

Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

Dwight Braxton, newly crowned light-heavyweight champion, was recently saluted by NBC as their sportman of today. Appearing with host Bryant Bumbel, the 5-6 boxer and ex-convict was honored for his work in the community.

Braxton, from Camden, N.J. just recently opened a campaign to help youngsters to stay in school. "I just want to show people that there is another side to me," beamed the champ. "Boxing has allowed me this chance and I owe it to the game and myself to give something back." The *Observer* salutes Dwight Braxton and wishes him well in his next month's title defense.

The Washington Huskies have shocked the nation by pulling off two of the top prep players in the country.

Tailback Kevin Wilhite and tackle James Fitzpatrick, two of the nation's most-sought-after prep players... each has verbally committed that they will join Coach Don James in Seattle.

Wilhite, who comes from Sacramento's football hotbed's Cordova

High, reportedly made his decision Sunday after returning from a week-end visit to the UW campus.

The 6-1, 200-pounder, who scored 33 touchdowns and gained 2,651 yards in two years at Cordova had narrowed his choices to Washington and Oregon before deciding on the Huskies. If anyone has ever doubted the recruiting ability of Rich Brooks then his efforts here should swiftly dispel all such thoughts.

Oregon is on probation for two years, yet Brooks came close to grabbing off both Wilhite and James Fitzpatrick.

Fitzpatrick, a 6-8, 260-pound giant, visited Seattle on Monday. The Beaverton All-America indicated to the local press that U.W. was his choice although he would probably visit USC on the weekend.

Wilhite, whose older brother Gerald was an outstanding running back at San Jose this past fall, has already twice been named the national high school player of the year, initially by *Parade Magazine* and just recently by *Dial Corporation*.

A cousin of former NFL great Gale Sayers, Wilhite is also the defending state champ in the 200-meter dash and was clocked last year in a fast 9.3 100-yard dash. It is interesting to note that both Wilhite and Fitzpatrick attended numerous UW Rose Bowl practices.

No mas! No mas! And with that famous statement went the once-invincible Roberto Duran. The legendary hands of stone, the once proud fighter from Panama, whom many called the greatest lightweight that ever lived, was reduced to a paper tiger on that memorable night in Las Vegas when Sugar Ray Leonard, who is the best fighter in the world today, reduced Duran's image on that hot summer night. Duran announced his retirement that evening, but later changed his mind. His vendetta was to chase Leonard until he could once again get him into the ring. He (Duran) wanted to show the world, as he says, that Sugar Ray was a sissy. Roberto started his comeback weighing 185 pounds, which prompted Leonard to crack, "He

shouldn't be wanting me. At that weight he should be going after Larry Holmes."

Duran, at the advice of his trainers, moved to the mountains of Panama, where he could escape the bright lights and fast women that plagued him most of his career. He trained diligently with only Leonard in mind.

Roberto took a tune-up fight at 165 pounds to test his stamina. He quickly learned against a nobody that the old clout wasn't there. He won an unpopular decision and went quickly back to the gym, with visions of Leonard still dancing in his head.

Meanwhile Sugar Ray was training for Thomas Hearns. While Duran's mind was obsessed with Leonard, Sugar Ray thought only of his next opponent... the Detroit "hit man." After disposing of Hearns in a grueling 14 rounds Leonard decided to relax for a short time. But Duran still in pursuit of his dream continued to pursue the welterweight champ.

With both the NBA and NBC titles in his hip pocket Ray Leonard

was content. But not Roberto Duran. This Duran had known adversities all his life. He grew up a street urchin in the ghettos of Panama City. He met tough challenges every day as he tried to eke out a living for his mother and himself. He wouldn't let Leonard's success bother him. His pursuit was relentless.

In his quest to conquer Leonard he decided he needed one stiff challenge.

His followers disagreed with his choice of one Wilfredo Benitez. Those close to him advised that Wilfredo was too tough. That if he was to fight a tough fight, then take on Leonard and get the payday. Duran won the argument and signed to fight Benitez, a fighter who took Leonard 15 tough rounds, who many believe to be nearly as great as Sugar Ray. Benitez is the classic boxer, elusive, intelligent, and a great counter-puncher. On January 30th from Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, a myth came to an end. Wilfredo Benitez gave Duran a boxing lesson on this night. Benitez was in total control as he punished the ex-champ over 15 rounds. When it was over Duran refused to shake hands in the traditional manner.

Thus showing that he was as sorry in defeat as he was great in victory.

The legend has ended!

Jim Saul, a 42-year-old former backstop with the Beavers, was selected Monday as the next Portland skipper.

Beaver General Manager Dave Hersh also announced that former Cy Young winner Vernon Law will be the team's first pitching coach and Tom Trebelhorn, a coach from last year, was retired.

With Monday's announcements the Beaver staff is now complete.

In an interview with the *Observer*, when asked by this reporter, "Why can't the Beavers attract more Black fans," Hersh simply replied, "You know we were just discussing that last Saturday."

The answer is obvious Dave. One only has to look at the current Beaver roster and coaching staff. While not lily it's alarmingly close to being. Portland doesn't need an all-Black baseball team, but a little something to identify with and I think the Black community would respond.

Do you agree?

If you do -- or if you don't -- let us know. Write: *Sports, Portland Observer*, Box 3137, Portland 97208.

Oregon State a strong tournament team

The OSU Beavers, currently ranked among the nation's top ten basketball teams, are fast becoming the scourge of the west coast. The 15-3 Beavers came back Saturday night to trounce a good Southern Cal team after dropping a tough 74-68 contest to the UCLA Bruins at Pauley Pavilion. UCLA had to get season highs from Kenny Fields (23 pts.) and Mike Sanders (29 pts.) and still the game never got out of reach. The always tough Beavers refused to bend under the pressure of Pauley and if not for some sensational play from the entire Bruins team, the miller's men certainly would have emerged the victors.

