

It's™ Be Back! - Victor Recovers with MHP

Contributed by Rafael Norat
Friday, 15 February 2008

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The first confirmed report posted the next day on MuscularDevelopment.com read "On Wednesday January 16th, while doing a set of warm-up lunges at his home gym in New Jersey, 2007 Arnold Classic Champ Victor Martinez fell off balance and felt something give in his left knee. The pain wasn't intense, but it forced him to discontinue his workout. Today, he went for an MRI at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City and it was determined that he'll require surgery to repair the injury. Victor will have one of the top orthopedic surgeons in the country operating on him tomorrow morning; and, if all goes as planned, he should be home by Saturday afternoon. As a result of the injury, Victor will be forced to withdraw from the 2008 Arnold Classic and, instead, will concentrate on the upcoming 2008 Mr. Olympia. Stay tuned for daily updates!"

The people's champion and "uncrowned" Mr. Olympia had torn his patella tendon and was going to need surgery. The news sent shockwaves through the bodybuilding community. Immediately the forums starting buzzing; not only was Victor going to have to sit out of the Arnold, would he also miss this year's Olympia? Could this be a career-ending injury? It was perhaps the most career-threatening injury to ever happen to a Mr. Olympia hopeful. Everyone had Victor as a shoe-in to repeat victory at the Arnold Classic and everyone but Victor was already looking past the Arnold waiting for Victor to get his chance to redeem his controversial loss at the 2007 Olympia and lay claim to the crown.

A blow like this would set any athlete back not just physically, but also mentally. Here Victor is, in the prime of his career, the reigning Arnold Classic Champion and "Uncrowned" Mr. Olympia and a freak accident like this blindsides him like a freight train. One would expect Victor to be devastated and filled with uncertainty. Shockingly, Victor isn't the least bit devastated or uncertain. In fact, he seems more focused and determined than ever to make his mark as one of the best bodybuilders of all time. The package Victor presented at the Olympia certain would qualify as one of the best ever, but Victor doesn't want to be a "one hit wonder." He is determined to prove he cannot only reach the top—he can stay on top, too. Once you hear what Victor has to say, you will have even more admiration for him and a better understanding of why he is such a remarkable champion.

Rafael Norat: So, Vic, I understand you trained heavy legs without any problems on Sunday and then on Wednesday you blow out your tendon doing lunges. How the hell does that happen?

Victor Martinez: I guess there was a lot of tissue damage in the area. I was having pain in the area during my leg workouts, but I just pushed through the pain. Dealing with pain is a part of the game. I guess the tendon was so damaged it just gave on me.

RN: So, what's the prognosis? Everyone wants to know. Will you be back for the Olympia? Is this a career-threatening injury?

VM: The prognosis is "I'll be back" and "I'll be back bigger and better."

RN: So, you'll be ready to even the score at the Olympia?

VM: Right now, that is the plan. But I am going to take it one day at a time. I was fortunate enough to have a great surgeon and my recovery is coming along fast. I am going through aggressive rehabilitation and loading up on nutrients to speed the recovery.

RN: You sound optimistic, but it's only been a few weeks. How do you think your mindset will be in 2 or 3 months?

VM: My mindset will be even better. Believe me, I am only going to come back bigger and better. I've overcome many other challenges before and they've all made me stronger. The past few years have been a real turning point for me. I endured many big challenges in my life and a lot of obstacles along the way, but I know where I want to go and what I have to do to get there. People have always counted me out so I'm used to it. They used to say I had potential, but would never be able to put it all together to win pro show. Then after I won my first pro show, they said I wouldn't be able to be consistent enough to be a good pro. Even after I won the 2007 Arnold Classic, some critics said I wouldn't be able to hit my peak again for the Olympia. Yet I even surpassed my Arnold conditioning. So, I thrive on being the underdog. Plus, my close friends, family and many loyal fans keep me motivated. The most important thing is to believe in yourself and not set limitations, only set expectations. I'm going to turn this setback into a positive and challenge myself to overcome it. Ten years from now, when I look back, I'll reflect on this as a critical point in my life. Hopefully, it will be a good example for others who encounter difficult situations to help them overcome. My focus now is to rehab my injury and get back into the gym as quickly as possible. I am in total command of my destiny.

