



# Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

The Pryor vs. Arguello confrontation to decide the Jr. Welterweight championship of the world was billed as a classic... matching the slugger, Pryor, against the master boxer, Arguello.

It unfurled in Miami's Orange Bowl before a crowd of nearly thirty thousand fans. This was a fight that was expected to rate right up there with the "Thrilla in Manila" where Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier stood the boxing world on their ears as they went at each other for 14 bruising rounds with Ali getting a TKO when "smokin' Joe" was unable to answer the bell. And it, the Arguello vs. Pryor fight, had all the action and fury of the Leonard-Hearns encounter.

As usual Aaron Pryor started fast. He opened the first round with a vicious head and body attack that had the challenger dazed and holding on.

Then in the middle rounds it was Arguello landing the big punches. In round nine Alexis shot a right hand to the head of Pryor that landed with all the fury of the Mt. St. Helens eruption. But instead of going down like so many of Arguello's lightweight opponents, Aaron came forward and landed a right-left combination of his own.

Arguello's handlers would later cry "foul" because Pryor didn't go down when hit by their man, Arguello.

Bill Miller, Arguello's manager, openly accused Pryor's corner of using some illegal solution in between rounds to stimulate their fighter.

Miller allegedly said that what-

ever it was, it allowed Pryor to take "shots that would have stopped King Kong."

Miller should recognize the truth. The truth is that his man "Arguello" was not fighting "just" another ordinary fighter, but was in against a true champion and in a bigger weight class.

All one has to do is examine the record of ex-lightweight champion Roberto Duran. Duran was one of the hardest punching lightweights in boxing history, but when he moved up to welterweight his punch was never the same. Duran has never knocked out a true Welter.

Miller was further amazed because "Pryor has been knocked down in almost all of his previous fights," he said. And those guys could do it, then why couldn't the hard-punching Arguello.

Alexis Arguello is truly a great champion and a class man. He has refused to go along with any form of protest. "I was beaten by a great champion," Alexis said.

And there's nothing shameful about that. What is shameful, however, is that work performed by South African referee Stanley Christodolou.

When Arguello was pinned helpless on the ropes in the 14th round, Mr. Christodolou allowed Pryor to deliver 24 straight punches to the head. Whatever reasons he had, whether he thought Alexis could survive and somehow win a decision, is unknown. What is known is that he almost allowed a class person, Arguello, to become seriously injured. Let's hope that referees are judged on their performance as are

fighters. And let's also hope that this man is never allowed to referee another fight, anywhere in the world.

### Fight-of-the-week

Lightweight Hector "Macho" Camacho and Greg Coverson, will both bring undefeated records with them Saturday when they will square off against each other and the winner is sure to receive a title shot.

Coverson's last outing was a tough match against the super-talented Dave Armstrong. Coverson stopped Davy in 14.

Camacho is a super fast puncher who displays a great deal of confidence. It was the sharp hitting New Yorker that stopped Portland's Louie Loy in Madison Square Garden four months ago.

If ever there was a true cross-roads fight, this is it. Both fighters are young, talented and it will be a donny-brook. Coverson's superior height, 6-1, could be the difference.

Some weeks ago this writer predicted that Sugar Ray Leonard's boxing career would not end on Nov. 9th. In a gala surrounding at Baltimore, Maryland, Leonard announced to the world that he was retiring. But skeptics are still saying that Leonard's retirement is not permanent.

"Let's give him six months to a year and then we'll know," said middleweight champion Marvin Hagler, one of the many guests invited by Leonard to attend his retirement party.

The question—will Leonard fight



AARON PRYOR

again? Ken Norton, former heavyweight champion, thinks Leonard will be no different from Muhammad Ali or Joe Louis.

However, Leonard, who has not fought since undergoing surgery last spring to repair a detached retina, holds steadfast to his decision to hang 'em up.

"The feeling is gone," announced Leonard. "I no longer miss the game."

This writer didn't believe Jim Brown when he made his decision to retire and I didn't believe Leonard would. But, now I can see Leonard following the same trail which Brown walked. So, goodbye to a great man and an even greater champion. *Au revoir! Sugar Ray.*

## Why Lever?

by Joe White

Life in the National Basketball Association has been anything but what Lafayette "Fat" Lever expected it to be.

First of all, when Lever was drafted in the first round by the Portland Trailblazers last year, many people asked why Lever instead of Oregon State star Lester Conner?

Then Darnell Valentine, the Blazers' starting point guard, suffered a deep thigh bruise that has kept him sidelined. This forced Lever into a starting role, a role he was supposed to gradually move into.

