Non-combat Sports vs. Combat Sports: Key Differences

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Disclosures

- Contract employment for event coverage only and I have no established affiliation agreements with any organization in this presentation
Learning Objectives

- Learn the history of combat sports
- Gain understanding of pre-event differences of medical coverage of a modern combat sport athlete
- Be able to participate as the lead of the onsite medical team
  - Medical equipment differences
- During event differences for combat sports athletes
Combat Sports

- 148 recognized combat sports
  - Boxing
  - Mixed Martial Arts
  - Wrestling
  - Karate
  - Ju-jitsu
  - etc
Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) History

- Ancient Greek sport of Pankration
  - Contested in the early Olympic games
  - Combined striking and wrestling
- 19th century boxing matches often looked more like modern MMA until rules emerged
  - Bartitsu (England): judo, ju-jitsu, boxing, kickboxing and stick fighting
  - Merikan (Japan): “American fighting” KO/TKO, submission victories, rounds
Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) History

- Vale Tudo (anything goes)
  - Brazilian fighting competition
  - "no holds barred" style of combat
  - Gracie challenge
    - Gracie family would challenge anyone to competition, often held in garages or gyms
    - Became famous for being able to beat much larger or stronger opponents via submission due to talent in Brazilian Jujitsu
Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) History

- Ultimate Fighting Championship
  - Started in 1993 with first event in Denver, CO
  - Touted as an event to answer the question of what fighting style was superior to all others
    - Competitors came from boxing, wrestling, sumo wrestling, kickboxing, boxing and Jujitsu backgrounds
    - Won by Royce Gracie
Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) History

- Unified Rules
  - Drafted by the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board in 2001 after allowing MMA in 2000
  - July 30, 2009 adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions
    - Stated specific rounds, attire, judging criteria, fouls, medical requirements and prohibited substances
  - Several adaptations, the most recent in 2018
Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) History

- Oversight of the sport of MMA varies by state
  - State office of athletics
  - Native American athletic commissions
  - National associations (ISCF, KICK, ISKA, etc)

- Prior to the event you need to make sure you understand any aspect of medical care that may differ from other organizations
Where does a Doctor fit in?

*Caution: Some images and videos contained in the PowerPoint show injuries sustained by combat sports athletes and can be considered graphic in nature.
Pre Event Agreement

- Team physician or event physician
  - What duties fall on you vs organization?
  - Liability coverage
  - Follow up on athletes and their injuries
Prior to the Event

- Prebout physical examination
  - Full details in upcoming lecture
  - Not routinely done for most sports but required in combat sports
  - Exams vary by sport
  - Weight cutting issues
EMT/Paramedic Plan

- Verify that the ambulance is dedicated to the event and the venue
  - Estimated arrival time for additional unit if transfer needed
- Identify the location where the Paramedics will be stationed at the event
- Make sure they have the necessary equipment
  - Stretcher, spine board, cervical collar, oxygen and airway management equipment, splinting
- Clear path to the ring/cage and out of the venue
  - No stairs, elevator, obstructions, proper crowd control
- Verify what hospital injured competitors would be taken to if injured
  - Must have neurosurgery capabilities if head trauma injury
Examination/Treatment Room

- More likely to perform definitive treatment on site
- Verify you have adequate facilities to deal with injuries that do not need transported to the hospital
  - Quiet
  - Adequate lighting
  - Adequate space
    - Organize equipment
- Larger venues
  - Training room
Doctor’s Equipment Bag

- Pen light
- Disposable gloves (Nitrile)
- Gauze
- Stethoscope
- Otoscope
- Ophthalmoscope
- Blood pressure cuff
- Tongue depressor
- Airway management device
- Adhesive tape
- Nasal packing and nasal specula
- Wound dressings
- Medical scissors
- Ice bags
- Cotton tip applicators
- Steristrips and mastisol
- Suturing equipment kit including anesthetic*
- Sterile saline in prepackaged bottles
- Sanitizer solution
- Cold compress
Final Meeting with Referee/Commission

- Make sure you have a good working relationship with your referee
  - They should trust your opinion and seek your advice if a contestant appears injured
- Discuss event concerns with the commissioner
  - Inspect the ring/cage for safety concerns
Start of the Event

- Physician table
  - Closest to the entrance to the ring/cage
  - Away from corner workers*
  - Unobstructed view
  - Near head official
  - Make sure you are in your seat whenever bouts are occurring
During the Event

- Monitor the bout at all times
- Understand the sport and how injuries occur
  - SEE THE INJURY HAPPEN!!!
- Communicate your thoughts and concerns with the referee
  - Very few sports where this occurs
- Attend to any injured combatants
  - Lectures coming up on aspects of care during events
What’s The Worst That Could Happen?
Thank You!

Questions?