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Ali mum on retirement, says Spinks will be new champion

CHICAGO (AP) — Muhammad Ali said Tuesday he doesn't know what he is going to do about retiring — "If I say I'm finished, fight organizations would strip me of the title," said the first man in boxing history to capture the heavyweight crown three times.

"I'm just holding the title for five or six months before making a decision," he told a news conference. "Will I fight? Or won't I fight? You'll just have to wait and see. But I will say that (Leon) Spinks will be the next champion. I told him that and told him to keep after it."

Asked if he made up his mind but did not want to say at this time, Ali quipped: "That's for me to know and for you to try to find out."

Ali was flanked by his personal doctor, Charles Williams, and his nutrition specialist, Dick Gregory.

The news conference was called for Ali to plug Gregory's health formula "made up of 93 ingredients — herbs, minerals, vitamins and chemicals with kelp the basic ingredient."

Ali, 36, attributed his victory over Spinks in New Orleans last week "to

God, Allah, and the formula."

"Dick Gregory was sent to me by God, Allah. Gregory had a great mixture in a formula which he gave me in a drink with juice and honey, and I danced, and danced, and tired that young boy, Spinks, out," said Ali. "I made all the old people of the world happy. They saw me dance. It made them feel young again. It made them say, 'Man, I'm not old' and they went off dancing."

Ali said he and Gregory plan to package the formula, "and through my world organization" send it to feed the starving in the third world countries.

"In the first Spinks' fight, Gregory was not in my training camp and I tried to make it (the formula) my way, and I got tired and lost," said Ali. "This time Gregory was with me and I drank it before and after dinner and before going to bed. Then I went out and danced to victory. Usually after a fight, I'll see the press and then fall out. This time I went out to a party until 4 a.m."

"I'm old for boxing but young for the world," said Ali, who spooned up some of the dry brownish health food, ate it and offered some to the audience.

Ali spoke glowingly of being a man of the world. "Two hours after the fight, President Carter phoned me," he said. "I could leave now for Moscow and in less than an hour after arriving, I could be sitting in the Kremlin with Brezhnev

(Leonid Brezhnev, the Communist party chief). Who else could do it?"

"I'm leaving next week to see the Shah in Iran, then I'll go to Russia, then I'll make a movie," said Ali.

Two white promoters of the Ali-Spinks rematch, New Orleans businessman Jake DiMaggio and City Councilman Philip Ciaccio, dropped a lawsuit Monday against two black co-promoters. The suit charged the blacks with illegally taking some fight revenues. DiMaggio and Ciaccio said the black promoters returned about \$225,000 in corporate funds.

Ali contended that the suit was racially inspired and was quoted as making some racial slurs about DiMaggio and Ciaccio. The two said they will sue Ali unless he returns to New Orleans and apologizes.

"Me, Muhammad Ali, go down there to apologize? Never," Ali said Tuesday. "Apologize for what? For telling the truth?"