

## Eye Injury Puts Alan Belcher in Career Jeopardy

Written by Robert Joyner

Wednesday, 11 August 2010 00:38

---

Visit [purefight.org](http://purefight.org) for more Videos

UFC middleweight contender Alan Belcher [sat down with Mark from Purefight.org](#) to give an update on his recent training injury:

"I had a detached retina, I just lost the vision in my right eye. It just happened all of the sudden, pretty much overnight. I was training in Brazil, messing around there for a few days and had surgery the day after I came home. I think it happened in training but I don't exactly know when. It's gonna take a couple of months to heal, to be at its peak, so then I'll know how much my vision comes back. I lost a lot of my peripheral vision but I got that back right away but everything is blurry and distorted, pretty much like it was before the surgery. [The Doctor] says it's definitely not gonna get back the same, but at best it's gonna be something like 20/40, 20/60 vision. There's gonna be more surgeries probably even at the best case scenario. Worst case is I don't get any better than this and I'm only working with one eye and then I probably don't want to risk fighting again with only one eye because if I lose that one I'm gonna be blind. I'm not even thinking about fighting right now. I'm just going to wait a couple of months and see where I'm at. It's disappointing because I was on a roll and getting really close to a title, but there's nothing I can do about it, just deal with it. I'll be back in there if my health allows me to."

Detached retinas have heretofore been an injury more prevalent in the world of boxing, but as MMA fighting becomes more and more popular, we may see more of these types of injuries enter our sport. As with boxing, it isn't so much the "in competition" action that leads to chronic injuries such as these, but the high volume of sparring that is incumbent in being a world class fighter. I wish Belcher a speedy recovery, but it seems like even the best of recoveries may still leave him in a vulnerable state when it comes to resuming his MMA career. While other high

## Eye Injury Puts Alan Belcher in Career Jeopardy

Written by Robert Joyner

Wednesday, 11 August 2010 00:38

---

profile athletes like Sugar Ray Leonard have returned to the ring successfully from detached retina surgery, it is a crap shoot and maybe a risk that isn't worth taking.

Another issue in boxing that I think may be note and applicable to MMA is dementia pugilistica, or punch -drunkness. With the sport still being in its infancy, there aren't a lot long range studies to guage the ill effects on the brain of an extended MMA career. The heavy amount of sparring and high number of concussions that are endemic to stand up training for MMA may be sowing the seeds of a problem we won't see for years down the line.