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'The War' ends in a draw

Leonard, Hearns battle to 12-round no-decision

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns, calling on skills that were supposed to have been gone, battled to a 12-round draw Monday night at Caesars Palace, almost eight years after their first fight.

Leonard, knocked down in both the third and 11th rounds, probably earned the draw with a desperation rally in the final two minutes of the final round that had Hearns holding on.

Leonard went down from a right to the side of the head in the third round and three straight rights to the head put him down in the 11th.

Hearns never went down but he was on wobbly legs several times and was cut on the left cheek.

Leonard was behind on all three official cards after 12 rounds of the first fight and had to rally to win. In 90-degree weather Monday night, he had to rally again.

In the first minute of the 12th round, the 30-year-old Hearns landed eight punches to the head that had the 33-year-old Leonard in trouble.

Then, Leonard landed a left hook that backed Hearns up on wobbly legs and, for the next two minutes, Leonard unleashed everything he had left, while Hearns tried to survive, alternately hanging on, staggering about and fighting back.

Leonard went into the fight a 3-1 favorite.

"I want to make Tommy work until he slows down," Leonard said before the fight. Hearns was exhausted at the end, but Leonard did not have enough left to finish it.

At 1:20 of Round 3, the crowd came to its feet. The two men had just exchanged right hands. Hearns smiled, then nailed Leonard with a

right to the side of the head that put the Sugar Man down. He was up at the six count and, while Hearns landed several more good shots in the round, he was unable to put his punches together.

Leonard appeared to be taking charge in the ninth and 10th rounds. He wobbled Hearns with a hook and a right hand in the ninth, then cut him under the left eye and hurt him at the bell in the 10th.

In the 11th round, Hearns landed a right hand that caught Leonard's attention. He followed with another right that backed Leonard and pounced on Leonard with yet another right, that put him down.

Leonard arose at the six count and the two exchanged good shots for the rest of the round.

At this point, the AP card had it even at 103 points apiece. The AP scored the final round for Leonard 10-9.

Hearns never forgot the first fight and, for years, he fretted about not getting a rematch.

"It's been a definite nightmare — thinking about it over and over again," Hearns said.

The "Hit Man" from Detroit did not walk out a winner, but no matter what the future holds for him, he was able to walk out of the ring Monday night with his head high. Leonard had nothing to be ashamed of, either.

Hearns, in his three previous fights, had appeared to be on the verge of being a shot fighter.

He was hurt several times by Juan Roldan before stopping him, was knocked out by Iran Barkley in the third round and was knocked down

by James Kinchen before winning a split decision on Nov. 4, 1988.

Monday night's fight was his 15th since he fought Leonard in 1981. In those fights, he fought 126 rounds, many of them very tough.

Judge Jerry Roth of Las Vegas scored it 113-112 for Hearns and there were loud cheers from a crowd of over 15,000. Tommy Kaczmarek of New Jersey scored it 113-112 for Leonard and there were some boos.

Judge Dalby Shirley of Las Vegas scored it 112-112 and Leonard kept the World Boxing Council super middleweight title on the draw.

But a title was not what this fight was all about. It was about pride and courage, which were exhibited from the opening bell to the final gong.

While neither was the man he was on Sept. 16, 1981, when Leonard won the undisputed welterweight title by stopping Hearns in the 14th round of a great fight, they both summoned all the skills they possessed.

Byington, Duke sign with Brewers, Reds

Texas A&M baseball standouts John Byington and Andy Duke took one step closer to the major league dream Monday as both signed professional contracts with major league teams. Byington signed with the Milwaukee Brewers while Duke inked with the Cincinnati Reds.

Both join other A&M players Chuck Knoblauch, Scott Centala and Kirk Thompson, who have also signed with pro teams.

Knoblauch bypassed his senior season at A&M to join the Minnesota Twins organization, while Centala and Thompson completed their senior eligibility and signed with the Kansas City Royals.

The 1989 post-season baseball polls were also released Monday, with Wichita State gaining top honors in both the ESPN/Collegiate Baseball and Baseball America polls.

Texas A&M earned the ninth spot in the ESPN poll, but finished second in the Baseball America balloting. The ESPN poll ranks the top eight teams according to their finish in the

College World Series tournament.

Wichita State earned the No. 1 ranking with their victory over the Texas Longhorns in Saturday's CWS championship.

