

# SportsWeek

Scores, Standings, Columns, Features

## Joins pro ranks

### Kennedy ends Olympic quest to pursue yet another dream

By ROBERT ELLER  
Chronicle Sports Editor

Local fighter William Kennedy decided he wanted to box after watching Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier square off in the "Thriller in Manila" some years back.

A little over six years ago, he told Bobby Giles at the Salvation Army Boys Club that he wanted to be a boxer -- not just any boxer, but an Olympic gold medalist and champion of the world.

Kennedy gave up on one of those dreams last month when he decided to turn pro after winning 75 of 85

*"The five days I spent in there (jail) did a lot for me. That's when I decided that hard work and dedication were what it would take to reach my goals. Each day I became more determined."*

-- William Kennedy

amateur fights. Along the way, he had earned numerous Golden Glove awards and three national titles.

But after waiting in vain to hear from the Olympic boxing committee, then hearing of the boycott of the 1984 Olympics by the Soviets and other communist-bloc nations, Kennedy decided to give up on the gold medal and go for the green.

Kennedy made a successful debut into the light heavyweight ranks of pro boxing on May 24 in Nashville,

Tenn., when he outpointed Dan Allen, a former Missouri State football player, in a four-round bout. He's now in training for his second pro outing, set for June 14 in Richmond.

Kennedy's coach and trainer, Whit Lowry, who has worked with a number of pro fighters, including Earnie Shavers and Irvin Hines, says Kennedy has a chance to become the light heavyweight champ over the next four years.

Though both fighter and trainer know the task won't be easy, the 23-year-old Kennedy already knows plenty about hard work -- and hard times.

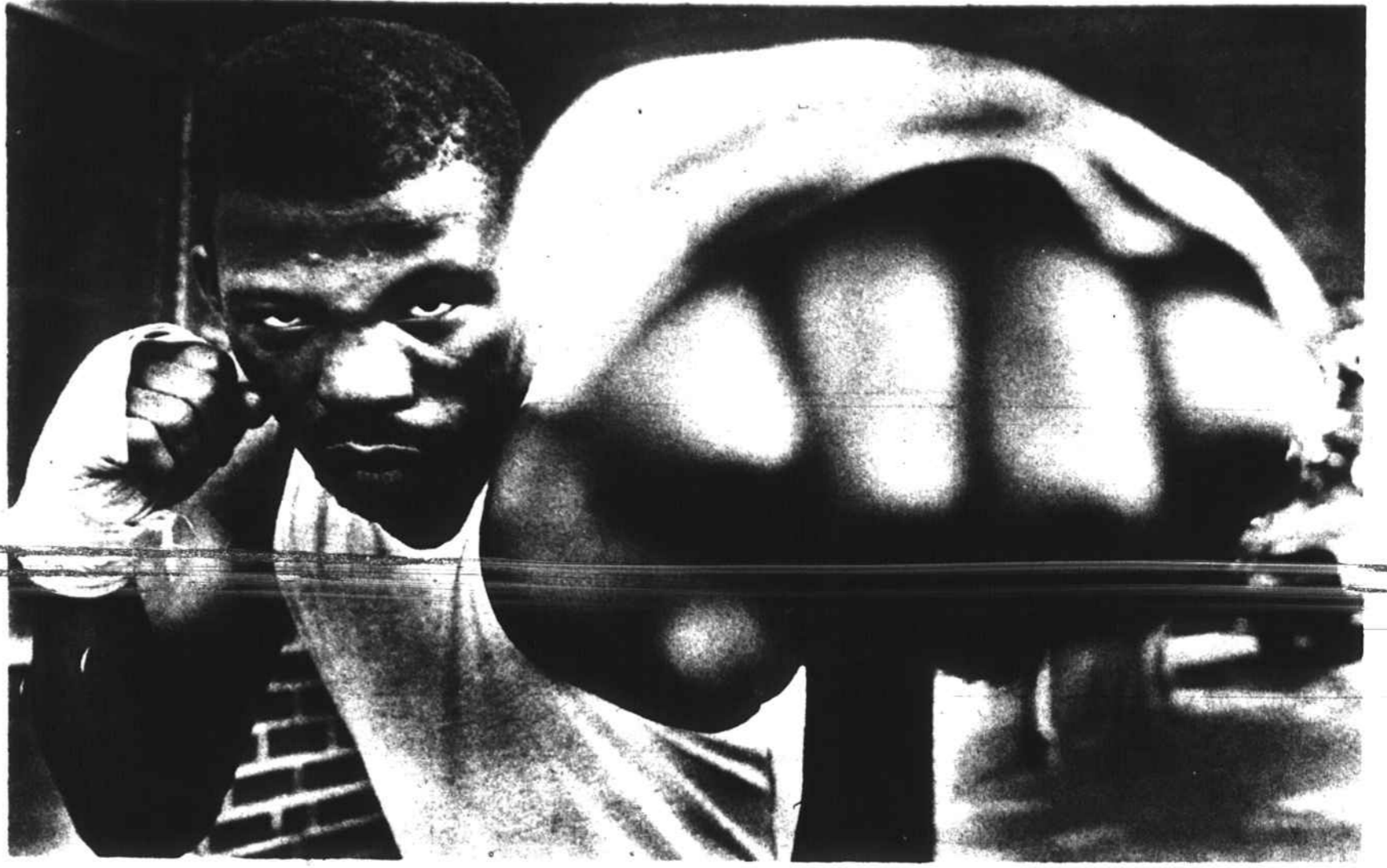
First, he was charged with accessory to armed robbery and placed on probation. Then he had to halt his boxing career for more than six months in 1983 to have a series of operations on his face to remove cysts. But the 178-pound power-puncher is not discouraged.

