

# Despite rust, Hearns hungry

DETROIT (AP) - A number of people have urged the Hitman to stop hitting. But Thomas Hearns, one of the greatest fighters of his generation, said he's not quite ready to hang up the gloves.

"This is just a start. I'm planning to fight a long time," the 46-year-old cruiserweight said after his latest comeback fight — Saturday night's eight-round win over lightly regarded John Long.

It was Hearns' first appearance in the ring since a forgettable loss to Uriah Grant five years ago. In that bout, Hearns sprained his ankle in the second round and couldn't answer the bell for the third round against the Jamaican left-hander.

On Saturday, it was Long — six inches shorter and 11 years younger than Hearns — who could not answer the bell for the ninth round.

It was far from an easy fight for Hearns, however. The seven-time world champion looked tentative and slow in the first four rounds. The partisan crowd at a half-filled Cobo Arena seemed anxious as the hard-charging Long pounded Hearns against the ropes in the early going.

But in the fifth, Hearns (60-5-1, 47 knockouts) scored a knockdown, using a right jab to set up a left cross that sent Long to his knees. In the sixth, Hearns opened a cut over Long's left eye.

The bald, goateed Long (19-7-1) charged at Hearns for the majority of the fight and scored some early shots to Hearns' head along the ropes, but he appeared to tire

after the fifth-round knockdown. Hearns, wearing white shorts speckled with Long's blood, dominated after that point, finally bringing the Detroit crowd to its feet with chants of "Tomm-y, Tomm-y."

"I feel like I went eight rounds," Hearns said in his dressing room. "I didn't know how long the fight was going to go. I thought John might try to go 10."

Hearns was ahead 79-72 on all three judges' cards when the referee ended the fight on the recommendation of Long's corner.

After the decision was announced, Hearns knelt and prayed while supporters — including his son, Ronald — stormed the ring and celebrated.

The supporters did not include Emanuel Steward, the legendary trainer who guided Hearns' career since his early days at Detroit's Kronk Gym. Steward had advised Hearns not to enter the ring again.

But Hearns appears determined to fight on.

"The next three or four times I fight, I know they have to be better than this," Hearns said.

Ronald Hearns, a promising middleweight, fought on Saturday's undercard. He ran his professional record to 7-0 by knocking out Donald Adams of Zanesville, Ohio. Ronald Hearns put Adams (1-2) on the canvas with a series of overhand rights at 1:47 of the first round.

"I respect everyone's opinion, because they care about my father and don't want to see him get hurt," said the younger Hearns,

who led his father into the ring. "But he's worked hard. He came down from 200 pounds to 177. He's in great shape."

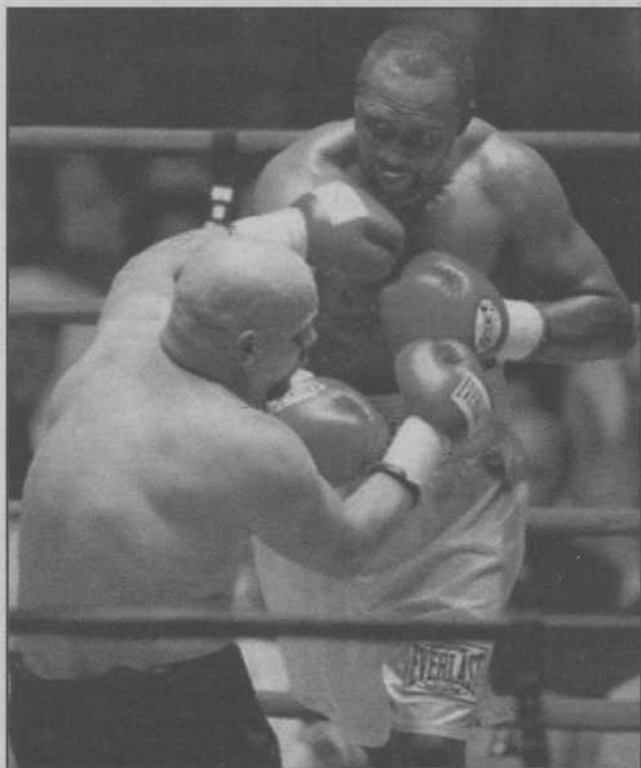
Also on the undercard, Mary Jo Sanders — the daughter of former Detroit Lions standout Charlie Sanders — won the WBC junior welterweight title with a unanimous 10-round decision over Eliza Olson of Fresno, Calif. The Auburn Hills-based Sanders improved to 17-0, while Olson fell to 8-5-3.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Kathi Overstreet

## RON ARTEST EMPOWERED

Ron Artest, *sitted, star forward for the NBA's Indiana Pacers and rapper, stopped by the studios of Power 88 (KCEP FM 88.1) on Wednesday. With him are George Glenn, general sales manager of Shack-Findlay Honda, left, and on-air personality Billy T.*



Tommy Hearns, right, connects with John Long during the sixth round of their cruiserweight fight Saturday in Detroit. Hearns won. He wants to build on his legendary career.

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