I have my diet, training and nutrition down to a science. I've already begun to formulate my comeback strategy.

RN: How does this injury affect your finances and sponsorship?

VM: Well, the \$130,000 in lost prize money for the Arnold hurts. That's a nice payday. But I am very fortunate to have 2 of the best possible sponsors in MHP and Muscular Development. Both Gerard Dente and Steve Blechman have been totally supportive. They call me all the time to see how I am doing and are standing behind me as I work through my recovery. It's important to have their support. Arnold Schwarzenegger only had Joe Weider, I have two great guys in Gerard and Steve.

RN: I don't want to rub salt on the wound, but I heard you were looking incredible for the Arnold with 6 weeks to go.

VM: My Arnold Classic preparation was going great. I felt better than ever. 2007 was a great year for me. Winning the Arnold Classic was tremendous and even though losing a close and controversial decision at the 2007 Mr. Olympia was disappointing, it wasn't discouraging. In fact, it made me even more determined to come back better in 2008. I was looking forward to defending my crown come March 1st at the Arnold. After the Olympia, I never got more than 20 pounds over my competition weight. I knew I would have to be totally dialed in for the Arnold and even be sharper than I was at the Olympia. I didn't want to leave any doubts in the judges' minds or have them say I wasn't as ripped as I was for the Olympia. At the time of my injury, I was 262 lbs and only about 10 to 12 pounds over my target contest weight of 250. I was ready and looking forward to the competition because I knew I was going to hit my peak and it was going to be difficult for anyone to take my crown.

My contest preparation for this year's Arnold wasn't much different from what I did last year. I have pretty much figured out my body and the formula of diet, training and supplementation that works. With each show, I learn a little more and refine my program. These slight modifications and the addition of some new MHP products have allowed me to make improvements with each show over the past few years. For this year's Arnold, I started my pre-contest prep leaner than I have ever started before thanks to DREN. I'm not going to allow myself to get too heavy in the off-season. Starting out leaner makes my preparation easier and allows me to coast into my show. I won't have to do any drastic calorie cutting or hours of cardio. This allows me to dial it in without sacrificing muscle. As contest time approaches, if I feel a need to cut down my calories a little and step up the cardio sessions, I'll do that.

RN: That sounds like a good plan. So, what about your diet and supplementation? Come on, fill us in on what it is you do.

Here is my diet and supplement program. As you can see, my diet is

pretty basic. I keep the protein pretty high throughout the day over 6 meals (3 of these meals are food meals and 3 are in the form of MHP's ProBolic-SR protein shake). I eat most of my carbs in meal 1 and meal 2. Then post-workout, I drink Dark Matter, which gives me the fast absorbing carb load and influx of aminos and creatine I need after training. As the contest gets closer, if need be, I will cut back on my carb intake.

As you can see, I rely heavily on MHP supplements. I was not a big supplement user earlier in my career, but that was a mistake. In 2005, I began an extensive supplement regimen and it has made a big difference. It's no coincidence that my bodybuilding career has skyrocketed since I began using MHP supplements.

RN: Wow, that is a lot of food and supplements. What if someone didn't want to take all that? What would you suggest?

VM: As far as the food goes, I have no choice but to eat that much. It's what I need to maintain my muscle mass. Of course, depending on how much you weigh and how hard you train, you need to adjust the quantities of those meals. But stick to the basic food selections. As far as the supplements go, they all have a benefit especially at the level at which I train and compete. But if I had to narrow it down, I would say ProBolic-SR, TRAC Extreme-NO, Dark Matter and T-BOMB II are the essentials. With this, you have all your major bases covered: the most advanced protein, the most powerful pre-workout formula, the ultimate post-workout formula and by far the best test booster available. And, of course, all bodybuilders should take a quality multi and there is none better than MHP's ACTIVITE.

RN: Well, Vic, thanks for sharing your contest prep secrets with us. I know a lot of us, including myself, are going to follow your plan. It definitely seems to work. I hope you make a full and fast recovery and hope to see you back on stage soon.

VM: Thanks, Raf, you will. I still have some goals to achieve and I plan on achieving them. I really want to thank all of my fans for being so supportive. The emails you send add more fuel to my fire. Don't worry— I'll Be Back!

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