

## ShoBox Card Shows Off Boxing Offspring

Written by Michael Woods  
Friday, 30 June 2006 19:00

---

It seemed like a good idea on paper.

Collect the sons and a cousin of standout pugilists from yesteryear, and televise the offspring so fight fans can assess how far the apples have dropped from the proverbial tree. Showtime thought so, anyway; the network devoted two and a half hours of time to a Saturday night special ShoBox: The New Generation 'The Sons Also Rise' card from Manistee, Michigan.

So what did we learn about the fruit of the loins of fighting lions Buddy McGirt, Thomas Hearns, Aaron Pryor and Tim Witherspoon? To be blunt, the kids got a bit more of mom's blood than dad's than each might like, but each has enough of pop's genes to make them at the least a serviceable pro, and possibly, more than that. Well, one of them should perhaps quit while he's behind, I have to say with all due respect, but more on that later...

Chazz Witherspoon, who is the second cousin of 80s-90s marquee heavyweight "Terrible" Tim Witherspoon, left viewers with the impression that of the assembled offspring featured, he may be the one to keep closest watch on. He showed some nice skills against underweight 32-year-old Mike Alexander from Columbus, Ohio, who came to Michigan with Buster Douglas' former manager/trainer John Johnson.

'Spoon, who goes by the nickname "The Gentleman," outweighed Alexander, 232 to 205, but he didn't play that card till midway through the scheduled ten.

Alexander didn't come to lay down for Witherspoon, and in the first half of the fight surprised Witherspoon with some nifty combos, a sneaky-quick right hand and smart movement. One had to wonder if Alexander could keep up his busy footwork for the duration, and as it turned out, he could not.

A 2004 National Golden Gloves champion and 2004 Olympic alternate, Witherspoon had to contend with a game and durable opponent who switched from righty to lefty in the fourth round.

ShoBox analyst Steve Farhood quite rightly pointed out Witherspoon's lack of power in the fifth, but he did get off a scoring rip to the body that showed he is capable of being more than just a volume puncher when he puts his mind to it.

Tim's second cousin, who lives in Philly, does not possess blazing-fast hands, it must be said. But he may make up for that down the line with his stamina and by keeping busy.

Alexander looked nearly out of it sitting on the stool after the sixth and my heart ached for the dude when Johnson told him there were four rounds to go.

In the seventh, Alexander shot a straight left that scored strongly, signaling that he wouldn't go the accordion route, and fold.

## ShoBox Card Shows Off Boxing Offspring

Written by Michael Woods  
Friday, 30 June 2006 19:00

---

Farhood described Witherspoon as "workmanlike" and talked about a lack of handspeed, but to counter that criticism, he showed a solid closer's instinct in the tenth round, when he was still busy and looking to do damage in the last minute.

Witherspoon (13-0, 7 KOs) impressed the judges, 100-90, 98-92, 96-94. Postfight, he told Al Bernstein that his "defense needs work" and that he "needs to warm up better." He's 24, and with an improved nutritional program stripping off some baby fat, and some work on investing more in his power shots by bending his legs, Witherspoon will be on my 'One To Watch late 2007' list.

Alexander, who earned every cent the IRS lets him keep, dropped to 11-1.

In the second televised battle, James McGirt Jr. faced off with Stephan Pryor in a battle of sons of former world champions. Buddy's son, age 23, showed his amateur pedigree as he raised his record to 12-0-1 NC over the under inspired Pryor, a 31-year-old from Cincinnati who dropped to 10-2.

Pryor (160 1/2) started out with a lazy jab, which made McGirt's so-so tablesetter look positively deadly in comparison. The first was a feeling-out special but McGirt (163 pounds) picked it up in the second. Showing a smooth, schooled style in the ring, he kept a respectful distance as he piled up points and sized up Pryor's methods.

Pryor, whose father Aaron didn't always exhibit classic, balletic grace and footwork as he plied his trade, had issues with his movement as well. But he didn't make up for it with feverish output. He went southpaw in the fourth, and that served only to give McGirt a different angle to peck away at.

In the fifth, a viewer had to like McGirt's right hand rip to the body after he tossed a right to Pryor's head.

Pryor actually landed a leaping right lead in the sixth, his best punch of the night, but it didn't phase McGirt in the least.

All told, Stephan Pryor's skills as a boxer lie somewhere in between Aaron Pryor in his prime and Richard Pryor today.

I'm not interested in making snarky cracks for the sake of a cheap giggle, but Pryor called out Ronald Hearns postbout and also complained that his left shoulder was hurting him in the bout because he had stopped doing pushups. Er, OK...

The judges saw McGirt as the clear victor in the eight rounder, 79-73 times three.

Buddy's boy is polished, and relaxed as he does his thing, and his upside cannot be dismissed. I'd like to see him set down on punches more often and cultivate a nasty streak, but all in all, he's a prospect.

## ShoBox Card Shows Off Boxing Offspring

Written by Michael Woods  
Friday, 30 June 2006 19:00

---

Ronald Hearn, 27, kicked off the broadcast. He was matched with a rudimentary fighter from Phoenix, Mexican-born Hector Hernandez, in a middleweight eight.

Hearn (158 pounds), who audaciously goes by the nickname "The Motor City Cobra," showed flashes of dad's chops. For one thing, he's long and lean, like dad. But he's 27, so he darn well better get cooking if he wants to make meaningful noise in the middleweight division.

The first round of this one got off to a goofy start, when Hearn hit Hernandez (160 on the dot) with a left hook on the break. Hernandez was pissed off and mouthed off to the ref, who instead of giving him time to recover his senses, started a mandatory eight-count.

Hearn has some of the basics to master, that's obvious.

He drops his hands too much, doesn't slip punches all that well and isn't too accurate with his deliveries. But he has some pop, as he showed in the fifth, with a left hook to body/right cross combo that sent Hernandez to the deck. He rose at 8 3/4.

Then, Hearn got back to work, with a left hook to the head that further dazed Hernandez, and again sent him to the floor. He got up at 8 1/2, and the ref, John O'Brien, gave him a long look, like your mom used to when you slipped home past curfew stinking of Bud Light and Tic-Tacs.

Hernandez's "brave" corner sent him back out for the sixth, but Hearn was having none of it. He flurried Hernandez to the head and O'Brien waved the fight over at 12 seconds of the sixth.

Hitman Hearn talked to Bernstein afterwards and gave his take on his son's performance. "I had to calm him, get him to use his defense and tell him defense is as important as offense," the elder Hearn said. "Once he uses them both together he's going to be stronger."

As you may have heard, Jorge Paez Jr. was supposed to give us a compare and contrast peak on this Showtime broadcast, but the ever-diligent professionals heading up Homeland Security denied his entry into the US from Mexico. Perhaps, they surmised Al Qaeda was planning a cunning "use a suicide bomber disguised as a pro boxer" plan, and that's why Paez, whose face and identity could be ascertained by a freaking Google image search, was refused entry and scratched from the card.