"The last year or so has been difficult for me," he says. "I had never been in any serious trouble before but I started hanging with the wrong crowd and wound up in jail. The five days I spent in there did a lot for me, however.

"That's when I decided that hard work and dedication were what it would take for me to reach my goals. Each day I became more determined."

As for the operations, Kennedy says, "I knew the cyst problem would have a detrimental effect on my career so I decided to get it out of the way. Now that the operations are over with, things are beginning to turn around for me."

Kennedy, who is short for a light heavyweight at 5-10, says he will make up for his lack of height with strength, power and intelligence.



### Those Powerful Hands...

A brush with the law and a brief, but sobering, stay in jail convinced Kennedy that he should keep them out of trouble and in boxing gloves (photo by James Parker).

Lowry agrees. "William can be a champ," Lowry says. "He is willing to work hard and he has already sparred with people like Mike Spinks (the current light heavyweight champ) and James Shuler, the number one contender in the middleweight class.

"If he learns to pace himself and box more using his combinations, he can be a legitimate contender."

"I learned a lot from Spinks and Shuler," says Kennedy. "They worked on me pretty good but they also helped me determine my strengths and weaknesses."

Kennedy says his biggest strength is his punching

power. "I know I can punch like a light heavyweight," he says "but I need to throw more combinations. You don't always take a guy out with one punch, but, if you put them together, then he has to fall."

Now in training four days a week and running three to five miles each day, Kennedy says he has a timetable for reaching the top. "By the time I am 27, I want to see guys like Spinks and Shuler again," he says. "By then, I'll have the experience and will have perfected my technique."

Please see page B3

## Black College Sports

### Black college alumni may go high in draft

By BARRY COOPER  
Syndicated Columnist

On June 19, some of the tallest men in this country will tuck their long legs underneath them and settle in front of a television or beside the telephone. It will be draft day, and the National Basketball Association will be taking the best talent available.

For players such as Houston's Akeem Olajuwon and North Carolina's Michael Jordan, there will be little suspense. They are certain to be among the first players picked and shortly thereafter will sign multimillion-dollar contracts.

The picture is not so clear for others, especially those from smaller and predominantly black schools. Because smaller schools are ignored by TV networks and the major newspapers, not much is known about some players.

Correction: Let's say that not much is known

of some players by the public. While Joe B. Fan might not know who Napoleon Johnson is, the NBA sure does, and that's the only thing that counts.

Because NBA scouts scour the country for players and leave no rock unturned, Johnson, a 6-foot-9 center for Grambling, can expect to be taken within the first three rounds. So can Alabama State forward Lewis Jackson and a handful of other black college stars.

To find out how black college players are likely to turn out in the draft, I turned to Marty Blake, director of scouting for the NBA.

Blake, who sees about 150 college games a year, figures it will be a good year for the black colleges.

"There is a lot of talent at some of those schools, no doubt about it," says Blake. "Lewis Jackson can play forward or guard (in the NBA) and he is a great shooter. The kid from Grambling (Johnson) hit for 50 points in one game. He is a great offensive player."

