



CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

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Members of the Commission

Peter R. Villegas, Chair

Dr. Vernon Williams, Vice Chair

AnnMaria De Mars

Ronald Fiore

Christopher Gruwell

Douglas Hendrickson

Scott Wetch

COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 11, 2023

10:00 a.m. - Conclusion of Business

Location:

DCA Headquarters 2
1747 North Market Blvd, Rm 186
Sacramento, CA 95834

Commissioners Present

Chair Peter R. Villegas

Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams

Commissioner AnnMaria De Mars

Commissioner Ronald Fiore

Commissioner Christopher Gruwell

Commissioner Douglas J. Hendrickson

Staff Present

Andy Foster, Executive Officer

Patrisha Blackstock, Assistant Executive Officer

Kenneth Swenson, Legal Counsel

Lee Palmer, Associate Governmental

Program Analyst

Claudia Ron, Staff Services Analyst

Monique Azar, Staff Services Analyst

OPEN SESSION

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order / Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Peter Villegas. Executive Officer (EO) Andy Foster called roll and a quorum was established. Commissioner Scott Wetch was not present at the meeting.

Agenda Item 2 – Chairman’s Opening Remarks

Chair Villegas welcomed everyone to the meeting and praised the work of EO Foster and the Commission.

Agenda Item 3- Review and Possible action to approve the June 5, 2023, Commission Meeting Minutes.

Chair Villegas presented the June 5, 2023, Commission meeting minutes for approval.

Commissioner Gruwell moved to approve the meeting minutes.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams seconded the motion.

No Commission or public comments

The motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 4- Discussion and Possible Action on Petition to Change the Decision for Joseph Keith vs Sczar Charles bout on July 22, 2023, in Wheatland, CA.

EO Foster presented the petition to change decision from Joseph Keith where he alleged that he received an illegal knee to the head. EO Foster stated he believed there was a foul that occurred but did not believe that the foul impacted the fight in a significant way. Video of the fight was shown for the Commission to review. EO Foster explained that the opponent’s thigh and not his knee was the point of contact with Mr. Charles’s face. He explained that he consulted with the Association of Boxing Commission’s Fighter Committee, and they agreed with that assessment.

Commission Comments

Commissioner Gruwell asked about the punches to the back of the head. EO Foster explained he believed those punches were incidental blows.

Public Comments

Referee Ed Collantes stated that a knee to the head is a serious foul and would cause a fighter to collapse and that technically the foul also includes the thigh. Mr. Collantes felt that there was no concussive head blow reaction that would indicate a significant blow to the head. He had made the decision in that split second that the knee had not landed and allowed the fight to continue.

No Further Commission Comments

*Commissioner Dr. De Mars **moved** to deny the petition to change decision.*

*Commissioner Gruwell **seconded** the motion.*

No Commission or public comments

The motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 5- Update from the Specialty License Plate Subcommittee.

EO Foster explained that he and Commissioners Wetch and Hendrickson had a stakeholder meeting regarding the license plates with about 80-90% of the televised market being present. EO Foster thought the reaction was enthusiastic and noted that the UFC and Roy Engelbrecht offered to draft a few license plates for the Commission. EO Foster stated that once the application is submitted for approval that the stakeholders offered to assist in spreading the word about the specialty license plates.

EO Foster explained that the Commission is currently waiting for the Legislature to return from recess and to see how AB 1136 fares. If the bill passes the Commission will submit the application for the license plate and have the Commission vote on a license plate image. EO Foster noted that the Department of Consumer affairs will help build a website for the license plate.

Agenda Item 6 – Executive Officer’s Report

a. Budget update for the support fund, the neurological fund, and the pension program

EO Foster stated that the Commission’s event schedule for the first quarter of the fiscal year has not been as active as usual due to a shift occurring in the television market. These shifts are negatively impacting the Commission’s schedule. EO Foster spoke to the Budget Office before the meeting, and they explained that the Commission currently has \$389,000 in the fund. EO Foster explained that should the Commission require a section loan or if the Department could not bill the Commission for distributive costs all at once he believes the Commission could recover in the first quarter of 2024.

EO Foster stated that as of the date of the report, the Commission has deposited \$3,864 to the neuro fund this fiscal year. He noted that Frank Carruba of C3 Logix asked if the Commission would like to participate in research project using the data obtained through the C3 Logix program. Vice Chair Dr. Williams explained that the Medical Advisory Committee is very interested in participating in this research.

The Commission has deposited \$8,318 in the pension fund this fiscal year so far. EO Foster pointed out that as of September 1, 2023, the Commission has distributed \$308,000 to retired boxers in 2023 with another \$58,000 pending.

b. Report on the pending and proposed regulations

EO Foster introduced new Regulations Counsel Steven Vong who will be assisting the Commission with the pension plan and dehydration regulations.

