

**BOXING**

# Lowery and his champs set their sights on regionals

By CHRIS MACKIE  
Chronicle Staff Writer

For every boxing trainer, there is the dream of one day coaching a great talent -- that true thoroughbred of the sport who is known simply as "the champ."

Whit Lowery, head boxing coach at the Reynolds Park Recreation Center, knows the dream well and recently saw it fulfilled when not one, but three of his stable of young fighters claimed North Carolina Golden Glove Boxing titles.

Michael Miller (106-pound division), Harold Bennett (132) and Thomas Warren (139) won Golden Gloves titles, prompting their veteran coach to say he couldn't be happier.

"I've had one champion at a time before but never three," Lowery said in an interview last Friday. "Also, these guys all won in the open divisions (which are open to any amateur fighter in the state who has competed in more than 10 matches) and that shows how good they really are."

*"This was a good title to win but I hope it's just a step to bigger and better things."*

-- Harold Bennett

They beat guys who were a lot older and more experienced than they are, guys who have been fighting in the open division for a number of years."

To Bennett, the open division was a new twist to a setting that had become old hat. The 17-year-old Parkland High senior has a lengthy boxing past which includes more than eight consecutive state championships, but all of which were won in the novice division.

"This was my first time in the open division and it was good to get the chance to fight more experienced guys," said Bennett, who was voted the tourney's outstanding boxer. "This was a good title to win but I hope it's just a step to bigger and better things."

For Miller, who also happens

to be a senior at Parkland, this championship was definitely a big step toward the future.

"This was one of my best victories, and I hope it will be a sign of things to come," said Miller, a veteran of more than 40 amateur bouts. "I got into boxing about five years ago just through watching in here (at the Reynolds Park gym) and it's something I've never regretted. I've won four novice titles and I want to go as far as I can in the amateurs and then, hopefully, turn pro sometime in the future."

Twenty-one-year-old Thomas Warren also hopes his involvement in Golden Gloves will lead to a professional career. But he said he's fully aware that a rewarding pro tenure will hinge on more prominent amateur exposure.

"I've only been fighting for about two and a half years and in order to get the right sponsorship (as a professional) you need to make a name for yourself in the amateurs," said Warren, a

## 'Rocky III'

Lowery, front, and his triumvirate of champs: left to right, Michael Miller, Harold Bennett and Thomas Warren (photo by Chris Mackie).

although Lowery said its rigorous training schedule is really just business as usual.

"I've never had any problems with keeping these guys in shape because they train constantly," he said. "Dedication pays off and they all realize that in this sport you have to be very dedicated."

Indeed you do, and that's why it is not uncommon to see Lowery's troops up at 5:00 a.m. and on the road for a three-mile jog laced with a variety of sprints.

Then, after a long day at school or work (Warren is employed as a barber), the trio returns to the gym for a two-hour session in the ring. Multiply this workout by at least five days a week and you've got three guys who are ready to do business when they step between the ropes.

"Coach (as Lowery is called) is the one who inspires all of us to be the best we can," said Bennett. "He picks us up in the mor-

nings and afternoons and teaches us the right ways to train and everything else. Really, he's just like a dad to me and I hope that when I get out of boxing I can be just like him."

A fitting tribute to man whose unyielding devotion has proven that dreams really can come true.

Junior Brian Howard ended the night with 22 points to lead all scorers. He was followed by Jeff Denny and Scott Johnson, who had 13 points apiece for the Vikings.

"Howard, Johnson and (shooting guard David) Carlyle were, of course, the heart of our team all year long," said Shuler. "But everybody on the team made an important contribution. It was a tough way to end the season, especially for our seniors. But we have to put it out of our minds and start looking toward next season."

## Recruit From Page B3

has stripped from high school athletes a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and in its place are early signings based sometimes on scanty information and limited contact. High school stars are constantly heard to say they want to "get the decision over with" so they can enjoy their senior year in high school.

That almost-universal comment tells me that they have been taught to believe that this is the intelligent thing to think and say. They have no idea what they are missing. But the NCAA should.

In many cases, the coaches who are shielding young athletes from college coaches and from media attention are pumping their own egos and are basking in the limelight themselves; and the NCAA, by so restricting recruiting, is denying the athletes an exceptional opportunity in the process.

It really isn't so much pressure being wanted and being pursued. Mostly, it's fun. And it's controllable. Coaches don't purposely try to irritate a kid. They'll take no for an answer once they are made to realize the guidelines a kid or a family has set up.

So, don't bother feeling sorry for any kid who claims the recruiting process is pressure. It's a lot more pressure for the kids who are *not* wanted, and who spend their senior years wondering what happened to their dreams, where they went wrong and what they'll be doing next year with their lives.



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## PREP SPOTLIGHT

# North's Shuler still pleased with '85

By CHRIS MACKIE  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Although the 1985 season may not have netted the title his talented Vikings had hoped to bring home, it was a year that North Forsyth basketball Coach Olon Shuler won't soon forget.

After all, Shuler's team notched 23 consecutive victories, a Frank Spencer Tournament title and a regular-season conference crown.

But, with the good there must also be the bad and, for the Vikings, it came in the form of a season-ending 69-62 loss at Roxboro Person last week. That setback, the second in a row for the Vikings in postseason play, occurred in the first round of the state tournament and abruptly ended North's quest for a state championship.

"We didn't rebound well and didn't execute our offense when we needed to," said Shuler in an interview late last week. "But it has been a great season, one I'm very happy with. We had some great players and we were able to accomplish a number of things. Anytime you go 23-2, you've got to be satisfied."

Shuler was also satisfied with playing in Person's home gym, although he admitted that the Viking players were a bit bothered by the partisan crowd.

"It was a great atmosphere to play in and it was really the type of excitement all high school basketball games should be played in," he said. "To be the best in the state, you have to be able to beat anybody at any place and, unfortunately, we weren't able to do that. I do think that, at times, our guys pressed a little too hard because of the fans."

But for most of the night, the Vikings were able to match baskets with Person and kept the score within a three-point margin. However, turnovers (12 in the second half and 20 for the night) and missed rebound opportunities eventually led to North's demise.

By scoring mostly on second and third shots, Person was able to maintain a narrow lead and then nail down the win with several foul shots in the closing minute of play.