



Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, left, stands with opponent Kevin McBride, right, at a news conference to promote their upcoming fight on Wednesday, in Washington. Tyson will fight McBride on June 11.

Tyson in crossroads bout versus McBride

WASHINGTON (AP) - Promoter Rock Newman feels Mike Tyson is reaching a pivotal moment toward the end of his boxing career. If Tyson can beat Kevin McBride on Saturday night, he could be on track to fight again for the heavyweight championship. But a loss, Newman said, could mean Tyson's career would be effectively over.

"I think that Mike Tyson, at 38 years of age, has gotten to a place where he understands it's his final chance," Newman said. "Everything in his life, in his professional life, is riding on Saturday night, June the 11th."

Newman was on hand Tuesday for Tyson's open training session at Howard University's steamy Burr Gymnasium. Tyson sparred briefly with his trainer, Jeff Fenech, before addressing the media. Despite Newman's opinions, Tyson refused to say a loss would mark the end of his career.

"Losing does not enter my mind (unless it becomes) reality," Tyson said. "If it does happen, I just keep fighting until I get what I want in life. Whenever you're trying to become the best in the world in anything, you're going to have ups and downs. It doesn't mean you should give up."

Many of the questions for Tyson centered on his age. Tyson will turn 39 on June 30. The fight at the MCI Center is Tyson's first since an embarrassing fourth-round knockout loss to Danny Williams on July 30, 2004. Tyson has not fought for a heavyweight crown since 2002, when he was knocked out by Lennox Lewis in the eighth round.

That fight was Tyson's first attempt for the title since 1997, when he was disqualified for biting off a piece of Evander Holyfield's ear. That reputation for erratic behavior has been a signature of Tyson's last several years in the ring.

"Mike and I have prepared mentally and physically," Fenech said. "My job is to make Mike happy, to make him enjoy training. He's done that tremendously. I have no fears whatsoever that Mike Tyson will be fully in control of his emotions, and his actions and we believe it will be a successful night for Tyson."

Tyson added: "I'm not going to bite anybody, or break anybody's arm, hit anybody after the bell, if that's what you're talking about."



IT'S A WRAP

Laila Ali, right, daughter of the boxer Muhammad Ali, gets her hands wrapped by her husband/trainer Yahya McClain, left, before her workout at Burr Gymnasium at Howard University on Tuesday in Washington. Ali is fighting Erin Toughill for the WBC and WIBA world super middleweight titles Saturday, on the undercard of the Mike Tyson-Kevin McBride heavyweight bout.

Deion Sanders' expected return delayed

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP) - Deion Sanders' expected return to the Baltimore Ravens was delayed another day Tuesday as the veteran nickelback flew to New York to have his surgically repaired toe examined by the doctor who performed the procedure.

Sanders, who turns 38 in August, returned to the Ravens' training complex Tuesday evening and indicated that he hadn't yet been cleared medically.

Sanders underwent minor surgery on a toe in his left foot after last season. He was limited to nine games in 2004 with toe and hamstring injuries.

"I'm still waiting on (clearance)," said Sanders, who ran laps around the practice field after returning from his doctor's visit in New York. "I wish I did know."

Sanders hasn't signed a contract, pending passing a physical, but has agreed in principle to a one-year, \$1.5

million deal that could be worth as much as \$4 million with incentives.

When asked if he might be cleared to practice Wednesday, Sanders replied: "Hopefully, pray for me."

The results of the seven-time Pro Bowl cornerback's MRI exam were sent overnight Monday to his doctor, who was scheduled to discuss them Tuesday with Leigh Ann Curl, the team's chief orthopedic surgeon.

If Sanders is cleared medically, team officials said he could join the team for Wednesday's practice.

Sanders ended a three-year retirement last season and finished second on the team with three interceptions. He was one of three NFL players to intercept three passes despite playing in less than 10 games.

Sanders is expected to split time in the Ravens' nickel and dime packages with Dale Carter.

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