

Tyson must fight to pay off debts

By Tim Dahlberg
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Mike Tyson will have to fight — and fight often — to get out of debt, despite the prospect of a \$14 million payment from Don King to settle his claims against the promoter.

Tyson will drop his \$100 million suit against King in exchange for the payment, but the former heavyweight champion will see none of the money. It will go toward paying some \$38.4 million Tyson owes to various creditors, the Internal Revenue Service and his ex-wife, Monica.

To pay off the rest, Tyson's attorneys have laid out a plan in federal bankruptcy court in New York under which Tyson will fight seven times over the next three years. The plan is ambitious, if only because Tyson has fought only twice in the last three years for a total of about eight rounds.

The first of those fights will be formally announced Tuesday at a news conference in Louisville, Ky. Tyson will take on unheralded Danny Williams on July 30 at Freedom Hall in a bout that will earn him several million dollars to help satisfy his debts.

Assuming Tyson, who will be fighting for the first time in 17 months, beats the British journeyman, he could fight again as soon as the fall. That could be against the likes of light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver or Lamon Brewster, who holds the lightly regarded WBO heavyweight title.

The other part of Tyson's story is well-known. The most feared boxer of his time, he spent three years in prison for rape and squandered some \$300 million in purses over the years.

At the age of 38, he's broke and living in a small house in Phoenix, where he's in training. His two homes in Las Vegas are up for sale, with the proceeds already earmarked for the bankruptcy court fund to pay his numerous debts.

The settlement with King is a key part of solving Tyson's financial problems. If the bankruptcy judge approves, King will pay \$8 million up front, with another \$3 million in January 2005 and \$3 million more in January 2006.

Tyson had pinned his financial hopes on winning an even bigger settlement in court on his claims that King stole some \$100 million from him while promoting Tyson after he got out of prison in 1995.

For King, the settlement removes one more barrier between him and his former fighter. Since King controls many of the top heavyweights, there's a good possibility he will end up promoting Tyson fights again.

Tyson, who once vowed never to fight for King again, said in an interview last week that he wouldn't rule it out.

According to the plan filed Thursday in bankruptcy court in New York, Tyson will contribute the \$14 million from King, an estimated \$4.2 million from the sale of his two houses in Las Vegas, and \$19.5 million from future fight purses to a fund to pay creditors.

Tyson's first contribution will be a \$2.475 million payment on Aug. 4, followed by a \$2.31 million payment next Jan. 5. The biggest payment from the proposed series of seven fights will be in January 2006 when Tyson pays \$4.95 million.

The IRS is Tyson's biggest creditor, owed \$18 million by the former champion. He also owes taxes in several different states, including \$834,000 in Tennessee for his 2002 fight there against Lennox Lewis.

Under the plan, Tyson will also pay Monica Tyson \$9 million, beginning with a \$2.3 million payment when King makes his first payment. Monica Tyson will also get \$750,000 from each Tyson fight.

Tyson also owes millions to unsecured creditors, who will be paid negotiated settlements totaling an estimated \$10 million.

For King, the \$14 million is the second big settlement he has made with an ex-fighter in recent months. In December he agreed to pay former 154-pound champion Terry Norris \$7 million to settle a lawsuit.

McGrady dazzled by Houston welcome

HOUSTON (AP) — Tracy McGrady was escorted to his new home court in a White stretch limo, treated to a Jumbotron video of his most impressive highlights and greeted by hundreds of cheering fans.

McGrady, who spent much of the past four years playing in nearly empty arenas with the Orlando Magic, was almost overcome by the hearty welcome to Houston.

"This is, by far, probably the best time that I've experienced in my career," McGrady said Wednesday. "This is unheard of. I've never seen or experienced anything like this. I'm not a guy that gets emotional but ... man, I almost got emotional up there."

That says a little about the reception in Houston and a lot more about the time he spent with the Magic.

McGrady, Tyrone Lue and Reece Gaines were showered with applause during a Wednesday news conference that was really more of a pep rally, a day after a blockbuster trade sent them and Juwan Howard from Orlando to the Houston Rockets.

The Magic got guards Steve Francis, Cuttino Mobley and forward Kelvin Cato in return.

McGrady, a two-time NBA scoring champion, hopes to find the kind of postseason success in Houston that eluded him in his hometown.

Tired of carrying a mediocre franchise, McGrady told Magic officials that he would exercise the opt-out clause in his seven-year, \$93-million contract that was to

