

Have Tyson's antics irreparably harmed him?

Is Mike Tyson, a two-time heavyweight champion, who supposedly earned more than \$400 million in the past two decades, putting his following on when he says he has wasted his life?

Or, is the youngster, who was raised in the New York City's Bedford Stuyvesant area looking for some sympathy before taking on journeyman Kevin McBride in Washington, D.C., this Saturday. Only Tyson knows, and he keeps saying strange things.

In the 18 years since the 20-year-old member of the 1984 U.S. Olympic team became the youngest to hold a heavyweight title, Tyson has been glorified by the everyday fight fans while being steadily vilified by the United States media corps.



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

His interviews in newspapers and on television appear to be a charade of someone who wants people to think he is crazy while he is secretly laughing inside.

It's true that quite a number of exceptional occurrences have taken place since he began boxing at around 15-years-old, but as Tyson gets older, he made some noticeable adjustments to his surroundings. He went to prison, on what many of us believe was a trumped up charge, but that's over now.

He was once considered

one of the most notorious spendthrifts in the world making such promoters as Don King and his partners filthy rich.

But now, with the Internal Revenue Service taxing most of his purses, a different more businesslike Tyson has emerged. He still gives to churches like New Revelation and school children but a little less.

He sued his promoter of ten years, Don King, and has settled the suit out of court. King has attempted to renew their relationship by buying

Tyson several high priced cars but to no avail.

Two failed marriages haven't kept the former champion from providing food and shelter for his six kids. He said he loves his children and likes to be around them. He couldn't be all bad.

The injury that occurred in the lateral meniscus of his left leg when he lost to Danny Williams of England should be well healed, and Tyson intends to show the world that a 38-year-old ex-champion has a few good bouts remaining in his body. Doesn't look like a waste to a lot of people.

If he takes out McBride as expected, Tyson just might be in line for a few more bouts because like James "Lights Out" Toney, he is

well liked by boxing fans. So far, there are no odds on this bout in Las Vegas.

MARION JONES ISN'T FINISHED

Even though Marion Jones has lost every race she has participated in this year, her fans shouldn't count her out before the track season is over. Jones, who dropped out of the Prefontaine meet last week, is still attempting to regain the form that made her a three-time gold medal winner in Sydney, Australia, five years ago.

Since winning five medals in all in Sydney, Jones had a son and found her training less effective. In a 400 meters race at Mount Sac Junior College last month, Jones finished fourth. She has never liked the 400 but thought she could run much

faster than the 54.2 seconds time she posted.

Jones is also appealing a ruling by the European meet directors banning her from running in any of their meets that are coming up in the future. Even though she has never tested positive for steroids or any other performance enhancing drugs, the owner of the Bay Area Laboratory Cooperative, Victor Conte, had indicated that he gave her drugs to increase her speed.

Jones, on the other hand, has sued Conte for spreading falsehoods. Meanwhile, the pride of Palmdale, California, Marion Jones, is working very hard, because track and field has gone professional and there is some money to be made by winning a race or two.

Football

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hibits ... to performances," McCloskey continued.

The exhibits will allow visitors to test their football throwing skills. There will also be AFL players signing autographs and fans can watch cheerleaders perform routines. The U.S. Army is one of the AFL partners and will showcase their top fuel dragster race cars there. For the children, there will be face painting booths and other amusements. The third day of the three-day Fan Fest activities will be held on site at the Thomas and Mack Center on Sunday, but it will be shut down during the game and resume afterwards.

Next on the menu is the Arena Battle. Celebrities like Justin Berfield, from "Malcolm in the Middle," former NFL stars, including Vegas native, Randall Cunningham, and world famous Olympic skiers, Bode Miller and Erik Schlopy, will be testing their skills when they participate in a flag football game alongside AFL stars at the Arena Battle.

"Obviously Randall was a national draw for this event. He has an impeccable football history. And the fact that he's from Vegas made him a perfect candidate for the Arena Battle," said McCloskey.

This event will be held Saturday at the Orleans Arena. This tasty appetizer is certain to whet your appetite for Sunday's main course. To get the party started, BET's Big Tigger will be emceeding the entire event.

"Because of Big Tigger's popularity, we felt he would be someone great to keep the crowd entertained throughout the night," McCloskey said.

The evening at the Orleans will also include a skills challenge, which will feature two hometown stars, Las Vegas Gladiator Marcus Nash and Clint Dolezel. As for the musical entertainment, saxophonist Mike Phillips and hip-hop violinist Miri Ben-Ari will be competing in a unique musical challenge.

"One will play and get the crowd's reaction, then the other will play and get the crowd's reaction," said McCloskey, explaining how the scheduled competition will work.

The Arena Battle has a little something for everyone, but there's more. Fans will get a chance to get up close and personal with their favorite celebrities and athletes during an autograph session immediately following the nights events.

For all the music lovers out there, the Arena Bash concert at the MGM Grand on Friday should satisfy all cravings. Maroon 5, a Grammy Award winning group, will headline the concert, but they won't be alone. John Legend, Gavin DeGraw and Low Millions are also performing at the Bash which starts at 7:30 p.m.

The weekend features the final big game Sunday afternoon at the Arena Bowl XIX when the Colorado Crush and the Georgia Force battle for the championship. Both

teams clinched their conferences — the Crush winning the American conference and the Force winners of the National conference.

According to AFL Commissioner David Baker, Arena Bowl XIX will be the culmination of a fantastic season. He feels that the Colorado Crush and the Georgia Force were two of the best teams all season. He feels that during the Arena Bowl "We'll find out which one truly is the best."

Aside from the main event there will be a half time performance by world-famous musician Bryan Adams. And the game goes won't be too quick to leave after the game because R&B group Kool & The Gang will excite the crowd with their post game performance.

All in all, the weekend should go down in the history books.

Arena Football seems to be embracing Las Vegas where other professional sports seem determined to shy away from the City of Lights. And more and more fans are being drawn to the game played in an indoor arena with padded sidelines and a field about half the size of a regulation outdoor NFL football game. And, the end zone consists of a high net above the heads of fans that get to see the action up close and at a faster pace than outdoor games tend to move.

"We [Arena Football] have been the fastest growing sport in the nation. We feel taking our game to a neutral site, to Las Vegas, will

only enhance our popularity," McCloskey said.

The Arena Bowl will be held here in Vegas for the next three years, according to McCloskey, and it's almost inevitable the weekend will get even bigger every year.

"I would say to all fans

out there, you are not going to find a better bang for your buck than the arena weekend. It's a phenomenal value for your dollar," McCloskey concluded as he implied ticket prices are fair for all fans.

Arena weekend will be

filled with football, celebrities, music and the fans — the regulars and, undoubtedly, many new ones. It will be a great time to pick your events and celebrate with arena football fans from around the country, right here in town.

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