



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES, AND HOUSING AGENCY • GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 2010 | Sacramento, CA 95815

Phone: (916) 263-2195 | Fax: (916) 263-2197

Website: www.dca.ca.gov/csac | Email: csac@dca.ca.gov



Members of the Commission

Peter R. Villegas, Chair
Dr. Vernon Williams, Vice Chair
Dr. AnnMaria De Mars
Christopher Gruwell
Michael Hardeman
Douglas Hendrickson

**Agenda items may be taken out of order the
agenda except public comment.
Action may be taken on any item listed on**

MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022
4 p.m. - Conclusion of Business

Location:

*Millennium Biltmore Hotel
506 South Grand Avenue, Barnard Room
Los Angeles, CA 90071*

Commissioners Present

Chair Peter Villegas
Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams
Commissioner Dr AnnMaria. De Mars
Commissioner Michael Hardeman
Commissioner Christopher Gruwell

Staff Present

Andy Foster, Executive Officer
Patrisha Blackstock, AGPA
Mark Relyea, Chief Athletic Inspector
Kenneth Swenson, Legal Counsel

OPEN SESSION

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Peter Villegas. Executive Officer (EO) Andy Foster called roll and a quorum was established.

Agenda Item 2 – Welcome-Chairman’s Opening Remarks.

Chair Villegas welcomed everyone to the first in person meeting since 2020 and thanked everyone who was in attendance.

Agenda Item 3- Approval of the March 1,2022, Commission Meeting Minutes.

EO Foster presented the March 1,2022, Commission meeting minutes for approval.

Commissioner Hardeman moved to approve the minutes

Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams seconded the motion.

No Commission or Public Comments.

The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 4- Approval of the May 24, 2022, Commission Meeting Minutes.

EO Foster presented the May 24, 2022, Special Commission meeting minutes for approval.

Commissioner Hardeman moved to approve the minutes.

Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams seconded the motion.

No Commission or Public Comments.

The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 5- Review and Possible Action on Petition to Change the Decision for DJ Navarro vs Ulysses Molina bout on May 28, 2022, in San Francisco, CA.

EO Foster presented the Commission with background information on the petition to change the decision and presented the video of the fight for the Commission to watch. EO Foster stated that the dispute comes down to whether the foul was intentional or unintentional. EO Foster added there was no dispute that the foul occurred by the petitioner, but Mr. Molina is requesting that the decision be changed to a “no contest”.

EO Foster stated that Referee Shurley followed the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts when disqualifying Mr. Molina.

B. Accidental Fouls

1.If an accidental foul causes an injury severe enough for the referee to stop the bout, the bout will result in either a NO CONTEST or DISQUALIFICATION if stopped before:

- A completed 2 rounds of a scheduled 3 round bout*

Referee Shurley provided a written statement which was included in the meeting materials as he could not attend the meeting.

Promoter Zhong Lou and petitioner Ulysses Molina were present at the meeting.

Mr. Molina stated that he has always competed with professionalism, and the knee he threw was not intentional. Mr. Molina stated that when he threw the knee during round 2, he had felt Mr. Navarro's weight lift off the canvas and was aiming for his midsection.

Mr. Lou addressed the Commission stating that the video showed to the Commission doesn't capture how bad Mr. Molina felt when he was disqualified for the knee. Mr. Lou added that the knee Mr. Molina threw was more muscle memory than anything and he didn't intentionally try to hit Mr. Navarro in the head while he was grounded. Mr. Lou asked the Commission to review the ruling and rule the bout a "no contest".

Commissioner Dr. De Mars stated that as far as changing the decision there is a criteria that must be met and a violation of the rules. She added that on the petition submitted Mr. Molina did not complete that section. Commissioner Dr. De Mars asked on what grounds was Mr. Molina asking the Commission to use to overturn the decision as right now the Commission is being asked to rule on Mr. Molina's mindset during the bout to determine whether he unintentionally or intentionally kned his opponent.

Mr. Lou stated that he felt Mr. Molina just didn't complete the paperwork completely as this was his first time petitioning the Commission to change a decision.

EO Foster stated that he didn't feel the foul was truly intentional, but this was the Referees call and he followed the Unified Rules of MMA. EO Foster added that as the person who appoints the Referees to events and assigns them to bouts, he believed that it was not supportive of the Referees to try to change a decision made that was within the rules.

Commissioner Gruwell moved that the Referee's decision to disqualify Mr. Navarro stand as Mr. Molina was a grounded opponent when he was kned to the head.

Commissioner Hardeman seconded the motion.

Commission Comments

Commissioner Dr. De Mars stated that when you think about intentional versus unintentional fouling, just because this was ruled as intentional it doesn't make you a bad person. She further added that Mr. Molina did mean to knee Mr. Navarro, the act was intentional, but she understood that Mr. Molina didn't intentionally set out to violate the rules.

