

# The Countdown Has Begun

By Mark Olejniczak

Well fans, we are now beginning the countdown. It's an even week until Thomas Hearn returns to the ring to resume his illustrious career.

For most of us who enjoy sports, this action packed fight card comes at a great time. For those of us in the Metro Detroit area, we have just witnessed the ending to the Larry Brown coaching carousel. The Detroit Tigers are in a fight of their own for respectability and a wild card spot in the American League. With summer, also comes football training camp. The Detroit Lions will be taking the field and reporting to camp later this week.

Now, that we have reviewed the local sports scene, let's look a little deeper into this card. There are some questions that will be answered on this evening. First and foremost, is age just a number? Will Hearn be able to beat his opponent with the naysayers holding the father time card over his head?

Hearn is not the first boxer to continue a storied career at a time when many of his peers and adversaries have hung up their gloves. The legendary Archie Moore was still fighting well into his forties. He was still defending his light heavyweight title at the age of 47. Most recently George Foreman at age 45 came out of retirement and dethroned heavyweight champion Michael Moorer on November 5, 1994. Foreman down in the fight, tagged Moorer with a right hand flush off his chin to gain the upset victory. The 10<sup>th</sup> round knockout of Moorer gave Foreman the distinction of being the oldest heavyweight champion in boxing.

Hearn has been inactive since April 2000, when his fight with Uriah Grant was stopped due to an ankle injury. So this career note only begs the next question: What is Hearn's primary motivation for a return to the ring?

There isn't a true clear-cut reason for Hearn's to fight again. It is really a three-headed monster.

1. He would like to win an eighth title. This title would be either a light heavyweight or cruiserweight crown.
2. After all of these years, Hearn's still has the hunger to compete. It is something he feels when he trains and he knows he must not wait any longer.
3. For Hearn's his last fight had a sour ending. He would like to avenge the loss and prove to many people that the injury he sustained was a fluke.

For Detroit sports fans who are planning to take in the festivities at Cobo Arena, they will truly get a double dose. On the same card, Tommy Hearn's son Ronald will be the co-feature. The younger Hearn's has showed many similarities to dad with a powerful jab and he possess great hand speed.

The "Double Trouble" fight card ironically falls on the calendar two days before The Hitman's proudest moment in the ring. On Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup> it will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hearn's crushing defeat of Pipino Cuevas in two rounds. This fight gave Hearn's his first title and truly a legend was born.

So on July 30<sup>th</sup> there will be many boxing fans in the Detroit area hoping that the Legend really does continue.