

SPORTS

Championship bout has chance to make history

By Huel Washington
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Something that has never happened and perhaps may never occur again will be in store for boxing fans who attend this week's World Boxing Organization heavy-weight championship battle between Wladimir Klitschko and Lamon Brewster.

The Mandalay Bay Resort Event Center will be the venue for the fight. HBO will telecast the bout.

Never before in the history of the heavyweight division, in the manly art of self-defense, not since the Marquis of Queensberry established rules with the bout between John L. Sullivan and Gentleman Jim Corbett, have two brothers been called the heavyweight champion at the same time.

Wladimir, younger of two boxing brothers from Kiev, Ukraine, at 28, is attempting to regain the title he lost over a year ago to South African

Corrie Sanders in Hannover, Germany. Sanders launched a devastating attack on Wladimir before the latter could get started and won by a TKO in the second round.

Now, with Lennox Lewis hanging up his gloves, Sanders has decided to give up the WBO heavyweight belt and will battle the older Klitschko brother, Vitali, 30, on April 24, at the Los Angeles Staples Center for Lewis' vacated WBC heavyweight title.

If both brothers win, Vitali, avenging his brother's startling defeat, they will have a share of the heavyweight belts and will be in line to fight each other in the near future. The meeting will never occur because the brothers promised their mother that they would never fight each other.

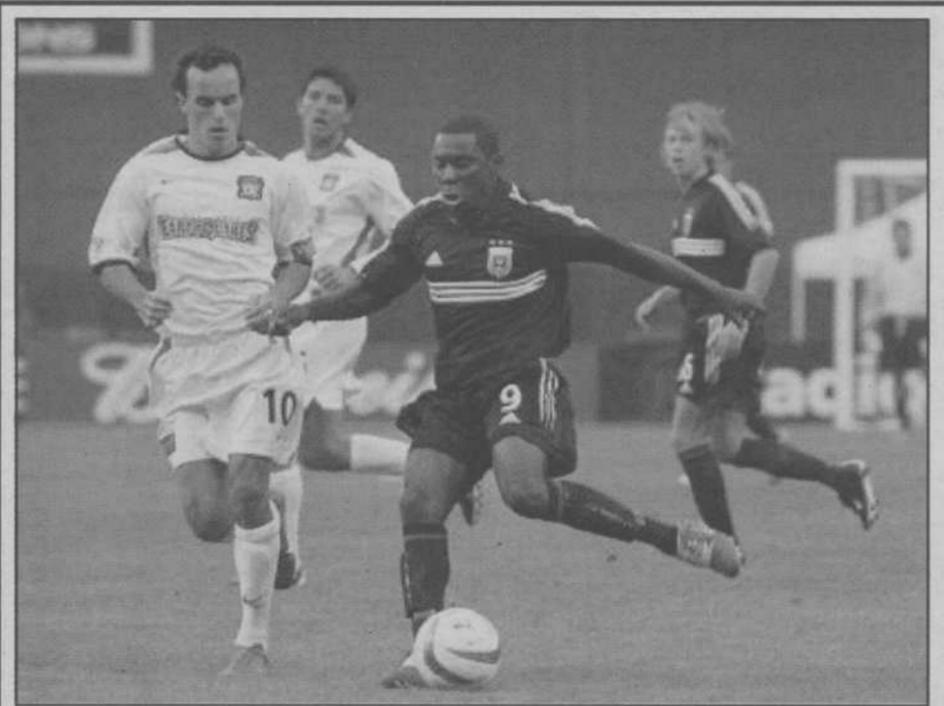
The older brother hopes to restore the family name as pay back for his younger sibling who defeated Chris Byrd for the WBO title after the

Flint, Michigan native had defeated Vitali. Wladimir defeated the southpaw Byrd, in all rounds, 120-106, 119-107 and 118-108. "Revenge of the Brother" it was billed and now there is a chance to be another revenge in Los Angeles in two weeks.

Vitali was leading on all three judges' cards when he fought Lewis in Los Angeles, where he sustained a cut over his left eye. The doctor to halt the bout in favor of Lewis.

Brewster, 31, from Indianapolis, Indiana, enters this bout with 29 wins in 31 bouts, scoring 26 knockouts. He hasn't fought since March 1, 2003, and most experts feel his lack of activities for such a long period will hinder his chances to emerge with the belt.

"I couldn't believe it would take this long for someone to agree to fight me for the world heavyweight championship," he said recently.



FREDDY'S HOME

DC United's Freddy Adu, right, moves the ball past San Jose Earthquake's Landon Donovan (10) during second half of Major League Soccer action at RFK Stadium in Washington on Saturday. Adu, 14, became the youngest athlete in a major American professional sport in well over a century Saturday when he took to the field.

Brewster became emotional at the pre-fight news conference in Los Angeles. He started to cry and had to be calmed down.

"I'm bringing it home," he said. "I am ready for the tall guy." He ignores the fact that Wladimir is 6 feet, 5 inches to his 6 feet, one inch.

By comparison, Vitali is 6-7. With that height advantage he gave Lewis, who is 6-5, all he could handle.

Both Klitschko also have doctorates in philosophy, but Brewster said education wouldn't be any help to his opponent inside the squared circle. "This is my chance and I am taking advantage of it," he said. "When it is over, I will be the champion."

