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1401:stevenson

three-time olympic heavyweight champ on comeback trail:

havana, jan 26, reuter-- cuba's three-time olympic heavyweight boxing champion, teofilo stevenson, continued the come-back trail with a first round victory over a mediocre opponent at the local playa giron boxing tourney here.

stevenson, who once turned down a million dollars to turn professional and fight mohammed ali, missed out on a chance to win his fourth olympic gold medal when cuba decided to stay away from the 1984 summer oympics in los angeles.

last august, in his first international competition in a year, the thirty-three year old stevenson was badly beaten by the european super-heavyweight champ, viocheslav yakovlev of the soviet union at the summer spartious sports competition in warsaw. the cuban boxer showed neither the speed nor awesome punche that made him what many experts consider one of the world's great heavyweights.

while some boxing pundits said it was time for stevenson to hang up his golves, stevenson announced he would continue boxing.

last september he looked good in a fight against bulgarian boni iliev in prague and in october he won a gold medal at the ven berlin tourney in germany.

stevenon's greatest problems in the ring have come from tough infighters like italy's francesco damiani who stopped him in the quarter finals of the 1982 ,mvvmvworld amateur boxing championship and three soviet boxers who beat him in recent years, visovsky, krutpin and yakovlev.

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