

## LEE D. JENKINS

# Cassius Clay Prepares For Pro Ring Jump



For those who possess the special talents for extending themselves into the future the newest outlet for said talents could easily be in forecasting the boxing career of Olympic light heavyweight champion Cassius Marcellus Clay. The gleam of golden fistic rewards burns brightly in the eyes of the recent gold medal winner. Certain screwy edicts concerning amateurism have prevented him from broadcasting his intended break with the simon-pures but he of the classic Roman moniker is ready to make the move into the professional ranks.



CASSIUS CLAY

His course is pretty well laid out and illuminated by the bright lights and fat paychecks have been strewn along the path of another Olympic champion of a couple of Olympiads past, heavy-weight champion Floyd Patterson.

A recent graduate of Louisville's Central High school, 18 year old Clay knocked off the strange and unpronounceable named Pole southpaw Zbigniew Pietryzkowski in the Olympic finals for what is destined to be his final performance for free. The Olympic medal was a must get his pro aspirations off the floor even though he had racked up two national Golden Gloves titles.

Patterson's moves were almost identical with Floyd taking the national Golden Gloves and the AAU 175 pound crowns before his move.

Continuing the parallel, Clay resembles Patterson physically and in ring mannerisms. He is not a slugger but a punishing puncher with some shown boxing finesse.

At the present it would seem that Cassius' fortunes are in the hands of wealthy Louisville businessman and an interested policeman. It is highly likely that his move into the professional ranks will be accompanied by the inclusion of other parties who know their way around boxing circles. Without these other parties there is some likelihood that Clay will not reap the golden harvest. With this little help, for a small percentage, certain obstacles may be removed. The pay checks will be a slight bit smaller but the assurance of paying progress is worth something.

The paths leading to the boxing thrones in every division are pretty well cluttered with former amateur champions. Fighting for money can change Clay's dream picture of the many ring rewards but at 18 years of age, he has a time element in his favor.

At 178 pounds, he will probably enter into the light heavyweight ranks. By the time he has knocked over some of the easy ones that will surely be placed at his disposal, Archie Moore may be ready to move his graying carcass from the top spot.

From all indications and from the guys who are supposed to know good boxing material, Clay is supposed to have the potential. Patterson was king of all he surveyed at 21. Three year hence, it will be interesting to look back and note the progress of Cassius and see how close the forecasters were in charting his career.

If there ever was a deserving athlete, it has to be that Ira Davis, U.S. representative in the hop, step and jump in the Olympic Games. Any semblance of justice would have found Davis a winner in his event but the cruel actualities found him being squeezed out for the bronze medal.

Making his second attempt to give his country a winner in this rather unknown event, he came closer than he did in the 1956 Melbourne action when he suffered a bum ankle and finished 11th.

The 23 year old LaSalle College graduate, who holds the American record for his specialty, Davis is not one of those athletes that have some sort of subsidization to keep free of financial worries.

Since the last Olympics, the burning desire to prove a winner has caused him to burn the candle at both ends in supporting an ailing wife and daughter and still find time to train for his specialty.

There was little competition as an aid to keeping sharp. The event is only scheduled in one or two of the national events yearly. The impetus for staying in condition and improving techniques was a constant drive.

It would be a most pleasant task to report that Davis' industry brought forth a gold medal. There are a couple of items that may be reported. The hop, step, jump and long, a step-child of the track world, may at long last get some recognition comparable with other track events. One thing is sure, it will continue to be slated as an Olympic event and the nation's track coaches, always anxious to stay ahead of the rest of the world, will have to take steps to bring up the U.S. score.

The other item has to do with Davis' dedication. The hop, step and jump may be a relatively minor track activity but if it can bring out the pure unadulterated devotion as shown by Davis it should be included in every track manual throughout the nation.