

Sports

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(F1C)



C.J. Risak

Finally, Payne to get pro debut

NEARLY EIGHT months ago, Craig Payne was embroiled in the biggest fight of his boxing career. He chased Tyrrell Biggs around the ring, at times swinging wildly and lunging clumsily, in his effort to dethrone the No. 1 amateur heavyweight in the U.S.

Payne failed. Biggs won. The victory earned Biggs a trip to the Olympic Games and a shot at a gold medal.

Payne did not come away empty-handed. He had beaten Biggs once in the final trial for a berth on the U.S. team. The second victory needed to unseat Biggs never materialized, but Payne's aggressiveness caught the eye of Eddie Futch, the trainer of one Larry Holmes, the pro heavyweight champ.

Payne decided to chuck his amateur status and turn pro. He would train under Futch and his amateur managers from Livonia, Paul Soucy and Dick Quinton.

THAT WAS in August. Tonight, Payne's dream of becoming a professional heavyweight boxer will be realized.

It's been a rugged trail since that nationally televised battle with Biggs. It always is for the Olympic Trial loser. Payne has been saddled with management problems, with the Vegas and Livonia interests squabbling over who should handle what.

Two months ago, Payne lamented, "My career is at a standstill. Everything's all screwed up. I've got no fights planned right now."

The scenario changed rapidly. Promoter Bill Koszarski of Detroit-based Gold Circle Productions entered the picture, offering Payne a chance. He grabbed it.

THE MANAGEMENT problems still aren't solved. But Payne's career is at least off the ground floor.



Craig Payne

pro, I cover more than Livonia. I cover the whole world."

That's a big job. But Payne feels he's ready for the first step.

Tonight he'll face a veteran of six pro bouts: Mike Evans of Chicago, who has won 3, lost 2 and tied 1. Payne knows what to expect.

"You can expect him to come out and give me a boxing lesson," he said. "At least he'll try to. He's a boxer."

PAYNE HAS seen Evans fight once. He has studied film of Evans. And he believes, with inherent bravado, that he is well prepared to handle his initial pro boxing challenge.

"I'm not underestimating him," Payne said. "I'm going out there like I'm the heavyweight champ of the world. He won't be as up as I will be for this fight."

There's a lot at stake for the 23-year-old. For the first time, he'll be going 6 rounds instead of 3, the length of amateur bouts. And he'll be going against a boxer — not a puncher — who has gone that distance before.

"I want to make sure I've got enough stamina to go the distance. If it should go that far," said the over-confident Payne.

It took this fight for Payne to get back what he called "the eye of the tiger," a phrase coined in the last of the "Rocky" fight movies.

"I guess this fight coming through kind of inspired me," he said.

WITH PAYNE, inspiration is important. He's an emotional athlete who needs to set goals, to have aspirations.

His strength, he said, has increased. His left hook and jab are both improved, but, he added, the biggest difference for him is "my right hand is much sharper. I always had it. It was just a matter of getting it tuned in. I'm throwing punches harder, crisper."

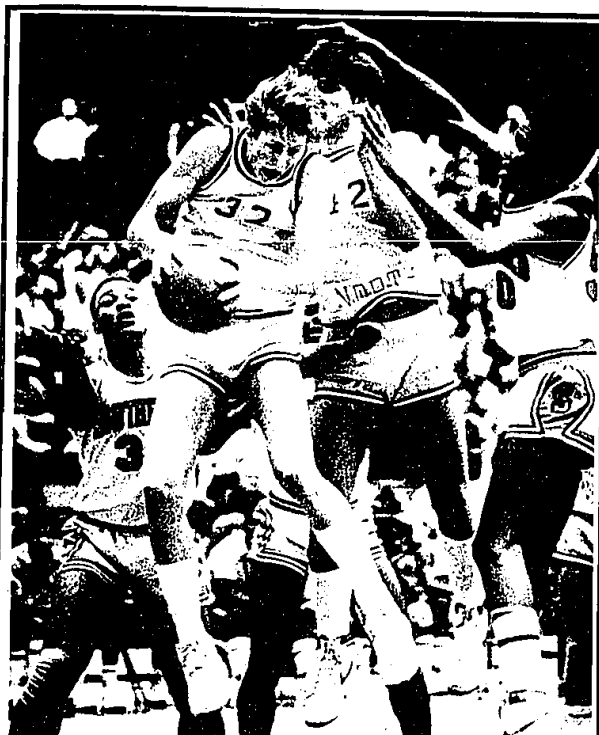
Payne's been training with James Broad, another Futch fighter and the No. 6 heavyweight contender. That's hastened his improvement.

