



Sims Center director Ben Piggott and students are excited about the series of soccer clinics that will be held at the Sims Center.

Sims Center sponsors soccer clinics for kids ages 6-10

The William C. Sims Recreation Center in Happy Hill Gardens will be the host for a series of soccer clinics for boys and girls throughout Winston-Salem.

The clinic is open to kids 6 to 10 years old and is sponsored by the Winston-Salem Optimist Youth Soccer League, The U.S. Department of Justice Weed and Seed Initiative and the Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks Department.

Ben Piggott, center supervisor at the Sims Center, said the program is designed to involve more African American children in soccer, which is rapidly becoming the nation's most popular sport.

"This will be a great opportunity for boys and girls to learn about another sport that is played all over the world," he said. "We are looking for more kids to be a part of this and to want to appreciate it."

Of particular interest to the program at the Sims Center are students who currently attend nearby Jefferson Davis Diggs Magnet Arts School. However, kids from all over the city are encouraged to participate.

Transportation will be provided from recreation centers at 14th Street, Reynolds Park and Salem Gardens.

For more information, contact Ben Piggott at 727-2837.

Is this justice?

Despite three exonerations, Don King remains a perennial target

COMMENTARY
By COLLIE J. NICHOLSON

It's getting so you can hardly believe what you read in the newspapers anymore — and the likelihood that you'll get a clear report on the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, stands true for television too.

Case in point: Don King vs. those crusading news people. Their real outrage — never openly stated — is about King's enormous influence in boxing and the massive amount of money flowing his way.

Is his success also one of the reasons why he is being pursued by Justice Department officials? This question is being posed throughout the African American community, which is of the opinion that some hanky-panky is going on.

King has gotten the poison pen so often that, seemingly, the U. S. Justice Department has bought the lie. For the fourth time, the government is trying to find a way to prosecute him, along with Bob Lee Sr., president of the International Boxing Federation, on charges that the two fixed fighters' ratings. Lee is being targeted for the first time.

It doesn't matter that those rankings were not far different from those of the World Boxing Council (WBC) or the World Boxing Association (WBA).

Neither does it matter that King has been exonerated in three attempts by the feds to prosecute him. He remains under scrutiny, a perennial target, which raises the question about fairness.

Despite constant criticism from media types, and the possibility of collusion between the good-old-boy network and the government to remove King from the boxing scene, King remains an icon as much as any public figure.

King is one of the most recognizable figures in the world. He continues to embrace the public and the public embraces him in an honoring and celebratory kind of way.

Most fans can identify with his struggle from a depressed beginning to dwarf the accomplishments of the largest boxing and entertainment moguls of all times.

Still, those grumpy reporters continue their efforts to jimmy up gossip, and negative reports, to get King and Bob Lee, who, incidentally, happen to be the

most prominent black boxing figures in the world. It appears that they're resurrecting that Great White Hope thing associated with boxing during the championship era of Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight title holder, 70-odd years ago.

Then it was about a "White Hope" reclaiming the heavyweight title. Now it is about money, control and removing King from his high perch.

Don King has had his media detractors since he became the sport's most successful promoter.

Some well-known reporters, from several of the biggest papers — a number of them certified King haters — are using their columns to speak ill of King, and in doing so, continue to sully his name while giving rise to the government's interaction.

What is so unfortunate is that the allegations being made are just that — allegations. Equally unfortunate is the fact that the government is being duped into trying to produce any shred of evidence to try him again. King has become the Justice Department's whipping boy.

To a large segment of the population, who believe anything they read in newspapers, perception amounts to guilt. And in the private halls of justice, perception also equals another chance to get after King.

For instance, HBO got in on the act in June in a manner that King regarded as insulting.

A letter from HBO wanted King to remove himself from the next Evander Holyfield-Lennox Lewis heavyweight championship fight — that King holds promotional rights to — in the event he is indicted.

Because the HBO letter was based on supposition of a phantom crime, and an indictment is not a conviction, King's answer was a flat-out no.

Apparently, HBO was ticked off by the rejection on a situation it created.

King also indicated that he believed HBO conspired with the FBI on the day the government agency raided his Florida headquarters. King said he thought HBO "set him up," in effect, by luring him to New York for negotiations on the day the FBI held its raid.

That day, 68 FBI agents raid-

ed King's headquarters and took with them computers and software that could possibly exonerate King.

You see, they're jumping up all over King's grave and the man isn't even dead yet. The legion of sportswriters with an ax to grind still whack away with the same old zeal.

Meanwhile, the list of King supporters is also growing steadily.

His most powerful new ally is the NAACP. At its annual convention in New York, the national organization adopted a resolution of support for King. Kweisi Mfume, chief executive officer of the NAACP, criticized the Department of Justice for "using its police powers to further a hostile agenda aimed at destroying black economic and political leadership."

A week later, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Black Leadership Forum, an organization made up of 39 leading black groups, joined in supporting King. The Black Leadership Forum wants to talk with U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno about "racially motivated investigations."

Dr. Joseph Lowery, who heads the BLF, said he felt sure that "the investigation of King is racially motivated" and said something should be done about it.

The Congressional Black Caucus has asked for an internal investigation using Assistant Attorney General Eric Holder, who is black, to head a task force to do the investigation of what they view as "very serious allegations."

It is fashionable, in certain quarters, to put the knock on King, but several things are obvious: King is his own man — a new wave entrepreneur who furnishes his own propulsion.

He is a true personification of the American dream. He demonstrated that an idea coupled with perseverance and knowledge, backed by an indomitable spirit, can lead to success.

King is also a major philanthropist of his time among the sports gentry. He has given beneficently of his accrued millions to various charities; and a number of organizations, aware of his contributions and concerns, have showered him with hosannas, awards, plaques and other symbolic recognitions.



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