

The general purpose of this **Referee's Manual** is to establish criteria to be followed in all professional boxing contests held in the United States. This manual will aid in the **uniformity and consistency** in actions, responsibilities, duties and total performance of all Professional Boxing Referees.

It is hoped that each referee will take the time to read this manual to ensure that the control of each bout and the physical protection of each boxer are always maintained.

GENERAL MECHANICS

The referee has the sole responsibility of controlling the action of the boxers in the ring. By immediately establishing the respect of the boxers, the referee's job becomes easier and a greater effort will be put forth by the boxers as a result.

Primarily, the basic functions of the referee are to protect the boxers from serious injuries, enforce the rules and regulations in a fair and consistent manner and to see that these rules are obeyed by each boxer and to maintain control of the action at all times.

A referee should say what he means and mean what he says.

The referee should avoid close contact with the boxers and should maintain his position as far away from the boxers as possible. The referee should utilize the perimeter of the ring and continue to move in a graceful manner.

He should not interfere with the boxers by over-playing his part.

When either or both of the contestants commence holding and/or fouling, the referee should immediately take the necessary action required to stop and prevent any such further tactics. Not all rule violations require immediate interruptions of the action; some can be more efficiently handled at the conclusion of the round in the corner. The referee should be discrete in counseling and cautioning the boxers during a round and avoid making a scene with his warnings.

All warnings should be clear and direct.

The referee should not allow his attention, actions, and decisions to be diverted and/or influenced by emotionally involved spectators, nor should he engage them in conversations.

The referee should move around the ring in a smooth manner; he should not bounce or give the appearance by his actions that he is also boxing. If possible, the referee should try to maintain the pace of the circling boxers, maintaining a side view of both boxers which allows the referee to observe a greater degree of the offenses and defenses of both.

UNIFORM APPEARANCE

Gray or blue shirt (either short or long sleeves) with black or blue bow tie. Dark blue or black pants – If wearing a belt the color should be black and be careful of the size of the belt buckle. Shoes should be “boxer-type” and preferably black.

- ✓ Plastic gloves can be worn.
- ✓ Hair should be neatly groomed; nails cut, and no jewelry (rings, watches) should be worn during your work.
- ✓ No gum chewing while in the ring.
- ✓ Light meal 4/5 hours before – no alcohol/medications
- ✓ Be physically fit “look well” – perform well

PRE-FIGHT

Arrive early – at least one hour before the bouts and check in with Commission to get the bouts you are working and to see if there are any concerns/observations the Commission may have about a particular bout or boxer. Ask questions about the boxers such as: Do they speak/understand English or are any boxers making their pro debuts? This is a good time for you to sit down and review the rules that will be in effect that night.

Go to the dressing rooms with a Commission representative – Talk to all of the boxers – Ask who is their Chief Second, this is the guy you are going to work with. Give them a general review of the rules and how you work and what is expected of them and what they can expect of you. Be very clear on the rules that will be in effect that night. Always ask if there are any questions or concerns.

At ring-side: Check the ropes – Lowest rope should be a little looser, (to cushion a fallen boxer’s head) Canvas clean/dry, corner post and all pads are secured. Look to see if any press, photographers/cameras are crowded to close at ring-side. If there is a problem contact the Commission immediately. Put your towel in the neutral corner.

Know the location of the:

- ❖ **Doctor** -- Introduce yourself-make sure you guys are on the same page.
- ❖ **Timekeeper** -- Ask to hear 10-second pound and bell he will be using that night- become familiar with this sound.
- ❖ **Judges**
- ❖ **Commission**
- ❖ **Inspectors**

DRESSING ROOM - Key Issues

The referee is to check the boxer's appearance and equipment to determine if it is in compliance with commission rules and best practices. Inspect the mouthpiece, the trunks (anything in these trunks that may cause a problem), the protective cup (especially the height of the cup) - also look for any type of jewelry or piercings or temporary tattoos.

Any Issues should be rectified immediately with the commission

Briefly go over fouls in general, but explicitly discuss the three most common fouls and harmful fouls Head butting, Low Blows and Holding.

Let all Boxers know what your verbal commands and hand signals will be.

Be specific on how you will break or separate the boxers.

Be specific on your knockdown procedures and explain exactly what the boxers need to do if they suffer or score a knockdown.

You should make it very clear that they are not to strike an opponent when they are down, that they must go to a neutral corner after scoring a knockdown and are not to leave that corner until they are called out.

