

Boxing News: The 2010 Annual Meeting of the AAPRP

For three days last weekend, from 4-6 November, at the Omni Orlando Resort, Champions Gate, Florida, some of the most eminent ringside doctors from around the world took part in the annual medical seminar of the American Association of Professional Ringside Physicians.

This was no corporate free for all, no all expenses jolly. Every delegate paid their way.... air fare, hotels, meals, registration....everything! The reason for this largely unrecognized altruism is quite simple. These doctors and specialists have a simple and honest desire to make boxing and mixed martial arts safer, whilst preserving the very essence of these combat sports.

The focus of this seminar was "The Brain and Neck in Boxing and Related Sports".

The initial session saw clear definitions and explanations of both acute and chronic head injury, with guidance on how best to identify at an early stage those boxers who might be developing problems. This covered not only the acute collapse in the ring, but also the chronic condition still witnessed today in the "Punch drunk" combatant.

The second day began with a comprehensive overview of hydration....or more importantly dehydration and how dangerous it can be leading up to a fight. The participation of two retired world champions, Christy Martin and Pinklon Thomas, provided a unique insight for the doctors, into the mindset, determination and sacrifices of the champion boxer. Both these individuals contributed greatly to the discussion, but perhaps most significantly they understood firsthand not only the risks of pre-fight dehydration, but also the potential for chronic damage from excessive sparring..."Gym wars"

The morning concluded with an incredible lecture, in which cutting edge research was presented, outlining the possibility of treating diseases such as dementia using simple drugs delivered via a nasal spray. The afternoon began with the annual discussion forum "The Show must go on?" during which the delegates brought to the collected experts, problems they had encountered during the preceding year. The most animated discussion was reserved for the delicate and controversial area of a boxer's ability to continue following a knockdown and mandatory eight counts. Video footage of Enzo Maccarinelli's last defeat by knockout was discussed at great length, and in a very constructive manner. The agreement was to formulate guidelines to help assist referees in this high pressure and complex situation. The afternoon continued with excellent presentations on facial fractures and injuries, neck trauma, and a general overview of "how to be a good ringside doctor". The final session compared and contrasted the similarities and differences between amateur and professional boxing and MMA.

The final day began with review of the ongoing political struggle to improve the safety of boxing and MMA, through the enactment of new laws within the USA. This is directly relevant to our UK fighters, many if not all of whom aspire to fight one day in the states.

Following a systematic overview of pre fight examination, and blood test interpretation, the conference concluded with a lecture and practical advice on the management of facial cuts.

The concluding remarks focussed on the stark reality that a significant amount of serious and permanent damage is done during heavy sparring in the gym, and that dehydration in an attempt to make the weight can be dangerous in the extreme.

The AAPRP convention is held annually, and has been for the last 10 years. The organization goes from strength to strength.

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