

The Black Olympians: How they fared after the glory From Page B7

of Hearn.

Five world heavyweight champions have been graduates of the Olympic experience: Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay as an Olympian), 1960; Joe Frazier, 1964; George Foreman, 1968; Leon Spinks, 1976, and Floyd Patterson, 1952, who won an Olympic championship as a middleweight but moved into the heavyweight class when he turned pro.

Patterson is retired and residing in New York, while George Foreman, also retired from the ring, is a preacher in Houston, Texas.

The Spinks brothers are still battling for the cash in the pro ranks while, for the most part, the others have retired or just called it quits after brief stints as professionals.

Ray Seales, who won a gold medal in the 1972 Olympics and attained the North American Boxing Federation middleweight title in 1981, has had probably the worst luck of any ex-Olympic boxer. A former middleweight champion, he is now legally blind with no vision in his left eye and only 10 percent in his right eye, according to his ophthalmologist in Tacoma, Wash. Only 30, Seales early last year announced his retirement because of his vision problems. He had three operations for detached retinas before making the decision to call it quits.

Robert "Pappy" Gault, 61, who coached the U.S. Olympic Boxing Team in 1968 in Mexico, says all Olympic fighters "try to get the gold (medal) because it is the path to the real gold." Boxers, as Gault sees it, have learned that the Olympics is the way to make big money fast, so if they are fortunate enough to win, they invariably seek the "big payoff" in the pro



Cassius Clay, now known as Muhammad Ali, in training for the 1960 Olympics. Ali won the gold medal and subsequently won the world heavyweight championship twice.

ranks. This has been the trend for most of the ring champions since television scaled the pro purses for title fights to such lofty heights.

Gault, who now operates a training gym on Georgia

Avenue in northwest Washington, D.C., known as "The House of Champions," recalls that the 1968 team of 11 members won nine medals in Mexico. The 1976 team at Montreal, highlighted by Sugar Ray

Leonard's victory, won more gold medals but the '68 team set a team mark. Pappy Gault also recalls the exciting episode in Mexico City when Foreman won the heavyweight Olympic ti-

tle and he handed George a tiny American flag to hold over his head on the victory stand.

The incident came several days after Tommie Smith and John Carlos, medal winners in the 200 meters, had used black-gloved clenched fists to give a black power salute as "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played and they stood on the victory stand.

Gault says he simply felt "that was not the time or place to wash our linen.... I had compassion for Smith's and Carlos' feelings, and they understood it, but it was just the wrong place."

Carlos, who now works in Los Angeles as a member of the Olympic Organizing Committee for the 1984 Games, is still a friend and frequently calls him, Gault says.

The first Black Olympic competitor to win the light-heavyweight championship did not cash in on his boxing talent. He is Washingtonian Norvell Lee, a former Howard University boxer who captured the light-heavyweight Olympic crown at Helsinki, Finland, in 1952.

Significantly, Lee was awarded the Val Barker Trophy as the outstanding performer in the boxing division, winning over such fighters as Davey Moore, Floyd Patterson and Sweden's Ingemar Johansson, who later became the world heavyweight champion.

Prior to his Olympic triumph, Lee had been CIAA champion in 1949, and scored big wins in the Golden Gloves in 1950-52 and the National AAU

tournaments in 1950-51.

Lee stayed in boxing, serving as a member of Columbia Boxing Commission for 14 years and using his spare time to serve as the coach of several community teams in the amateur ranks.

Currently, Lee is employed in the Radiology Defense Office of the District of Columbia and resides in northwest Washington.

Another Washingtonian was on the team with Lee. He was James (Jim) Braddock, who competed in the weightlifting class, winning a runner-up medal. Braddock works at the Library of Congress.

Next week: Basketball alumni and a look at outstanding local athletes.

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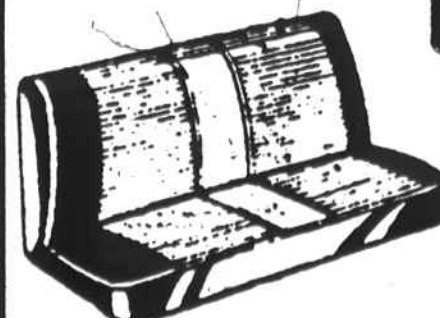


FLOYD PATTERSON, from Little Washington, N.C., won an Olympic championship in 1952 as a middleweight but moved into the heavyweight class when he turned pro. He is the only man to hold the heavyweight title twice other than Ali.

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