End of the Round Procedure- It is good practice to take advantage of the ten-second announcement towards the end of the round by getting in good position so that you will be centered to the boxers at the actual end of the round. Get in a centered position, call out "TIME!" and concurrently announce the end of the round with a hand signal. Explain this to the boxers.

Mouthpiece Procedure- Explain to the boxers how you will handle these situations and the consequences of spitting out a mouthpiece. Make it a point to mention that if the mouthpiece becomes dislodged concurrent with a knockdown, it is your immediate decision to make whether the mouthpiece was spit out or it became dislodged because of natural bout action. Make sure the Boxers know that you will decide when there is a "Lull in the action" and when the mouthpiece will be replaced.

IN THE RING

When the boxers come into the ring:

- ❖ Check boxers for mouthpiece; protective cup (at the belly button); trunks (are they regulation-is there anything on them that could cause a problem) and gloves which should be taped and initialed by an inspector (tape should be smooth, not curled) – make sure the gloves are in good condition, no grease or substance on them and that they are the same size!!
- ❖ Keep boxers and handlers in their own corner area after initially entering ring- Don't allow any taunting by either boxer – Use inspectors if necessary.

Instructions in the middle of ring after boxers are announced – Boxers must come to the center “clean”, no robes or hats. Check to see that there is no excessive Vaseline or other substances on face or body nor any jewelry, belly button rings, or earrings. Boxers should only be accompanied to the center of the ring by their chief second.

General instructions in the middle of the ring (should be brief and to the point) such as:

- ❖ Obey my commands at all times
- ❖ Protect yourself at all times
- ❖ Any questions
 - Make sure boxers touch gloves and go directly back to corners – there should be no taunting by either boxer – You as the Ref must set the stage!

THE BOUT

- ❖ Remember to use basic commands: BOX-STOP-BREAK, especially if boxers do not speak English (see Spanish Commands – Attached)
- ❖ Use basic signals to signify a butt, excessive holding or low blows
- ❖ Be in the CENTER of the ring prior to the bell ringing to start each round and always keep boxers in the corner until the bell. Also, always stay in center until both boxers go back to corners at end of each round (to eliminate excessive taunting or late punches/actions).
- ❖ Keep a window between boxers – Position is important: never get caught behind the boxers or the action – try to close the gap when a boxer is on the ropes, remember you can call a knock-down if the ropes are the only thing holding the boxer up.

It's all about Concentration and Positioning.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR FEMALE BOXERS

Female boxers shall box in boxing shorts, abdominal guard, foul proof cup, body shirt, shoes and mouthpiece. Breast protectors are optional.

Boxers shall wear NO facial cosmetics. Hair shall be secured with soft and non-abrasive materials.

The weight classes shall be the same as used by male boxers.

No female professional boxing contest shall be scheduled for more than ten (10) rounds, although going to 12 rounds has been used in various commissions. Each round shall be two (2) minutes in duration and have a one (1) minute rest period between rounds.

Glove weight shall be the same as used by male boxers.

THE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND THE BOXERS

Experience and instinct will give you the sense of knowing when to move in closer and when to stay at a prudent distance.

There is no set rule, but there are some situations where a Referee should shorten his distance to the boxers. One is the case where you have a tough bout involving two hard punchers and they are infighting.

Another case is when the boxers are boxing close to the ropes or a corner and there is a possibility that they may get into a clinch or a boxer may get tangled up on the ropes. Referees should be alert to their exact position so as not to interfere with or be trapped between the ropes and the boxers.

Generally, the Referee should shorten his distance in the following cases:

- When boxers are moving towards or fighting on the ropes.
- When the boxers mainly resort to infighting/holding/clinching.
- When the fighting ability of one of the boxers is in doubt and a stoppage may be imminent.
- When there is a good deal of noise and his verbal commands may not be easily heard.
- At the sound of the timekeeper signaling that ten seconds are left in the round.

THE KNOCK DOWN/KNOCK OUT

- ❖ In the event of a knockdown – make sure standing boxer goes to the farthest Neutral Corner and then pick up the count from the Time Keeper – DO NOT RUSH!
- ❖ Keep an eye on the standing boxer and make sure he stays in neutral corner. If boxer comes out STOP THE COUNT, put boxer back into neutral corner and then resume counting. Refs should practice counting!!
- ❖ A knockdown can also be scored if the ropes are the only thing holding the boxer up.

During this count, the referee should ensure that the fallen boxer can clearly see and hear his count. (Remember, if during the count the standing boxer comes out of a neutral corner, the referee shall stop the count and instruct the boxer back into the corner. The referee shall then resume his count over the fallen boxer.) If the fallen boxer arises anytime before the count of (10), the referee, after giving the full (8) count, shall wipe the fallen boxer's gloves of any debris and take a hard look at the boxer's eyes and assess his over-all physical condition so as to determine if the fight should continue.

