

The Battalion Sports

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Boxer Larry Holmes announces retirement

NEW YORK—Larry Holmes is giving his wife a Christmas present that will be enjoyed by all challengers in the heavyweight division.

Holmes, the World Boxing Council heavyweight champion who barely defeated unheralded Tim Witherspoon last Friday night to retain his title, said Tuesday he will retire by Christmas.

Holmes is unbeaten in 43 professional fights and has held the heavyweight crown for five years.

After surviving a strong finish by Witherspoon to earn a split decision last week at Las Vegas, Nev., Holmes said on NBC's "Today" show his Christmas present to his wife would be his retirement from the sport.

"I've done everything in boxing — 43 fights, 43 wins, five years of being heavyweight champion," Holmes said. "I'm part of history. I want to get out of boxing with my faculties and some money and let my kids grow up and be proud of their father."

"Yes, I'm going to retire this year — if there is another fight or if there is not another fight, I'm going to still get out this year. It might be Christmas, it might be before Christmas, but I'm definitely going to give it up this year."

Holmes, 33, earned nearly \$10 million for stopping previously unbeaten Gerry Cooney in 14 rounds last June but has had to go the distance in his last three title defenses. He easily outpointed Randy Cobb over 15 rounds late last year, but looked out of shape and sluggish in a 12-round unanimous decision

over Lucien Rodriguez of France in March and had to use all his ring experience to survive against Witherspoon last week.

Holmes is now due for a mandatory defense against No. 1 ranked Greg Page.

"This fight hasn't influenced my decision," Holmes said. "It's just that I've been very active. I fought three times in six months, four times in less than a year, so I've been an active champion. I fought all the fighters, gave everybody an opportunity. I don't have to continue to keep proving myself."

Holmes said he watched a tape of his bout against Witherspoon and felt he had won the decision.

"I watched the fight last night and I only give the guy three rounds," Holmes said. "He fought a good fight and he's

strong and when he hit me, I came back and hit him."

"The guy was a game fighter, stronger than a lot of people anticipated, stronger than I anticipated. He fought a good fight but it shows you what a cham-

pion's made out of. But Witherspoon's a good fighter. Should Holmes return, he would become the second heavyweight champion in history to retire with a loss. Rocky Marciano retired with a 49-0 record.

Lakers hope 'Cure'ton works against Sixers

PHILADELPHIA — Earl Cureton has been a hard guy to find for the past three months, but the Los Angeles Lakers will make sure they know where he is when the NBA championship series resumes Thursday night.

The Philadelphia 76ers will have the 6-foot-9 Cureton slotted for some playing time in Game 2 in place of Clemon Johnson, who is in Temple University Hospital with a urinary tract infection that could keep him out of the entire series.

Cureton's playing time has been cut since the acquisition of Johnson from the Indiana Pacers in February, but putting him in the playoff pressure cooker doesn't seem to overly concern Sixers' Coach Billy Cunningham.

"Earl has been through this many times in the past," Cunningham said Tuesday. "You just don't know what's going to happen but one thing I know you will get is the effort and intensity."

Cureton's speed is important against the fast-breaking Lakers. He thinks he'll be able to contribute despite his limited playing time.

"I've been practicing hard every day," he said. "Our practices are almost like games so I'll be ready."

The Lakers are confident they can bounce back from a 113-107 defeat on Sunday and tie their franchise history as a result.

They earned a split in the first two Philadelphia championship series games in 1980 and 1981, their way to six-game triumphs.

An advantage for the Lakers will be the full days of rest they've had since Game 1. They played less than 48 hours after beating the Spurs in San Antonio for the West crown.

"When you're rested, you should be a better player," said guard Norm Nixon, who led the Lakers Sunday with 26 points. "We'll be sharp. The difference is being able to get more rest."

Nixon said his left shoulder, which was injured in a first-quarter collision with Andrew Tate, still sore but he will play Thursday.

Not as certain is the status of backup forward Bob McAdoo, who has a bruised thigh.

Not too much is expected to change Thursday night. Both teams will run as much as possible. Look for their big men — Moses Malone and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — when the action is down.

