

## SPORTS

SPORTS  
PACE

By Huel Washington

Real heavyweight  
champ—Stand up

Perhaps some of you readers can remember when one of the top television programs was "To Tell The Truth." A group of well educated celebrities would sometimes have at least three individuals repeat they were the person whose name they were saying and the panel would have to guess which one was the really the person in question.

A similar situation has developed in the world's heavyweight boxing division where with the recognition of four different organizations: the World Boxing Council; the World Boxing Association; the World Boxing Organization; and the International Boxing Federation, all claiming a different individual as their world heavyweight boxing champion.

And not to be outdone, Ring Magazine, once considered the bible of the boxing world, has stated their champions in all weight classes including the heavyweight are true champions.

Going back to the old days, when the top battlers were Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Ike Williams, Kid Gavilan, and Dick Tiger, just a few of the champions in different weight classes, there were only eight divisions. They were the heavyweight which was over 190 pounds and first contested in 1719, and the others followed: the light heavyweight, the middleweight, the welterweight, the lightweight, the featherweight, the bantamweight, and the flyweight.

Actual sanctioning became legal in 1891 when the English established the National Boxing Club and began to recognize winners at different weights as the champions. John L. Sullivan is historically recognized as the first real heavyweight champion.

To be recognized as the overall champion today, the fighter must hold all four belts and no one has done that since Mike Tyson unified the heavyweight ranks on August 1, 1987 by defeating Tony Tucker to win the IBF belt to go along with his WBC and WBA belts. The WBO came in to existence since 1987.

Since that time, only Lennox Lewis has held all four championships but only three simultaneously.

Saturday, at New York's Madison Square Garden, Chris Byrd, a Flint, Michigan native son, currently living and training in Las Vegas, Nevada, will defend his IBF heavyweight championship against mandatory challenger, Jameel "Big Time" McCline and John Ruiz, the World Boxing Association champion will defend his belt against Andrew Golota.

Also on the same card, promoted by Don King, is former WBC and IBF champion Hasim Rahman, who defeated Lennox Lewis in South Africa, who hopes for another shot at a title if he defeats Kali Meehan.

Meehan recently lost a disputed decision in Las Vegas in a title bout with World Boxing Organization champion, Lamont Brewster.

Earlier in the week, Rahman stated that he expected to win the fight with Meehan by a knockout. He also said he had decided that he would give up the profession if he lost to Meehan.

"He's a good fighter, but I think I have all of the tools to beat him and I have learned quite a bit since my last bout."

Brewster is not on the card but on December 11, World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Vitali Klitschko will defend his title against Danny Williams, the former English heavyweight champion, who defeated former unified heavyweight titlist Mike Tyson on July 31, 2004 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Klitschko dubbed "Dr. Iron Fist" is actually a second time champion having won the WBO belt on June 27, 1999 when he kayoed Herbie Hide in the second round.

While defending his title against Chris Byrd, he hurt his shoulder and could not answer the bell for the 10th round.

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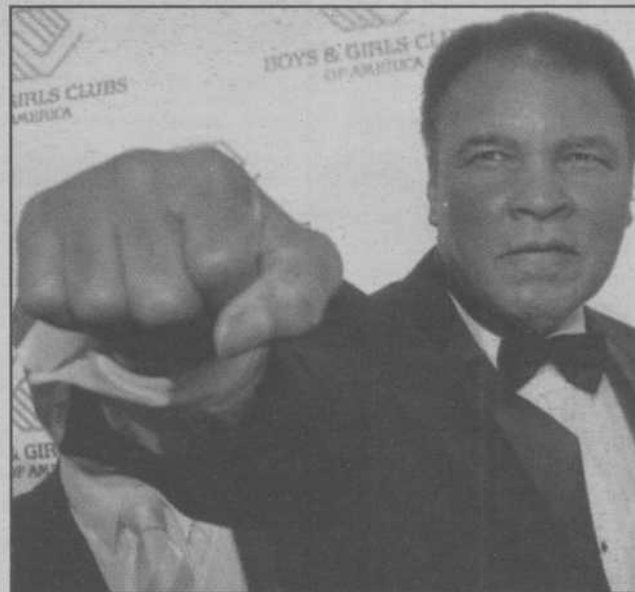
## Ali celebrates topping out of center

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) - Muhammad Ali posed for pictures, gave out hugs and performed magic tricks for about 150 people who turned out for a "topping out" ceremony at the downtown center named for him.

The event was to mark reaching the center's highest point.