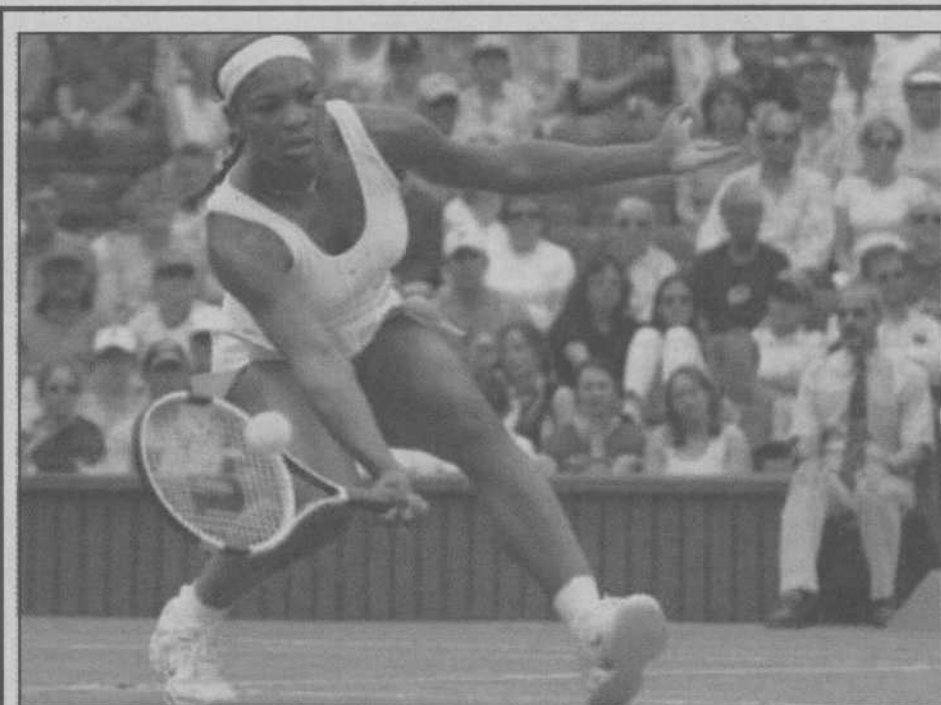
go into effect at the end of next season.

Still stinging from losing Shaquille O'Neal without compensation eight years ago, Orlando decided to deal McGrady.

The 25-year-old becomes the fourth defending scoring champion in NBA history to be dealt away, and the first since the Buffalo Braves sent

Bob McAdoo to the New York Knicks in 1976.

The Rockets hope a McGrady-Yao Ming combination can replace Shaq and Kobe Bryant as the dominant twosome in the NBA. They might get an early start, considering the Lakers are splintering apart since losing to Detroit in this year's NBA Finals.



CAPRIATI CRUSH

Number one seed Serena Williams hits a forehand return to her compatriot seventh seed Jennifer Capriati in their quarter final match on Wednesday at the Wimbledon tennis tournament in London. Williams seems to be regaining her championship swagger.

We need Tiger to return to stellar form

By Marvin Wamble
Special to Sentinel-Voice

If you want a wide range of emotions that can quickly turn to anger, go to any golf course in the country and ask a brother the question: "What's wrong with Tiger?" Take a few steps back, pull out your umbrella and let the brothers roll.

"Ain't nothing wrong with Tiger, man. They just need to leave him alone," my playing partner barks. "Brother starts playing a little bad golf and everybody is on his case. AIN'T NOTHING WRONG WITH TIGER!!"

Okay, brother, just thought I'd ask.

Another golfer's eyes narrow before he begins to shake his head. "It's the White girl, man. It's the White girl," he says, referring to Tiger's fiancée, Elin Nordegren. "He can't focus on golf no more. He's talkin' about getting married. It's a damn shame."

"The White media needs to leave Tiger alone," says an older golfing friend. "They didn't mess with (Jack) Nicklaus or (Arnold) Palmer

Commentary

like this. They just been waiting for this so they can pull the brother down. There are a whole lot of White people enjoying the way Tiger is playin' and most of them are in the media."

It is easy to understand the range of emotions that pour from the souls of African-American golfers when you understand what Tiger Woods means to us all. Tiger made it cool to go to the golf course. Now don't get me wrong, there were thousands of African-Americans playing golf before Tiger blasted on the scene eight years ago, but he allowed us to walk the course with pride. Even in the trees or hacking in the rough, as long as Tiger was the king, we all felt that we belonged on any golf course in the country.

Now things are different. On the eve of the U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills Tiger is struggling. He can't win a tournament and his aura,

which was once as bright as the sun, is a flickering candle. When he hits his driver it looks like me and my boys out there hacking. It goes left, it goes right, it hides in the trees, takes a dip in the lake. Tiger was never ever supposed to look like us.

Like most brothers and sisters who play golf, I still watch Tiger every time he plays. Like so many others I am keeping hope alive for the Tiger. Hoping that one day soon, one tournament this year he will find his swing and turn it all around.

What's wrong with Tiger? Here's my answer: He has been dazed by the one-two punch of life and success. Tiger has been doing this golf thing for a very long time. He shot an unbelievable 48 over nine holes at the age of three. He has had the intense scrutiny of the media shining in his face all of his life. Once he became a pro, he whipped everyone and made it look

easy. He has won eight majors including holding titles in all four at one time.

He has made all the money. At 28, there is very little he is playing for. He has become interested in other things. He likes fishing. He loves his fiancée. After living with his driver and putter for so many years, Tiger has decided, to the frustration of us all, that he would like to enjoy a few more things in life. I'm not hating him for that.

Tiger is in a slump, there is no doubting that after going seven major tournaments without a victory, but Nicklaus went 12 straight without a major win back in the day. I believe that Tiger will regain his form and dominate once again. Then, I will be able to showcase my line of Tiger Woods apparel that has recently been on sale in most major stores across the country.

Marvin Wamble has covered sports in California, Texas and Washington, D.C., and has hosted several Dallas sports radio talk shows.