



GERRY COONEY

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

As we go to press the outcome of the most ballyhooed heavyweight fight of this decade will not yet be known. But, when this newspaper reaches the streets a verdict will have been rendered. And if all the smoke ever clears those eyes you will finally see peeking through this heavy maze will belong to one Gerry Cooney. Yes, we realize that Cooney has yet to meet a top-ranked heavyweight, and we're reminded every day that he's only had a mere 22 fights, and how often must we hear that those opponents Cooney did defeat were all charter members of the "Over-the-hill-gang."

So, now that all these startling revelations have been made, and to this writer stacked end to end they wouldn't amount to a hill of beans. I'll give you the reasons why we predict a Cooney victory.

Why Cooney will win Holmes in three!

Some will say, "Oh, no, I don't want to hear anymore about that great white hope myth." Okay, believe it or not it does exist. However, this writer believes that Cooney does possess the skills to defeat an aging Larry Holmes, but also realize that there's something extra Cooney will have in his favor and that my friends is the right pigmentation. Call it fair or not but always realize that it is a fact.

Fact: It has been more than two decades since Ingemaar Johannsen knocked out Floyd Patterson to become the first white heavyweight since Rocky Marciano.

Fact: There will be no black judges at ringside when Gerry Cooney and Larry Holmes climb through the ring and set foot on the apron.

Fact: If a decision is necessary, and I don't believe it will be, then Cooney will have the help that he'll need to keep this thing from going another couple decades on the black side, but Gerry will see that no help is needed by flattening Holmes around the fifth or sixth round.

Fact: Larry Holmes has done most of the talking, while Cooney chose to let his fists do the talking.

Fact: Holmes, one of 12 children, born in 1949 to John and Flossie Holmes, in Culbert, Ga., will be in the best shape of his life. Though comfortably rich, Holmes is still described as a hungry fighter. He knows very well how far he's come and is not in a hurry to return. He once loaded trucks for a garment company, worked in a car wash, poured hot steel and did a little farming to make ends meet.

Holmes will bring a perfect 29-0

record into the ring but like Cooney... Holmes' record was not made against all top notch fighters. In 1976 Larry faced such blockbusters as Joe Gholston, Fred Aske and Roy Williams—hardly household names. And if 1976 was bad, then '77 didn't get any better when he KO'd Tom Prater, Horace Robinson, Young Sanford and Iban Arrington all inside ten.

Holmes' stiffest competition came in 1978 when he faced an old but hard-hitting Ernie Shavers.

It was a classic... that is if you view a slugging match as such for these two gallant gladiators ripped each other with rights and lefts from round one 'til Holmes finally KO's a very tired Shavers in the 12th. But not before Ernie had nearly had Larry out in the 8th. On closer perspective Holmes' record leaves much to be desired. With all the talk about Cooney's lack of top caliber opponents, then what about Larry!

From 1977 through 1982 Cooney has only fought 85 rounds; he's won 25, of which 22 were knockouts. In 1977 he won a four-round decision over Matt Robinson; 1978 he got the decision over Sam McGill in eight rounds and January 1978 Eddie Lopez managed to survive a brutal eight rounds only to drop a unanimous decision to Cooney. Cooney has amassed 8 first round knockouts in his brief career. Gerry Cooney's main assets are his fists. The young man from New York is a devastating puncher and is quick off the mark. Holmes has a history of being hit and going down. He will get hit by Cooney and the belief here is that he won't get up. "Nuff" said.

by Al McGilberry

June is busting out all over and so will Las Vegas on June the 11th. All the high rollers and stars of film and stage will be there. The occasion, of course, is the heavyweight championship. Gerry Cooney, challenger, and Larry Holmes, champion, will be in the square circle trying to decide who will be standing victorious at the end of round 15 or by knockout or TKO in an earlier round. The victor of course will be Larry Holmes.

I know public sentiment is for Cooney to win. Why? Because the media is promoting him in every way. "What a champion he will be," they say. Hogwash! Sure he is younger and maybe even stronger but beat Holmes? No way.

Fights are won in the ring and not on paper and he will have to beat Larry. Another thing is he has never fought a man like Larry, who will hit him back harder than he has ever been hit before. Holmes will punish him round by round with that great jab that he has. Folks, let me tell you, Larry is good. Very good.

It is a shame that he had to fight

after Ali. We all loved Ali, but after the last Frazier fight Ali was through. He knew how to fool the people and the judges. It was show time and we all loved just to see our hero in action.

But all fighters lose sometimes and out of the ashes came Larry Holmes. He could not recite poetry. He didn't tell stories; he didn't joke with Casell. All he could do was fight.

Fighting is tough business and Larry is just that. He has fought all comers and has ducked no one. He did it easy sometimes, got careless sometimes, but as always at the end he remained victorious. He has mastered his trade; he is a complete fighter. His name will go down in history as one of the greatest champions of all time. Yes, Ali, all time.

Cooney has been promised ten million dollars. Can you believe that? What a guarantee for a guy who never fought a top contender. Michael Doaks and Greg Page really wanted him, but why should he fight tough guys when he could fight bums and get a title shot? The public should be ashamed for going for this type of hype. Millions of dollars will be spent to see this spectacle.



LARRY HOLMES

Why not Holmes against Doaks or Page? Why Cooney? Money, money, not records, or being tested to earn the shot at the title. That's why Cooney is fighting Holmes. He should be fighting Rocky on the movie screen. That's the closest this fight will come to reality.

So, folks, don't go to your refrigerator or to the candy counter. It will be over quick. Holmes in three.

Satchel Page

by Al McGilberry

Someone finally caught up with Satchel Paige. It had to be the big reaper for no one else could catch him; he was running the game of life so fast.

He was a legend in his own time, a master of the American game called baseball.

He was black and great; he could throw the baseball faster than any man ever did before or since. He just couldn't play in the major leagues because of his color.

He played against the major league stars after the World Series each year. He showed the sport world he was the best ever to throw a ball—better than Feller, Grove and the rest.

He made a living by barnstorming across the country—entertaining the whole country by striking out teams of major and minor calibre.

He was hurt because Jackie was the first of his race to go into the major leagues, then he saw Campy, Newk, Doby and others go into the majors. It bothered him so much that he stopped playing the game he loved so very much; his disappointment in not making the majors played so heavy on his heart he stayed at home and wondered why not him, why! why!

But soon they called from Cleveland. At the age of 55, when his great speed had slowed to where you could now see the ball, Satchel

Paige stood in front of eighty thousand people with tears in his eyes and threw his first pitch in the major leagues.

His dream now fulfilled, he could relax and say, "Thank God I finally made it." It's too bad that the country could not have seen him at his greatest level of speed. He was really great.

Now he is on the greatest all-star team. He is the newly appointed captain. I can see him winding up striking out Babe, Mel, Lou, Jackie. Gosh, he is still the fastest of them all. This league has no restriction. Everyone can play. Strike them out, Satch, you're a winner!

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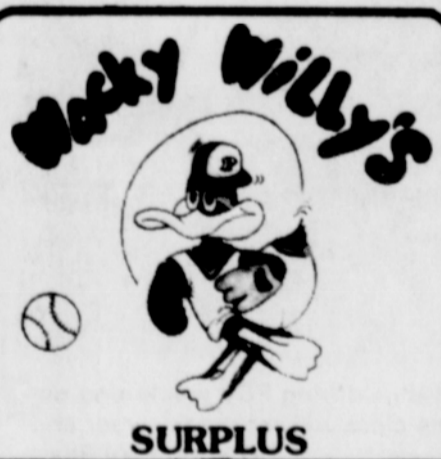
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