

# Holmes has little respect for Spinks

NEW YORK — Larry Holmes, the WBC heavyweight champ, keeps seeing all the problems that befall his WBA counterpart, Leon Spinks, and he laughs at him.

Holmes doesn't have a whole lot of respect for Spinks, either as a fighter or a citizen of the community.

"I think he's a jackass for getting in all that trouble," Holmes says, talking about Spinks' repeated brushes with the law. "He certainly isn't setting himself up as a good example of a black man. He says he wants to be a model for the kids in this country. Some model, isn't he?"

Holmes simply is sitting back waiting now to see what happens in the Sept. 15 return between Spinks and Muhammad Ali at New Orleans. He's convinced it's only a matter of time until all the controversy over who is really the world heavyweight champion will be settled and is equally sure that when it is, he'll come out on top.

Unlike a great many others, Holmes does not believe Ali merely "loaned" Spinks his title so that he could beat him in their return and thereby become the first man ever to win the heavyweight crown three times.

"I think Ali gave it everything he had in their first fight," says the 28-year-old, Easton, Pa., battler who won the WBC championship by outpointing Ken Norton in Las Vegas last month. "I don't believe he 'loaned' Spinks his title."

## Pearson wins Firecracker

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — A slow car lagging several laps behind gave David Pearson the final push he needed to pass Cale Yarborough Tuesday and win his fifth Firecracker 400 stock car race.

Pearson's Mercury and Yarborough's Oldsmobile were running nose-to-tail after the race's fifth caution flag was lifted 17 miles before the end of the \$186,000 event. Then they approached Baxter Price chugging along in an outpaced Chevrolet.

"I saw that car coming and talked quite a bit on the radio with my crew about what to do," Pearson said. "I kept trying to get Cale to pass me but he hung back to save gas."

Pearson, who averaged 154.324 mph, pulled up behind Price, paused a few seconds, then maneuvered around him and soared across the finish line by a car length.

"Cale said I blocked (his view of the car)," Pearson said. "Cale should have been looking farther ahead than that. What we planned to do, we did, and it won it for us. I think the longer the race went, the better I got."

"I knew I was where I shouldn't have been but I couldn't just disappear," Price said.

The first-place showing, good for \$18,450 in prize money and contingency fees, put Pearson far ahead of other Firecracker winners. The closest contender has won only three of the Fourth of July races.

Yarborough took second place. One lap back were Darrell Waltrip, third in a Chevrolet, and Richard Petty, fourth in a Dodge. Lennie Pond was fifth in a Chevrolet, two laps back.

Holmes says he'd like to see Ali beat Spinks in September and then retire, but whatever happens in that fight, he feels he's better than either man.

"I can beat anybody in the world," he says. "Ain't nobody can whip me."

So far, he has the record on his side. He has won all of his 27 professional bouts, including 19 by knockouts. So elated was he over beating Norton last June 9 that he immediately fastened his new WBC title belt around his waist after the

fight, took off like a shot out of his dressing room and dove into a nearby pool at Caesar's Palace where the contest was held.

Holmes has one thing in common with Spinks. He is a grade school dropout and it bothers him enough so that he's now taking courses with a view toward getting his equivalency diploma.

"I think you need an education," he says. "You need it to be able to read newspapers and contracts. I'm not the best reader in the world, it takes me time to read, but I'm not

the dumbest, either. I'm not afraid to admit I was a dropout, that I need help. Seventh grade was as far as I got."

"My Daddy couldn't read or write, but you couldn't cheat him out of a dime. He could count money. So can I."

Holmes earned \$500,000 for his fight with Norton, who was paid \$2 million for his end. Getting the smaller share doesn't bother him that much because he feels that all will change now that he holds a title of his own.

"I couldn't make this kind of money shining shoes or working in car wash," says Holmes, who has done both.

"I made \$50 a week washing cars. Before that, I used to walk all the way from Easton to Phillipsburg, New Jersey, shining shoes. I'd walk into bars and say, 'Mister, mister, shoe shine?' Sometimes, I'd shine their shoes and they wouldn't pay me. I'd remember those guys and the next time they asked me to do their shoes, I'd polish their socks."

The fact that Spinks comes from a ghetto area in St. Louis draws little sympathy from Holmes, who didn't exactly originate from the lap of luxury himself.

"I know how it feels not to have shoes," he says. "I knew how it feels to be on welfare, to smoke dope and get high on wine. I've tried it all, I've traveled a lot of miles."

Holmes is guided by his manager-trainer, Richie Giachetti, whom he says has helped him a great deal outside the ring as well as inside it. He also has learned considerably from Ali, on whose payroll

he was twice as a sparring partner.

"What I learned from Ali was determination and says Holmes. "He has a heart that, and working hard. I picked it up myself. He wanted me for, my sparring partners. He wanted me a lot of good rounds after that. He's smart, fight with Norton, he won, and he was right."

Larry Holmes feels that the fight with Norton, which started now.



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