

A Call for Return To Same Day Weigh-Ins

Written by Rick Folstad

Wednesday, 14 March 2012 22:15



I once read where a leading physician, after some serious research, claimed that professional boxers who had 20 or more fights in their careers were very likely to have suffered some type of brain damage.

This was important information for me at the time, considering I had 22 pro fights before I finally had to quit the ring. Like blowing a .09 at a traffic stop, I was just a little over the limit, but if I was driving, I was still going to jail. Or in my case, I was still going to get lost walking to the post office when I was 61.

After reading the article, I used that "20-fight rule" as an excuse if I did something foolish. I would mention the article to my friends and tell them about the rule and then I'd blurt out, "Well, I had 22 pro fights, so I guess I'm in big trouble," and then I'd laugh like hell, adding to the hilarity of the moment.

"But that doesn't take into account the 60 amateur fights I had," I'd would yell out, holding my belly as I was bent over laughing. "I guess I'm in big, big, big trouble."

Like most research, there were a few gaping holes in the 20-fight rule. If I had 20 fights and knocked every one of my opponents out in the first round, I'm pretty sure the rule wouldn't apply to me. Or if the opposite was true, if I couldn't take a punch and I was stopped in the first round in all of my fights, I think the same thing would be the case. I wouldn't be taking a beating.

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But few fighters fall into either category. Instead, most are between the two extremes. What I do know is, the guys who were the toughest in the ring were usually the ones who were most likely to retire from the ring hearing funny voices in their heads. Why? Because they are the ones who don't go down easy, who take the most punishment, who stand there swapping punches with another guy on his way to the rest home. If possible, you want to avoid wars in the ring. They're fun to watch, but they take a heavy toll.

Even the tomato cans are better off than the world-class fighters. In most of their fights, they never stick around long enough to get hurt. They don't take a beating for 10 rounds like the contenders do. They get in, do their thing, and they get out before they get hurt.

Former opponent Bruce "The Mouse" Strauss had hundreds of fights and his philosophy was, he'd fight as hard as he could for the first few rounds and if that wasn't good enough – if he was still taking some heavy shots from the other guy after three or four rounds - he'd take a knee. He didn't really quit as much as he practiced the art of self-preservation. If he knew he couldn't beat the guy after giving it everything he had, there was no reason for him to stick around and take a beating.

As fight fans, you don't have to like the idea of a fighter not being out carried on his shield – I know I don't – but it's always been a part of the game.

What's this all getting too? Apparently they are doing a little research in Las Vegas to see how much head damage is actually taking place among professional fighters.

According to an AP story by boxing writer Tim Dahlberg, the aim of the study is to find ways to make contact sports like boxing and MMA a little safer. And they're doing it by examining athletes who are still active. Dahlberg writes that 148 current boxers and mixed martial arts fighters have already taken their first set of tests for the study, which is being conducted at the Cleveland Clinic's new Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health in Las Vegas. According to Dahlberg, "researchers hope to enroll more than 600 fighters in what is hoped to be at least a four-year study of their brains."

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I hope that's enough time.

Chief investigator of the study, a Dr. Charles Bernick, says they're not trying to prove that getting hit in the head on a regular basis can cause brain damage. They already know that's true. What they don't know is why some fighters develop Alzheimers or dementia pugilistica, while others don't. The study could "lead to better ways to predict which fighters are more at risk for brain damage later in their lives."

Fine. But if they discover the answer to that question, what can they do with it? Tell some fighters they shouldn't be boxing because they have a higher chance of becoming punchy as they enter their golden years? Yeah, that will stop a top contender from competing.

I have a better idea of how we could make boxing safer and we could do it right now without any research or long-term study.

You start by giving the fight back to the fighters. You go back to the old ways and you hold weigh-ins on the day of the fight - say around noon – and not the day before.

It's a simple, easy thing to do and it immediately makes the fight game a little safer and a lot more competitive. And if the promoters or the TV people or the sponsors don't like it, well, it's not their heads that are getting scrambled.

A good example of what I'm talking about is the middleweight title last month between Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., and Marco Antonio Rubio.

