

Stop The Insanity - Enough is Enough

Written by Scott Mallon

Tuesday, 31 January 2006 19:00

Champion - Superior to all others, one that is clearly superior, holding first place or prize.

Who's the heavyweight champion of the world?

Ask this question – most people haven't a clue.

If the definition of a champion is a person who holds first place or prize or is clearly superior, who is “the champion” if ten different organizations all claim to have their own?

Answer: Whoever is *The Ring* magazine champion.

As ESPN's Dan Rafael once pointed out, “the only, truly important belt is *The Ring* magazine title.”

Recently, the Editor-in-Chief of *Ring*, Nigel Collins, issued a message to boxing's champions on behalf of the magazine:

KEEP YOUR MONEY!

The Ring's championship belt doesn't cost anything. (Other organizations charge upwards of \$2000 for a belt that can be made for a few hundred dollars.)

The Ring charges no sanctioning fees.

The Ring has no interim champions.

The Ring has no “Super” champions.

The Ring has no “made-up” titles to extract more sanctioning fees.

The Ring doesn't arbitrarily strip its champions or give titles.

The Ring helps restore credibility to championship boxing - the WBC, WBA, WBO and IBF do the opposite.

The Ring is not a puppet of Don King and/or Jose Sulaiman or any other organization.

***Ring Magazine's* Championship Policy**

“Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between *The Ring's* number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

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There are only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight, or is defeated in a championship bout.”

Current *Ring Magazine* Champions

Heavyweight – Vacant, #1 – Chris Byrd
Cruiserweight – O’Neil Bell
Light Heavyweight – Antonio Tarver
Super Middleweight – Vacant, #1 – Joe Calzaghe
Middleweight – Jermain Taylor
Jr. Middleweight – Vacant, #1 – Roman Karmazin
Welterweight – Carlos Baldomir
Jr. Welterweight – Ricky Hatton
Lightweight – Diego Corrales
Jr. Lightweight – Vacant, # 1 – Manny Pacquiao
Featherweight – Vacant, #1 – Juan Manuel Marquez
Jr. Featherweight – Israel Vasquez
Bantamweight – Vacant, #1 – Rafael Marquez
Jr. Bantamweight – Vacant, #1 – Martin Castillo
Flyweight – Vacant, #1 Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
Jr. Flyweight – Vacant, #1 – Roberto Vasquez
Strawweight – Vacant, #1 – Yutaka Niida

What Do These Letters Stand For?

First what they don’t stand for - truth, ethics, loyalty, honesty and good faith. If you were to only read what is written on the WBC’s website, you’d think it was the WBC and Sulaiman who were consistently treated unfairly.

”I am not going to let myself drown in the sea of problems, treachery, personal abuse, disillusionment, frustration, abuse of the vested interest and above all, the use of injustice,” Jose Sulaiman wrote.

The use of injustice?

No way, Jose.

The W.B.C, the W.B.A., the I.B.F. and the W.B.O answer to no one; they make, break, and bend the rules whenever it’s convenient, blatantly, and not-so-blattantly stretching the bounds of absurdity. They’ve all been a continual drain on boxing from their inception, with little give, and lots of take; yes – it’s definitely time for a change, whatever the change may be.

Ask El Presidente Sulaiman why a fighter deserves to be ranked where they are, he’ll ask you if you know of the many good deeds the WBC has done for boxers. When asked to elaborate on these deeds, he’ll change the subject.

Ask him why a female boxer is fighting for a world championship in her very first bout, and he’ll

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tell you about the WBC's commitment to safety in women's boxing or the medical congress. When you then ask how safe can it be to have someone who has never fought professionally fighting for a world title, you'll get grumbling or no response.

In other words, when you ask for specifics and proof to back up all the rhetoric, you'll get a long list of everything, including the kitchen sink – but you won't get specifics and proof.

Former heavyweight champion John Ruiz is nowhere to be found in any of the alphabet ratings. I've never been a big fan of John Ruiz, but then again, who is? That's irrelevant though. Apparently none of the big four feel he deserves to be rated in the top fifteen. The Ring has him rated at number five.

