MR NEIL SCOTT – Supporting Profession Sport

Consultant Maxillofacial Surgeon – Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

Mr Neil Scott is a Consultant Maxillofacial surgeon and British Boxing Board of Control Head Office Medical Officer.

How did you get into supporting professional sport?

Professional boxing in the United Kingdom is regulated by the British Boxing Board of Control (BBBoC). In 2012 I approached the BBBoC to enquire of any vacancies within the medical officer group. Fortunately for myself they did and following interview I commenced a period of shadowing other ringside medics. This shadowing was extremely important as it both assessed my suitability for the role and gave me direct exposure to the comprehensive medical guidelines stipulated by the BBBoC.

What medical professionals support a contest?

Following the 1991 contest between Chris Eubank and Michael Watson, significant changes in ringside medical practices were introduced. Now all BBBoC licenced shows must have a Consultant Anaesthetist present as well as another Consultant / Senior Doctor. There are no strict guidelines on the sub speciality of the non-anaesthetic Doctor, it can be medical or surgical, however, Maxillofacial Doctors have a particularly useful skill set. There will also be other doctors depending on the number of contests at an event.

The Medical Officers are supported by a paramedic team and ambulance. The size of the team reflects the size of the event. For example the recent Clash on The Dunes event in Saudi Arabia was supervised by the Saudi Arabian Boxing Federation. At the event there were 8 Doctors present (3 Consultant Anaesthetists, 3 Consultant Surgeons and 2 Emergency Department Consultants). There was also 3 paramedic crews and ambulances.

What makes a Maxillofacial Surgeon suited to the Medical Officer role?

Maxillofacial injuries are the most commonly seen injuries in professional boxing, with soft tissue facial injuries being most prevalent. Therefore, your skill set as a Maxillofacial Surgeon puts you in a fabulous position as a ringside Doctor.

The quick, but accurate assessment of facial lacerations at ringside is essential, as the continuation of a contest may depend on your advice to the referee. Therefore, the benefit of your experience cannot be underestimated.

Professional boxers frequently have soft tissue swelling and bruising. Being totally comfortable in assessing the facial skeleton and overlying soft tissues is an essential skill, which ensures the boxer receives appropriate and expert treatment.

What are the requirements to work at ringside?

Senior Trainees post certification exams are best suited to the role. Up to date ATLS and ALS are desirable and an appreciation of pre-hospital medical care. An often overlooked but essential requirement is medical indemnity.

What is the most rewarding aspect of this work?

If you enjoy sport, particularly boxing, then the interaction with the boxers and sitting front row at events is an undeniable privilege. But above all the greatest reward is making the sport as safe as possible.