

Phillips outlasts Spinks for IBF championship

Special to Sentinel-Voice
ST. LOUIS -Having his famous father and uncle working the corner was no help recently to Cory Spinks, who relinquished his IBF junior welterweight championship in his hometown in a 12-round split decision to Verno Phillips.

The 30-year-old Spinks (36-5) has lost his last two fights. The latest setback came a few weeks after a split with longtime trainer and manager Kevin Cunningham, and despite moral support from Leon Spinks and Michael Spinks, Cory's father and uncle and both former heavyweight champions.

"I felt good, just a little rusty, that's all," Spinks said of his first fight in 10 months. "I'm upset with myself. I let myself down."

Spinks said the layoff was too much to overcome and that he ended up going toe-to-toe as a result.

"I was trying to give the fans a little excitement," he said. "I should have just

boxed, but it was also the rust.

"I felt like I could just get myself out of the way, but that wasn't the case and he caught me with some shots I shouldn't have gotten hit with."

Michael Spinks thought his nephew had won the fight. "Being the champ, I thought Cory was going to get the decision," he said. "I thought it was going Cory's way."

Cory Spinks, the former undisputed welterweight champion, hopes to get back into the ring soon.

"I will get my titles back," he said. "I'm a still a champ. I will still succeed."

The fight was Spinks' third in his hometown and perhaps his last, given lackluster attendance of 8,874, including thousands of free tickets. His first fight in 2005 sold out the 22,000-seat Scottrade Center.

"I felt like his people were booing him because he didn't bring it," Phillips said.

The 38-year-old Phillips



Verno Phillips, right, head butts Cory Spinks during the IBF Junior Middleweight Championship fight last week in St. Louis. Phillips beat Spinks by a 12-round split decision.

(42-11-1) is a former three-time 154-pound world junior middleweight champion who last held the belt in 2004. Unlike Spinks, Phillips overcame a layoff; it was his first fight since Feb. 16, 2007.

Cunningham's focus now is on unbeaten Devon Alexander (15-0) of St. Louis, the aggressor throughout his 12-round unanimous decision over Miguel Callist of Panama in a bout matching regional super lightweight titlists.

Alexander, who delivers all of his punches with a loud

grunt, knocked down the 33-year-old Callist (24-7-1) in the final round and had him in full retreat by the end of the fight.

"Devon did what he had to do," Cunningham said. "There's not much you can do when a guy brings his track shoes instead of boxing shoes."

The 21-year-old Alexander said he wants to fight for a world title by the end of the year.

"St. Louis has a new champion," he said. "And I'm going to stay around."

Flood deserves Hall of Fame recognition

By Bill Fletcher Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When it comes to sports, there are two issues in two different sports that really get my blood boiling. With football, it is the fact that the Washington Redskins refuse to jettison their racist/anti-Native American name despite the continuous requests and protests of Native Americans and their allies.

When it comes to baseball, for me, it is all about Curt Flood. It is about the fact that this late, former outstanding player for the St. Louis Cardinals has been denied entry into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame, largely because he took a courageous stand that ultimately brought about a dramatic change in Major League Baseball.

Major League baseball was once dominated by a system known as the "reserve clause."

Simply put, it was a form of indentured servitude in which a player was locked into a perpetual deal with a specific team for as long as the owners of the team wanted. A player could be traded irrespective of their wishes, and many a player suffered under this system.

In the 1960s, influenced



CURT FLOOD

by the Black Freedom Movement and the courage of his mentor Jackie Robinson, Curt Flood took a public stand against the reserve clause, refusing to be traded to the Philadelphia Phillies. As detailed in Brad Snyder's powerful book on the subject—"A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood's Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports"—Flood was warned by many people, including members of the Major League Baseball Players Association, that bringing a lawsuit challenging the reserve clause was an entirely uphill battle. Flood was pre- (See Curt Flood, Page 11)

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