But no training can substitute for ring experience. How good is Craig Payne? How good can he be?

Both are legitimate questions. At least partial answers can be expected tonight.

And, should Payne succeed, plans are already in motion for another bout in Las Vegas April 11. Who will control Payne's fate is then remains to be seen.

But it would be a disgrace if his future was further damaged by quarreling factions outside the ring.



All-Area?

Did North Farmington junior Rick Anderson (No. 32) make the first team All-Oberverland basketball team? The squad

will be profiled in Monday's Farmington Observer.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington grad is All-American

The NCAA Division II championships weren't all that Oakland University's women's swim team hoped for.

The Pioneers figured to be among the top half-dozen teams at the meet, held last weekend at the Justus Aquatic Center in Orlando, Fla. That's not how it turned out.

OU slipped to 12th place, scoring 133 points. A year ago, the Pioneers placed fourth, had an NCAA champion in diver Mary Vincent and had eight individual finishes in the top 10 (5 in the top 3). They also scored in 5 relays, all finishing in the top 7.

THIS SEASON, the best OU finish was a third, with 7 individual swims in the top-10 and only 3 relays scoring — one in the top 10. Four swimmers scored all of the Pioneers points in individual events.

Freshman Nancy Schermer enjoyed a solid NCAA meet, taking a third and 2 fourths and anchoring all 3 relays. Schermer, from Zealand, placed third

in the 200-yard freestyle (1:52.60) and was fourth in the 500 (4:58.52) and 1,650 (17:05.91) free.

Schermer anchored the 800 free relay, behind Linda Scott, Kim Pogue and Bonnie Gieffe, which placed third (7:40.25).

POGUE, a JUNIOR from Farmington, also turned in All-American performances with her fifth in the 1,650 free (17:10.07), seventh in the 500 free (5:51.04) and eighth in the 200 free (1:58.70).

Senior Kathy VanValkenburg, from East Grand Rapids, scored in both the 100 back, placing fifth (1:01.04), and the 200 back, taking 13th (2:11.43). Junior Linda Scott of Rochester was 15th in the 200 free (1:56.65).

Scott, Sarah Stanwood, Gieffe and Schermer combined for a 13th in the 100 free relay (5:35.94) and Scott, VanValkenburg, Gieffe and Schermer teamed for a 16th in the 300 free relay (1:40.33).

Area stars bolster indoor Crusaders

The Michigan Crusaders, a women's under-19 soccer team comprised primarily of current or past Observerland stars, ended a most successful indoor season recently with a league championship and two prestigious tournament titles.

The Crusaders, coached by Dave Lusier, won the Bosnas Premier league championship at the IV Seasons Indoor Soccer Complex in Farmington with a 27-1-2 overall record.

Also, the Crusaders won the Michigan State University Tournament, besting MSU, University of Michigan and Schoolcraft Community College teams, and a 20-team tournament in Canada, besting a pair of Canadian National teams in the process.

The Crusaders are: Doreen Beagle (Livonia Stevenson), Kim Paterson

soccer

(Livonia Bentley), Jennifer Hugel (Livonia Churchill), Chris Lusier (Livonia Churchill), Terri Groat (Livonia Churchill), Doreen Dudek (Livonia Churchill), Shannon Bowler (Livonia Churchill), Julie Tortora (Plymouth Salem), Tamara Brown (Dearborn), Jennifer Wilcox (Brighton), Lori Hauber (Brighton), Liz Suttle (Troy), Lori Engel (Plymouth Canton), Sheri Wolfe (Livonia Bentley), Annette Ruggiero (Farmington Hills Mercy), Karen Pennywitt (Farmington), Kim Montgomery (Livonia Churchill) and Laura Arcola (Livonia Franklin).

