



by Roy Lee Jernigan
Sports Editor

SPORT TALK • SPORT TALK •

Amp Elmore sells karate/kickboxing



The Electrifying Anthony "Amp" Elmore is just what the new, exciting sports of karate/kickboxing needs — a super salesman.

"I'm a fighter, promoter, commentator and trainer — I'll even set up the ring if that's what needs to be done," says the champ. Often called the "Muhammad Ali of Professional Karate," because of his non-stop comments and predictions, Elmore maintains such a style is necessary. "I talk a lot, but I do it to bring attention to the sport."

The Amp describes himself as "a former skinny kid who ran his mouth a lot." He began training by learning from books and later studied with a friend who had learned karate in Vietnam. Elmore earned his black belt in 1974. There are differences between his sport and the traditional Oriental art. "Karate, in its old, pure form, is an Eastern art of self-defense. A decade ago, it was still regarded in this country as a mystical art. Karate/kickboxing takes the art of self-defense and modifies it into a form of self-offense for competitive purposes." And although karate has been around for thousands of years and Elmore held his black belt since 1975, a 1979 television broadcast

kindled Elmore's interest in the new, professional sport. Bitten by the bug of competition, he closed his retail carpet store and devoted full-time to a rigid training program. His first professional bout was to follow later that year.

Full contact karate is very different from anything else. A fighter is required to throw at least eight kicks per round and there is no clinching allowed. These rules make for a demanding and exciting spectator sport. "In karate/kickboxing, a fighter needs to run like a track star, have the grace of a ballerina, the stamina of a boxer and the flexibility of a gymnast in order to win," Elmore explains.

The 6'4", 215-pound Memphis native is known for his devastating kicks, and holds the world record for the most kicks thrown in a professional championship bout — an impressive 189. That record goes along with Elmore's strategy in the ring, which includes lots of long kicks in order to keep his opponents away from him.

Keeping competitors at bay is especially important to Elmore. "There is no weight limit in the Super Heavyweight division, and I've given up as many as 30 pounds to an opponent."

His ring expertise and personality have done much to draw attention to himself and his sport. Operation Push bestowed Elmore with their Sports Award for 1984, he was featured as one of *Ebony* magazine's 10 Most Eligible Bachelors for 1983, and a column on the front page of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* called Elmore a "one man chamber of commerce" for the city. "I believe the work has paid off in calling attention to the sport. The *Ebony* article, for example, got the attention of the ladies — and I want to attract everybody," he says.

Elmore is as proud of his sport's clean reputation as he is of his 17 knockouts — and works toward bettering both. Champions, to him, must set examples as good citizens as well as good sports. "The man must make the title, the title doesn't make the man."

Program to eliminate abuse in youth sports

The lessons young people learn from sports are often remembered the rest of their lives.

That is why volunteer coaches and youth administrators have a responsibility to the kids with whom they work, according to Curt Gowdy, National Spokesman of the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) and chairman of the "Making Youth Sports Fun For Kids" program.

"The irony of youth sports today," Gowdy said, "is that while many psychologists, reporters and educators denounce organized youth sports, millions of parents still encourage their offspring to participate."

According to Fred Engh, founder and president of NYSCA, "Even though the elementary school-age population is decreasing, overall organized youth league programs have increased to nearly 20 million participants throughout America."

"That indicates that youth league sport are here to stay, but those who criticize youth sports make some good points, too. Although problems exist in a number of areas, the statement that 'no program is better than it's leader,' can best summarize the problem in youth league sports," Engh said.

In nine out of 10 cases, the leader is a parent of one of the team players. "In most cases," Engh said, "the parent probably has never been told that his or her responsibility extends beyond ensuring that the team wins the championship. Perhaps more importantly, that responsibility includes the development of the value systems of the young people being coached, and it is just as important for parents and coaches to remember that youth sports should be a fun experience."

"No parent would let a 10-year-old take swimming lessons from a person who is not qualified to teach," Engh said. "Well, what about the young people who suffer emotionally, psychologically and sometimes physical abuse because the youth sports coach was never told that he had the responsibilities in these areas?"

Engh believes the coach's volunteer status does not exempt him (or

her) from these responsibilities. To fill this training gap the NYSCA, a non-profit organization formed in 1981, offers a basic certification program that can be completed by attending three-hour sessions on two consecutive nights.

