

SEARCH DPO:

Enter search term,
hit enter key
[Click here for
advanced search](#)

Johnston's release to allow ring return

Child support key to agreement

By Nick Groke
Special to The Denver Post

Wednesday, April 03, 2002 - Denver boxer Stevie Johnston, a former lightweight world champion, was to be released from jail early today under an agreement requiring him to pay thousands of dollars in back child support.

The deal allows the 29-year-old boxer to return to the ring for a fight this month in Las Vegas.

Johnston reportedly owes \$100,000 in back child support to three women. Juvenile court records are sealed, and Tuesday's court hearing was closed, so the exact amount was not released.

"It's been really hard, really frustrating to keep coming back here," said Ebony Gray, the mother of a 7 1/2-year-old child of Johnston's. "The kids hear stuff on the streets and at school. It's hard for them."

Johnston was jailed Friday, putting in jeopardy an April 20 bout against Alejandro Gonzalez at the MGM Grand Garden Arena for a \$100,000 purse.

HBO, which will broadcast the bout, threatened to cancel if Johnston wasn't released by Tuesday, said Sharon Liko, Johnston's attorney. HBO officials could not be reached for comment. However, promoter Top Rank Inc. confirmed Johnston never was off the fight bill.

Two other women also are due child support: Lanese Thomas, the mother of a boy, 12, and girl, 11; and Latasha Hall, the mother of a girl, 11.

"I'm not happy, but I've got to take what we can get," Thomas said. "I think my kids have been deprived long enough. He's not even a part-time dad."

Thomas said she last received child support from Johnston in March 2001.

Top Rank had offered to pay \$60,000 to the Denver Department of Human Services to pay Johnston's bail. That money would have come from the fight purse, Liko said. Specifics of the agreement, and whether payment was made Tuesday, were not disclosed.

"We're pleased the ball is rolling," department spokeswoman Sue Cobb said. "Great progress has been made today for the children who