Public Comments

Mr. Lou stated that Mr. Molina was trying to knee Mr. Navarro's body and from the angle Mr. Molina didn't see that he was grounded.

No further Commission Comments

No further Public Comments

The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.

Chair Villegas thanked Mr. Molina and Mr. Lou for attending the meeting to explain what happened and appreciated the sincerity that Mr. Molina showed.

Agenda Item 6- Discussion and Possible Action of creation of a Pension Plan for Mixed Martial Arts Athletes.

EO Foster informed the Commission this was something the Commission was discussing before COVID however this was put aside during the pandemic. He stated the Boxers Pension Plan has been in effect since 1982 but the mixed martial arts fighters have never been able to participate in the plan as it would take legislative action. EO Foster informed the Commission that during the pandemic it became very clear that the Commission can't rely on the two revenue streams, ticket fees of .88 cents per ticket and the investment income from Raymond James, to fund the Boxers Pension Plan. He added that when the Commission has no events, and no revenue the pension funds crash.

EO Foster stated one of his ideas to help stabilize the funding for the Commissions pension plan or plans, is a special license plate similar to what the Veterinarian Board did, but it would have to be sponsored by a state agency. EO Foster stated that if the Commission was able to do this, 7,500 people would have to commit to purchase the license plate. The funding would be allocated between the existing Boxer Pension Plan Fund and the new MMA Pension Plan Fund. EO Foster informed the Commission that his preliminary calculations estimate that sponsoring a Special Interest License Plate could generate approximately \$250,000 - \$350,000 per year. He added that the Commission would still collect the .88 cents per ticket from events as well.

An analysis and breakdown by Benefit Resources of the proposed criteria for the Mixed Martial Arts Pension plan was included in the meeting materials. EO Foster added that after discussion with John McCarthy and others, that the number of rounds to be vested should be changed from 30 to 36.

Chair Villegas thanked EO Foster for presenting this to the Commission and asked if any of the Commissioners had any questions.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars stated this was a great idea and asked if the rounds had to be rounds in California. EO Foster stated that yes, the rounds would have to be in California.

Chair Villegas asked for the definitions of scheduled rounds and lifetime rounds. EO Foster stated the scheduled rounds were rounds that the fight was scheduled for, and lifetime rounds would be the total rounds you completed.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams wanted to clarify that the license plate funding would be for the Boxers Pension and Mixed Martial Arts Pension. EO Foster said that was correct and the monies collected for the pension fund would be divided based on the licensing population.

Commissioner Gruwell asked EO Foster what steps would need to be taken for the creation of the Mixed Martial Arts Pension or the license plate idea. EO Foster stated that for the Mixed Martial Arts Pension fund to be created, the Commission would have to pass legislation. He added that for the license plate idea, a state agency would have to sponsor the plate and at least 7,500 people would have to buy the license plate within one year.

Commissioner Gruwell asked when the pension numbers were set for the funding of the Boxers Pension and what would be needed to modify the amount per ticket paid or the cap. EO Foster stated this was set in 2006 and that if the Commission wanted to change the amount it would have to be a regulation change.

Chair Villegas stated he thought this was a fantastic idea and that California is the only Commission that currently provides a pension plan for retired Boxers.

Chair Villegas established a Mixed Martial Arts Pension Subcommittee to look into and review ideas to bring back to the Commission. Commissioner Gruwell and Commissioner Dr. De Mars volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

No further Commission Comments

No Public Comments

Agenda Item 7- Executive Officer's Report

a. Budget Update for the Support Fund, the Neurological Fund, and Pension Program

EO Foster presented the Commission the updated revenue numbers as of June 1, 2022, and further stated that the Commission will end the fiscal year with 1.873 million, which was 600K above projections. The Commission did bounce back quickly however the Commission was not close to where they were in FY 18/19. This fiscal year, the Commission deposited \$7,976.94 to the neurological fund, and \$382,093.36 to the Boxer Pension Fund with \$300,000 of that being a transfer from the Boxer Pension Investment Account. EO Foster stated the Pension Investment account is healthy with approximately \$4.6 million dollars as of May 31, 2022, but did decline due to the volatility of the stock market.

b. Report of Pending and Proposed Regulations

EO Foster updated the Commission on the proposed regulations. Staff was working on the regulation changes to Section 299, Dehydration and Rehydration. Staff had been working closely with DCA Regulations Unit and Benefit Resources on finalizing the proposed language of the Boxers Pension Plan.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars asked if any other Commissions had any similar regulations regarding Dehydration and Rehydration? EO Foster stated that California would be the first.

c. Status Update of Delegated Entities

EO Foster stated that the Commission has delegated amateur combative sports to delegated entities per statute, however that doesn't mean the Commission can't take back any of the amateur programs if needed.

