Holyfield," he said.

Lewis said after beating

Grant that whoever won the WBA title would merely have a "paper title" and would not be recognized as a legitimate heavyweight champion.

But Norman Stone, Ruiz's manager, noted that Lewis first became heavyweight champion by picking up the WBC belt that Riddick Bowe tossed in a garbage can.

"John is fighting the real heavyweight champion anyway," Stone said.

Tyson accused of hitting, cursing out exotic dancer

Sentinel-Voice

Former boxing champion Mike Tyson is again experiencing women troubles.

Victoria Bianco, an exotic dancer at Cheetah's, 2112 Western Ave., claims the former heavyweight champion hit her while she was walking across the club and shouted expletives at her during their encounter Monday.

Cheetah's management denied Bianco's story. They said Tyson merely rebuffed the 24-year-old stripper's offer of a lap dance.

Police investigating the matter said they have very little to go on.

Tyson is no stranger to violence. He was imprisoned for a 1992 rape conviction, served time for an incident involving a traffic accident and had his Nevada boxing license revoked for biting the ear of Evander Holyfield during a championship fight in 1998.

Doctor cleared in Lewis case

BOSTON (AP) — A doctor who told Reggie Lewis he had a "normal athlete's heart" two months before the Boston Celtics star died shooting baskets was cleared Monday of charges in Lewis' death.

Jurors were asked to decide whether cardiologist Gilbert Mudge provided Lewis with substandard care, and whether that negligence caused the player's 1993 death at 27.

The lawyer for Lewis' widow, Donna Harris-Lewis, said he has not decided on an appeal. Neither Harris-Lewis nor Mudge was in the courtroom when the verdict was read.

The 16 jurors decided in Mudge's favor moments after being told the sides agreed to accept a verdict with 12 votes, instead of 13, to avoid another hung jury.

"I hope the time has now come when everybody involved in the case can count their many blessings and

move on with their lives," Judge Thayer Fremont-Smith said.

In a letter read by Mudge's lawyer, the doctor and his wife thanked the jury and judge.

"We are gratified by their obvious attention to the evidence in deciding this most complex case," they said.

Neil Rossman, the lawyer for Lewis' widow and two children, said his client needed time to compose herself.

"She'll never get over the loss of her husband, and the children will never get over the loss of their father," he said. "But she's had the opportunity to have this question answered by a jury of her peers."

The verdict comes more than seven years after Lewis first collapsed on the court during an NBA playoff game, and 11 months after a different jury failed to reach a verdict on Mudge's culpability.



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If you have any questions, please give our office a call at 648-6222.

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