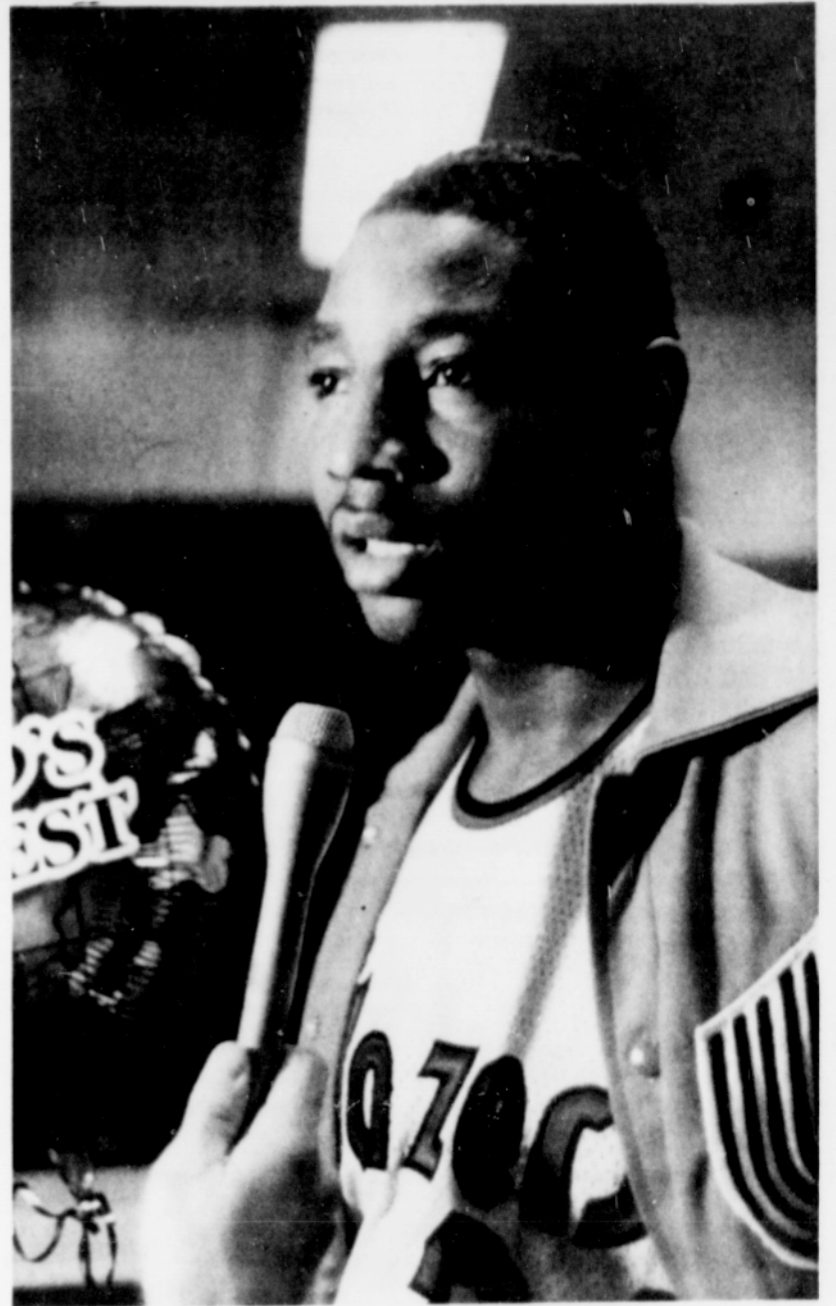
"The feedback we've received from leagues that have implemented the NYSCA certification indicated that by clearly stating minimum standards for volunteer coaches, the vast majority willingly comply," Engh said. "More importantly, the youngsters benefit almost immediately from the more positive experience youth sports was intended to achieve in the first place." NYSCA doesn't stop at educating and certifying volunteer coaches. They have also created special programs to offer comprehensive guidelines for parents, youth league administrators, and game officials who are involved in community youth sports programs.

Certification of an NYSCA volunteer does not denote qualification to coach, per se, but more so indicates a basic awareness of the very important role that each volunteer has on the psychological well being, safety, and the need for basic sports instruction of each child in his (or her) care.

Atlanta, Georgia, County Commissioners make NYSCA certification program mandatory for over 1,500 coaches in leagues using municipal facilities.

Langley, Virginia, U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Command bases with youth sports programs will require all coaches to be certified beginning fall 1985.

To obtain further information on NYSCA and their programs, contact the NYSCA, 2611 Old Okeechobee Rd., West Palm Beach, FL 33409.



Audie Norris, nicknamed "The Atomic Dog," has removed himself from Jack Ramsey's doghouse and will take his talents to Europe. Norris, who has one year remaining on his contract, feels that the European experience will benefit him in the long run. Thanks for the memories, Audie, and the best of luck to you.



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\$100 INCLUDES: ALL OF THE ABOVE WITHOUT A CART
\$12.00 OTHER DINNER GUESTS (not participating in Scramble)

TIME: **9:00 a.m.** CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
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4:00 p.m. DINNER, ENTERTAINMENT AND AWARDS



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