

# Sports Talk

by Ron Sykes  
Sports Editor

The story concerned the operator of a traveling circus, who was offered the services of a one-man thrill act. "Got all the thrill acts I can use," he argued.

"But you've never seen an act like mine," the man said. "I climb to the top of a 200-foot ladder and dive into a steel tank covered by only six inches of water."

Well, the circus operator had to see that with his own eyes, and sure enough, the man climbed to the top of the 200-foot ladder and belly-flopped into the tank with a splash heard across the continent.

"That's the greatest act I've ever seen," the circus operator said. The circus boss agreed, "I'll give you \$15,000 a week for six shows and a matinee." "Not on your life," the performer responded.

The circus operator raised his offer three times and got the same rejection, and finally asked in despair, "Just how much do you want?"

"I don't want a dime," the man replied. "That was the first time I tried it, and it hurt."

A good friend of mine, whom I'll refer to as 'Olympia Jim,' and for obvious reasons, got hurt in just a similar way the other night while engaging in a sports conversation on the subject of boxing. Now, if you follow my Column with any regularity you will certainly remember the topic two weeks ago was on boxing. And who was the greatest. Well, I was fortunate enough to coax a few experts of both the past and the present to join me in a rap session to discuss the iron men of pugilistic fame.

Now, if Ruby Kay will excuse my redundancy, I'll set the scene.

On Monday, July 23rd, six of us met at Cleo's. Joe Boyd, Louis Harris, Charles Hinton, Olympia Jim, Mr. Tigner and myself. The rap session was to be held at 8:00 p.m. in the back room. Hinton, Harris, Boyd and Harris arrived promptly at eight. Tigner strolled in, apologetically, fifteen minutes later. And this was to be the only time during our session that he would admit error.

From the beginning it was obvious that the meeting was divided into two camps, the old generation against the now generation.

Divided it was, with Hinton, Olympia Jim, Boyd and Tigner representing the Joe Louis era and Harris and my favorite columnist representing the Muhammad Ali era.

Everyone agreed that their champions were the best. Harris argued that everything in the world of sports today is better. Sykes concurred. Tigner then said, "You youngsters today think you know everything, and you don't know nothin', Joe Louis would have knocked that Clay outta the ring."

Harris scoffed at this and insisted that Louis was too slow. Harris told the group that he had spent numerous hours at the PSU library reviewing films of the boxers of yesteryear and it was comical and hilarious. "The old timers couldn't hold a candle to the good present day heavyweights," he concluded.

Olympia Jim sitting to my right proclaimed Jack Johnson as the greatest heavyweight of all time, and that Henry Armstrong could have easily destroyed Sugar Ray Robinson.

At this point Olympia Jim's knowledge lost some of its credibility.

Which fighter had the most heart? "Ali," shouted Harris, "His heart was big as all outdoors." Olympia Jim, who earlier stated that Henry Armstrong would decapitate Sugar Ray, pulled on his last swig of beer and calmly said, "Jake LaMotta."

"Why Jake LaMotta?" Harris asked. "Because he had to fight a man, Sugar Ray, who was the best fighter pound for pound to get in the ring." At that point Lou Harris keeled over backwards and the meeting abruptly adjourned. And please, Ruby Kay, excuse my redundancy, but I would have certainly been remiss not to report on this meeting.

Al (Bubba) Baker, last season's NFL defensive rookie of the year extended his three year contract with the Lions for a reported additional \$30,000.

Outside linebacker Isiah Robertson, traded from the Los Angeles Rams to the Buffalo Bills a week ago, has signed a three year contract with his new club.

The 6'3", 225 pound linebacker, an eight year vet, is received by the Bills as the cornerstone to plans for a more respectable linebacking crew.

Detroit Pistons signed Roy Hamilton, their first-round choice from UCLA.

Indiana Pacers signed Mickey Johnson, forward, to a multi-year contract. Johnson played last year with the Chicago Bulls.

## Venable joins AMF staff

Charlie Venable, regarded as the best professional Black bowler in the country and the only full timer on the PBA tour, has been signed as a member of the AMF Staff of Champions, it was announced by R.R. Woodruff, vice president, marketing, AMF Bowling Division-U.S.

The 28-year-old Venable, a native of Brooklyn, but now a resident of the Bronx, has been a PBA member since the summer of 1972 when he finished third in Rookie of the Year voting. He bowled infrequently through most of his early professional years because he was pursuing a degree in business management, which he received in 1976 from Medgar Evers College in New York City. His lone PBA victory came during his undergraduate days when he won a PBA Regional tournament at Lansdale, Pennsylvania in 1975.

Venable's best finish in a national PBA tourney came in 1977 when he finished fourth in the BPA U.S. Open, his first exposure on network TV. He earned \$6,930 in five appearances that year, but then made his first full swing of 31 tournaments in 1978, winning \$16,212, including a fifth-place finish in the Midas Open.

As an exempt touring pro, he hit 12 stops on the 1979 PBA Winter Tour, earning \$6,500, with his best finishes being 11th at Alameda, California and 13th in the San Antonio AMF MagicScore Open.

Venable started in the junior bowling ranks at 13 and had the first of his six sanctioned 300 games at age 16. One of his perfectos came in his PBA rookie year at Rochester. In between tour stops, Venable carries a 218 average in the highly competitive Eastern Classic League in Paramus, New Jersey.

Venable has been hailed as the best Black bowler since the legendary late J. Wilbert Sims of two decades ago, and is confident that he will be the first Black to be crowned a PBA champion. "It's only a matter of time," he says.

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**JOHN R. PARIS**  
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The Timbers finally found a winning combination in Mitchell, Butler, Day and Best, as they soundly defeated the Ft. Lauderdale Strikers 4-1 during last Saturday's home game at the Stadium. Next home game is against the Vancouver Whitecaps, Saturday, July 28th at 8:00 p.m. (Photos: Keith Kvernvik)

## Ali cancels

Muhammad Ali will not be able to attend the scheduled events of "Augustfest," the major annual fund raising activity of the Albina Women's League/North/Northeast Youth Development Program on August 25th, as previously announced.

Muhammad Ali's personal secretary informed Mrs. Bettie Lou Overton, President, AWL via telephone on Saturday night, July 21st, of the decision that, "Mr. Ali was overextended and would not be able to attend the ceremonies in his honor." The cancelled events include a scheduled parade with Ali serving as the Grand Marshall.

The renaming of the AWL building in honor of Muhammad Ali will take place as scheduled on Saturday, August 25th, at 8 N.E. Killingsworth Street at 10:00 a.m. The food and entertainment activities will continue as scheduled.

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JULY 1979

### ON SOCIETY:

I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy the company as to shun myself.

Samuel Johnson

### ON SUSPICION:

Always suspect that which seems probable, and begin by believing what appears incredible.

Emile Guboriau

### ON SUSPICION:

All persons, as they grow less prosperous, grow more suspicious.

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Terence

### ON SUCCESS:

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

Ralph Waldo Emerson