EO Foster explained that he had to cancel a fight over the weekend due to a weight discrepancy. Chair Villegas praised the Commission for setting the bar on safety in the nation and standing by those standards.

EO Foster explained that the ABC MMA Rules Committee added 3 new procedures to the Unified Rules.

1. The cutman will be allowed 5 minutes to work on the fighter after a foul occurs during the round.
2. Standing up fighters from a downed position or breaking up fighters while they are pinned against the cage when neither fighter is able to or fails to make any significant effort to advance towards finishing the fight.
3. Allowing some time for the fighter to recover from an eye poke before the physician shines a light into their eye to examine it.

c. Status update of delegated entities

- **California Amateur Mixed Martial Arts Organization (CAMO)**

JT Steele, President of CAMO, submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. He added that CAMO has been making efforts to train inspectors with CSAC and thanked the Commission for allowing CAMO inspectors to join in on CSAC trainings and noted that CAMO also participated at the ABC conference. Mr. Steele informed the Commission of an up-and-coming fighter from California to watch for, Tatiana Suarez.

- **USA Boxing**

Mr. Mike McAtee, Executive Director of USA Boxing, submitted his written report to the Commission which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. McAtee noted that in the 2nd quarter USA Boxing had 958 bouts with 4 reported injuries for a 0.41% injury rate.

Mr. McAtee noted that USA Boxing had their Junior Olympics and Summer Festival in Texas recently. There were 157 out of over 1000 boxers from California, 25 of which were national champions.

USA boxing held 3 official's clinics during the 2nd quarter and noted that USA Boxing also participated in the ABC conference.

Mr. McAtee also noted that last year USA Boxing had over 24,000 bouts nationwide and tracks every single bout in their online database system.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars asked if USA Boxing was able to use the data from their bouts to do analysis on injuries and dehydration. Mr. McAtee explained that they do use the data to analyze win percentages and minimum bout requirements. USA boxing does analyze the weights of fighters to track their weights and determine what they should be fighting at during championships.

USA Boxing held youth boxer training camps in Chula Vista with funding from the US Olympic and Paralympic Committees.

Mr. McAtee mentioned a letter sent to EO Foster from IKF regarding point boxing being held in the state. Mr. McAtee stated that this is beyond the scope of the IKF's delegation and is concerned about the lack of medical and promoter requirements. EO Foster stated that he is looking into it.

- **United States Fight League (USFL)**

Joe Stevenson, President of the USFL, submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Stevenson informed the Commission that the USFL had no injuries in the last quarter and that there was one additional bout not listed in the report. Mr. Stevenson explained that the California team placed 2nd at Worlds and the next goal is to help the junior team (ages 18-20) place as well.

- **International Kickboxing Federation (IKF)**

Toni Fossum, President of IKF, submitted her written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mrs. Fossum added that 2 events occurred after the report was submitted. Mrs. Fossum informed the Commission that 3 training sessions were held for officials and the IKF introduced a training for ringside physicians. Mrs. Fossum explained the IKF is now using a new national records database to track bouts and fighters.

To answer a question from the previous Commission meeting, Mrs. Fossum looked at the California fighter demographics and found that 16.5% of fighters were female and noted that that number is rising. Mrs. Fossum noted that there were 2 all-female events coming up on the calendar and invited the Commissioners to attend.

d. Staffing Update

EO Foster stated that the Commission is still operating very lean with three in office staff, one chief athletic inspector, one assistant chief inspector, and the assistant executive officer, Patrisha Blackstock. EO Foster asked the staff to introduce themselves. Chair Villegas thanked the staff for their hard work and welcomed back legal counsel Kenneth Swenson.

e. Upcoming Event Schedule

EO Foster informed the Commission that budget issues are not related to the number of shows the Commission has, they're related to the number of large shows. EO Foster pointed out a few shows that the commissioners may like to attend: October 7th, Bellator MMA at Pechanga Arena, October 21st, Golden Boy Boxing at the Forum, November 4th, Westside Boxing at the Cow Palace, November 18th, Matchroom Boxing at the YouTube Theater, and December 9th, Matchroom Boxing at the Chase Center.

Agenda Item 7 – SOLID Strategic Planning workshop to review, discuss and revise the Commission's mission, vision, values, and goals for the 2024-2028 Commission Strategic Plan.

The Commissioners and staff took part in a Strategic Planning Development Session with staff from DCA.

Agenda Item 8 - Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda.

Mrs. Fossum clarified the dates of the all-female events.

Agenda Item 9 - CLOSED SESSION

Agenda Item 10 – Next Commission Meeting will be Monday, December 11, 2023, with the location TBA

Meeting Adjourned at 1:00 PM