Tankers 6th at nationals

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

The difference between last year's Oakland University men's swim team and this year's edition was four places at the NCAA Division II swim championships.

The Pioneers placed second last season, mimicking their finish of the year before. This year they took sixth.

Poor performance? Hardly. Last season OU went into the NCAA meet as favorites, with past champions Tracy Huth and Jeff Colton and top-notch recruit Mike McCloskey only three of several good reasons why. But illness weakened the Pioneers, forcing them to settle for second.

When this season began, coach Pete Howland was without Huth (graduated) and McCloskey (academically ineligible). In January, Colton, too, fell victim to poor grades.

Combined with several other graduations, OU was transformed from a national contender to a team in transition.

IT DIDN'T leave Howland much hope for a high finish at this season's NCAA meet. But youth can surprise the most veteran of coaches. It did Howland last weekend at the Justus Aquatic Center in Orlando, Fla.

"If you had asked me two weeks ago if I expected us to do this well, I would have said, 'No way,'" the OU coach said. "It was very, very pleased."

The Pioneers scored 201 points, edging seventh-place California State-Chico by 8. Cal State-Northridge won the national title with 498 points, followed by Cal State-Bakersfield (417½), University of Tampa (293), Wright State (282), Clarion (246) and OU.

Junior Matt Croghan and sophomore Steve Larson ignited the Pioneers, each grabbing a second and placing in the top six twice.

Larson's performance was especially pleasing. He was given the task of replacing Colton in the 100-yard and 200-

OU sports

yard backstroke, a job he filled most effectively. Larson was second in the 100 (51.72) and fifth in the 200 (1:55.58). He also splashed to a ninth in the 50 freestyle (21.14).

He was the most pleasant surprise of the meet," said Howland of Larson. "It's funny how those things work, destiny or whatever. It was really nice for him because he didn't have a particularly good meet last year. We knew he had the talent."

CROGHAN MISSED the national record in the 1,650 free by just 1, a record that was shattered anyway by Bakerville's Australian import, Richard Ford. Ford, an Olympian who was named Swimmer of the Meet for his 3 record-breaking victories, won in 15:25.13. Croghan was second in 15:45.76, a new OU record. Croghan also placed sixth in the 500 free in 4:35.06.

Mark VanderMeer had an outstanding meet for a freshman, finishing fourth in the 100 breaststroke (57.60), sixth in the 200 breast (2:07.06) and eighth in the 200 individual medley (1:56.61). Freshman Jeff Cooper took 10th in the 1,650 free (16:06.59), 12th in the 600 free (4:37.80) and 15th in the 400 IM (4:12.10).

Mike Koleber, a sophomore, and John Christiansen, OU's only senior, also scored in individual events. Koleber was 11th in the 50 free (31.21) and Christiansen was 15th in the 100 butterfly (51.89).

OU had a sixth and two eights in the relays. Larson, VanderMeer, Christiansen and Koleber were sixth in the 400 medley relay (3:27.84). VanderMeer, Cooper, Tom Warnick and Larson took

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Jim Foote of Gibraltar, Michigan is the Featured Artist at the 1985 Festival. From his original "Spring Courtship - Pintails," 450 signed limited edition Show Prints will be sold only at the 1985 Festival.

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10:00am Department of Natural Resources
1985 Michigan Trout Stamp Contest judging.
2:00pm Department of Natural Resources
1985 Michigan Duck Stamp Contest judging.

Sunday, March 24
1:00pm Wildlife Art Workshops begin... free to the public. "Decoy Carving" with Larry Hayden, Jim Wicks, Clark Sullivan and Bob Bolle.
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3:30pm "Nature Photography" with Gilbert vanFrankenhuysen.
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