



**WBO INTERNATIONAL BOARD
RESOLUTION**

In the Matter of WBO Jr. Heavyweight Participant – Anthony Martinez

Parties:

Mr. Alfredo Martinez
Manager of behalf of Anthony Martinez

ISSUE PRESENTED

Whether the WBO International Board has jurisdiction and the authority to review an official decision registered by Florida State Boxing Commission pertaining to the “Vacant” WBO International Jr. Heavyweight Championship Contest between Anthony Martinez and David Light held on Saturday, May 7, 2022, at the Hialeah Park Racing & Casino, Hialeah, Florida, United States of America. We respond in the negative and explain our ruling below.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On Saturday, May 7, 2022, the “Vacant” WBO International Jr. Heavyweight Championship Title was contested between participants Anthony Martinez and David Light at the Hialeah Park Racing & Casino in Hialeah, Florida, United States of America. The official bout result registered by the Florida State Boxing Commission was David Light winning via knockout (KO) in round one (1).

Thereafter, on Monday, May 9, 2022, the WBO confirmed receipt of written correspondence via email by Mr. Alfredo Martinez, on behalf of WBO Participant Anthony Martinez requesting an official review by the WBO pertaining to the subject matter bout, most notably an alleged foul committed by WBO Participant David Light, which resulted in Martinez losing via KO in round one (1). In support thereof, Mr. Martinez argues that (i) Team Martinez believes that David Light landed an illegal rabbit punch to the back of Martinez’s head during the last seconds of round one (1) and unfortunately, caused a knockdown and a later knockout of Martinez in this championship contest; (ii) Team Martinez possess video, photo and medical documentation post-fight which all point and show that Martinez received a rabbit punch causing an injury to the back of his head; (iii) Martinez suffered a concussion and so far no internal bleeding in the brain; (iv) Team Martinez submitted a formal letter to the Florida Boxing State Athletic Commission regarding this matter; (v) are in the process of obtaining legal counseling to help us with these circumstances; and lastly (vi) request a full review of the decision or validity of the results of this bout.

Now, having this Board considered the facts herein, having considered the arguments submitted by Team Martinez, and having carefully reviewed the subject matter bout via “YouTube” and having reviewed the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests their applicability, and enforcement in this matter, and having the power, authority, and discretion conferred by our rules, it is hereby determined as follows:

APPLICABLE PROVISIONS

All WBO Participants agree that they are bound by the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests.



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Section 35(f)ⁱ provides in relevant: “These Regulations apply to all WBO Participants. The term WBO Participant includes, but not limited to, WBO World Champions and WBO World Championship Contenders. All WBO Participants who participate in any WBO sanctioned activity do so on the express condition that such WBO Participant is bound by and subject to these WBO World Championship Rules and all WBO Rules and Regulations”. [Emphasis Added].

As such, this Board has jurisdiction and the authority conferred by its rules to resolve the matter at issue accordingly but is limited to whether a “Return Fight” is warranted under the present scenario.

The WBO World Championship Committee’s authority to consider the issue at hand is governed under Sections 1(b)(18), 18, and 26, respectively of the WBO Rules and Regulations of World Championship Contests, which provide, in relevant as follows:

SECTION 1. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE

(b) The World Championship Committee shall have the following powers and discretion:

(18) To recommend to the WBO Executive Committee whether a direct return fight should be authorized

The provision governing “Return Fight” and the applicable criteria is set forth in Section 18 of our governing provisions, which in relevant, states as follows:

SECTION 18. RETURN FIGHTS

The WBO shall not allow direct return fights unless recommended by the WBO World Championship Committee and authorized by the Executive Committee. A direct return fight is a fight between the new Champion and the former Champion from whom the new Champion won the title or between a new Champion and the losing contestant in a Vacant title fight before the new Champion defends his title against any of the other fighters classified in his category. If the World Championship Committee determines either that the resolution of a Championship Contest was substantially irregular, or that there was a clear misapplication of the rules of boxing resulting in a manifest unfairness such that in either case the World Championship Committee determines that the Championship was substantially unresolved, the World Championship Committee may, in its discretion, recommend a direct return fight, which may be authorized only by the majority vote of the Executive Committee. The World Championship Committee may recommend a direct return fight for any other circumstance; in that event a direct return fight shall only be authorized by the affirmative vote of not less than 75% of the Executive Committee.

