

IBF Loses Decision: 12 Rounds

Trenton (AP) — New Jersey state athletic commissioner Larry Hazzard yesterday set next Monday's heavyweight title fight between champion Mike Tyson and Michael Spinks at 12 rounds.

But the International Boxing Federation, which demanded the fight be scheduled for 15 rounds, said Tyson would lose the IBF heavyweight crown once he stepped into the ring in Atlantic City.

"It doesn't look like it'll change before then, but funny things can happen," IBF spokesman Sy Roseman said.

Hazzard, athletic commissioner of the State Athletic Control Board, said he felt compelled to take action because the parties had failed to reach a consensus by his deadline Monday. The WBC and WBA are the other sanctioning bodies for the fight.

"The Tyson camp was adamant that he would not fight 15. The Spinks camp didn't care," Hazzard said in explaining his decision.

Hazzard also said he relied on the wording of the fighters' contract in supporting his ruling. Articles of the agreement stipulated that Tyson had the choice over the fight's length, and that if there were a conflict among the WBA, WBC and IBF, Tyson would determine which would sanction the fight, Hazzard said.

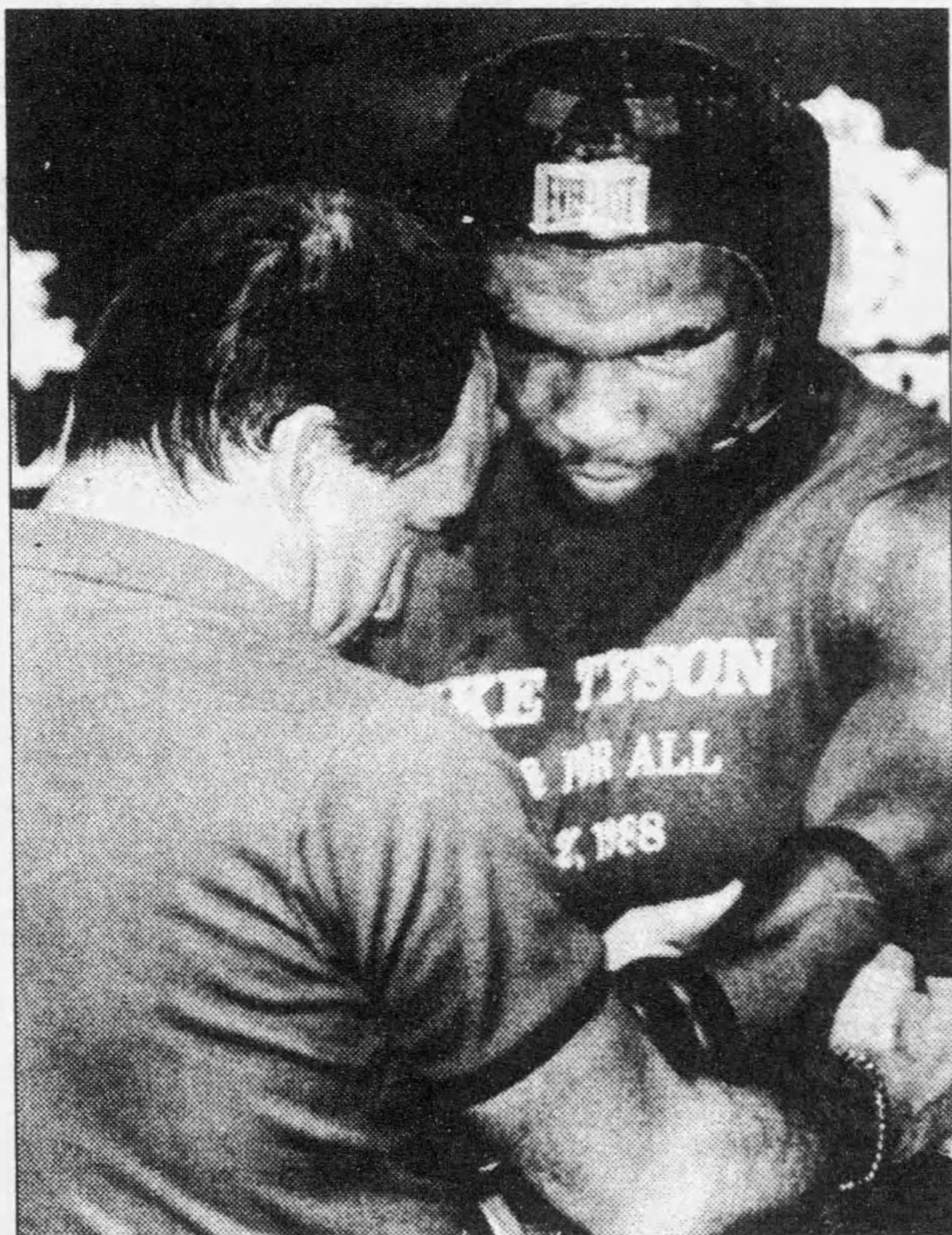
IBF president Bob Lee said he was "not surprised but . . . very disappointed" by yesterday's ruling.