ESPN/Collegiate Baseball Poll

Team	Record
1. Wichita St.	68-16
2. Texas	54-18
3. Florida St.	54-19
4. LSU	55-17
5. Miami, Fla.	49-18
6. Arkansas	51-16
7. Long Beach St.	50-15
8. North Carolina	41-19
9. Texas A&M	58-7
10. Mississippi St.	54-7
11. Arizona	48-18
12. Michigan	48-18
13. Fresno St.	44-19
14. Clemson	55-20
15. Oklahoma St.	49-15
16. Loyola	48-19
17. Arizona St.	42-19
18. Loyola Marymount	39-24
19. Oklahoma	44-19
20. South Alabama	45-22
21. Villanova	40-13
22. Indiana St.	48-19
23. Notre Dame	48-19
24. Illinois	42-16
25. Central Florida	42-22

Lakers hope to make greatest comeback in playoff history

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — After sweeping their first three opponents in the playoffs, the Los Angeles Lakers are just a game away from being swept themselves in the NBA Finals.

The Lakers, completely outplayed at the guard position without starters Magic Johnson and Byron Scott, trail the Detroit Pistons 3-0 going into Tuesday night's game. No team in playoff history has ever come back from that deficit.

Los Angeles took an 11-0 record into the finals, spurring talk of going through the playoffs unbeaten. Now the Lakers must win four straight to capture their third consecutive championship.

"The only thing left is the greatest comeback in NBA history," Lakers coach Pat Riley said. "It's our last shot and we'll go after it."

After sweeping Portland, Seattle and Phoenix in the early rounds of the playoffs, Riley has heard what coaches say in that situation.

"I know what other coaches say when they are down 3-0," he said.

"You just try to win one."

Johnson is listed as questionable and Scott as doubtful for Tuesday night's game. Neither was available for comment after Monday's practice session and Riley said it was unlikely that Johnson, the less severely injured of the two, would play.

"Even if his mobility was 50 percent better, it would still be something he couldn't overcome," Riley said.

Riley admitted it would be extremely difficult for the Lakers to overtake Detroit.

"The Pistons were flying right now," he said. "We've been riding the crest for 36 of the last 48 months, but now we're seeing the other side."

James Worthy, who led Los Angeles with 26 points Sunday, said that preventing a Detroit sweep would mean a lot to the Lakers.

"If we can get one win, it would give us a lot of confidence," Worthy said. "One win can lead to two or three. I don't think we're outmanned. If we were, we'd be behind

by 25 points in the second quarter."

But the Lakers have been one matched in the backcourt.

With guards Vinnie Johnson, Joe Dumars and Isiah Thomas out-

ing the Lakers' backcourt 211-218, the Pistons appear ready to win the first championship in franchise history.

"All we want to do is get one more win," Detroit center Bill Laimbeer said. "It's won't feel good until we get one more win."

"We still have one more to go and we have been playing it one game at a time," forward Mark Aguirre added. "That's not going to change Tuesday."

In Sunday's 114-110 victory, Dumars scored 21 of his 31 points in the third period, Vinnie Johnson 17 of his 17 in the fourth quarter and Thomas finished with 26 for the Pistons.

Scott hasn't played at all in these playoffs and Magic Johnson limped through less than five minutes Sunday. Both have left hamstring injuries.

Johnson admits use of steroids since 1981

TORONTO (AP) — Ben Johnson, the world's fastest human whose Olympic drug test turned his medal into fool's gold and sickened a country that adopted him as a national hero, admitted under oath Monday that he had cheated with steroids since 1981.

Johnson, a Jamaican immigrant, made his long-awaited appearance before a Canadian government tribunal investigating the scandal in which he forfeited his victory and a 9.79-second world record in the 100-meter dash at the Summer Games of Seoul.

In a clipped but calm voice, he recanted previous claims that he was a victim of sabotage — or that he had never "knowingly" taken illegal drugs.

He did say that for two years he took pills handed him by his longtime coach, Charlie Francis, as a matter of blind faith, without knowing specifically that they were steroids or banned substances. But even then, "it came to my mind" that the pills were illegal, Johnson acknowledged.

In any event, Johnson said, he was aware that he was taking steroids, designed to build strength and enhance performance, by 1983. And he answered "yes" when government pointedly asked if he knew he risked disqualification for using them.

