

# Sugar Ray Leonard: Will he fight again?

by Al McGilberry

"Sugar Ray" Leonard is an American hero; his style and grace have been shown on all the media in this country. He is a champion.

The Olympic Games gave him a forum to launch his fistic career and his smile has shown clear into T.V. sets around the world. Sugar Ray Leonard: Olympic Boxing Champion.

I've watched him grow from a manchild into a man. I was happy when he signed to go into the professional boxing ranks. Because he had said he didn't want to fight anymore, I felt I would never see that cat-like grace in the ring again.

Ray is a crowd pleaser and for each fight the gate and crowd grew larger and larger. It was said that the people he was fighting were "set-ups" and "chumps," but I believed in him.

The marriage to his childhood sweetheart and the admission of his responsibilities to his child brought joy to my heart. I was very proud of his growth and his approach to life. What a beautiful family—one that exemplifies the American dream: sweethearts together, family man forever.

Boxing is a brutal sport. The fights grew tougher until he had to meet a top contender. He signed to fight Wilfred Benitez who also was undefeated. Benitez had fine boxing skills and had fought tougher opponents than Ray. This was a supreme test. Could he pass it?

Indeed he did—a T.K.O. and the drums started beating for greater matches and gates. They finally signed to fight "Stone" Roberto Duran, the recorded best fighter of the times. Golly days. The Sugar Man against Roberto. Could he win? Is he that good? Is he ready for such a war?

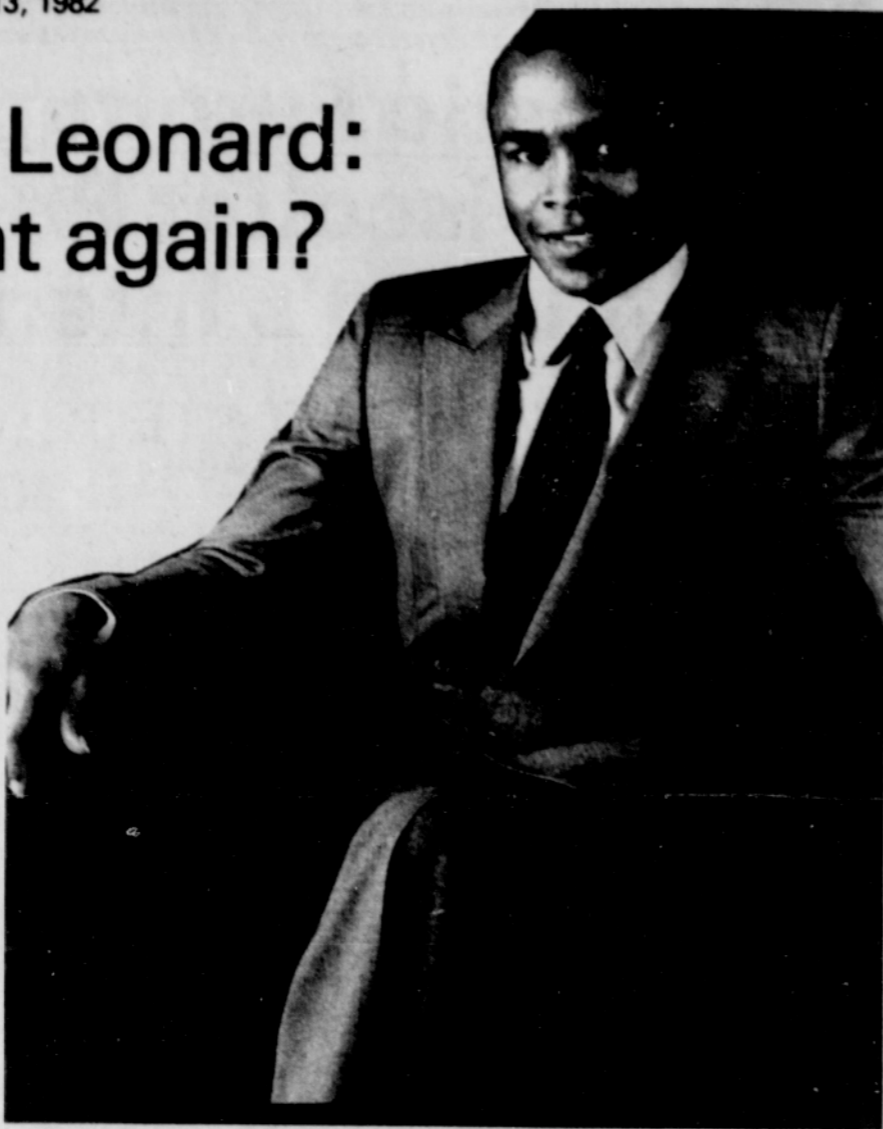
I still thought he could win. Many thought he would lose. Yes, he did lose, but he showed the world he had guts, heart and style.

He lost a decision but he gained in his profession and in the hearts of fight fans around the world. I knew he soon would be the champion.

The loss to Duran made Sugar go back to camp to fine-tune his operating tactics, the bag, the jab, the strategy. He came out of camp razor sharp, ready once more to climb boxing's highest height, the championship.

The gross receipts for the fight were fabulous. The world stood at attention for this rematch. Could he do it this time? Could he reach back for that something extra to win? Before the fight could get into the proper groove it was over. Duran was saying, "No mas, no mas! No mas!" Great day in the morning! Sugar Ray was Ring Champion of the World.

Sport is like love: you must go to the proving ground time and time again and contenders are always



Will Sugar stay in the business suit?



Sugar Ray: Victorious over Hearns

knocking to gain the prize you possess.

Now Tommy Hearns wanted to wear the crown. He also possessed great skill and agility in the sport. Could Ray do it again?

The Leonard-Hearns fight was a thriller. Both fighters taking turns hurting each other, neither showing superiority for 13 rounds. In the 14th round Ray, with one eye closed, showed what champions are made of. He gave it his all. Soon Hearns was stunned—out on his feet. Ray had him. It was over . . .

Today Sugar is fighting again; fighting to save his sight; fighting to remain whole, young and beautiful.

Sugar man, you have money, your beautiful family, and you will be a star in the boxing heavens forever. You have nothing more to prove to the world. We know you have courage, guts and style. Please

show us you've got the heart to walk away from the fight game forever—never to fight again. You can win in other games of life.

Get off the canvas. You are a winner, and a winner always wins.

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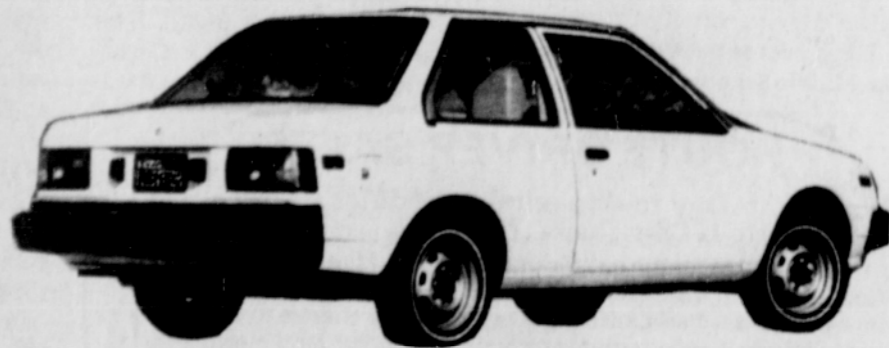
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