

ARIZONA STATE BOXING AND MIXED MARTIAL ARTS COMMISSION

JANICE K. BREWER
GOVERNOR



DENNIS R. O'CONNELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 22, 2011

Mr. Tim Lueckenhoff
President, Association of Boxing Commissions
c/o Missouri Office of Athletics
P.O. Box 1335
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Re: Proposed Agenda Items for July - August 2011 ABC Meeting in Washington D.C.

Dear Tim,

I have been requested by the Chairman and the Commissioners of the Arizona Boxing and Mixed Martial Arts Commission to request that Association of Boxing Commissions ("ABC") incorporate the following two items into its agenda for its 2011 national meeting scheduled for July 30 - August 3 in Washington D.C. :

1. The safety, medical and rules issues associated with licensing a MMA contestant who is missing a limb, in this case leg at the knee.
2. What additional medical, physical requirements ought to apply to boxers and MMA contestants over the age of 36? 40?

These issues are of crucial importance to Arizona and I believe would be of similar importance and interest to a number of other Commissions across the United States.

Regarding the first item, please refer to the enclosed memo I prepared for our Commission in March. It explains some of the issues faced when considering the licensing of an MMA fighter who happens to be an amputee. These concerns have received even more attention as a result of the recent NCAA wrestling championship won by Anthony Robles of Arizona State University who was born

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with only one leg. I think it would be timely for the ABC to address these issues in July.

Insofar as boxers and MMA contestants over a certain age (36 in Arizona), I am confident that other Commissions besides Arizona would appreciate receiving input from the ABC's medical committee as well as the views of others. With the evolution of MMA, we have seen increased participation from men and women in their 40's and a few nearing 50 years of age, who wish to compete in sanctioned events. We need to get a better knowledge from the medical community and Commission administrators about what exams, tests and requirements would enhance the safety of these older combatants. The ABC's July meeting would be a perfect venue for such a discussion.

If I can provide further clarification or information on the above matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,



Dennis R. O'Connell, J.D.

ARIZONA BOXING & MIXED MARTIAL ARTS COMMISSION

JANICE K. BREWER
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DENNIS R. O'CONNELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

March 10, 2011

To: Chairman Michael Preston Green,
Commissioner Joe Pennington
Commissioner Scott Fletcher

From: Dennis O'Connell *DOC*

Re: Pro MMA License Application of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is an amputee (one leg at/above the knee) who was approved in August 2009 by the then Arizona Boxing Commission to compete as an amateur MMA fighter in Arizona. He had three amateur bouts in Rage-in-the-Cage events during 2009 and 2010. In October 2010 he fought as a professional at a show ([REDACTED]) near Tucson. That event was not subject to the regulatory authority of the Arizona Boxing and MMA Commission.

Mr. [REDACTED] now seeks this Commission's approval of his professional MMA license. For the reasons below, it is my recommendation that the license not be granted.

When Mr. [REDACTED] was initially allowed to compete, the amateur rules enforced were quite restrictive. For instance, in 2009 no closed fists to the head of a grounded or standing fighter were permitted for amateurs. Those restrictions no longer apply.

Mr. [REDACTED] removes his prosthesis after he enters the cage. His starting position is kneeling; the sole of one foot and his stump portion are flat on the mat. That start position has been interpreted for Mr. [REDACTED] as being in a "down" or "grounded" position. Thus, Mr. [REDACTED] opponent has been disadvantaged because of rules that prohibit kicks to the head of a grounded opponent. Further, the opponent's ability to deliver hand strikes is limited due to the head height difference. In effect, the three matches I have observed with Mr. [REDACTED] were mainly grappling contests.

Now, Mr. [REDACTED] wants to be licensed under uniform pro MMA rules. Under those rules, a grounded fighter may be kicked to the body. However, Mr. [REDACTED] simply does not have the ability to return kicks when his opponent is standing. Also, as noted above his opponent would be restricted from using kicks to the head because uniform rules prohibit kicks to the head of a grounded fighter.

If one were to change the interpretation and consider Mr. [REDACTED] stump portion as equal to the sole of his foot, his starting position would be "standing", not grounded. That would create additional risks. Under present pro rules applied to Rage in the Cage events, standing fighters may be kicked to the

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head. With Mr. [REDACTED] head being only a little higher than the waist level of his opponent, he would be a much easier target for powerful leg strikes.

In January 2011, I was contacted by the President and several other members of the Association of Boxing Commissions regarding MMA fighters who have prosthetic legs. I related to them the same history and concerns described above. The ABC may put this issue before its Medical Commission for the 2011 ABC meeting in Washington D.C.

In sum, I do not believe that Mr. [REDACTED] participation as a professional MMA fighter would be consistent with the Commission's and the public's interest in safety and fairness or with the best interests of the sport. (A.R.S. §5-227.B.)