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

JT Steele, President of CAMO, submitted his written report to the Commission, which was contained in the meeting materials.

- **USA Boxing**

Mr. Mike McAtee, submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. McAtee introduced Mr. Ethan Figge who is with Boxing Operations at USA Boxing. Mr. McAtee stated that USA Boxing supervised 24 successful events in California during the 1st quarter and the Southern California LBC is the largest LBC in the country. Mr. McAtee informed the Commission that USA Boxing has reached out to the Los Angeles Park and Recreation Department to utilize and start a program at a vacant gym located East Los Angeles. Mr. McAtee informed the Commission that the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Committee will have until May or early June 2023 to determine if Boxing will be in the Olympic games in Los Angeles.

Chair Villegas stated the Commission is excited about the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and was looking forward to seeing boxing at the games.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars asked if USA Boxing could breakdown the participants by gender as well as age for future reports.

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

Jon Frank submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Frank stated that USFL held its National Youth Championship in Temecula, this Championship was used to select who would advance to Worlds in Abu Dhabi. He informed that Commission that since USFL became a delegated entity, they have only had 40 injuries out of 3,146 athletes.

Chair Villegas asked if USFL tracked the economic impact the tournaments held for the cities? Mr. Frank stated they did not. Chair Villegas stated the Character program that USFL was implementing was great and wanted to know if they are tracking the grades of the athletes as well. Mr. Frank stated that currently they were not but that was something they do wanted to add to the program once it was up a running.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams stated USFL has done great work in tracking the injuries and asked if the researchers involved in collecting the data could expand their study to look at multiple factors not just injuries at event.

Commissioner Hardeman congratulated Mr. Frank on the low injury record for USFL.

- **International Kickboxing Federation (IKF)**

Toni Fossum submitted her written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mrs. Fossum stated that IKF supervised 10 successful events in California during the 1st quarter, with 141 bouts total. Mrs. Fossum stated that California is the busiest state for IKF events. She informed the Commission that IKF will supervise about 10 events during the 2nd quarter and has 15 events scheduled so far for the 3rd quarter. Mrs. Fossum stated IKF is looking to build a Central California team to run events in addition to the Northern and Southern California team already in place.

EO Foster informed Mrs. Fossum that IKF can't continue to run events with over 18 bouts like they have been doing, that the number needs to be reduced to around 13-14 bouts.

EO Foster stated that wearing headgear should worn by the amateur competitors to not only tell the difference between the amateurs and professionals but to also protect against cuts.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams stated that the headgear not only protects against cut but also concussions. He echoed what EO Foster said as to how the headgear does differentiate between the amateur and professional competitors.

EO Foster stated that if the event is a combination event with the Commission, then the officials fees for that event would need to be in line with the Commission's officials fees.

Mrs. Fossum asked if Promoters who have more than 13-14 bouts scheduled can run a double show? EO Foster stated this could be allowed if the Promoter was using 2 sets of Officials, but it is not safe or fair for Officials to have to report at events at noon and be there all day and night.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars asked if the delegated entities could breakdown the percentage of male and female competitors. Chair Villegas directed the delegated entities to provide that information in their reports going forward.

d. Staffing Update

EO Foster informed the Commission that Commission was currently in operation with two Associate Analysts, one Staff Analyst, the Chief Athletic Inspector, the

AEO and the EO. The Commission currently has three vacancies. EO Foster stated that the Commission did hire 10 new Inspectors in April.

e. **Upcoming Event Schedule**

An updated event schedule was included in the meeting materials.

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

Jeff Dojilli introduced his federation, the United States Muay Thai Federation. He stated the federation was the governing body for USA Muay Thai, with about 2,000 of their members being youth participants. Mr. Dojilli added that his federation would appreciate the opportunity to hold events in California.

Promoter Dennis Warner expressed concerns with gyms holding amateur Muay Thai/Kickboxing mat fighting to bypass the Commissions regulations. Mr. Warner asked for the Commission to display or explain the dehydration and rehydration process to the fighters during their licensing.

Cameron Frizzell wanted to formally introduce himself to the Commission as he is looking to become a professional boxing referee.

Closed Session

Agenda Item 9- The Commission will meet in closed session as authorized by Government Code §11126, subdivision (c)(3) to deliberate on disciplinary matters and petitions; and subdivision (e)(1) to confer with legal counsel regarding pending litigation.

Open Session

Agenda Item 10- Next Commission Meeting will be on Monday, September 12, 2022, location TBA.

Agenda Item 11- Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 5:59 p.m.