As part of last Monday's ceremony, a large crane was to hoist the highest beam into place on the steel frame of the six-story Muhammad Ali Center. But rain kept that from happening, and the beam was lifted only a few feet off the ground.

The \$34.5 million, 93,000-square-foot center is scheduled to open Nov. 19, 2005. It will include 24,000 square



Boxing legend Muhammad poses at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America annual President's dinner on June 9, 2004 in New York. A small leather-bound volume in which Ali drew pictures of himself fighting archrival Joe Frazier has sold for \$30,000 at auction in London on Monday, Nov. 1, 2004.

feet of exhibits, featuring six themed pavilions. Each will focus on a different trait of the former heavyweight boxing champion.

Lonnie Ali, Ali's wife, said the Ali's are committed to the center "becoming a global gathering place, where individuals not only have a platform for ironing out their differences, but a place to motivate visitors to strive."

The Ali Institute, based at the University of Louisville, plans to hold seminars and other events at the center to promote peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Officials also announced new contributions to the project of \$2 million, which match an anonymous donor's grant for a total of \$4 million.

## Aging warrior Holyfield to fight, again

By TIM DAHLBERG  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Evander Holyfield broke camp Monday in Houston, heading toward New York and an uncertain future. Holyfield fights Saturday night at Madison Square Garden for the 48th time in a professional career that began 20 years ago. His opponent is the undistinguished Larry Donald, though the name is of little concern to the former four-time heavyweight champion.

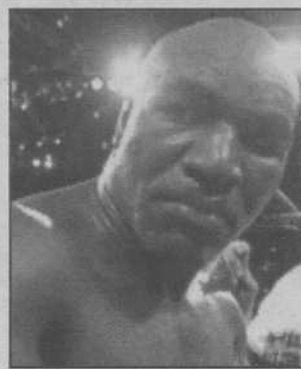
At 42, Holyfield is chasing the impossible dream of becoming the undisputed heavyweight champion once again. His reflexes are suspect, and he took a beating in his last fight, but Holyfield is determined to fight on anyway.

This time it will be in the unfamiliar role of an undercard fighter, on a night that features heavyweight title bouts between Chris Byrd and Jameel McCline, and between John Ruiz and Andrew Golota.

And this time it will be without longtime trainer Donald Turner, who made the mistake of waving a white towel to save his fighter from further punishment when James Toney was hitting Holyfield at will when they fought 13 months ago.

"He thought I was old," Holyfield said. "I thought I wasn't."

To the casual observer, Holyfield doesn't look old. His body is still chiseled, just as it was when he beat Mike Tyson eight years ago in one



*"I'm a smart fighter, and I realize what I've done and what I can still do in the ring."*

— Evander Holyfield

of the biggest upsets in boxing history.

But he's won only two of his last eight fights, and many in boxing wonder why he doesn't just quit. "He's a grown man," Byrd said, "but my father has as good of a chance at winning the undisputed title as he does."

In a heavyweight division lacking big stars, Holyfield might be the biggest name on a card that includes defenses from IBF titleholder Byrd and WBA champion Ruiz. But his name is one that lives in the past, bringing back memories of wins over Tyson and wars with Riddick Bowe.

It could be argued that Holyfield peaked in November 1996, when he stopped Tyson in the 11th round. He hasn't looked impressive since and seemed to hit bottom in October 2003, when Toney took him apart before knocking him down in the ninth round, and Holyfield's corner called it quits.

After the fight, Holyfield admitted he was in over his head.

"If he was a big puncher, I'd have been torn apart," the former champion said.

Plenty of time has passed since that fight, though, and now Holyfield sees it in a different light. He believes he was too aggressive and didn't pay enough attention to defense, something his new trainer, Ronnie Shields, has been working on with him.

And he found hope in his Houston training camp that the skills that made him one of the best of his generation are still there.

"I truly believe there's no fear in me, and that's why I do what I do," Holyfield said.

"I'm a smart fighter, and I realize what I've done and what I can still do in the ring."

Even if Holyfield does have something left, and most in boxing feel he doesn't, his goal of winning the undisputed title again is more of a dream than anything else.

He's already lost to both Byrd and Ruiz, who hold two of the major titles. Vitali Klitschko has the other one and doesn't stand to gain much by beating an aging former champion.

Still, Holyfield plans to press on, and not just because he can make some money doing it. There's always a possible lucrative third fight with Tyson, though that would be more of a freak show than anything.

"I would fight him to get me close to a championship fight, or fight him in a situation where he's a champion," Holyfield said. "But I won't fight him just for the money."

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