

Would-be Vikings owner sorry for errors

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (AP) — Reggie Fowler apologized Friday for mistakes he made in misleading the public about his background and reiterated he has the money to buy the Minnesota Vikings.

The Arizona businessman, poised to become the NFL's first Black owner, has an agreement to purchase the club from Red McCombs — pending league approval.

Fowler met with the Twin

Cities' media to accept responsibility for inaccuracies in a biography distributed earlier this week by a public relations firm he's using, attempt to repair his image and pledge his sincerity and passion to fans.

His original bio claimed he played in the NFL with the Cincinnati Bengals, in the Canadian Football League with the Calgary Stampeders and in the Little League World Series as an 11-year-

old.

Fowler, a star linebacker at Wyoming, was actually cut in training camp by the Bengals and also by the Edmonton Eskimos — not the Stampeders. Clarifying the Little League confusion, Fowler said he played with an all-star team at a tournament in California that was called the World Series.

Though he refused to declare any parts of the botched bio embellishments or decep-

tions, Fowler acknowledged that he intentionally doctored his resume years ago — to show he graduated from Wyoming with a degree in business administration and an emphasis in finance.

Fowler, who took business classes but actually received a degree in social work, said he fudged his resume after graduating in the early 1980s to look better for prospective employers.

As for the CFL confusion? Fowler said he remembered Thursday — by looking at a W-2 form — that he reported to Calgary initially before being sent to Edmonton, where he was cut after a brief stint.

The biography came from his office in Chandler, Ariz., where Fowler runs Spiral, Inc., a diverse business that has numerous real estate holdings and owns companies in several industries, including broadcasting, aviation and manufacturing.

Estimating the last time he created a resume was more than 20 years ago, Fowler said the errors — other than the degree discrepancy — came from oversights and said there was no intent to deceive.

"When you don't pay at-



Arizona businessman Reggie Fowler, left, answers questions during a press conference announcing his intent to purchase the NFL's Minnesota Vikings from current owner Red McCombs, right, at the Vikings corporate office in Bloomington, Minn., this month. The team's sale is pending.

tention to what you put out," Fowler said, "you're subject to errors. I'm a perfect example of that."

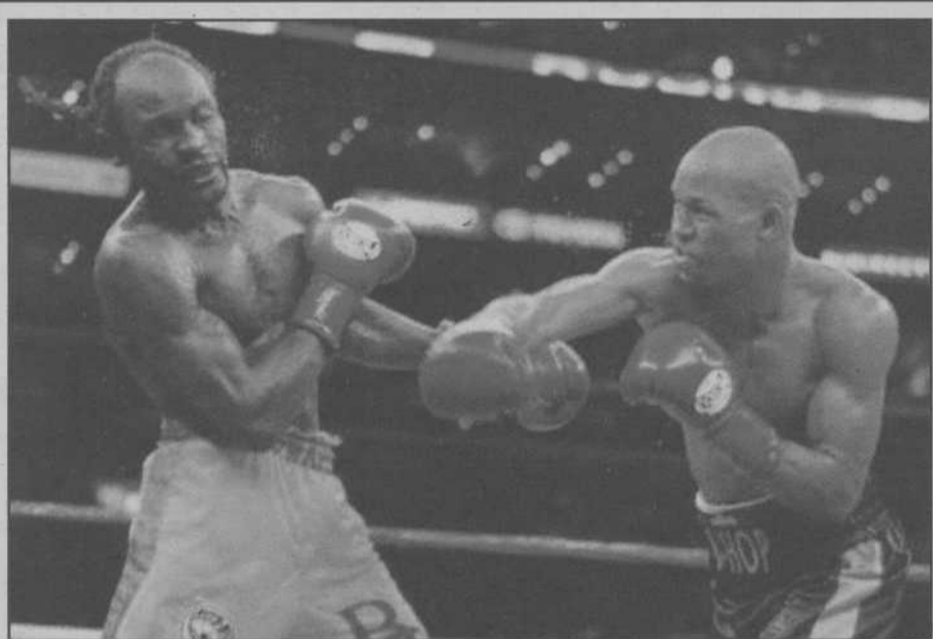
Fowler admitted he was unprepared for the onslaught of scrutiny his pursuit of the team, and subsequent public relations missteps, would bring. He repeated his desire to live in Minnesota, something McCombs didn't do, and insisted that his ownership group has no plans to move the franchise.

"I've obviously learned over the last week that it's important to be a part of your community," Fowler said. "I've never owned or operated an NFL club, and I'm going to need to be real close to it — for a real long period

of time — to understand how it works. So the only way that I'm going to do that is to live here and be part of not only the team but the atmosphere in the community."

He again declined to reveal his net worth or confirm any reports about his company's revenues. But Fowler said he and his limited partners are wealthy enough to complete the transaction. He insisted the NFL and McCombs are satisfied with his financial condition after 10 months of research.

"If both those groups did not feel that we were capable of doing what we're doing," Fowler said, "we would not have been allowed to sign a purchase agreement."



World undisputed middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins (right) makes contact with Britain's Howard Eastman during their WBC middleweight championship fight at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on Saturday. This was Hopkins' 20th title defense.

Hopkins: Boxing future about history, paydays

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bernard Hopkins got the number he wanted in making his 20th title defense. Now he's looking ahead, to making money and history as a middleweight champion approaching middle age.

Hopkins had barely finished beating Howard Eastman Saturday night when he laid out his immediate future. There wasn't much sense looking too far ahead, though, because at the age of 40, time is beginning to run out.

"It's about history, along with the money," Hopkins said. "I'm not interested in making mandatory defenses against fighters you've never heard of anymore."

Hopkins joined former heavyweight champion Larry Holmes as a fighter with 20 defenses. Joe Louis had 24 straight during his career, but only a handful of fighters have ever gotten to the plateau.

Hopkins mentioned as possibilities a rematch with Felix Trinidad, a fight with upcoming star Jermain Taylor or a move to light heavyweight to fight Glen Johnson.

The money would be biggest for Trinidad, whom Hopkins already has beaten, and there would be history by moving up to light heavyweight to fight Johnson. Taylor might be the most intriguing prospect, though, after he looked spectacular in winning his fight on Saturday night's undercard at Staples Center.

"If the media wants it, I'd be ready to take the test with the young lions," Hopkins said.

Taylor was certainly ready, after re-

maining unbeaten by stopping Daniel Edouard in the third round.

"I believe I'm ready for him, I'm a fighter," said Taylor, a 2000 Olympic bronze medalist. "I'll fight him whenever and wherever."

Hopkins wasn't terribly impressive against Eastman, a British fighter who had never won a fight outside the United Kingdom. He started slow as usual, allowed Eastman to chase him around the ring, then caught him with counter punches when it mattered.

It wasn't pretty, and the crowd of 12,828 booed at times, but Hopkins is at the stage in his career where he fights his own fight and isn't concerned with how he wins.

"I didn't want to bore nobody, but I'm taught to fight the fight that's best for myself," Hopkins said. "I heard some boos, but I heard a lot of cheers, too."

Hopkins didn't even seem that interested in the fight until the fifth round, the round Eastman had predicted he would knock him out. The two fighters exchanged big punches in the final seconds of the round, and the flurry seemed to get Hopkins going. From then on, each round was a carbon copy of the other as Hopkins used the experience gained in 19 previous title defenses to remain unbeaten in the last 11 years.

"I give myself a B-minus," Hopkins said. "He hung in there and had some moments. But the smart man in boxing lives to see another day. I wanted to fight my fight, and not Eastman's."

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