

Toughman contenders slug it out

By CRAIG PIECHURA

physical examination before they fight," she said.

However, more than one of the losing fighters said they'd decided on the spur of the moment to compete in the contest and were physically unprepared for the fight.

IT COST fighters nothing to compete in the contest. But it cost the roofing section \$10 a head. Only 450 people paid to attend the Friday night fights, while about twice that many paid to watch 13 elimination bouts Saturday.

In those bouts, Jairocy Simpson, 18, of Detroit was named the toughest guy on Detroit's west side.

After fighting one bout on Friday night, a knockout, and four Saturday night, two knockouts, Simpson received a check for \$1,000 and a \$500 purse.

A \$500 runner-up purse went to Tyrone Smith, 23, of Detroit, who said he'll try out for a position on the Kansas City Chiefs in training camp this week.

The toughest east sider was found in February, a fighter named Biff Humphrey. As \$1,000 winners of regional "Toughman" contests, both Humphrey and Simpson are scheduled to compete in an "international" Toughman contest sometime in October in either the Pontiac Silverdome or Detroit's Joe Louis Arena.

Promoters credit television coverage of the event on NBC.

Before the championship takes place, between 54 and 80 regional contests will be conducted, said Joe Goldstein of West Bloomfield, director of operations for Ardore Ltd., which owns the "intellectual property" of Toughman Promotions.

On May 9-10, Toughman contests are scheduled in Jackson Mich. and Hampton, Va. The following week the con-

tests are being held in Macon, Ga. and Flint. Upper peninsula pugilists will slug it out May 23-24 for a chance at \$1,000 and a trophy.

Golding says he's also angling for contests in Dublin, Ireland and Anchorage, Alaska in upcoming months, figuring pipeline workers and pub drinkers are naturals for the contest.

WHAT DRIVES these less-than-ambitious boxers to climb into a ring to face people who want to hurt them bad enough to win?

For 38-year-old Hosea Johnson of Detroit, the motivation was the same that drove people to compete in dance marathons during the depression — the chance to win money.

"What do I do for a living?" asked Johnson. "I'm a professional racker for Budd White but not now though. I'm trying to make a dollar right now. I began to work about a month and a half. I got about five years seniority in."

Johnson said he had never boxed before that night, although he admitted participating in a few street fights "back when I was a jitterbug." Johnson won his first fight Friday night against A.I. Hayden, who complained that his opponent had butted him with his head. Johnson didn't return to box Saturday night, because he suffered a sprained hand in the fight.

"I was in the contest last year and didn't win so I figured I'd come back again and see if I could do it," Johnson said. "It was just an old man out there trying to do it."

An old boxer's pride caused 40-year-old Roberto Crazette to climb back into the ring after a 16-year hiatus to see if he still had any moves left. An old pro robe told Crazette's background.

"Penn. Post-Gazette Golden Gloves — 1964."

Crazette came directly from his job as repairman at a Pontiac assembly plant to compete at the event against smiling, gangly Don Whewright. When three rounds were over a bloody, but smiling Crazette, won the decision in his first fight.

One of the losers said he had wrestled since before and lost.

"I wrestled a bear three years ago at the 'Outdoorsman' at the State Fair. Y'know Victor, I wrestled them bad. I lost."

THE BIGGEST roofing section Friday night was backing 35-year-old Jim Males of Detroit, sales representative for Village Bath Products, who, it could be said, threw everything but the kitchen sink at his opponent, Robert Solomone.

After Males' victory, his co-workers rushed over to pose for pictures with their hero and informed the reporter that a bath fixture salesman Males is "one of the best."

Like many fights both evenings, the bout started out in a flurry and ended up so tired that they had trouble lifting their 10 oz. gloves. Referees and judges said the fighters' inexperience and fatigue made the bouts tough to officiate.

"THESE FIGHTS are neither fish nor fowl," said referee Tom Briscoe, 70, of Detroit. "I could stop every bout if I went by what's on the record. What I looked for was whether it was a foul or a harm foul. These kids are amateurs, there's no harm foul."

Briscoe received a lot of criticism, even from the "Toughman" staff, for not stopping a particularly one-sided bout won by Tim Taylor against Geno Donati.

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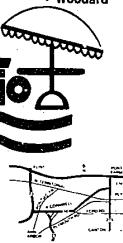
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