

## Edison Miranda On the Ropes?

Written by Raymond Markarian  
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If losing a fight that expelled you out of contender status was not bad enough, then being branded a cheater--allegedly at this point--has to be the icing on the cake. Edison Miranda lost a one sided decision to Andre Ward this past Saturday. Miranda at age 28 will have to climb a steep hill to be considered a top level fighter once again, but the hardest blow he felt from the fight did not come from a speedy Ward left hook, it was a mind-numbing thump post-fight courtesy of the California State Athletic Commission.

The CSAC confirmed with me that Miranda is suspected of using an illegal coagulant following the fourth round of the fight.

After the post fight press conference on Saturday night, Virgil Hunter, Andre Ward's trainer, informed me that the Edison Miranda was suspected of using an illegal substance after round four. On Sunday, the associated press confirmed that Miranda and his team were approached by the commission about the matter immediately after the fight, and Miranda was forced to take a drug test before he left the Oracle Arena in Oakland, Ca.

On Monday, a spokesman from CSAC who did not want to be identified told me that, "This is similar to the Margarito situation. However it is not a high priority (for the California State Athletic Commission) because it is not a form of steroid that was found."

When asked to clarify the allegations put on the Colombian slugger, the spokesman stated, "The best thing I could tell you is that we are trying to investigate whether what they used in that corner was pure Vaseline." He laid out a possible penalty if Miranda and his corner are found to have used an illegal substance: "The results usually lead to a fine or suspension."

'Usually resulting in a fine,' does not mean Miranda is necessarily guilty, however the spokesman reiterated that with what the State of California already knows about the Miranda situation, this is practically an open and shut case: "I would say that Miranda will get suspended or fined most likely." TSS must add that Steve Benbasat, Miranda's manager, insists that Miranda did not use any illegal substance in the bout, and that his trainer Jose Bonilla followed CSAC guidelines all the way.

2009 has not been the smoothest year for the CSAC so far. In January, Antonio Margarito was found with an illegal form of plaster in his gloves before his fight with Shane Mosley in Los Angeles. The State revoked Margarito's boxing license for one year, tarnishing the proud Mexican's reputation as a warrior in the ring.

In March, California suspended amateur boxing in the state. "The Commission is concerned that the safety and fairness standards set forth and overseen by the national office of USA Boxing are inadequate to properly protect the health and safety of amateur fighters in California," Bill Douglas, the Assistant Executive Officer of the CSAC said in an issued statement two months ago.

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Meanwhile in April, less than three weeks after the CSAC announcement about the end of amateur boxing, the sport was back in business, on a prohibitive basis with new provisions that emphasized fighter safety. Which is great in theory, but the State continues to investigate problems in the foundation of amateur boxing.

In reality, the three week layoff created issues in boxing gyms throughout the California. There were reports that some boxing gyms lost business and some amateur fighters lost focus because of the maneuvering by the CSAC about amateur boxing. Sixteen amateur events were cancelled due to the three week layoff, so the ramifications were concrete.

Luis Farias, the Deputy Director of Communications with the CSAC, confirmed the commissions' position on the Edison Miranda matter during a phone interview with TSS Tuesday afternoon. "Well, the situation is, as you are well aware of it, an official took a brown substance. It has been sent to a lab. And we will have the lab results in a week or two weeks."

According to Farias, who did not attend the event, a state representative confiscated the substance during the bout, perhaps between the fourth and fifth round. "The minute the inspectors saw the brown substance they acted accordingly. They removed it, sealed it, and now it is in the lab," Farias said.

At least the possibly illegal item was confiscated before it could have been used later in the fight. Yet, detractors of CSAC will say, did the commission inspect the materials Miranda's camp brought into the ring before the bout, especially after the Antonio Margarito incident? If you recall, it was Nazim Richardson, Shane Mosley's trainer, that spotted the foreign object in Margarito's glove after a CSAC official had already taken a look at Margarito's hand.

The Antonio Margarito fiasco surrounded the CSAC with an aura of mismanagement. It seems that for right now, if it weren't for bad luck, the CSAC would have no luck at all.