

Boy, family awarded \$15M from operation

ByDave Racher
Daily News Staff Writer
MAY 22, 1999



The heart surgery on the 13-month-old boy was a success at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in 1993, but he suffered permanent brain damage. Yesterday, a jury awarded Alec Sears, now 7, of Portland, Ore., \$15.2 million in a suit against the hospital and surgeon Marshall Jacobs. The boys parents, Mard and Vicki Sears, were awarded an additional \$225,000 for past medical bills.

Attorney Thomas R. Kline, of the firm of Kline and Specter, said Common Pleas Judge Arnold New will access delayed damages that will increase the boy's total about \$3 million. Kline said Alec was brain-damaged because his body was not cooled long enough to bring his temperature down before the surgery.

A 20-minute cooling period would have prevented the damage, the attorney said, but Alec's body was only cooled nine minutes. The hospital contended that it followed proper cooling procedures. Jacobs was accessed \$9 million and the hospital was ordered to pay the rest. Jacobs had performed two prior successful heart surgeries on Alec when he was younger. The money awarded to Alec will be placed in a trust to pay for his lifetime care and medical bills.