# Champ Change

Morrison makes the ring safe for boxers with HIV

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Tommy Morrison had to learn in public what most PWAs do with less fanfare: An AIDS diagnosis isn't a death sentence.

When news that the heavy-weight boxer had HIV broke last February, he announced his retirement from the ring—most states where the sport is a big ban HIV positive boxers. But by March, Morrison was predicting he could eliminate the virus from his body—"by magic"—and would fight again. And last August he went back to work. "The virus isn't doing anything to me, and I feel perfectly fine," the 27-year-old from Oklahoma said flatly.

What about exposing his opponent to HIV-infected blood? "It's dangerous, no doubt about it," Morrison said. "But we're trying to prove to people it can be a positive thing as well." Which he did, on Movember 2 in Tokyo against Marcus Rhode, in a manner that made Mike Tyson look like a slowpoke. The referee stopped the bout after 98 seconds and three Morrison punches—in keeping with an agreement that match would end at the first sight of blood. The beneficiary of Morrison's winnings, estimated at $500,000, was Knockout AIDS, his foundation for children with HIV.

Two-time world champion George Forman, who is reportedly next in line to fight Morrison, had this to say: "Now no one can ever say 'he should' or 'he shouldn't.' It's done now. He's already stepped in, the water's fine, and nobody can take that away from him."

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