

## IF I Was Smarter, I'd Have Gone To Harvard

Written by Michael Woods  
Sunday, 15 March 2009 19:00

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After Marco Antonio Barrera had his tush handed to him by Amir Khan on Saturday, he lamented the fact that the cut he suffered from an accidental clash of heads in the first round of his bout threw him off his game.

If not for the cut, Barrera said, things would've been different.

So many MAB fans are echoing this line of thinking, and I have say I am surprised.

As we get older, our skin thins out. The skin is damaged more easily when we are older, like, say, 35, as Barrera is. His skin has thinned out some, and is less elastic, and thus he is more prone to cuts than when he was at the top of his game, in the mid to later 90s.

This makes back to back fights Barrera has suffered cuts; he had a gash over his left eye from a butt in a fight with Freudis Rojas on Jan. 31. On Saturday, he looked liked he tried to headbutt a samurai sword after he clashed heads with Khan in the first round. A deep gash on the crown of his head called out for a staple gun, more than Avitene, and led to the ring doctor to recommend to the ref that the fight be halted.

It is understandable why an athlete would express frustration at being on the short end of the stick, and embrace rationalizations to minimize the sting. But I hope Barrera soon sees through his own coping mechanism response, and realizes that it is useless to speculate on what would've happened if he hadn't been cut. You get older, you are more susceptible to cuts, and to muscle pulls, and the like. This is one reason why boxing, and all big time sports, are best suited to the young, the under 27 crowd whose best physiological are out ahead of them.

A segment of TSS U is engaging in fantasy sports type speculation, as they declare that if not for the cut, Barrera would've been too strong for the 22-year-old Brit. This ignores a glaring reality, that Barrera is old for a boxer, and now is seemingly prone to cuts. Isn't this like me yapping that if only I were a bit smarter, I would have gone to Harvard, and today my existence would be an Ivy covered dream? My IQ is what it is, I can do nothing to change it—just as Barrera can do nothing to stop his skin from thinning out—so I march on, with an understanding that my IQ is what it is, and while I can do things to keep my brain in decent shape, I will not ever join Bobby Czyz in Mensa.

I got a taste of Barrera type rationalizing when I spoke to Ken Shamrock last week, before he was hit with a suspension in California for a dirty specimen after his fight last month. Shamrock was explaining to me why he thought he had a great chance to beat former WWEer Bobby Lashley on Roy Jones' Saturday card in Florida. The 45-year-old UFC Hall of Famer said that, yes, he was 2-7 in his last nine outings, but that was because he'd been injured. He spouted a laundry list that included just about every body part on him. He tore this, pulled that, had pins inserted in this, had surgery on that. But now, he told me, he is fully healthy, the first time in many years. If not for those injuries, he was saying, he would have a less putrid record in the

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five or so years. "I was too hard headed to take the time to get healed," he explained to me.

Understand, I am not blasting MAB and Shamroid..I mean, Shamrock. Aging isn't for the faint hearted, and it is even crueller when aging takes away your vocation when you are still relatively young.

I get the need to explain away losses, and poor showings. All of us do it on a daily basis, on a less grand scale. But I expect a bit more from the astute populi of TSS U.

The cuts, and the tears and the pulls and the strains, are nature's way of telling you to get out, find something else to do. The Barrera of 2009 is a fighter who is prone to cuts, and for anyone to put forth the notion that if not for the cut, he would've whopped Khan, well, I think they aren't operating with their eyes wide open.