In the other corner, the younger Klitschko could gain distinction that may never be duplicated. It would be not just two brothers as heavyweight champions but two White hopes.

The smaller fighters have not been neglected on this Las Vegas card with the undisputed welterweight championships up for grabs. Cory Spinks, a member of the that famous pugilistic family, will put his WBC, IBF, WBA, welterweight belts on the line against IBF junior welterweight champion Zab Judah.

Spinks also surprised the boxing world on Dec. 13, 2003 in Atlantic City, upsetting Ricardo Mayorga with a unanimous decision.

Mayorga, a wild man in the ring, couldn't match wits with Spinks, a southpaw, who outboxed his slugging opponent.

The 26-year-old Judah is moving up in weight. He thinks speed will help him overcome this heavier and steadier foe.

Judah has won three bouts since his memorable action on Nov. 3, 2001, when he got too happy and lost a controversial second-round knockout to Konstantin Tszyu in Las Vegas.

"Fighting at this weight is a dream come true," Judah said recently. "At this weight, I can be 100 percent of my talent. Now, I can let it all out because I can train at my boxing weight."

"It doesn't matter whether they have speed or not," Spinks counters. "I am finally getting the credit I deserve. I went through a long, hard struggle to get to this."

Two top fights for the price of one and, perhaps, history in the making could fill the house this week at the Mandalay Bay Resort Event Center.

Sports Pace

Baseball deserves its place in our hearts

By Huel Washington
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Other sports can be called whatever you, but historically, in the United States of America, baseball is still the national pastime. Both the American League and National League opened the season last week in grand style.

Of course, the idea of having the New York Yankees and Tampa Bay Devil Rays open the season in Tokyo, Japan must have come from a rocket scientist taking orders from someone on Mars.

The Yankees must have been shaken after third baseman Alex Rodriguez was hit in the jaw by a throw from his Japanese teammate, Hideki Matsui, in a practice game. The Bronx Bombers blew their opening day to the Devil Rays, 11-3.

Rodriguez' quick recovery helped the team even the series the next day with a 12-1 win. Derek Jeter and owner George Steinbrenner said, "Let's get the devil out of here."

New York has been picked by most experts to win at least the American League East, even though the Boston Red Sox will certainly cause the Bronx Bombers some

problems.

The acquisition of Curt Schilling gives the Red Sox pitching staff equality with the Yankees who got Kevin Brown, Gary Sheffield and, of course, Rodriguez, the player of the year.

Jason Giambi hit 41 homeruns for New York last year and struck out 140 times. He has to make some adjustments to raise his .250 batting average.

Pedro Martinez won't have 72-year-old Don Zimmer to push down. However, he has to win more than 14 games this year for the BoSox to get back to his 2003 level.

With their win on opening day, March 30, the Devil Rays will have to win 62 more games to equal their 2003 record of 63-99. With the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Tampa Bay Avengers being losers this season, sports fans have only the Tampa Bay Lightning, the National Hockey League entry, to cheer.

Returning to the national pastime, the Detroit Tigers in the American League Central Division only won 43 games and lost 119, just one game short of the New York

Mets' 1962 record of 120 games. The Tigers won their last four games of the season to avoid tying for the record. According to history, teams that lost more than 100 games in a single season improved by at least 10 the next season. Detroit made a pretty good deal in getting Ivan Rodriguez from World Series champion Florida Marlins. He's worth at least ten more wins.

In the National League West, San Francisco can expect plenty of trouble from the Arizona Diamondbacks, even with the snakes losing Schilling to American League. A few players that helped win the World Series several years ago, including Luis Gonzalez, are still around.

Robert Alomar and Richie Sexson, who hit 45 homeruns last season, are the team's offensive threats in all games.

Although the San Francisco Giants won 100 games last year, their pitching staff has a number of injuries to key players like Jason Schmidt and Robb Nen. Manager Felipe Alou is worried.

Alou hopes to get more production from Edgardo Alfonzo and Ray Durham, whose previous hitting fell

below previous years. Alfonzo, who was acquired for his bat, came through with only .258 last year. His batting average was over .313 a couple of years ago. Leading the Giants will be the six-time Most Valuable Player, Barry Bonds, who hit 45 home runs, batted in 90 runs and an average of .341.

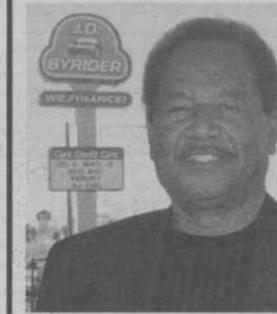
The Oakland Athletics in the American League West won 96 games last season but the productive pitching staff of Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito, didn't measure up to their previous year. Hudson won 16, Mulder, 15 and Zito, 12. The Erics, Karros and Chavez, promise to give the A's some offensive power that is really needed with the departure of Miguel Tejada to the Baltimore Orioles.

Who will meet in October for the World Series? Some experts are picking the Chicago Cubs. But don't bet on it.

Bonds will past his Godfather on the first week as number three on the homerun list. He is headed for Hank Aaron. Will he over take Hammering Hank? It's your call.

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