

Junior Spinks shines in boxing upset

By John Curran
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — On a night with plenty of stars, it was a new one named Cory Spinks who shined the brightest.

Spinks, the son of former heavyweight champion Leon Spinks, used patience and superior quickness to pull off a Spinks Jinx-style upset over welterweight bad boy Ricardo Mayorga last week.

In doing so, he won a title - and brought his famous dad to tears.

The young Spinks, a clever lefty who doesn't hit especially hard but doesn't rattle easily either, captured the WBA crown with a majority

12-round decision in simple but surprising fashion.

Reacting calmly to Mayorga's flailing, unorthodox assaults, Spinks picked his spots and used radar-like anticipation to avoid getting hit, frustrating the fighter who has frustrated so many others.

Spinks (32-2) went down at least three times, most on tangled feet as he retreated from wild-swinging Mayorga flurries. Once, Mayorga landed a solid right to Spinks' abdomen as he backpedaled and Spinks fell down, but referee Tony Orlando ruled it no knock-down.

The victory brought Leon Spinks to tears in his son's

corner. Uncle Michael Spinks, another former champion in the family, was among the sellout crowd of 12,346 who watched the eight-fight card in Boardwalk Hall.

"I loved it," a beaming Leon Spinks said afterward. "I knew he could do it if he put his mind to it."

Mayorga, who was riding high off consecutive victories over Vernon Forrest, said afterward Orlando cost him the fight, between the no-knockdown call and the two points he deducted from Mayorga for hitting low and hitting late.

Spinks, meanwhile, is looking forward to bigger things. "I don't mind giving

Mayorga a rematch but doesn't Shane Mosley and Spinks sound a little better?" he said.

Spinks' victory highlighted a night that also saw middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins stage his 17th successful title defense, which was another punishing, workmanlike victory - this time over a game William Joppy.

Joppy, a 33-year-old WBA champion, withstood a beating that left his cheekbones grotesquely swollen and raised a knot on his forehead, bravely going the 12-round distance. With the unanimous decision, Hopkins ran his record to 43-2-1.

NFL issues minority interviewing guide

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The NFL has issued 10 guidelines it hopes will strengthen its year-old policy that at least one minority candidate be interviewed for each head coaching vacancy, The New York Times reported.

A memo sent by the league's committee on workplace diversity dated Dec. 1 and obtained by the Times lists several provisions for interviewing coaching candidates. These include documenting each interview that is conducted, eliminating telephone-only interviews and involving the team's owner in interviewing finalists for the job.

The memo said exceptions will be made if the team has a prior contractual agreement with a member of its

coaching staff to become the head coach and files it with the league office when it is signed.

Penalties for failing to follow the guidelines could include fines or loss of draft picks.

Pittsburgh Steelers owner Dan Rooney, who is chairman of the committee, said the guidelines will increase the number of head coaches who are minorities, and help to build relationships between owners and minority candidates.

"We're not doing this with the idea to satisfy a complaint or look good," Rooney told the newspaper. "This is the right thing to do and we want it to work. We're not saying 'This is the guy you have to hire' but the relation-

ship has to be there."

Attorney Cyrus Mehri, who joined Johnnie Cochran earlier this year in pushing the league to hire more minorities as coaches, called

the new guidelines "a high-water mark in terms of major league sports" and said the NFL should be commended for developing a way to enforce its policy.

Withers key for 49ers

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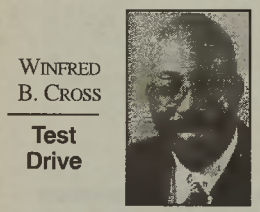
That's why Withers is the 49ers most important player because he allows the team to play small with him at center, but not lose their advantage on the boards or inside the paint on offense.

Withers, a former West Charlotte High standout, continues to keep in contact with his high school coach Rusty White.

"We're real cool. (He's) kind of like family," Withers and White live about 5 minutes apart and they talk almost every day. A year and a half after leaving the Lion's Den Withers is happy with the decision he made to stay at home in Charlotte.

"I've progressed more than I would've if I went to any of the other schools. Plus I've become a lot wiser both on the court and off the court." After Charlotte's 6-2 start, 49ers fans are pretty happy with his decision, too.

Verona reintroduces Suzuki as auto player



WINFRED B. CROSS
Test Drive

Suzuki yanked most of its cars from the American market a few years ago to concentrate on selling sport utilities. It wasn't a hard decision because few bought the autos.

But Suzuki has quietly updated its auto selection, offering some cute and much more likable vehicles. Its latest is the very affordable and appealing Verona.

The car has a somewhat checkered past. First it was a Daewoo Leganza and in Korea it still may be such. Daewoo pulled out of the U.S. with a thud last year. Suzuki liked the restyled Leganza (and all of Daewoo's other cars) so it sells a slightly restyled version.

The Verona gets high marks for value. It competes with the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord, which it absolutely trounces on price. It's nearly the same size as both but starts at about \$15,000 (four-cylinder engine). The EX model starts at \$19,499. Even with the \$500 destination charge it doesn't crack \$20,000.

What do you get for \$19,999? Everything. Your 20 grand buys climate controlled interior, leather seats,

power driver seat, six-speaker CD stereo, tilt, cruise, power package, leather-wrapped steering wheel, speed sensitive steering, sunroof, fog lamps, full size spare, ABS with four-wheel disc brakes and keyless entry.

You also get a six-cylinder engine. The 2.3-liter unit makes 155 horsepower with 177 pounds-feet of torque. That's the perfect place to start mentioning the car's faults. Yes, you get a six-cylinder, but it's weak. There are plenty of four-bangers that make more power. It is a fairly smooth power plant, however.

The seats are leather-covered, but rock hard. Ditto for the suspension. You will feel every bump. Steering is progressive, but a tad slow. Handling can be a bit dicey on wet surfaces. The dash is made from plastic that looks cheaper than the stuff General Motors uses in a lot of its cars. Now that's cheap.

To its credit, the Verona is designed to be a value and that's where it succeeds. It gives you just enough for the money. Most people looking for this kind of bargain will live with the car's faults without paying them a second thought. Throw in the 100,000 mile/seven-year warranty and the price of entry looks even more appealing. You pay for what you get. Suzuki gives you enough of the right things on the Verona.

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