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QQ GMN BRJ
SPO :AM-SPORT-STEVENSON
CUBANS GIVE STEVENSON LITTLE CHANCE TO WIN CHAMIONSHIP:
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, MAY 5, REUTER - FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN A DECADE, CUBAN BOXING FANS AND WRITERS ALIKE DON'T GIVE THEIR COUNTRY'S THREE-TIME SUPER-HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING CHAMP TEOFILO STEVENSON MUCH OF A CHANCE TO WIN THE GOLD IN THE INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR BOXING CHAMPONSHIP WHICH BEGINS NEXT WEEKEND IN RENO, NEVADA.
STEVENSON, WHO ALSO HAS TWO WORLD AMATEUR BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS TO HIS CREDIT, HAS WON 292 OF HIS 304 FIGHTS IN A CAREER THAT SPANS ALMOST TWO DECADES.
THE THIRTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD CUBAN, WHOSE FATHER CAME TO THIS ISLAND FROM NEIGHBOURING JAMAICA TO CUT SUGAR CANE, ONCE TURNED DOWN A MILLION DOLLAR OFFER TO TURN PROFESSIONAL AND FIGHT MOHAMMED ALI.
HE REFUSED ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD MEAN ABANDONING FIDEL CASTRO'S CUBA WHERE HE IS NOW AN ELECTED DELEGATE TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
CUBAN FANS HAVE WITNESSED THEIR HERO GOING DOWNHILL OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. STEVENSON LOST TO THE SOVIET VIACHASLAV YANKOLEV, HE WON UNCONVINCINGLY OVER HIS FELLOW CUBAN FELIX LEMUS, HE LOST BADLY TO THE EAST GERMAN ULLI KADEN AND HE LOOKED MISERABLE IN HIS LOSS TO A MEDIOCRE CUBAN NOVICE, OSVALDO CASTILLO, SIX MONTHS AGO AT THE +CARDIN 86+ TURNEY HERE.
=MORE LEM/SYL

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QQ GMN BRJ
SPO :AM-SPORT-STEVENSON =2 HAVANA:
IN HIS MATCH WITH CASTILLO, STEVENSON WAS SLOW AND CUMSY, UNABLE, AS BEFORE, TO KEEP HIS OPPONENT OFF WITH HIS POWERFUL LEFT JAB OR FLOOR HIM WITH HIS ONCE DEVASTATING RIGHT HAND.
THE CONSENSUS AMONG CUBANS WAS THAT HE HAD LITTLE CHANCE TO WIN HIS THIRD WORLD AMATEUR BOXING TITLE IN RENO BUT THAT, AS A NATIONAL HERO, HE DESERVED TO GO IF HE SO DESIRED.
STEVENSON HAS TRAINED HARD FOR RENO AND NOW CUBANS ARE HOPING -SOME ARE PRAYING- FOR A MIRACLE.
THERE IS A BELIEF AMONG CUBAN SPORTSWRITERS THAT THEIR NATIONN'S TEAM AT THE WORLD AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP IS NOT AS STRONG AS THOSE SENT IN THE PAST.
ASIDE FROM STEVENSON, OTHER CUBAN BOXERS WHO ARE GIVEN LITTLE CHANCE TO WIN THE GIOLD ARE JUAN TORRES ODELIN (48 KG), ARNALDO MESA (54 KG), JESUS SOLLET (57 KG), EDUARDO CORREA (63.5 KG), JULIO QUINTANA (75 KG) AND PABLO ROMERO (91 KG).
MOREOVER, SPORTSWRITERS HERE SAY THAT THE CUBAN TEAM HAS FIVE EXCELLENT CONTENDERS FOR GOLD MEDALS: PEDRO ORLANDO REYES (51 KG), ADOLFO HORTA (60 KG), CANDELARIO DUVERGEL (67 KG), A MIDDLEWEIGHT (75 KG) AND THE HEAVYWEIGHT FELIX SAVON (91 KG).
=REUTER LEM/SYL