

## *The Doc Is In :*

### **Leapfrog With A Unicorn**

**by Nelson "DOC" Hamilton**

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Over the past 18 years I have refereed boxing, kickboxing, Drakka, mixed martial arts, and muay Thai. As such, I have had a number of unique experiences.

I've seen the usual cuts and bruises as well as broken bones of all types. I refereed Baxter "The One-Arm Bandit" Humby's first fight in California. Despite being born without a right arm below the elbow, he has proven himself to be an outstanding fighter and champion. He epitomizes the expression, "He who wants to, finds a way; he who doesn't, finds an excuse."

On June 9, 1989, I was a referee/judge for the first World Muay Thai Championships held in the United States. It gave all indications of being a groundbreaking event for the sport!

All 10,000 seats at the Celebrity Theater in Anaheim, Calif., had been sold out. There also was a live satellite transmission to Thailand. Unfortunately, problems at the event led to a major riot. Anything that was not bolted down was thrown: chairs, drinks, and food. Fights broke out everywhere. The police finally arrived in force and put an end to the sad affair.

On January 3, 1998, I was a judge at the Forum in Inglewood, Calif., for the Drakka World Middleweight Championship between defending champion, Malik Boroashev of Russia, and Redone Bougara of France. Although he lost by TKO in the 11th round, Bougara appeared to be in good mental and physical condition. But after complaining of dizziness, he passed out in the dressing room and never regained consciousness.

However, these experiences pale in comparison to the most bizarre contest I've ever refereed.

On the evening of January 21, 2001, I arrived at the Hollywood Park Casino and was given my assignments. Of the ten bouts scheduled, I was to judge three and referee four. Joe, the commission inspector, then dropped the bomb.

"I want you to talk to both fighters in the third bout," he said. "Brian Dobbler has been retired for three years and tonight is his first fight back. His opponent is from Thailand and has been in Los Angeles for only one week. She is a transsexual, and this is her first fight since the operation six months ago."

Now, this was not a takeoff on the WWF. Pinya Kiatbusaba, also known as "Lady Boy", although openly gay, was a well-known and successful fighter in Thailand prior to his operation. Despite his sexual proclivity, he was respected for his accomplishments in the ring. Only he knew the reasons behind the sex-change operation.

After talking with each fighter separately, it became obvious that each was apprehensive and not entirely focused. Dobbler had not fought in three years; "Lady Boy" exhibited signs of stress and disorientation. This may have been natural, since she was not only fighting as a female for the first time, but also fighting for the first time in America.

Needless to say, it was my first time refereeing a bout between a man and a transsexual. I had no idea what to expect from either fighter.

Aside from a few catcalls, Lady Boy's appearance dumbfounded the audience. Her total femininity and attractiveness were accentuated when she performed the Wai Kru in the posture of a young woman dusting her face with powder and applying make-up. From all outward appearances, he certainly appeared to be a *she*.

The first round was uneventful. Lady Boy appeared tentative and confused. Dobbler was just confused. You could count the number of strikes on one hand, and none were meaningful.

The second round mirrored the first. After about a minute of the same stale action, I called time and gave a hard warning to each fighter: either fight or risk being disqualified. At that point, Dobbler stepped up the pace and landed

some decent strikes. Lady Boy continued to move as if in a trance.

Between rounds two and three, I told both fighters they would be disqualified if they did not give their best effort in the third round. Dobbler began turning up the heat and was landing strong kicks and punches. Unfortunately, Lady Boy couldn't defend herself and I stopped the fight, awarding Dobbler the TKO.

About an hour after the bout, I asked Lady Boy how she felt. She apologized for her performance and said that she was very weak throughout the fight. She thought she was in good shape and was unable to explain her performance. Little did she know, this was to be her last fight.

About six months later, I read that she retired from the sport. Her conditioning never improved; she no longer had the speed, strength and quickness of a man, and did not possess the ability to reclaim them. The surgery and hormone therapy had done the job.

In retrospect, I'm happy to have worked such a memorable contest. However, in the future I've resolved never to play leapfrog with a unicorn.

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