If there is any doubt on whether to stop the contest take the boxer over to the ring-side physician for his opinion. (Signal time-out)

- **Remember, you have this boxer's life in your hands.**

If a boxer goes down hard (knockout) and his eyes are closed or you notice his muscles twitching/spasms, you may want to end the count immediately (**time is precious**). Get the mouthpiece out – try to use the palm down technique then flick under the upper lip – less chance of boxer biting down on your hand. If boxer is bleeding through the mouth or vomiting, try to turn the boxer on his side so that the fluid can be released. Always stay with a hurt boxer until the doctor or his cornermen come into the ring.

- Remember – during count if the boxer gets up then falls again, resume the original count. If a boxer tries to lean on you to get up gently, but firmly, push them away. Always count in a clear and straightforward manner and if need be, bend down to a fallen boxer so he can hear you. Also, always use your hand signals (fingers) during your count—don't just rely on your voice.
- Remember a Boxer who is knocked out of the ring (platform onto floor) has 20 seconds to return with NO ASSISTANCE from his corner people.

AFTER THE KNOCKDOWN

Wipe the boxer's gloves – get the boxer's attention. Look into their eyes – are they looking right back at you?

Ask the boxer some questions to determine their current status. This is a face-to-face conversation. Ask the boxer to walk towards you – is he steady?

The main thing is to make sure he can protect himself – then stay close to see if the other boxer tries to finish. Check the injured boxer between rounds – see how he walks back to the corner. Have the doctor check the boxer. Stay close at the beginning of the next round in order to see if the boxer has recovered or if the other boxer is coming in to close the show. (Also see section on stopping the bout.)

Although there is **NO (3) knockdown** rule, it is strongly recommended that a referee take a hard close look at any boxer who has been down (3) times in any round. Also remember there is **NO saving by the bell in any round**.

- The referee can stop the contest at any time if he believes that one boxer is in any type of physical danger or if he wants a doctor to examine either boxer. The referee should always feel free to use the ring-side physician to determine a boxer's medical/physical condition.

BREAKING THE BOXERS

When physically breaking the boxers, this should be done at an angle (between the boxers) NOT from behind. Never walk through the boxers after a break, simply take a full step straight back and assume your normal distance. When breaking boxers, be sure to break at a full arms length and break both boxers, not just one.

THE MOUTHPIECE RULE

All boxers should have (2) mouthpieces. If a boxer loses a mouthpiece (gets lost in the stands/crowd) and he has no second piece, he loses by TKO.

Replace the mouthpiece at the lull in action: At your discretion—call time-out, put other boxer into the neutral corner, give the mouthpiece to the corner that should clean it and replace it – Remember, the corner not the Ref should always replace the mouthpiece. When replaced, always ask the boxer – Are you ready? If warranted, you may issue a warning at this time.

The Ref must replace the mouthpiece after a knockdown – stay with your mandatory (8) count. After the count determine if the boxer can continue. If he can, then call time out and replace the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece flies out into the stands – go to the corner for the second one – don't waste time looking for the first one.

If the mouthpiece continues to come out, WARN the Boxer, then (generally) unless the mouthpiece comes out from a punch, PENALIZE the boxer – this is at the Referee's discretion.

- **Make sure each boxer starts each round with a mouthpiece!!**

PENALIZING-POINTS

Generally a ref would give (2) soft warnings with hand signals – especially if dealing with a foreign boxer – then (1) hard warning where the ref would call time, stop the action and clearly talk to the offending boxer about his actions.

If you give a hard warning that basically means that at the next infraction you will deduct points – then you must deduct points. Let the judges and Commission personnel know IMMEDIATELY what actions you are taking – BE CLEAR, mean what you say and say what you mean.

*Obviously a ref can take points at any time based on the severity of a foul. In general it is always best to WARN before taking points.

ACCIDENTAL BUTT OR LOW BLOW – OR ANY ACCIDENTAL FOUL

- ❖ Let both boxers, their corners and Commission know as soon as possible that the butt/foul was accidental or at the very least this should be done at the end of the round.
- ❖ A boxer has (5) minutes to continue – if he cannot and (4) rounds have been completed, then go to the judge's cards. Partial rounds are scored. If (4) rounds have not been completed then it is ruled a No Decision.
- ❖ If the boxer can't continue after (accidental) low blow after a (5) minute rest, the bout ends and he loses – a boxer cannot win on an accidental low blow.
- ❖ If the boxer goes down from a body shot and claims low blow, YOU as the ref must make an immediate call. If you pick up the count then the boxer should know you are considering it a legal blow – MAKE IT CLEAR, non injured boxer goes to neutral corner.

