

Scientists computer analyze boxing

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U.S. scientists are using a computer program to develop an objective method of determining when a boxing match should be stopped.

The researchers at West Virginia University say a computerized approach to counting punches at ringside identifies certain characteristics related to deaths in the ring.

"This approach could provide sufficient data to stop matches that might result in fatalities," said Drs. Vincent Miele and Julian Bailes of West Virginia University School of Medicine.

Miele and Bailes performed a computer-assisted video analysis to compare three groups of professional boxing matches. Ten bouts leading to the death of a fighter were compared with a "classic" group of 10 highly competitive matches.

A computerized system called Punchstat was used to count punches thrown and landed. The fatal and classic matches were also compared with a group of 4,000 bouts previously scored with Punchstat.

The results showed some significant differences between the fatal and average bouts. The number of punches landed per round was higher in fatal matches -- 26.6 for the survivor versus 22.9 for the fighter who died, compared with 9.4 in the average fight.

The study appears in the February issue of the journal *Neurosurgery*.

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