

Hard-luck Holmes plans to silence critics

United Press International
NEW YORK — World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Larry Holmes is like a man throwing roadblocks in front of him and he keeps pushing through them.

But Holmes always will be on the run from critics whom he deserves to give him the respect he deserves.

Holmes, unbeaten in 39 fights, will make the 12th defense of his title on June 11 in

puncher. Holmes is a boxer-puncher. Holmes doesn't like Cooney and Cooney doesn't like Holmes. It will be interesting, to say the least, but to Holmes, who used to work in a car wash, it's just another fender to dry, albeit a \$10 million one.

Holmes is used to obstacles. The biggest one was put in his path on June 9, 1978. After 14 rounds, then champion Ken Norton and Holmes had fought to a virtual draw. The fight would go to whichever won the 15th and final round. Two out of three judges gave Holmes that last round — one of the most action-packed ever in a heavyweight championship bout — as Holmes and Norton stood toe-to-toe testing each other's shock absorbers.

The car wash days were gone forever. Holmes was now WBC heavyweight champion. Now he sees a car wash only when he drives one of his Rolls Royces through one.

Holmes is THE heavyweight champion although, on paper, there are two. Mike Weaver holds the World Boxing Association version of the title. Weaver could have been the WBC champion but a flueweakened Holmes rallied to stop him in 12 rounds on June 22, 1979, at New

York's Madison Square Garden in his third title defense.

Holmes, 33, now owns a recently custom-built house (11 rooms, 9 bathrooms), in Easton, Pa., where he has lived since 1956. The house has a pool in the shape of a boxing glove, a

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sauna, a jacuzzi, a five-car garage, a white baby grand piano, and a gym.

For all Holmes has accomplished, he still comes across as a hard-luck guy. The fame and recognition of a Muhammad Ali elude him, and it doesn't help that his career followed Ali's like a caboose on a freight train.

He derailed Ali in 11 rounds on Oct. 2, 1980, a hot night in Las Vegas when the three-time champion's corner stopped the slaughter with Ali's face a puffy, purple mess. Even that didn't si-

lence the critics, who complained he "beat up an old man."

A victory over Cooney, especially a knockout, could stop that talk.

Along with his anger at his critics, Holmes will carry into the ring an announced personal dislike for the 6-foot-5 Irishman from Huntington, N.Y., and what he represents.

"If he was black, he would not be in the position he's in now," Holmes said. "He hasn't paid his dues. He hasn't fought any contenders."

"If he was black, would he be making the money he's making?" Holmes asked. "Would I be splitting the money with him? I couldn't begrudge him a thing. I couldn't make the money if Cooney didn't help me."

Besides resenting Cooney's money-making power, Holmes has a genuine disrespect for Cooney as a person and points out that the postponement from March 15 to June 11 because of Cooney's shoulder injury bears that out.

"He's like a little kid. He doesn't have a mind of his own," Holmes said. "That's why I call him 'Looney Cooney'."

"Oh Victor," said Holmes, mimicking Cooney talking to his

trainer, Victor Valle. "My shoulder hurts. Tell me what to do." Shouter (Cooney's handlers) tell him how to feel, how to think and what to do.

"If he was a man, he would

have fought me in March. I believe he had a shoulder injury but that's not the whole problem, only half of it. The other half is with his mind."

will be interesting, to say the least, but to Larry Holmes, who used to work in a car wash, the fight with Gerry Cooney is just another fender to dry, albeit a \$10 million one.

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Furlong

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win the tournament. That earned him the closest team as ever been.

"I would love to have that feeling all through next season."

Although Tulsa ran away with the NCAA championship with an astounding 36 strokes over second-place TCU, Furlong sees the AIAW tourney as a closer battle.

"We should have played a lot better than we played," she said. After that tournament, we M. "He knew that even though it was the worst we'd ever played, it still finished fifth."

"Maybe it gave us a little incentive for the AIAW tournament. We've heard that the course at Ohio State is pretty tough. Tulsa's players aren't very strong long hitters. At Stanford was a pretty short course. Since they (Tulsa) are so dead straight down the fairway, it was their advantage."

Furlong, who finished sixth in the season's national rankings, has been preparing for AIAW nationals by playing in the city championships in San Antonio. Going into today's final round, Furlong has shot a 72-70 for a

two-shot lead over Texas A&M teammate Susan Yantis.

Furlong, who seems to have a knack for overtaking leaders on the last day of competition, defeated Yantis in the 1981 city tourney by rubbing out a three-shot lead with a final-round 72. Furlong won the San Antonio title in 1979, but missed the event because of her injury in 1980. She's now defending the title she won last year.

As for the professional career she's striving for, Furlong said she'll go through the usual procedure starting next July. In order to earn an LPGA tour card, Furlong must shoot four qualifying rounds of 75 or better and must also pass a written test, all at a golf school which will be held in Houston.

"The percentages are that usually only 10 or 12 of about 125 entries get their cards," Furlong said.

If she earns a tour card, Furlong won't be entering her career without some experience among well-known professionals. She qualified for the U.S. Women's Open in 1981 and said she hopes to do so next month as well.

"There'll probably be about 80 pros and amateurs vying for

about 13 spots in the Open," Furlong said. "Last year, they cut the field in half after the first 36 holes. I had shot a 76 on the first 18 and I thought that was a terrible score. I thought, 'Gosh, I'm going to have to shoot a 72 today to make the cut.'"

"So, I set a score that I was going to try to shoot for, but I found out quickly that the more you worry about what you have to shoot, the worse you're going to do. As soon as I was two or three over par, I figured that I'd have to get all birdies to get a low

score, and I ended up shooting an 82."

So much for the 1981 U.S. Women's Open.

Kitty Holley, the Aggie women's golf coach, sees a possible national championship for Furlong during her senior year.

"I've been very pleased with what she's done this year," she said. "She had a good year, and I think she'll have a great year next year."

"She ought to win everything in sight — and she's definitely going to try to."



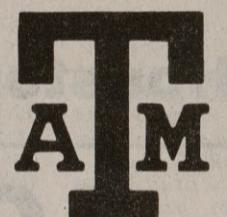
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