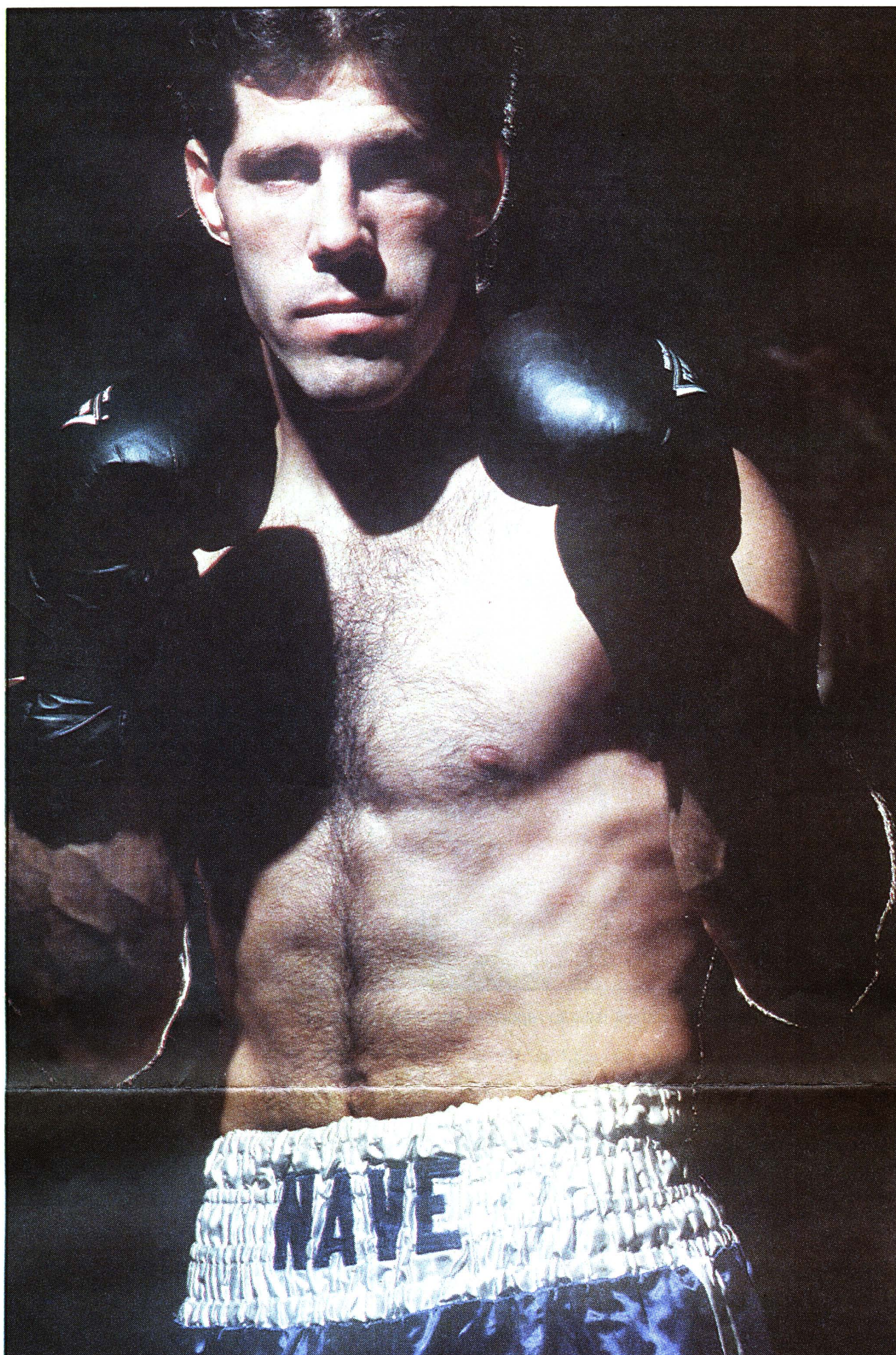


Nave finally lands title bout



IJ photo/Martin Klimek

NEXT STEP: Paul Nave will take a huge step when he fights Greg Haugen for the WBF welterweight title.