As to the provisions governing fouls incur during a bout, Section 26 of the WBO Regulations, states, in relevant as follows:

SECTION 26. FOULS



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- (a) *The WBO adopts and incorporates by reference the Uniform Rules of the Association of Boxing Commissioners (the Uniform Rules) as amended from time to time for all WBO World Championships and Regional or Zone Championships.*
- (b) *Each WBO Participant acknowledges that the Uniform Rules are published on the Association of Boxing Commissioners' website. Each WBO contestant shall acknowledged receipt of the Uniform Rules.*

Whereas the governing rules in the subject matter bout were the ABC Unified Rules of Boxing. Therefore, as to who determines whether a punch is legal or illegal, intentional, or unintentional such decision lies exclusively within the discretion of the appointed Referee. Therefore, the relevant ABC Unified Rule in the present case is as follows:

ABC UNIFIED RULES OF BOXING

As Approved August 25, 2001. Amended August 2, 2002, Amended July 3, 2008.
Amended July 24, 2012, Amended July 29, 2014, Amended August 3, 2016

2. *The Referee is the sole arbiter of a bout and is only individual authorized stop a contest. This rule shall not preclude a video or other review of the decision under the procedures of the applicable regulatory authority if a protest is filed claiming a clear rule violation.*

ANALYSIS

The first issue before this Board is whether the WBO has jurisdiction and authority to review an official result registered by the Florida State Boxing Commission pertaining to the "Vacant" WBO International Jr. Heavyweight Championship Contest between Anthony Martinez and David Light.

The WBO lacks subject matter jurisdiction to affirm, reverse, or modify an official decision registered by local boxing commissions, which are the entities authorized under State law to regulate professional boxing matches. From the outset, we must stress that all results registered by boxing state commissions are presumed correct and the burden of proof to determine otherwise lies on the party claiming the contrary.

In the present case, the Florida State Boxing Commission regulated the bout, and appointed the officials and therefore, this matter shall be addressed directly to the foregoing regulatory body. In other words, the controversy before this Committee is a matter that lies exclusively under the jurisdiction and authority of the Florida State Boxing Commission. In support of this contention is the above-referenced section of the ABC Unified Rules of Boxing, which clearly states that the Referee is the sole arbiter of the bout and the only individual authorized to stop a contest. Nonetheless, this rule permits an affected participant to file the corresponding claim (review) of the decision under the applicable procedures of the local supervising commission.



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Now, the second issue before this Board is whether the events that transpired during the bout were substantially irregular or that there was a misapplication of the rules of boxing resulting in a manifest unfairness, such that in either case, the WBO determines that the Championship was substantially unresolved. Having this Board carefully reviewed the bout via a “Youtube,¹” video clip, we strongly believe that the criteria set forth in the applicable provision do not warrant a “Return Fight.” In support thereof, we stress that it is an undisputed fact that the Referee as the sole arbiter of the bout, determines whether the punch subject to the controversy was a “rabbit punch” and therefore illegal. The Referee ruled it was a legal punch and therefore, we must defer to his ruling and discretion as it is presumed correct.

Therefore, based on the foregoing, this Board regrettably cannot grant a “Return Fight” between Anthony Martinez and David Light for the WBO International Jr. Heavyweight Championship Title. Nonetheless, today’s ruling shall not be construed as limiting Martinez’s right to pursue his claims directly with the Florida State Boxing Commission under the respective rules and regulations.

DECISION - WBO INTERNATIONAL BOARD

Now, having carefully reviewed and appraised the facts stated herein, having examined the arguments submitted by Team Martinez and having examined our governing rules and regulations, this Board resolves as follows:

1. The WBO International Board hereby rules:
 - a) Anthony Martinez’s request for review is hereby denied.
 - b) This “Resolution” is definitive, final, and enforceable.
 - c) The WBO International Board reserves the right to issue all further rulings, deem necessary, helpful, and convenient to accomplish the purposes, policies, and intent of the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests, including serving the best interests of the sport, the fighters and the WBO.

This is a final decision of the WBO Board. The affected WBO participant may appeal such determination to the Complaint and Grievance Committee as per Rule 34, which as per Article 3(e) of the WBO Appeals Regulation, must be submitted in writing to the WBO President within fourteen (14) days of this decision as its sole and exclusive remedy.

Dated: May 23, 2022
San Juan, Puerto Rico

WBO INTERNATIONAL BOARD
By: Leon Panoncillo, Jr.
Vice Chairman/WBO International Board

¹ Anthony Martinez vs. David Light “YouTube” fight video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWb1qT2qxGI>



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Cc: Francisco Valcárcel, Esq./President
Luis Batista Salas, Esq./Championship Committee

1056 Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 711
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00927
Ph: (787) 765-4628 Fax: (787) 758-9053
Email: www.wboboxing.com

ⁱ See, WBO Regulation §35(f).