Blake says NBA clubs also are likely to take a good look at North Carolina A&T forward Joe Binion, Norfolk State forward David Pope and Florida A&M center Michael Toomer.

Like teams in other sports, the NBA likes to take one last look at the nation's top seniors just before the draft. "There will be a lot of kids invited to the special NBA camp in Chicago about two weeks before the draft," Blake says. "A lot depends on what a kid does at the camp. What we look for from the kids from the smaller schools is how they do against the tougher competition. Take Lewis Jackson, for example. Before you can say where he is going to be drafted, you have to see how he does at the camp.

"Sometimes it's still tough to tell, though. The last time I saw (Hampton Institute's) Ricky Mahorn before he got drafted, he looked awful. Now he's one of the top players in the league. Clemon Johnson needed some work

Please see page B3

## Black College Briefs

### Schools pondering a new 1-AA league

By BARRY COOPER  
Syndicated Columnist

ORLANDO, Fla. -- Athletic directors from Florida A&M, Georgia Southern, the University of Central Florida and possibly Bethune-Cookman College are expected to meet soon to discuss forming a new conference.

It had long been rumored that a new Division I-AA league might be in the works, and now, sources say, preliminary planning for the conference could come within the next few months. Though they deny it, the conference is

reportedly being pushed by Florida A&M's Rattlers, who quit the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference several months ago after a scheduling dispute with arch-rival Bethune-Cookman.

Ironically, Bethune-Cookman, still a member of the MEAC, may follow FAMU into the new league, sources say.

It would be the first I-AA conference to include predominantly black schools (Florida A&M, B-CC) and predominantly white schools. Also said to be interested in the league are Troy (Ala.) State and Valdosta (Ga.) State. There was even speculation that Alabama

State, a predominantly black school that is an associate member of the Southwestern Athletic Conference, would consider joining the league.

The biggest stumbling block the proposed league faces is the fact that four of the prospective members are still Division II schools, and would have to decide to move up to I-AA status.

#### Package Created

DALLAS, Tex. -- The College Football Association, which includes every so-called

Please see page B3



## Floating

Though Corey Belton managed to float to the basket in a 64-53 win over Roanoke, Va., his 15-and-under AAU team won't be able to float to Memphis, Tenn. The team, sponsored by the Patterson Avenue YMCA, is soliciting tax-deductible donations from the public to pay for the trip to the AAU Regionals there June 14-16. Approximately \$3,000 is needed to finance the 15-and-under team's trip, and the 17-and-under's trip to Memphis for its regional competition. For more information, contact Robert Dunlap at the Patterson Y (photo by James Parker).

## Black On Sports

### Pond Giants, Indians may play regular-season games this year

By ROBERT ELLER  
Chronicle Sports Editor

Up until the late 70s, when one thought of semi-pro baseball in Winston-Salem, he thought of the Winston-Salem Pond Giants.

And why not? The Pond Giants, now entering their 68th season of continuous baseball, are the oldest semi-pro team in existence.

They've also been one of the most successful.

Up until 1979, they pretty much handled any team that dared take them on with ease. But a not-so-funny thing happened to them in the 1979 season.

A former semi-pro player by the name of Melvin "Rip" Wilkins had taken over the Winston-Salem Indians a few years earlier. Each year Wilkins managed to come up with new talent to go with the veterans he began his team with.

During the 1979 season Wilkins' Indians finally broke the Pond Giants' stranglehold on baseball in the Triad when they beat them out of the Winston-Salem Baseball

League title.

When 1980 rolled around, the aggressive Wilkins kept at it, getting commitments from at least two former Pond Giant players, and heating the rivalry even more.

Since the 1980 season, however, the Indians and Pond Giants have played each other only twice. Both times the games took place in Roxboro as part of the state semi-pro tournament with the Pond Giants winning 3-2 in '81 and the Indians taking a 4-2 decision last year on their way to the state title.

This year that may change. Both Pond Giant Manager

Nelson Petree and Wilkins say the two teams will play possibly twice with each team having a home game.

"We will definitely play the Indians this year," said Petree recently when announcing a 40-game schedule for the Pond Giants. "We are pretty booked up but the two of us will get together and work out the games. Hopefully we can play at least once before the state tournament in July."

Wilkins, who, over the past two seasons has repeatedly challenged the Pond Giants to games, will cooperate, he

Please see page B3