

Exclusive: Ike Ibeabuchi Denied Parole

Written by Tim Graham
Monday, 23 August 2004 18:00

Former heavyweight contender Ike Ibeabuchi has received an unfavorable decision from the Nevada Board of Parole Commissioners.

The board announced Tuesday morning Ibeabuchi would not be released from Lovelock Correctional Center in northern Nevada, where the native Nigerian is serving five to 30 years for attempted sexual assault and battery with intent to commit a crime.

Ibeabuchi won't be eligible for parole again until December 2007, with his next hearing scheduled for the preceding August. Three years was the maximum the parole board could make Ibeabuchi wait.

Had Ibeabuchi been granted parole he would have been released Dec. 12 and likely deported. He possibly could have resumed his career this autumn through a work furlough.

Many boxing observers thought the 31-year-old powder keg could have dominated the miserable heavyweight ranks after a few months of intense training and a string of tuneup bouts.

Ibeabuchi is 20-0 with 15 knockouts. He was a devastating force who handed slugger David Tua and slickster Chris Byrd their first losses. Ibeabuchi won a rousing 12-round affair over Tua in which the brawlers broke the heavyweight record for most punches thrown. Ibeabuchi then destroyed Byrd, knocking down the future IBF champ twice before the bout was mercifully stopped in the fifth round.

But Ibeabuchi hasn't fought since. Four months after his landmark victory over Byrd, he was arrested because of an incident involving a callgirl in his suite at The Mirage in Las Vegas.

Similar accusations regarding prostitutes surfaced over the ensuing months, and the Clark County court system needed over two years of hearings and evaluations to determine whether Ibeabuchi was competent to stand trial. He eventually was sentenced in late 2001.

Ibeabuchi also served 120 days in prison in 1997 for false imprisonment of a 15-year-old boy in Texas. Two months after that breakthrough Tua triumph, the troubled boxer intentionally crashed his car into a concrete pillar on Interstate 35 north of Austin with the son of his ex-girlfriend in the passenger seat. Ibeabuchi originally was charged with kidnapping and attempted murder, but prosecutors later determined he had tried to commit suicide.

Ibeabuchi's chances for parole appeared to be buoyed with political powerbroker Sig Rogich in his corner. Rogich, a Las Vegas ad executive and crisis-control specialist who was hoping to manage Ibeabuchi, has close ties with Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn (all of the state's parole board commissioners are appointed by the governor) and the White House.

Exclusive: Ike Ibeabuchi Denied Parole

Written by Tim Graham

Monday, 23 August 2004 18:00

Rogich played an instrumental role in Ronald Reagan's presidential re-election campaign, was a member of George H.W. Bush's cabinet, was a U.S. ambassador to his native Iceland and has raised over \$200,000 for George W. Bush's re-election campaign.