

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
Combative Sports Program
MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 30, 2008

Report on the October 20, 2007 Sammy Vasquez vs. Vince Libardi professional mixed martial arts fight held at the Toyota Center in Houston, TX (event #41419).

Greg Alvarez, TDLR Combative Sports Assistant Program Manager was the lead regulatory official at the event.

Kerry Hatley refereed the fight.

Dr. Jorge Guerrero (primary) and **Dr. Roger Temple** (second) were the ringside physicians.

Upon arrival at the venue, Greg Alvarez began the pre-event inspections. Instructions were given to the event inspectors as to how the contestants would enter the cage and where the ring-side physicians would be seated to maximize quick access to the cage door in the event of contestant injuries. The pre-event inspections are conducted to verify safety precautions and to ensure:

- That the two required ring-side physicians were present.
- An unobstructed route into the cage/ring for the ring-side physicians.
- The emergency evacuation routes in the event of injury.
- The location of the emergency medical technicians (EMTs).
- The location of the EMT's portable equipment within the tech zone.
- The location of the ambulance.
- That the referees discuss emergency situations with physicians.
- That referees have a rules meeting with all contestants and to instruct them that they must see the ring-side physicians after the contest.

The contestant lineups were also given to the inspectors.

Timeline Discussion

Review of the DVD of the Sammy Vasquez / Vince Libardi MMA fight.

R1 – During a take down, the back (left side) of Sammy Vasquez's head hits the cage post. His reaction is blinking eyes and squinting. On his back, Mr. Vasquez continues to punch, to defend himself and work his heels. Mr. Vasquez was kicked twice in the hip while on the mat.

R2 – During a take down, Mr. Vasquez landed against the fence out of the camera view. As Mr. Vasquez is on the mat at the cage-fence, he looks at the crowd and smiles. Throughout the round, he is punching and blocking, continuing to fight. Mr. Libardi pounds Mr. Vasquez with the back of his hand (Mr. Vasquez's head is not on the mat).

R3 – Mr. Vasquez was on the mat, but blocking head shots and punching. As Mr. Vasquez was upright, he was rushed by Mr. Libardi, was punched and dropped to the mat. Mr. Vasquez attempts to stand, but his legs would not hold him up. He falls to the mat. Mr. Vasquez, in sitting position “scoots” back to the fence and sits there. Referee stops the fight.

Sequence of Events After the Referee Stopped the Fight:

- Referee, Kerry Hatley stepped in and stopped the fight at 2:50 (Two Minutes: Fifty Seconds) of the third round.

Excerpts From Dr. Jorge Guererro’s Statement:

Dr. Jorge Guererro immediately steps into the cage to evaluate Mr. Vasquez at which point he (Dr.) called for Dr. Roger Temple to assist in stabilizing Mr. Vasquez. Dr. Temple also assessed the situation. Dr. Guerrero then called in the Emergency Medical Technicians to bring in the stretcher to remove Mr. Vasquez from the cage, get him in the ambulance and go to the nearest hospital (St. Joseph’s Hospital).

- Dr. Guerrero’s knowledge of surrounding hospital facilities assisted in his determination to send Mr. Vasquez to St. Joseph’s Hospital (which was 3 blocks from the venue) instead of Hermann Memorial Hospital which was further away.
- Dr. Guerrero also indicated that St. Joseph’s had a very good neurosurgical team and that there was communication with emergency room staff prior to Mr. Vasquez’s arrival.
- Mr. Vasquez was evaluated, stabilized, and transported to the ambulance in approximately 7 to 9 minutes and arrived at the St. Joseph’s emergency room in another 4 to 5 minutes, according to Dr. Guerrero.

Over the next month, Ms. Vasquez kept the Department informed of Mr. Vasquez’s medical status via email.

The Department is extremely vigilant in matters of safety in the combative sports program.

Referees are trained and will continue to be trained. Prior to working MMA events referees are required to attend a Department approved training seminar before they are allowed to officiate a Department regulated event. They learn the different fighting techniques and to recognize contestant injury/warning signs during fights – head trauma, cuts to reference to ring-side physician, and manipulation holds.

The autopsy on Mr. Vasquez was performed by the Harris County Medical Examiner’s Office. According to the Medical Examiner’s Office the CAUSE OF DEATH was “Complications of blunt trauma of head with subdural hemorrhage.” The MANNER OF DEATH was ruled an “accident.”

In closing, the set up of the ring/cage and positioning of the doctors and EMS personnel to minimize the time it takes to get medical personnel into the ring/cage and injured contestants out is a primary concern of the Department.

After a comprehensive review, the Department found that the contest between Mr. Vasquez and Mr. Libardi was conducted in accordance with all laws and rules pertaining to combative sports.

The Department also found that the referee, primary and secondary ring-side physicians, and the emergency medical technicians performed their duties in accordance with all laws and rules pertaining to combative sports.