

## BORGES ON BERTO Berto's Penalty For PED Use? A Summer Off

Written by Ron Borges  
Friday, 31 August 2012 10:05

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Why bother?

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That, more than anything else, seemed like the proper way to look at the California State Athletic Commission's recent decision to license former welterweight champion Andre Berto only 2 ½ months after he tested positive for the performance enhancing drug norandrosterone, a result that came from his own insistence on random drug testing before a scheduled rematch with Victor Ortiz.

Those events not only called into question what Berto has been up to but also either his sanity or his intellect. Here's a guy who accused Ortiz of using PEDs after Ortiz dethroned him by twice getting off the mat to drop Berto twice... and then he comes up dirty himself?

That positive test led to the cancelling of the rematch and soon after to Ortiz being knocked silly by Josesito Lopez in a stunning upset. Yet that outcome wasn't half as stunning as the disgraceful decision by the CSAC to re-license Berto only months after he lost his license in Nevada.

What, in the end, was Berto's penalty for being found guilty of having PEDs in his system? The summer off, that's what.

That's boxing. It's also why it is today looked down upon by the general sporting public. One understands boxing is the black-eye business but why so often does it have to administer them to itself?

"As someone who truly believes in clean sport, I have never used any type of performance-enhancing drugs," Berto said in a statement after his licensing was announced. "Everything I've achieved was the result of hard work and determination."

Sure.

If Berto was still an Olympian he would have been suspended for a year regardless of his claims of tainted supplement usage, which is difficult to prove but easy to claim. How one proves someone took an illegal steroid by accident is beyond me but the CSAC declared itself

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well satisfied and Berto is back in business less than three months after testing positive.

"I am excited that this whole situation is behind me, and I look forward to returning to the ring soon with another exciting performance, so stay tuned," Berto said.

No thanks.

Dr. Margaret Goodman and others who believe the use of PEDs in boxing is becoming an epidemic that is also a health hazard both for the user and for his opponent could not be blamed if they simply threw up their hands and walked away. What the CSAC ruling made clear is that PED testing in boxing is a joke and will remain so until someone is severely injured by an opponent who tests positive and the state is sued for millions for failing to protect the guy from assault with a dangerous weapon – in this case a syringe.

Berto's positive test resulted from a random urine test conducted by Goodman's Las Vegas-based Voluntary Anti-Doping Association. VADA was overseeing drug testing because that's what Berto and Ortiz agreed to before their September rematch. Berto (28-1, 22 KOs) submitted to a random urine test on May 2 and both his "A" and "B" samples came back positive. When the fight was cancelled Berto insisted the positive test was the result of some contaminated nutritional substance he was taking and not the use of PEDs, a familiar excuse that ranks up there with contaminated B-12 shots and my dog ate my homework.

Never have so many guys happened to stumble across contamination since the Russians had to clean up Chernobyl. That's the claim over and over again from every professional athlete who comes up dirty regardless of the sport or the PED found to have mysteriously wormed its way into his or her system without notice.

Truth be told, Berto was caught only because Goodman was using a more stringent and more sensitive test than what would be used by most testing organizations, including US Anti-Doping Agency, unless the first sample came up positive by a less profound test.

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Berto was under the dietary supervision of Victor Conte, the disgraced former steroid distributor who was at the center of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative (BALCO) Federal prosecution that sent him to jail and tainted the names of a wide range of professional athletes including Barry Bonds, Marion Jones and Shane Mosley. After Berto came up dirty, Conte, who is now a vocal opponent of steroid use and a Goodman ally in the fight against PEDs, denied any involvement, claiming Berto admitted taking supplements not administered by Conte or recommended by him.

According to Berto's statement, his positive test "revealed extremely small amounts of a banned substance that were inconsistent with any performance-enhancing effect and were much more consistent with contamination of an otherwise acceptable food or supplement."

Says who? Maybe the extremely small amounts were all that was left of a fast-working drug that passes the system quickly after doing its dastardly work? Beyond that, if the testing system and enforcement were legitimate the penalty would be automatic unless you could prove beyond reasonable doubt that the source of the PED was something other than your own hand or others in your employ.

How do you prove Berto's assertions? Why didn't he have to have more than a doctor whose ads boast of being able to provide clients with a fountain of youth as his defender? And why should the onus not be totally on him to prove he was clean once a legitimate testing process (which even Berto didn't try to argue against) comes up with a positive result?

If that's how commissions paid to protect fighters and administer a clean sport treat positive tests for performance-enhancing drugs why not just give up the testing altogether, stop the farce and let everybody do what they've always done in boxing...which if you're with the right guy, is just about anything you want?

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**ali says:**

Ortiz vs Berto should still happen ASAP