INTENTIONAL FOUL AND INJURY

Use the ring-side doctor to determine the severity of the injury. Points should be taken if you rule it intentional – Remember under the Uniformed Rules there is a mandatory (2) point deduction if an intentional foul causes an injury.

Even if it is an intentional foul, the injured boxer can still have (5) minutes to continue – don't rush to have the boxer make a call – always consult with the doctor. If the bout continues and the "same" injury becomes aggravated in the later rounds by fair blows then we shall go to the judge's scorecards. If after (4) rounds have been completed and the injured boxer is ahead, he wins. If he's behind, it is ruled a technical draw. Again, partial rounds are scored.

TAPE COMES LOOSE

Stop the bout (call time) and have the corner cut the tape or see if you can tuck the loose tape back into the glove. Generally, don't let the corner re-tape at this time—try to wait until the round ends and then remind them to re-tape the glove—Let them waste their minute rest time on the tape and not waste action time during a round.

HEAD BUTT/LOW BLOW MECHANICS

- Secure a safe distance and assume a centered position to the boxers and call "TIME!"
- Assure that the boxers are completely apart
- Examine both boxers quickly and take appropriate action to include notifying the commission
- If the fouled boxer needs medical attention, summon the Ring-side Physician while ushering the other boxer to the furthest neutral corner
- Caution both boxers for head butting/low blows and/or take appropriate action.
- Call time back in.
- Have boxing resume immediately.
- You may call the Ring-side Physician to examine the boxer or for consultation.

STOPPING THE BOUT

No question that this can be the toughest call for the referee. Look for signals such as—Are the boxer's hands up? Is his head snapping back from the punches? How are his legs (wobbly-sturdy)? When stopping a bout, try to step in between the two boxers while trying to block the injured boxer from any further punches—always protect the injured boxer.

Always stay with a hurt boxer until his corner or doctor comes into the ring to attend to him. Never leave a hurt boxer—he may fall again.

Whenever a boxer is knocked down, the fallen boxer shall take a mandatory (8) count. If a knockdown occurs, the referee shall direct the standing boxer to the farthest neutral corner and then pick up the count from the timekeeper. The referee may stop this count at anytime if in his judgement the fallen boxer is in immediate physical danger. If this should occur, the referee shall immediately signal for the doctor and rule the bout over via knockout.

During this count the referee should ensure that the fallen boxer can clearly see and hear his count. (Remember, if during the count the standing boxer comes out of a neutral corner, the referee shall stop the count and instruct the boxer back into the corner.) The referee shall then resume his count over the fallen boxer. If the fallen boxer arises anytime before the count of (10) the referee, after giving the full (8) count, shall wipe the fallen boxer's gloves of any debris and take a close, hard look at the boxer's eyes and assess his over-all physical condition so as to determine if the fight should continue.

Ask the boxer questions. Do you want to continue? Put your hands up! Make sure the boxer knows you are speaking directly to him; this should be a face-to-face conversation. Before you let the fight continue, you must be sure that this boxer can defend himself.

- Remember throwing the towel in from the corner cannot stop a professional boxing match. If this does occur—call time-out, get the towel out of the ring, look who threw the towel – Is the corner on the apron? If so, then stop the bout.

CUTS

Although you as the ref can stop a bout at anytime, it is generally preferable to consult with the ring-side physician to determine the severity of all cuts. (If he says no—it's NO) Remember call time out—put the other boxer in the neutral corner and take injured boxer to doctor. Do not let his corner aid this boxer, they are not allowed to touch their boxer unless requested by the doctor.

MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR REFEREES

General Procedures:

- If possible, give the corner time between rounds to try to stop the bleeding before you make your judgement. Have the ring-side physician also use this time to examine the cut.
- All cuts within the orbit of the eye should be stopped.
- If the cut is above the orbit and will impair vision, it should be stopped.
- If the eye is swollen enough that the examination is difficult, stop the bout.
- Although the Referee is the sole arbitrator of the bout and can stop the bout at anytime, you should utilize the ring-side physician to determine the severity of any injury, especially facial/eye cuts.

ETHICS

All referees should be familiar with the Federal Law regarding disclosures and conflicts of interest. (See attached.)