The Beavers are currently tied at 8-1 with the surprising Washington Huskies. Left on the OSU schedule is this weekend's visit to Corvallis by the Bay area teams California and Stanford.

OSU should have little trouble with this pair and should delight in the Dad's weekend party by taking both teams easily. February 13 the Orange express rolls into Eugene to take on the hapless Ducks. One has to wonder just how much more adversity this university can withstand. As if things weren't already bad enough with Coach Jim Haney's program. It was learned yesterday the redshirt team member John Cheatham has been arrested on an attempted first-degree burglary charge. Cheatham, a 20-year-old sophomore is current-

ly sitting out the season on academic deficiency problems.

After Oregon the Beavers must ready themselves for the Feb. 18 date at Seattle then on Saturday afternoon they must take on George Raveling in the always tough Palouse country. The following weekend it doesn't get any easier as UCLA and USC fly into town. The Beavers close the regular season March 5 and 6 on the road at Arizona and Arizona State.

Make no doubts even though they're young this Beaver team is as good or better than last year's 26-2 team.

Freshman A.C. Green, chosen last night at the annual Hayward awards banquet as the state's top prep player, has added stability and strong rebounding to this year's Beavers. Sophomore Charlie Sitton, 6-8, center is making me eat crow. Sitton has been outstanding since moving to the middle. And if your young man from McMinnville were a couple inches taller the NBA would soon witness the second coming of a Bill Walton. Yes, Charlie does possess those kinds of talents. Lester Conner and William Brew attack everything in sight and sophomore Dan Evans drills 15-footers like a wildcat oil man.

This is a Beaver team that could make it to the elite final four. They will finish no worse than 20-4.



RALPH MILLER

View from the guerrilla camp

(Continued from page 1 col. 4) and here in Usulután.

The concentrated government attacks followed the guerrillas' failed all-out offensive in January 1981. But according to U.S. government estimates and Salvadoran sources, the guerrilla force of 4,000 to 6,000 troops, plus peasant militia supporters, has remained at full strength during the past year, replacing substantial casualties with new troops.

The government force of about 20,000 in the army and three smaller security forces also has remained stable, despite claims by government officials and the U.S. government that it must be at least doubled to reach the 10-to-1 ratio of superiority which counter-insurgency experts consider necessary to win the war.

The entrenched guerrilla presence in Usulután is a strong indication that, in addition to the stalemated war in the north, the government has been unable to prevent the FMLN from expanding its position in new areas. Guerrilla leaders have said the camp was established last May. They declined to say how many troops are under Medrano's command in the southwest zone.

The guerrillas, giving dates and places that generally agree with official military reports, said they had launched attacks involving as many as 300 troops against the Usulután

garrison, the naval port of La Unión on the Gulf of Fonseca, separating El Salvador from Nicaragua, and several other cities in the zone.

Unlike the northern provinces, Usulután is a rich farming area, and its large peasant population has not been displaced into refugee camps by the fighting. The area also is strategic because it lies along the coastal highway, the second most important artery in the country, and the guerrillas' access to the seacoast provides ample opportunity to receive supplies by boat.

The picture of guerrilla life here is far from the romantic notion of "liberated territory." The Salvadoran armed forces, with vastly superior numbers, heavy artillery, napalm and helicopter gunships, can overrun the area at will. They did so last October in an attack by forces including the elite Atlacatl Brigade. The ruins of a former school destroyed by air bombardment and farmers' huts burned to the ground were visible around the guerrilla camp.

But the guerrillas returned to their old positions after three weeks, when the government forces withdrew from the area. The guerrilla leaders exhibited pride that they had held off the elite brigade for six days. They showed remarkable respect for the fighting ability of the U.S.-trained counterinsurgency

unit. Medrano said the FMLN had gone through a period of "defensive resistance" following the failed January offensive, during which they concentrated on retaining existing positions, training and "recovering arms and, of course, obtaining arms anywhere, in any way, from buying them elsewhere to buying them from the [Salvadoran] officers themselves."

Tactically, he said, they attempt to keep the government troops tied down and dispersed throughout the country by guerrilla sabotage attacks on electric power lines and other essential parts of the economy. Since then, especially since October, he said, his troops have gained the capability to move about the country in large units and to make incursions during the day into medium-size cities.

On Oct. 15, during a major government offensive, FMLN commandos from the Usulután area dynamited the key Do Oro suspension bridge on the coastal highway, in what is considered the most significant guerrilla blow to the military in the war. Medrano said that in some attacks on small outposts they have been able to overrun enemy positions and capture prisoners and weapons.

"Since December we have recovered almost as many weapons as in all of last year," he said. He

added that prisoners were given medical treatment if necessary and released unharmed after a few days.

Independent sources with access to intelligence information confirmed Medrano's identity. Medrano said he was a leader of the guerrilla organization, the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP), and a member of the Unified Revolutionary Directorate, the policy-making board of the guerrilla coalition that includes four other organizations.

The interview was preceded by a display of marching and a formation of a seven-man squad in full uniform, including olive-drab berets. They were armed with M-16s, which seem to be the guerrillas' standard weapon.

Later three separate columns of troops marched by single file up the steep path to the camp, exhaustion from the day's practice maneuvers showing in their faces. Most were armed. In addition, we saw dozens of peasant men with automatic weapons. They were described as militia who do not go on battle missions but guard the civilian population.

Militiamen were seen putting groups of about 30 young girls and 60 young boys through military marching and gun drill. The guerrillas had made no effort to camouflage the camp building we saw, nor did they urge us to secrecy.

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