Both fighters made the 160-pound weight limit the day before their fight, but by the time they got into the ring, Chavez had put on something like 22 pounds, which put him in cruiserweight country. How do you put on 22 pounds in 30 hours? They said Chavez looked pretty weak standing on the scale the day before the fight, but by the time the bell rang, he was back up to around 181 pounds. And it showed. He looked like Hoss Cartwright taking on Barney Fife. And that's how guys can get brain damage.

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The TV commentators mentioned the weight discrepancy, but then they let it go. If they had an opinion one way or another on weighing in the day before the fight, they weren't sharing it with us.

One of the arguments for weighing in the day before the fight is that it gives fighters more time to rehydrate and get their strength back. But if they need that much time to rebuild, maybe they don't belong fighting in that lighter weight class.

It's a funny thing. I was talking to some boxing people a few weeks ago and we all agreed that there are just as many punchy fighters today as there was 40 years ago. So maybe this study is important. But what I think is even more important is making sure a natural lightweight doesn't have to go 10 or 12 long, tough rounds against a natural middleweight.

And that doesn't require any research.

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dino da vinci says:

Rick, I've been saying this for years. If you weigh 147 for the 30 seconds you're on the scale, but weighed 158 (or better) a week before, and again on the night of the fight (or more), are you really the welterweight champ?

amayseng says:

i concur completely. same day way ins not only equal safety for the fighters but better fights all together. that means fighters will be fighting at their natural weight and wont fade or gas out so quickly. look at shane against floyd, shane hadnt had to make that weight for 18 months due to inactivity, so after 3 rounds he was gasping with his mouth open like his head was barely above water and he was trying not to drown.

Radam G says:

NO! NO! NO! No returning to the same-day weight ins. Too many fighters died from quickly over filling up themselves with water doing those days. Water used wrong is dangerous on a combatant's body and brain. Somebody, other than me, oughta holla. I remember when I was a

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TSS West Coast Chiefy David-Double-A was there. He can probably tell you better than I. Less fighter have died in the ring from water-related injuries since not having to weight in and fight on the same day. Holla!

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These knuckleheads and even the eggheads need to STFU and leave the game along. There are more people with this and that who have never even seen boxing than there ever will be with the people who box or boxed. "Leading physicians" are usually leading liars and just need another adventure, and to keep getting their meddling on. Muthasuckas just like to double fudge with ___ ___ ___!

According to leading researchers, 100,000 people die every year because of a lot of leading physicians' mistakes, misdiagnoses, and straight-up malpractice. More than 400,000 more people are taking out by the run-of-mill, low-skill doctors who don't report their killings. None of these covert killers in labcoats know syet 'bout bokin,'" biting off the words of Uncle Roger May.

The top guns of non-meddling leading physicians will tell you that the suckas who are getting this and that are/were probably pre-conditioned to that condition, meaning life was going to be served that jive, boxing or not. [Heredity and genetics are taking these fighters down IMHO, not exposure to getting wacked upside the noggin too many times. And, besides, how many times are too many times?] Fakers and slick-money takers talk monkey jive day and night about how GOAT Ali was probably damaged in dat squared jungle, but they tell you nothing about his late pops, who never boxed and/or participated in any upside-da-head sports or work, developing "Parkinson's disease. And what about his late moms who developed dementia and Alzheimers?

For every fighter that you find suffering from the damaging affects boxing, you can find 10,000

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or so real F***UP people, who woulda and coulda been better off by getting the syet knock outta 'em boxing style a few times than getting messed up by meddling doctors, who are in that game to just get paid -- largely paid. Hehehehe!

C'mon, guys, don't blame this and that on da hurt bitnezz! Possible damages come with the territory and paid. These doctors need to go and change and ____ the house of their own profession. Holla!

deepwater says:

Not a good idea. boxers will still dehydrate no matter what. they will not have enough time to be properly hydrated by fight time on the same day. more concussions and deaths will happen. the solution is to do a weigh in the week before. no more then 10 lbs or get the hell out of the weight class.

deepwater says:

I agree 100 %. alot of arm chair fools on here

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[QUOTE=amayseng;14538]i concur completely. same day way ins not only equal safety for the fighters but better fights all together. that means fighters will be fighting at their natural weight and wont fade or gas out so quickly. look at shane against floyd, shane hadnt had to make that weight for 18 months due to inactivity, so after 3 rounds he was gasping with his mouth open like his head was barely above water and he was trying not to drown.[/QUOTE]

you are 100% wrong. do some research please