

# SPORTS

## Olympic Hopefuls Bring Boxing To City

By ERIC NOON

Paul Brown Productions and John Hancock Insurance are off to an impressive start with last weekend's Pan American Boxing Trials held at the Oregon Convention Center.

The three-day event was a rousing success. Fifty of the nation's top-ranked amateur boxers were qualifying in 12 Olympic weight divisions to represent the U.S. in the Pan American Games at Mar del Plata, Argentina, March 11-27.

Brown put on a quality event by lining up great sponsors such as Hancock, Shilo Inns, and Louisiana-Pacific. The attendance wasn't as high as they would have liked, but was respectable considering boxing is new to a lot of sports fans in Oregon.

"This is the beginning of more boxing matches," said Jonathan Cogan of the Portland Metropolitan Sports Authority, who works with promoters to bring events to the Portland area. "Eventually, if we do things right, we can bring the Olympic trials here at some point."

Those in attendance got to see boxing at a top notch level in which most of these boxers should make up the 1996 Olympic squad representing USA in Atlanta.

Portland's own Derrel Dixon was stopped Sunday in the heavyweight final as his third round comeback bid was thwarted by Lamon Brewster of Los Angeles when Brewster rocked him with a crushing blow that sent Dixon to the canvas in a hurry, late in the third and final round.

Dixon, who looked a little lost in the earlier rounds, was staging a comeback and had Brewster backpedaling for the first time when he got hit with a powerful blow. Brewster looked to be a solid boxer and should represent the U.S. well.

In the light 112 pound weight class, 19-year-old Eric Morel and 29-year-old Mario Bueno were in a fight of the ages. Morel who came in unranked by USA Boxing defeated the older Bueno in what could have been his last shot at Olympic competition due to his age.

Shane Swartz of Fort Collins, Colo. who lost to middleweight (165) champion Ronald Simms Friday night, lost his father to a heart attack while he was driving a boxing team to a club match in Colorado.

Swartz was in attendance Saturday night for a moment of silence for his best friend and dad.

Harry Merlo, president of Louisiana-Pacific, stepped up and flew Swartz and his coach Dick Wood back to Colorado to be with family on his own corporate jet.

Swartz had broken some ribs two weeks ago and showed a lot of courage just being at the trials. He was the number-one ranked boxer in the middleweight division coming in.

"He told us he loved us all, but he was going to these trials no matter what," Dick Wood, said, quoting Swartz on his courage to even be at the trials in the first place with broken ribs and going against his father and coach's wishes.



The super heavyweight finals of the Pan American Trials at the Convention Center sees Alvin Manley, 5-11 and 235 pounds (right), make a strong challenge against defending champion Lance Whitaker, 6-8 and 232 pounds. (Photo By Tom Gomoll)



Local boxing favorite Derrel Dixon and his coach Steve Smith dwell over a fight before the last round of the heavyweight division finals of the Pan American Trials in Portland. (Photo by Tom Gomoll)

## Offers Goes To Tyson For Rose Garden Bout

By ERIC NOON

An offer to bring Mike Tyson to Portland was made last weekend during Portland's Pan American Boxing Trials.

Mark Hemstreet, owner of Shilo Inns, made some of the biggest news of the trials when he pledged \$16 million to bring the former heavyweight champion to town for his first fight out of prison.

"We are very sincere about trying to promote the first Mike Tyson bout," said Hemstreet, who made the offer with local promoter Paul Brown.

"We're inviting him to come

fight this fall in the new Rose Garden," Hemstreet said. "I can't think of a better way to introduce the world to the beautiful city of Portland, Oregon and our new Rose Garden."

Well, this maybe a beautiful city and the Rose Garden will be a state-of-the-art facility, but professional boxing is ruled by money. You may think \$16 million is a lot of money and it is, but the big money is in Vegas and professional basing has had a home there for many years.

There was a time when a great event like the trials was hard to grasp for the Portland sports fan, but with these big corporate sponsors work-

ing in conjunction with Paul Brown Productions, the Portland Sports Authority and various agencies, the possibilities are endless.

"Our limitations are only what we are unable to imagine," said Hemstreet, when asked if Tyson really has a shot at coming to the Rose City.

Well, maybe Portland will always be a one horse town with the Trailblazers as the only big four (NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL) professional team in town, but we can always bring the big ponies to town with visionaries like Brown and Hemstreet stepping forward and making the commitment.

## Convention Center

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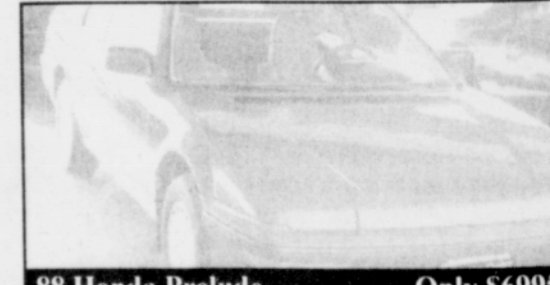
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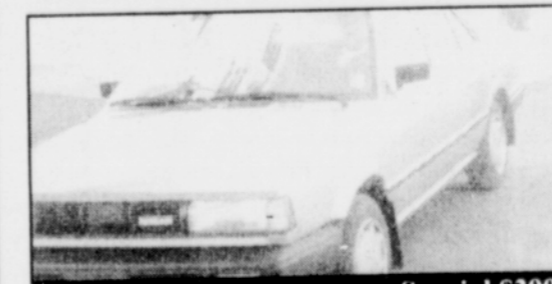
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