

# Holmes works hard to promote fight

By JAMES LITKE  
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO — Larry Holmes leaped over the podium, acting equal parts fighter and fight promoter. Addressing Gerrie Coetzee, his opponent in the June 9 battle of heavyweight champions, he glowered and said: "I don't play... I quit school in the seventh grade because they had recess and I don't play."

Holmes, 34 and unbeaten through 45 professional bouts, is working harder on the promoting part of his repertoire because the Las Vegas fight will be his first under the banner of the fledgling International Boxing Federation. He will be earning a reported \$8 million for the contest and Coetzee about \$4 million.

**'I'm not only a boxer, I'm a businessman. And if a fight is going to be big business for promoters, it ought to be good business for the fighters.'**

—Larry Holmes

But Holmes expects to keep more of his share than in previous bouts because his resignation of the World Boxing Council title last December cut the WBC and long-time Holmes promoter Don King out of the show. Further, Holmes has never been ranked by or fought

under the aegis of the World Boxing Association, which also will not be involved in the bout.

Coetzee stands to lose the WBA title he took from Michael Dokes last September simply by participating in the fight, which is not sanctioned by the WBA.

But the 28-year-old native of South Africa, who carries a 29-1 mark and went out on a limb by predicting he would KO Holmes in the eighth round, says the match is "the biggest thing I've ever been involved in... He (Holmes) is the best."

"I'm crossing my fingers the WBA won't do it (strip away the WBA title). I'm sure Larry Holmes is better than anyone else I could fight," Coetzee said. "It's just a sad story that he isn't rated."

Holmes basked at the idea of applying to the WBA for a ranking in order to get the association's blessing.

"I'm the champ," he said. "Who the hell cares about the WBA? He's their champ and he's already been knocked out three times. What kind of business is that?..."

"I do not knock the WBC or the WBA. They've done some good things, got some fights for some deserving people," he continued. "But the thing about some promoter having options on a man's fights for 20 years is no good."

"I'm not only a boxer, I'm a businessman. And if a fight is going to be big business for promoters, it ought to be good business for the fighters."

To ensure that, Holmes, a black, is skillfully playing up every possible angle of the fight, including the idea of losing to a white man from South Africa.

"I told him (Coetzee) in New York (at a March 28 news conference) that I shook his hand for the last time until we get into the ring. I'm expecting to get hit but, for a man with white skin, he cuts very easily."

