Written by Aaron Tallent
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Former heavyweight champion Tony “TNT” Tubbs continues his comeback tonight in St. Joseph, Missouri in a bout against journeyman Jason Nicholson. This will be his second fight in eight days.

A sparse crowd came out to Municipal Auditorium last Friday night to watch Tubbs score a six-round decision over Danny Wofford. That was Tubbs’ third straight win in a comeback that started in October of 2004.

Tubbs, a father of 16, does not beat around the bush when explaining his reason for the comeback. In an interview with *The Tennessean* last week, Tubbs said, “The bills still got to be paid and I still got to survive. I didn’t make a whole lot of money in my career, so how come I can’t break back into the top ten and make some of that money now?”

Tubbs started out as a sparring partner to Muhammad Ali in 1978 and turned professional two years later. He won the WBA heavyweight championship in 1985 when he beat Greg Page by unanimous decision. He lost the title seven months later in a majority decision to Tim Witherspoon. Tubbs went on to be knocked out in the second round by Mike Tyson in 1988. In 1991 he lost a very close decision to then up-and-coming sensation Riddick Bowe.

When he was a rising contender, Tubbs also fought the late Jimmy Young in Pittsburgh in 1983. The 56-year-old Young died last week of heart disease. During his career, Young lost close decisions to Muhammad Ali and Ken Norton. In 1977 Young beat George Foreman in a bout The Ring magazine named Fight of the Year.

When he fought Tubbs, Young was on the downside of his career and lost by a unanimous decision, but kept Tubbs respect. “Jimmy Young was one of the slickest boxers in the history of boxers,” says Tubbs. “You saw what he did to George Foreman. When I fought him, it was so hard to hit him with that right hand. Jimmy is going to be missed.”

Throughout the 1990s, Tubbs went through some ups and downs, including problems with drug addiction, but now says he is back and focused on his return to boxing. “I’m trying to fight as many fights as I can possibly get because that will get me back sharper,” says the former champion. He says Father Time is also a factor in scheduling so many fights so close together. “Age-wise, I’m 47, so I got to stay busy to stay sharp,” Tubbs says.

Danny Wofford may have kept Tubbs busy, but he will not bring the former champ more attention. The 5’7” Wofford came into Municipal Auditorium after a year layoff resembling King Hippo from Nintendo’s Mike Tyson’s *Punchout*. His weight was never announced, but it was probably between 250 and 300 pounds.

For the first five rounds, Tubbs landed on the 44-year-old Wofford, who shook off the shots and danced in his corner between rounds. Tubbs finally dropped him in the sixth, but Wofford got

back up and finished the fight. “This is as big as I’ve ever been in my life,” says Wofford, “and to get six rounds with an ex-champ, I’m alright with that.”

Wofford’s record, 17-100-2, is not exactly impressive either. Over the years he has served as the opponent to many contenders, including Witherspoon, Trevor Berbick, Shannon Briggs, Pinklon Thomas, James “Bonecrusher” Smith, Michael Dokes, Oliver McCall and Alex Stewart - and lost to all of them.

But before you scoff at Tubbs’ comeback, remember that his first two wins in this return have been over opponents with winning records. In fact, Tubbs beat then undefeated prospect Brian Minto by a split decision in December.

Tubbs hopes to have a few more bouts like tonight’s fight before he begins to face tougher competition. “I feel I need at least about five more wins, and I’ll be ready for anyone in the top-ten.”