Spinks Gaining With Bettors

The turmoil swirling around Tyson apparently has affected the betting patterns in Las Vegas on the fight. The odds on Tyson winning has dropped a full point, but he still remains a heavy favorite.

As of yesterday, Tyson was a 4-1 favorite in straight betting at most Las Vegas sports betting parlors, according to Sonny Reizner, executive director of sports gaming at the Frontier Hotel and Casino.

Reizner said that the odds had been 5-1 and even



UPI Photo

Mike Tyson has the right to determine the length of Monday's fight, it was ruled yesterday.

6-1 in some places in Las Vegas.

"When the articles started coming out about Tyson's fights with his manager [Bill Cayton] and his mother-in-law," Reizner said, "people started thinking that those issues took away from his spirit — it certainly can't help him — and the odds started to drop. All the late money has been on Spinks. Since the article in Newsday, the numbers have dropped even further."

A Newsday story Sunday revealed new details of domestic problems in the Tyson-Robin Givens marriage.

"I think the odds will drop even further," Reizner said, "until bettors become convinced that it won't hurt him or if something comes up that would counter all this bad publicity." — Manny Topol

1st Feels Great to Tigers

By Rich Cimini

Detroit — The Tigers were not supposed to be a contender this season. Sure, they won 98 games last year — more than any other team in the major leagues — but most experts figured the Tigers would not be able to overcome the loss of slugger Kirk Gibson, who signed with the Dodgers as a free agent. In spring training, they had the look of a fifth-place club. Mediocrity beckoned.

Well, the team that was supposed to finish fifth or thereabouts awoke this morning atop the American League East. Tom Brookens hit a home run in the 10th inning last night to give the Tigers a 2-1 victory over the Yankees, putting them a half-game in first place.

First place. That's all the Tigers talked about after beating the Yankees, whom manager Sparky Anderson

identified as "the big bullies of the boardwalk."

"Everybody laughed at us in spring training," Anderson said. "When we lost Gibson, no one thought we could win. But now we're in first, and it feels great."

Anderson's group of overachievers reacted to the nationally televised win as if it were a September win in the heat of a pennant race. There was Brookens, telling a group of reporters that it was the biggest home run of his career.

"I don't think I ever hit a homer to win a game before," said Brookens, who has four homers this season. "When I hit it, I'm surprised some people in the dugout didn't faint. It got us into first place, and that's big for us."

"You can say that again," said Ray Knight, who heard Brookens' remark.

When highlights of Brookens' homer flashed on the late news, players gathered around the television set in the clubhouse and cheered.

Jeff Robinson was more subdued, but he deserved as much credit as any player. The 26-year-old righthander was one strike away from a shutout when Dave Winfield doubled off the top of the left-center-field fence, scoring Jack Clark from first base. Before Winfield's hit, Robinson had not allowed an earned run in 32 consecutive innings. Winfield's hit deprived him of his eighth straight win. Instead, he settled for a no-decision.

"It doesn't bother me that I didn't win," said Robinson, who almost became the first pitcher to shut out the Yankees since Roger Clemens did it Sept. 30. "The team won, and we're in first place. That's the important thing."

Robinson pitched a terrific game, striking out 10. It was an exhausting performance. He allowed eight hits — at least one in every inning except the first and eighth — and he threw 137 pitches.

"The way he's pitched the last month and a half, he's the most dominating pitcher I've ever played behind," Brookens said. "He's been unbelievable. This whole season has been unbelievable so far."

Brian Sutter Is Blues' New Coach

Brian Sutter, one of the most aggressive forwards to play for the St. Louis Blues, became head coach of the NHL team yesterday and promised to shape the club in his own image.

