

Future of noted Detroit gym in doubt

DETROIT (AP) - Emanuel Steward sat down on the couch, hunched over and covered his face with his hands — the same hands that made him an amateur champion as a young man and later helped him tutor some of the greatest fighters who ever stepped in the ring.

"I haven't decided what I'm going to do yet," he said softly. "I don't know."

The Kronk — the dingy, overheated basement gym that has produced world champions like Thomas Hearns, Sugar Ray Leonard and Lennox Lewis — is nearly down for the count, and Steward isn't sure whether he should throw in the towel.

The 62-year-old Hall of Fame trainer has been reaching into his own pocket to keep the Kronk running in the eight months since Detroit shut down the recreation center that houses it because of a major budget shortfall. The city is permitting the gym to stay open, provided that Steward continues to run it and submits a monthly fee to cover utilities.

But the potential knockout blow came last weekend, when police say thieves entered the building through a window and made off with copper pipes from the basement boiler room, cutting off the gym's water supply. Copper, the value of which has skyrocketed on the New York Mercantile Exchange, is now a popular target for criminals across the U.S.

Steward has been told that it will cost anywhere between \$20,000 and \$40,000 to fix the damage to the gym he has led for more than three decades.

U.S. women snag World's bronze

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP) - Diana Taurasi had 28 points and Tina Thompson added 15 to lead the U.S. to a 99-59 win over host Brazil on Saturday to capture the bronze medal at the women's basketball World Championships.

Taurasi, who hit six 3-pointers in the game, had 18 points in the third quarter as the Americans outscored the Brazilians 34-11 to break open what had been a 15-point game at halftime.

Last Thursday, Russia stunned the two-time defending champion U.S. 75-68 in the semifinals. That defeat ended a 51-game winning streak in world championships and Olympics.

"We had to prove to ourselves that we could play better than we did against Russia," Taurasi said. "We lost some of our pride in that game, but we managed to recover it today."

Tamika Catchings had 11 points and eight rebounds for the U.S. squad against Brazil.

"The Americans played a perfect game," said Brazil's Janeth dos Santos Arcain. "Our coaches told us that each team would have one great game and one horrible game. Their horrible game was against Russia and their great game was against us."

"I don't have that kind of money," he said.

So, he's down to two options: Figure out a way to get the money to keep the gym up and running again or open a new Kronk elsewhere.

Ideally, Steward would like to repair the damage at the Kronk, but he worries about not only the cost but also the likelihood of another robbery.

"What's going to stop them from breaking in again? That's my biggest concern," he said.

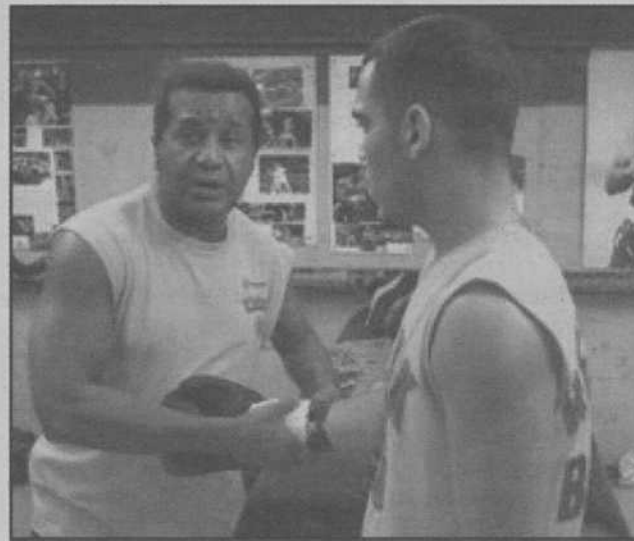
So, Steward is considering moving the Kronk to another location in Detroit, possibly to the site of a former Fitness USA location that closed five or six years ago. He has approached the building's owner about a possible deal.

In the meantime, Steward is renting space at a gym in Dearborn so his young fighters — many of whom he says are confused about the Kronk's predicament — can train for upcoming matches.

The best of the Kronk's amateurs are scheduled to compete next week in the National PAL Championships in Oxnard, Calif., and in October, several Kronk professionals are to appear on a card at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit.

But the uncertainty about the Kronk's future and the prospect of scraping together enough money to send his young fighters across the country is wearing on Steward.

"This man is a legend. He doesn't deserve to have all this going down," said Bobby Bostick, a Florida fight promoter who is helping to put on the Joe Louis



Legendary trainer and benefactor of the famous Kronk Gym Emanuel Steward wraps a young fighter's glove with tape.

event.

Bostick also is trying to line up corporate sponsorship for the Kronk to help ease the financial burden on Steward, who says it costs him about \$2,000 a week to run the gym.

In addition to his mounting expenses, Steward also is dealing with the fallout from a botched fundraiser held in the days before Detroit hosted the Super Bowl in early February.

Word spread at the event about a \$1 million-plus donation from an Internet businessman. Believing Kronk had all the money necessary

to operate in the short term based on the new infusion of cash, many potential donors backed off. But the Internet businessman's money never materialized, nor did much from anybody else, and to this day, Steward said, he still is trying to pay off all the expenses from the fundraiser.

"That's the worst thing that could have ever, ever happened," said Steward, who wants to put together another fundraiser, but hasn't had the time to organize it.

For the time being, though, Steward is doing his best to concentrate on the sport he loves.

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