Johnson's story, in the early hours of what may be days on the witness stand, differed from Francis' testimony only in that the coach insisted the athlete was aware all along, beginning in 1981, that he was on a steroid program.

Johnson said that in those first two years, Francis had urged him to begin taking steroids because "the whole world" of his competitors was using them. But Johnson said that whenever the matter was brought up in specific terms by Francis, he rejected the coach's requests — and even once walked out of the office of a Toronto doctor whose help Francis had enlisted.

Still, Johnson admitted that he began accepting blue tablets of the steroid Dianabol from Francis, without knowing what they were, shortly after the coach had entreated him to begin steroids. "He was my coach," Johnson said. "When Charlie asked me to take something, I took it."

Other members of the Canadian track team also were taking the blue pills, Johnson said, and he learned for sure by 1983 — when he started taking a second steroid, stanozolol — about the purpose and illegality of the drugs.

It was stanozolol which was found in Johnson urine sample at Seoul, triggering his disqualification from the Olympics and his suspension from international competition for two years. At the time, Johnson and his coach offered a theory that someone had spiked the runner's pre-race drink.

Later in the questioning, Johnson acknowledged that he also took other types of steroids, testosterone among them, sometimes by injection. The shots, he said, were administered by Francis, his teammates, or Dr. Jamie Astaphan, whom he said he first met in January 1984 and later became his sports physician. Astaphan, who once denied ever giving Johnson steroids, has since admitted his role to the tribunal.

'Power Rabbits' a new trend in the player of today

They have been referred to as the "Power Rabbits," those major league baseball players who consistently approach the 30 homerun-30 stolen base plateau, and the numbers are increasing every year.

Jose Canseco's remarkable 40 homerun-40 stolen base record set last year is a landmark achievement for a breed of player that can not only hit for power, but can steal over 30 bases in a season.

Many of the old guard of major league days gone by have said that Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, or even Hank Aaron could have eclipsed the 40-40 mark if they had wanted to.

Mays reached the 30-30 club in 1956 with 36 homeruns and 40 steals. Hank Aaron reached the mark in 1963 with Milwaukee, as he collected 44 homeruns and 31 steals.

But the unwritten code against base stealing in the majors was strictly adhered to in their day, and this code prevented them from reaching a milestone which could have added another record to each man's illustrious career.



Steven Merritt
Sports Editor

No one is really sure why base stealing was not considered part of a team's game plan in the days of Mantle, Mays, Ted Williams or Ty Cobb. Many baseball analysts have put forth the suggestion that the player profile of the day didn't include a base-stealing quality.

A player was evaluated primarily on the basis of hitting, throwing and defense. If a player had better-than-average speed, then it was considered an aid to their defensive play and their ability to run the bases, not steal them.

Since the early 1960s, the trend toward

making the stolen base an integral part of a team's offense has increased from year to year, creating such prolific base stealers such as Lou Brock with St. Louis and Roberto Clemente with Pittsburgh.

Bobby Bonds reached the 30-30 plateau five times from 1969 to '78, and of the 11 players in baseball history to reach 30-30, six achieved it in the 1980s. This figure can be contrasted with two players reaching the mark in the '50s, two in the '60s and five in the '70s.

Many believe that the players of today are far superior to those of the past. It is a comparison, like many drawn in several other sports between past and present, that is hard to overlook.

Obviously, the competition involved in major league baseball has increased significantly over the years, as has the pressure to perform, be traded or be sent to the minor leagues. The tremendous salaries paid to these players is also a major incentive in keeping a spot on the roster.

Players are constantly looking for an edge

which will put them ahead of everyone else in their chosen position.

That is where weight training has come in for so many baseball players today, as many practice a thorough off-season weight-training program to maintain their edge throughout the season. Baseball athletes of the past rarely considered weight training to be an integral part of their off-season or regular season for that matter. The competition for positions on the roster was stiff, primarily because the farm systems many major league clubs weren't as established as those of today.

Players such as Oakland's Canseco, Cincinnati's Eric Davis, New York Mets' Darryl Strawberry and Cleveland's Joe Carter are all poised and ready to compete for the elusive but not so hard to believe 50-50 mark.

The power hitter that can run has become part of the modern manager's evaluation system for many players of today, and this mold is being consistently filled by a player who can only play defense, but can add a dimension to a team's offense that was not fully realized 30 years ago.

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by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds

