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## BOXING; A Swimming Coach Savors His Title Shot

By TIMOTHY W. SMITH

As the swimming and diving coach at Mount Vernon (N.Y.) High School, Larry Barnes has no concept of being in over his head. So to make that suggestion about his coming bout against Yory Boy Campas, for the International Boxing Federation junior middleweight championship, would be useless.

But Barnes will be swimming in deep water for this fight, because he normally fights as a 147-pound welterweight. Even so, he believes he can stick with Campas, a hard-nosed slugger who has lost just twice in 73 fights (71-2), at the higher weight. The fight is on the undercard of the Oscar De La Hoya-Julio Cesar Chavez welterweight championship fight at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nev., on Sept. 18.

"At 134 pounds with Yory Boy, I don't have to look for him and he doesn't have to look for me," Barnes said during lunch in Manhattan yesterday. "We can dance."

This will be Barnes's second world title fight. Felix Trinidad scored a fourth-round knockout against Barnes (44-2) in 1995. Barnes's other loss came against Saul Maraby on Aug. 23, 1990.

Barnes said he felt he was in control of that fight against Trinidad before he got knocked out. Campas has also been knocked out in the fourth round by Trinidad.

"Felix almost killed Yory Boy," Barnes said.

Barnes has always been a working boxer, which means that he held a regular job between fights. About the time that Barnes lost to Trinidad, he had received a promotion at his alma mater to take over as the swimming coach. He had been on the diving team and was a place-kicker on the football team as a student, and had taken a job as the pool director and locker room attendant soon after he graduated from Mount Vernon High School in 1985.

With the promotion came more responsibilities. He said he decided to take some time away from boxing to help guide his team in the state sectionals. He stayed away from boxing for nine months, but Barnes didn't stop training. He would run around the pool deck in the winter with the water temperature from the pool heating the air to 30 degrees. He still works out in the pool by throwing punches under water.

After his layoff, Barnes returned with a sixth-round technical knockout against Dave Clark on Aug. 16, 1996. Since the loss to Trinidad, he has won six straight bouts. He knocked Roger Breen out in the fourth round on May 28 in his last bout.

Right before he got the call for the fight against Campas, Barnes was telling his wife, Annette, that he

did not think he was going to get another title shot, because he was 32 years old. "The clock is ticking, tick-tock, tick-tock," Barnes said. "It's now or never. It's sink or swim. I've had a lot of success in this game. Nothing is promised in the sport of boxing. I'm very fortunate to get this shot."

Barnes said a victory could lead to bigger and better things. But a loss could force him to hang up his gloves and move on. "They would want to register me as a journeyman fighter," Barnes said. "I don't think my wife and my manager would stand for that. If you stick around fighting for just washing machine money you're not going to have all your marbles too tight at the end."