Generally, if it seems wrong or appears wrong it probably is. Don't wait for something to come out—be upfront if you feel there may be a conflict. Don't call promoters to get assignments nor have personal relationships with the boxers or any licensees that could put you in an awkward position come fight time.

There is also a definite need for fellowship between all officials. **Officials should be supportive of one another and render assistance whenever possible.** Do not discuss the merits of another official's decision. They may be subject to criticism today; you may be subject to criticism tomorrow.

***BE PROFESSIONAL AT ALL TIMES.**

GENERAL SUMMARY

- A referee should be thoroughly knowledgeable of the boxing rules and regulations. He must, without hesitation, be able to control his actions and take the proper action to handle and control all situations as they arise.
- The referee has the power to stop a contest at any stage and render a decision if he considers it too one-sided or feels one boxer is in immediate physical danger.
- Be at the arena well in advance and report to the Commission for any instructions.
- Give instructions to the boxers in their dressing rooms in the presence of Commission personnel.
- Inspect the ring: check ropes for looseness; check canvas and apron. Report any problems to the Commission.
- Prior to the beginning of the bout, the referee must check where the following are seated; Judges, Commission members, Doctor and Timekeeper.
- Check the fighter's equipment: gloves, mouthpiece, protective cup, color of trunks, etc.
- Final instructions to the boxers in the ring should be very brief as they have already been briefed in the dressing rooms. Boxers must touch gloves at this time and before the final round.
- In the event of a knockdown, the referee will send the boxer scoring the knockdown to the farthest neutral corner. While counting over the fallen opponent, the referee must position himself so he can see that the other boxer stays in this neutral corner.
- If the ropes are the only thing preventing a boxer from falling while being hit by the opponent, then the referee may rule it a knockdown and start counting.
- The referee must never walk between the boxers after breaking a clinch.
- In the event a boxer violates the rules, the referee must quickly take charge by giving a stern warning or deduct points; otherwise it will be meaningless. If the boxer continues to violate the rules, the referee must quickly take charge by enforcing the rules. All warnings and/or cautions should be loud and clear.
- When a point is deducted because of a violation of the rules, the bout will be stopped immediately with boxers, judges and Commission members being notified. This should be done quickly and clearly.
- If a foul has been committed and after consultation with the doctor, the referee can grant the injured boxer a reasonable length of time to recover before resuming the contest, not to exceed (5) minutes.

- A doctor should always be called when cuts are severe or if there is any doubt. **Always take a cut boxer directly to the doctor, not his corner.** When doing this, call time-out and make sure the other boxer is in a neutral corner.
- At the end of each round, the referee must take all of the scoring cards to and hand them to the Commission representative.
- Assist ring announcer in correct announcement of the result of the contest, ie. KO, TKO, Technical Draw, Stopped by Referee, No Decision, etc.
- Refrain from getting into any discussions with seconds, managers or public at ring-side. Watch what you say—especially if wearing a mic for television.
- Refrain from making any comments about bouts to ring-siders or press. Before making any statements to the press, the referee must check-in with the Commission.
- Don't coach the boxers – this is not your job!!
- Stay at the ring area at all times until dismissed by the Commission.

PL 104-272 "Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996"

PL 106-210 "Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act"

An Act

To provide for the safety of journeymen boxers, and for other purposes,
To reform unfair and anti-competitive practices in the professional boxing industry

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996".
Amended by the "Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act."

SEC. 14. REQUIRED DISCLOSURES FOR JUDGES AND REFEREES.

A judge or referee shall not be entitled to receive any compensation, directly or indirectly, in connection with a boxing match until it provides to the boxing commission responsible for regulating the match in a state a statement of all consideration, including reimbursement for expenses that will be received from any source for participation in the match.

SEC. 16. JUDGES AND REFEREES.

No person may arrange, promote, organize, produce, or fight in a professional boxing match unless all referees and judges participating in the match have been certified and approved by the boxing commission responsible for regulating the match in the state where the match is held.

→ SEC 17 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.

(a) **Regulatory Personnel.** -- No member or employee of a boxing commission, no person who administers or enforces state boxing laws, and no member of the Association of Boxing Commissions may belong to, contract with, or receive any compensation from, any person who sanctions, arranges, or promotes professional boxing matches or who otherwise has a financial interest in an active boxer currently registered with a boxer registry. For purposes of this section, the term "compensation" does not include funds held in escrow for payment to another person in connection with a professional boxing match. The prohibition set forth in this section shall not apply to any contract entered into, or any reasonable compensation received, by a boxing commission to supervise a professional boxing match in another state as described in section 4.