The Blazers drafted the former Arizona State standout because of his "pure point guard" skills according to Stu Inman, director of player personnel. He was slotted to backup Valentine and learn the NBA game behind him but Valentine's injury has changed that situation.

The question about "Why not Conner?" bothered Lever for a while. "I felt pretty bad about it," Lever said. But the guys in rookie camp told him that only a few people in Portland felt that Conner should have been the one drafted. According to Lever, Conner told him, "Don't worry about it, just go up and play the way you know how."

Playing the way he knows how should make Lever quite popular with the Portland fans and the Blazer management. "As a player I want them to accept me the way I am," Lever said. "I don't want to be compared to everyone or taken apart for some reason."

Portland picked Lever in the first round last year as the 11th pick overall. Before the draft the Blazers had traded Kelvin Ransey to Dallas for backup center and rebounder Wayne Cooper pulled the Mavericks first round draft choice in 1985. This put the draft priorities at getting another lead guard and Inman and coach Jack Ramsey feel they got the best one available. "We knew the chances were very good to get Fat," Inman said. He said the Blazers took Lever over Conner and Eric Floyd of Georgetown because of "his lead skills, he was the purest point guard."

The trade of Ransey for Cooper was justified because the Blazers needed some rebounding and a center that could back up Mychal Thompson. "To find good back up center help is hard in the NBA," Inman said. "We knew Wayne would give us good back up help—it's a priority thing."

Taking a look at Lever, one can see why he would be compared to the former OSU standout. The two men look alike somewhat—both physically and on the court. But according to Lever they are different people. "I think me and Lester are two different people. You can't compare different people," said Lever. About the only way you can compare the two, Lever said, "We are close friends—that's as far as it goes."

Heading into the 1982-83 National Basketball Association season Lever knew that his duties on the team would come as the backup point guard behind Darnell Valentine. Many number one choices wouldn't be happy with such a role but Lever accepts the situation. "Darnell's doing well. He's the main player and he deserves it because he's been playing so well," Lever said.

Lever's goals for the season are set on helping the Blazers win. He said, "I hope we become winners right away." The Blazers' winning tradition was the first thing that popped into Lever's mind when he was drafted. "I thought of when they won the championship. They're capable of winning," Lever said. "I'm going into a program of winning tradition."

Valentine doesn't see Lever as his backup at lead guard. "He's a very qualified player," Valentine said about Lever. "Another quality player on our team."

Lever is one of six new players that adorn the Blazers roster as the season opened. Head coach Jack Ramsey said Lever "... has great instincts for finding the open people on the floor and makes the simple pass." Ramsey has said that Lever will play in every game for the Blazers, averaging around 20 minutes a game.

Lever and the rest of the team need to play together and get experience if they are going to fulfill the expectations of Ramsey and Inman that this year's team is better than last year's. Inman sort of expected the rough start the Blazers have experienced. "We are the youngest and least experienced team in the league," he said. "That could lead to a rough start."

According to Inman the Lakers are number one with the rest of the teams like Seattle, Phoenix and San Antonio being really balanced. "We're behind those teams now, no doubt about it. But if we're still in it down the stretch—we can play with those teams," Inman said.

During the preseason Lever had a 5-1 turnover to assist ratio com-

pared to Valentine's 2 to 1 ratio. Ramsay is pleased with Lever's ratio but said, "Darnell needs to improve on his. I don't see Fat's slackening off."

Valentine is looking to Lever to help him improve. "I'm excited. I know he's only going to help improve me," Valentine said. "I'm going to help him improve."

Lever said, "I'm just trying to learn behind him." Concerning his great assist/turnover ratio, Lever credited that to the fact that he hasn't been playing as much as Valentine. "I think I should keep the ratio the same but as the season goes along you start to get a little more tired," he said. "You start pushing a little more and you start making more turnovers."

"He hopes he doesn't make costly turnovers when he relieves Valentine on the court. "I want to come in if we were winning and keep the lead. I don't want to do anything to hurt the team or cause us to lose a game," Lever said.

The most difficult transition for the number one draft choice has been the transition game of the NBA. Lever said, "I think all of it's pretty hard. I have to learn to be under control a little bit more. Once you get the transition game going you have to be able to stop and take a shot."

He is finding out that unlike college when you play easy teams once in awhile, the NBA forces you to play hard every night. "Up here you have to be consistent," Lever said.

Signing his contract wasn't much of a problem for Lever. He was concerned about getting what he deserved but was more interested in getting on the court. "I think the sooner we got in (to negotiations), the sooner I would be able to learn the system and see what was going on," he said. "The longer I sat out, the longer it affected me."

Lever said, "My responsibility is to come off the bench and make things happen." Valentine said,

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