"I expect everybody to come to play," Sutter said, emphasizing the work ethic he plans to instill from behind the bench as the youngest coach in the league. "I won't tolerate people that play once every three or four games."

Sutter, 31, a left winger who played in 799 NHL games, succeeds Jacques Martin, who was fired a month ago after compiling a 66-71-23 record in two seasons. Terms of Sutter's three-year contract were not disclosed. Bob Berry, 44, was hired as an assistant and Joe Micheletti, 33, was retained from Martin's staff. Berry was an NHL head coach for nine seasons.

Athletes Escape Prosecution

Star running backs Brent Fullwood of Auburn, Ronnie Harmon of Iowa and Paul Palmer of Temple are among 40 to 45 college athletes who will enter a pre-trial diversion program to avoid being charged in the federal grand jury investigation of two sports agents, according to the Atlanta Constitution. The athletes also agreed to testify in any possible trial of agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, to perform 100 to 250 hours of community service, and to reimburse their former universities for their scholarships the years they were under contract to Walters and Bloom, the newspaper reported.

Allison 'Improved'

Veteran driver Bobby Allison's condition reportedly has improved, but he continues to be listed in critical condition with multiple injuries suffered in a first-lap crash in Sunday's Miller 500 stock-car race at Pocono.

"The doctors tell us that everything is normal as far as his vital signs and internally. Everything is stabilized," said Allison's son, Davey, who finished fifth in the race.

Davey Allison said his father has a broken leg, which is in traction, and fractured ribs. He said doctors drained fluid from his father's chest and relieved pressure in his skull. "He took a pretty good shot and he's busted up pretty bad. It's going to be a long haul."

Hospital officials would say only that Allison, 50, was in critical condition.

U.S. Open Prizes Increased

The men's and women's singles champions at the 1988 U.S. Open will receive a record \$275,000 — a 10-percent increase from 1987's \$250,000. The total purse for this year's tennis tournament, which will be contested over 14 days instead of 13, will be \$4,371,500, also a record. The tournament will begin on Monday, Aug. 29, a change from the usual Tuesday start.

Furthermore . . .

The Long Island Knights fell to 0-13, dropping a 155-127 decision to the Jacksonville Hooters at SUNY-Stony Brook. Jacksonville was led by Cedric Henderson with 49 points. He shot 20-for-22 from the floor . . . Radio station WABC will broadcast Devils games next season, ending the NHL team's five-year relationship with WMCA. Manhattan-based WABC, broadcast on 50,000 watts over 770 AM, will expand the team's listening area from WMCA's 5,000-watt signal . . . Lionel Hollins has been hired as the Suns' second assistant coach. Hollins, 35, joins another former all-star guard, Paul Westphal, as assistants to new head coach Cotton Fitzsimmons . . . Indiana basketball coach Bob Knight, 47, and a former Oklahoma girls high school coach, Karen Vieth Edgar, 41, were married on May 23 by a Methodist bishop friend of Knight. It is the second marriage for each. Knight separated from Nancy Knight, his wife of 22 years, in 1986 . . . Olympic-bound Peter Westbrook and Peter Lewison led the New York Fencers Club to the U.S. Fencing Association national team championship in sabre and foil competition in Chicago.

Edited by Parker Smith



NOTES & QUOTES

Detroit — Jose Cruz' standing continued to slip. After three hitless at-bats, Billy Martin replaced him with Jay Buhner though righthander Jeff Robinson still was on the mound . . . The Yankees placed Wayne Tolleson on the 15-day disabled list and recalled Randy Velarde from Columbus . . . Rickey Henderson decided he could not start for a second straight day because of a stiff right leg.

Sparky Anderson said righthander Chet Lemon probably will not play in this series because of a bruised left thigh. Anderson also did not have Alan Trammell in his lineup last night. Trammell was hit on the left elbow Sunday by a pitch from Todd Stottlemyre. Anderson said he anticipated that Trammell would start tonight . . . Anderson said if Dave Winfield does not play another game in his career, he is still a Hall of Fame player. "He already has done enough to be in it," Anderson said. "You can't tell me he's not a Hall of Fame player. In addition to the offensive numbers he's put up, he's one of the best defensive outfielders in baseball. I've seen him every year he's played. Never have I seen him not run out a ball to the best of his ability." — Tom Verducci