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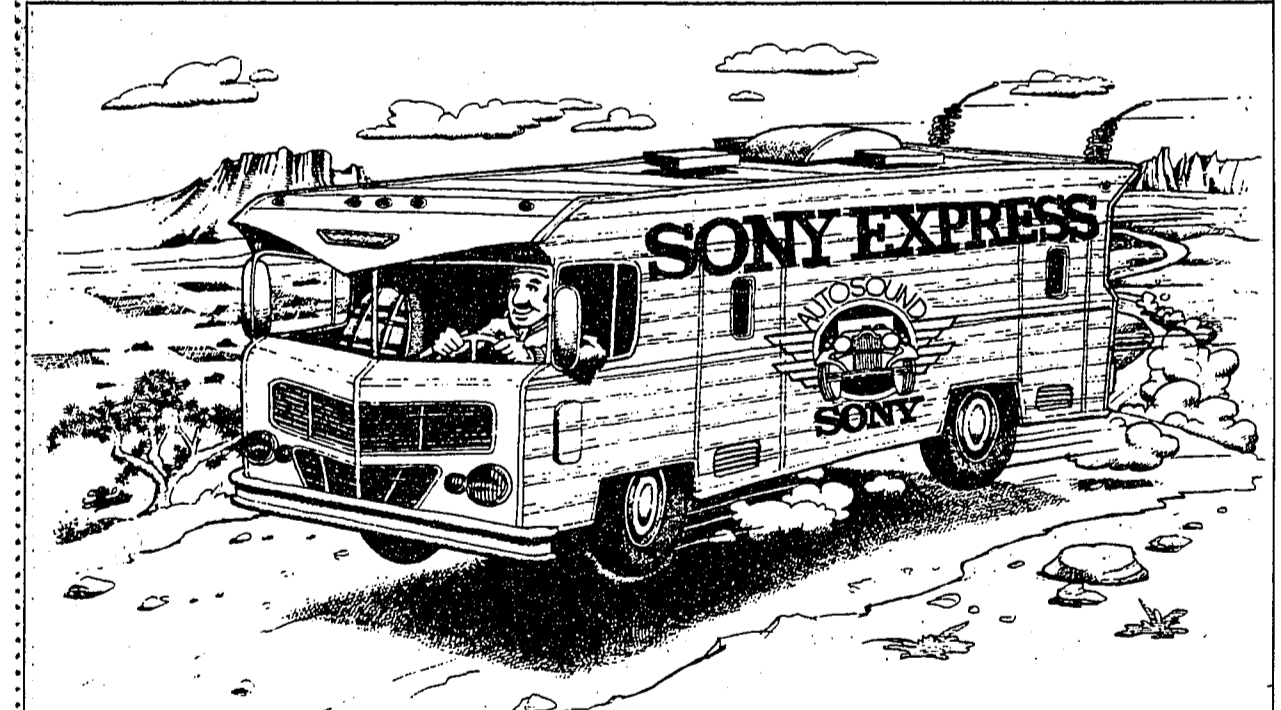
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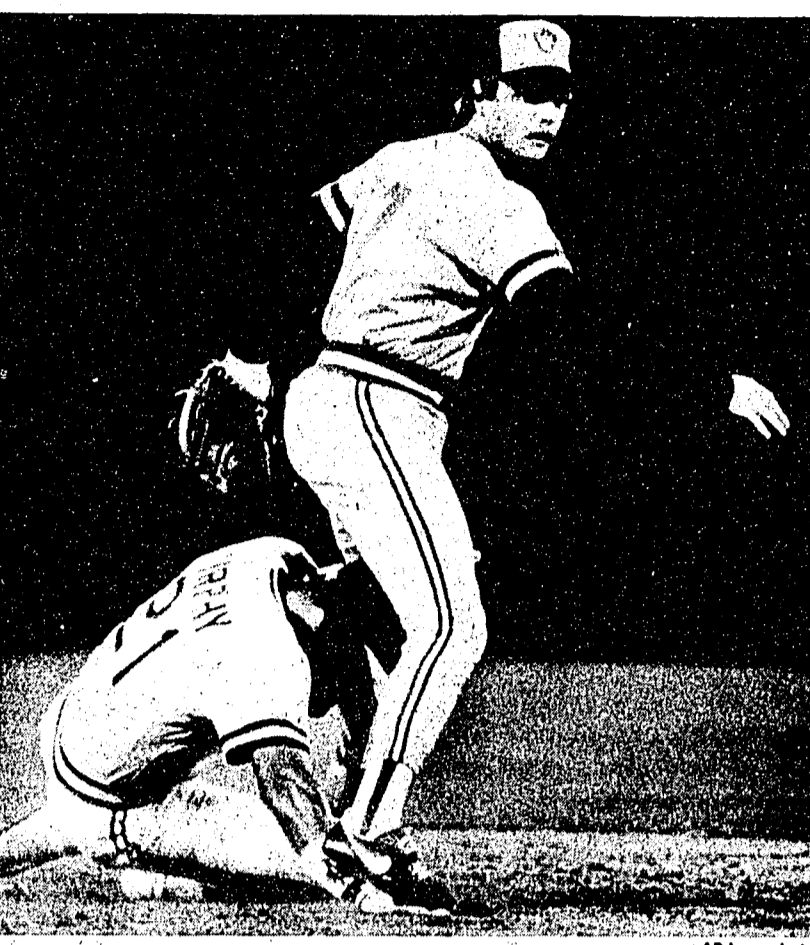
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Cincinnati	1	0	1.000
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New York at Cincinnati, (n)  
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PIRATES (Del. 7:30) at San Diego (Hawkins 5-7)  
St. Louis (Forsch 10-12) at Los Angeles (Honeycutt 2-3), (n)  
Chicago (Raney 14-13) at San Francisco (Krukow 11-11), (n)

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