The puncher is boxing's lifeblood.

Stylists are admirable. But the puncher is the reason the sport exists.

The puncher stalks. He threatens. He hunts. He hurts. And, ultimately, that's why people pay to watch grown men punch each other in the face.

To watch the hurt.

So what happens when punch meets chin – such as tonight when WBC lightweight champ Jose Luis Castillo (the chin) goes up against WBO titlist Diego Corrales (the punch)?

After the opening bell clangs and a mushroom cloud forms over the ring, the fighter with the bigger punch – the guy who can exact more hurt – is usually the winner.

Right?

Well, not exactly. More often than not, it's not the bat that counts.

It's the beard.

Want some proof? Look no further than these examples of absorption over ammunition.

1. *Marvin Hagler KO 3 Thomas Hearns* (April 15, 1985): Perhaps the most vivid example of a chin outlasting a punch, Hagler gobbled up all of Hearns' savage right hands and roared back to destroy the "Hitman." In fact, by the middle of the second round, the issue had already been settled. After Hearns nailed Hagler with yet another right hand bomb, closed-circuit commentator Al Bernstein said, "We have our answer to some extent." Hearns made Hagler wobble for an instant in the opening seconds, but hurt his right on Marvin's iron chrome-dome. Not that that served as an excuse. Hagler was on. And he would not be denied. By the time he flattened Hearns with his own right hand, Detroit's pride was all but done.

2. *Julio Cesar Chavez KO 11 Edwin Rosario* (Nov. 21, 1987): How good was Chavez's chin? Well, Rosario was perhaps the best lightweight puncher of his era. In his title-winning effort over Livingstone Bramble the previous September before the fight, it took "El Chapo" a little more than a round to convince the defending champ that he'd had enough. He left the "Pit-Bull" on his knees, almost hoping that the ref would accelerate the count. And Bramble had a pretty decent jaw himself. So when longtime junior lightweight champ Chavez moved up from 130 to 135 pounds to challenge Rosario, he was a solid underdog. But Rosario rattled home his best right hands, and Chavez hardly blinked. "J.C. Superstar's" unbelievable chin rendered Rosario's power almost irrelevant. It set the table for perhaps Chavez's most dominant performance.

3. *Jose Luis Ramirez KO 4 Edwin Rosario* (Nov. 4, 1984): Poor Rosario. He came along at a time when the lightweight division flaunted the strongest chins this side of Jay Leno. He almost finished Ramirez in the first and second rounds of the pair's rematch in Chapo's native Puerto Rico, putting the Mexican down twice with a furious assault. But Ramirez, who was better known for his durability than his skills, got up and continued to pressure his rival. He stunned an exhausted Rosario in the third, and, in the fourth, left him face-to-face with a ring post after a surprise rally. Rosario was saved, and Ramirez had taken the WBC lightweight title before a stunned crowd.

4. *Bazooka Limon KO 11 Rolando Navarrette* (May 28, 1982): Limon had lost his WBC junior lightweight title in a thrilling fight to Cornelius Boza-Edwards in 1981. Navarrette, in turn, had destroyed Boza-Edwards to take the crown the following August. So Navarrette was naturally the favorite when he met Limon the following spring. And for 10 rounds the fight followed the expected pattern: Navarrette detonating bombs on Limon's chin. But Limon was nothing if not tough, and he shrugged off the assault. His amateurish, awkward lunges had no chance in the early rounds. But by the late rounds, Navarrette was near exhaustion – and Limon began to connect. He finally caught up with the Filipino in the 11th, and stopped his opponent to regain the title.

5. *John David Jackson KO 9 Jorge Castro* (Dec. 10, 1994): There wasn't much more Jackson could have done to Argentina's Castro short of decapitating him when the pair fought on the undercard of J.C. Chavez-Tony Lopez. Jackson looked spectacular for most of the fight, treating the rough-but-limited Castro like a heavy bag. Right jabs, right hooks, straight lefts, right-lefts, left uppercuts – all of it bounced right off of Castro's cast-iron jaw without causing him so much as a backward step. Jackson looked like a reincarnation of Sugar Ray Robinson he was so utterly dominant. Then, naturally, he began to tire. And Castro – showing little if any effects from the brutal battering – stepped up his attack. He finished Jackson with a power-punching attack in a fight that would be named '94s "Knockout of the Year."

It is obvious that when chin meets punch, the chin wins out. Saturday probably won't be any different. Though Castillo has six losses, all were either by cuts or controversial decision. Somehow, he doesn't cut anymore. And he'll use his durability to outpoint Corrales, who will get his licks in.

They just won't be enough.

Castillo by decision.