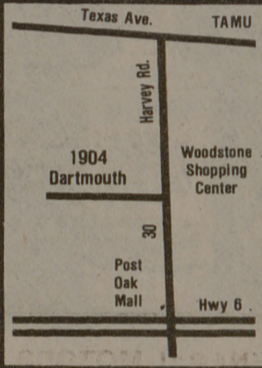
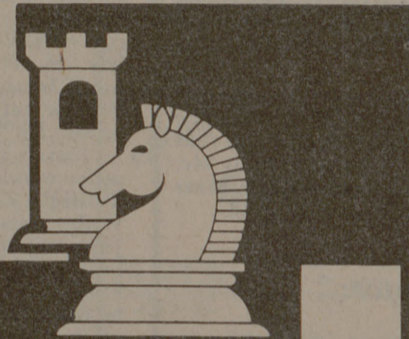
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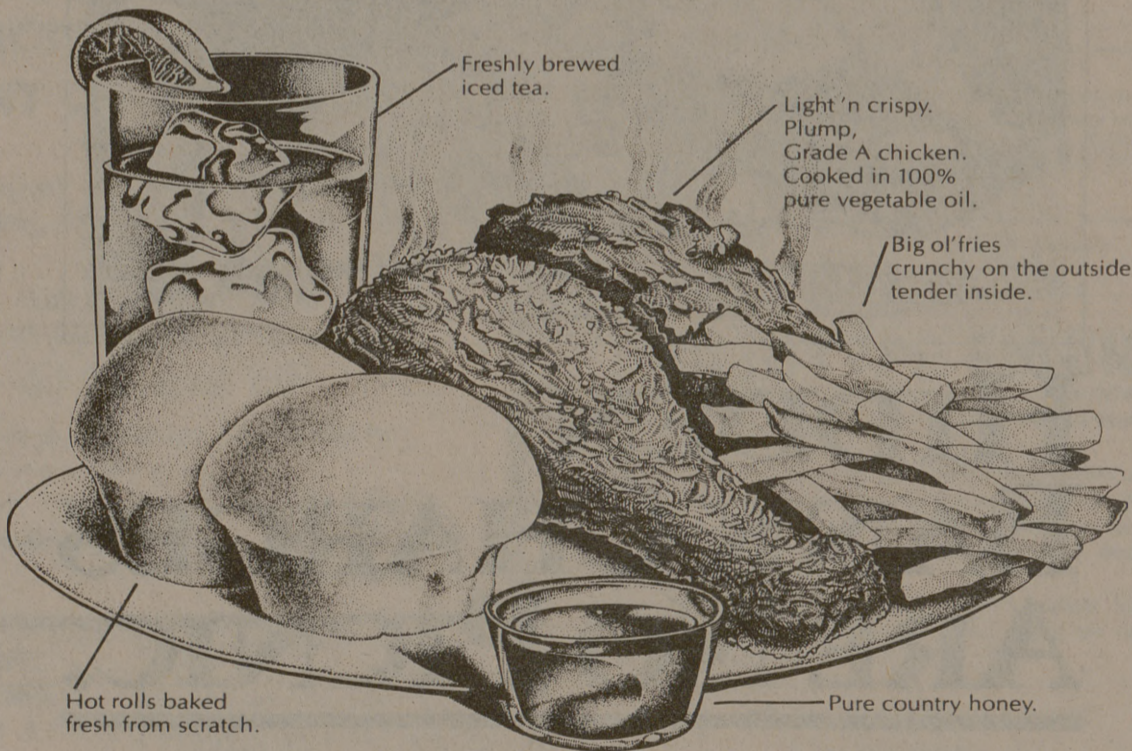
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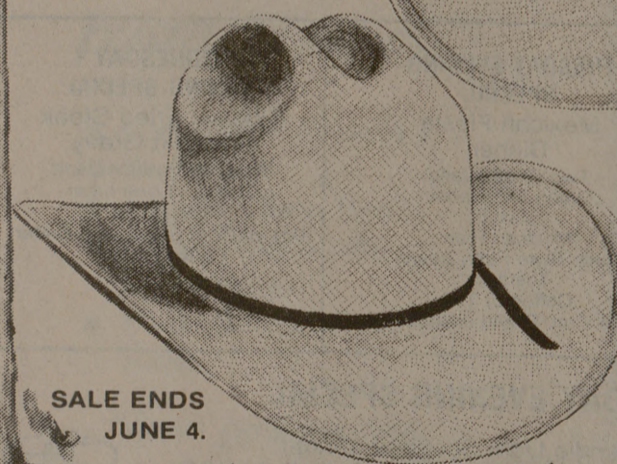
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