Jean-Marc Mormeck lost his title to O'Neil Bell, and just like John Ruiz, has been completely dropped from the alphabet ratings. The Ring has Mormeck rated at number three.

Apparently all of the fighters in the division are better than Mormeck. Hogwash.

After getting spanked by Winky Wright in May of 2005, Felix Trinidad announced his retirement. Despite this, he's still ranked number seven by the WBC (up one from last month) and number four by the WBA. Ring does not have Trinidad ranked.

The WBC and IBF are both non-profit organizations and thus their tax returns are public records.

Some of the WBC figures:

WBC website - \$18,027
Boxing functions - \$72,383
Office costs - \$145,131
Telephone - \$107,869
Travel - \$253,817
Committee expenses - \$45,876

Some of the IBF figures:

Boxer's Pension Fund Payable - \$3600
Marian Muhammad - \$157,000
Printing and Publications - \$16,832
Supplies - \$12,286
Telephone - \$23,521
Travel - \$127,868

Draw your own conclusions but as Jim Brady stated in his book, *Boxing Confidential*, "If you managed a McDonald's restaurant this way, you'd get fired."

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Earlier this week, it was announced WBC flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam will defend his title against Gilberto Keb Bass. The fight is scheduled for February 16th in Chainart, Thailand and is the thirteenth title defense for Wonjongkam.

This fight falls under the “so what” category, as have 90% of Wonjongkam’s fights in the last two years.

Wonjongkam is closing in on Miguel Canto’s record of fourteen straight title defenses and hopes to break the record later this year. Jimmy Wilde held the title for seven years but it seems doubtful Wonjongkam will break this mark.

Wonjongkam has received harsh criticism for his lack of quality opposition of late; the Thai’s last fight against a mandatory challenger came back in November of 2003 when he defeated Hussein Hussein via unanimous decision. Since then, he’s faced handpicked opponents who have little chance of beating him.

Sure, he’s fought the WBC number two rated Daisuke Naito and also Trash Nakamura, but there are much better opponents available. With fighters like Jorge Arce (interim champ), Rosendo Alvarez, Brian Vilorio, Lorenzo Parra and Vic Darchinyan all clamoring to meet Wonjongkam, his choice of opponents at this point is inexcusable.

Equally intolerable is the WBC’s lack of action in prompting Wonjongkam to face Arce.

When asked why Wonjongkam hasn’t been forced to fight Arce, the WBC’s response was, “Pongaklek is injured.”

His camp flatly denied any injury.

When told there was no injury to Pongsaklek, Sulaiman responded as if reading from a script: “These people have misrepresented the facts to the WBC and shall be investigated. Pongsaklek and Arce must fight for the undisputed, WBC, flyweight championship.”

I’m not holding my breath for that investigation, Sulaiman. I’d be dead by now if I did.

Interim champion Jorge Arce is now scheduled to face WBC, number one rated Rosendo Alvarez. With any luck, Wonjongkam and the winner will meet later this year to determine once and for all who deserves to be champion (at least for the WBC).

Takashi Koshimoto Take Title From Chi!

In a somewhat stunning upset, Takashi Koshimoto has defeated In Jin Chi of Korea via split decision to win the WBC featherweight title.

Judges scores: 115-112, 114-113, 111-116

Upcoming fights

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Feb. 6th, 2006 - 13 Coins Restaurant, Minburi, Thailand

Pornsawat Kratingdaenggym (Porpramook)

Feb. 14., 2006 - Thailand

Sataporn Singwancha vs. TBA

Sirimongkol Singwancha vs. Hayato Takabayashi

Wandee Singwancha vs. Kenichi Onishi

Feb. 16th, 2006 - Sannburi Stadium, Chainart, Thailand

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam vs. Gilberto Keb Bass

Feb. 17th, 2006 - Nonthaburi Pier, Nonthaburi, Thailand

Veeraphol Sahaprom vs Scari Korori

Devid Lookmahanak vs. Satoshi Usui

Napapol Kiatisakchokchai vs. Issa Sewe

Thong Por Chokchai vs. Noriyuki Nakata

March 4th, 2006 - Golden Gate Arena, Tenggaraong City, Borneo, Indonesia

Chris John vs. Juan Manuel Marquez