San Rafael boxer agrees to fight Haugen in Marin

By Carl Kotala

Independent Journal reporter

The contracts have been signed. The wait is over. San Rafael boxer Paul Nave is not only going to get the world championship fight he's been working 12 years for, but it's going to happen in front of his hometown fans.

Promoter Peter Howes announced yesterday that the 37-year-old Nave (15-5-2, 8 KO's) will face former three-time world champion Greg Haugen (37-7-1, 20 KO's) — also 37 — for the vacant World Boxing Federation welterweight title March 27 at the Marin Veterans Memorial Auditorium. The fight will be telecast on ESPN2.

"It's the first time in the history of Marin County that we've had a world title fight," Howes said. "It's also the end of an era. If Paul loses, he's retiring. If he wins, we've got plans for him to go after bigger purses in Las Vegas or New York."

In other words, win or lose, this will be Nave's last fight in Marin.

"I've reached every goal I ever set in boxing," Nave said. "Now I have to reset the goal to actually win a world title."

Nave last fought on Oct 4, winning a 12-round unanimous decision over Jose Limones in defense of his International Boxing Organization Intercontinental welterweight title at the Marin Civic Center Exhibition Hall.

After the fight, Nave said he hoped to hear from Haugen in the next few days so that a deal could be worked out.

Then came the hangups.

According to Nave, Haugen said he couldn't make the 140-pound junior welterweight limit that the original contract called for. He also wanted more money.

Nave said he was considering a fight with another former champion, Livingstone Bramble, for the 140-pound title, but that he wanted Haugen all along.

The breakthrough came when the WBF 147-pound title became vacant, and Howe's company, Howes Entertainment LLC, was able to swing a deal with ESPN after the two sides agreed on a date and the Marin Veterans Memorial Auditorium was secured.

"It was contingent upon television," Nave said. "We needed television, because of the revenue they give you, to make it work."

Neither Howes nor Nave would specify how much money each fighter will receive, except to say that Nave's purse will reach six figures. There's also a chance he could make more than Haugen, because he will be helping out with the promotion.

Haugen, who holds wins over Hector "Macho" Camacho and Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, is 2-0-1 after coming back from a year off.

"I've reached every goal I ever set in boxing."

— Paul Nave

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Nave

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Nave is not only getting the biggest payday of his career, he's also getting his toughest opponent, a man who has nearly twice as many wins as he has fights.

"Paul is considered the underdog in this 12-round championship fight, but we never count Paul out as he's proven in the past," Howes said. "He's coming to fight. This is what he's been working for."

Two weeks prior to his fight with Limones, Nave and his girlfriend flew up to Tacoma, Wash., to watch Haugen pound out a unanimous decision.

"I watched him close, and I feel like I can beat him," Nave said. "I have to be in top shape. I think speed's going to beat him. And you have to bang him early to get respect and keep him off you because he keeps coming and coming."

When he first started fighting professionally in 1985, Nave said his goal was to start working his way up the ladder. Not only is he ranked No. 6 by the WBF, he is also No. 7 in the IBO and is expected to be ranked in the Top 10 by the International Boxing Council.

In addition, he holds the Northwest and Southwest United States Boxing Association junior welter-

weight titles, the World Boxing Board welterweight crown and the IBO Intercontinental welterweight championship.

Three of those titles were won in Marin County, where Nave has headlined many a card. After March 27, the future of boxing in Marin well get cloudier faster than you can say El Niño.

"It's the end of an era," Nave said. "There are no other main-event fighters living in Marin County that can fight 12-rounders right now."

Howes, a graduate of Redwood High, said he expects to sell out the 2,000-seat Veteran's Memorial Auditorium.

Ticket prices range from \$25-150 with no standing room available. They are scheduled to go on sale after Jan. 1, 1998 at the following locations:

Marin Civic Center Box Office, T&B Sports in San Rafael, The Flatiron Sports Bar & Grill in San Rafael, New George's in San Rafael, Perry's Deli in Fairfax, Nave's Bar & Grill in Fairfax, Auto Parts Unlimited in Petaluma, Nave Lanes in Novato, Red's Recovery Room in Cotati, Broadway Joe's in San Francisco, La Grande Restaurant in Santa Rosa, and all BASS outlets.

For priority information or tickets call 922-7391 or 453-2775.