*****Chagaev unable to fulfill local medical requirements, WBA heavyweight title fight called off*****

The rematch between WBA heavyweight champion Nikolai Valuev and Ruslan Chagaev has been called off after Chagaev was unable to fulfill the Finnish boxing federation´s medical requirements. Finnish law prevents disclosure of any further private health medical information. “Unfortunately, we have no other chance but to call the whole show off,” Sauerland Event General Manager Chris Meyer said. “Our top priority is Nikolai´s health and it could not be guaranteed.” Added Valuev: “I would have loved to make this fight but given those circumstances it is not possible.”

The possibility of a replacement opponent was explored but with less than thirty hour’s notice arrangements could not be completed with Kali Meehan or Lamon Brewster. The entire card has been cancelled.

After that bombshell, promoter Don King spoke his piece:

Don King Calls for the World Boxing Association to Declare Nikolai Valuev

As Its Undisputed Heavyweight Champion

NEW YORK—Boxing promoter Don King has asked the World Boxing Association to declare Nikolai “Giant Russian” Valuev its undisputed heavyweight champion after Saturday’s match between Valuev and WBA “champion in recess” Ruslan Chagaev at Hartwall Arena in Helsinki, Finland, was cancelled.

“The World Boxing Association should act swiftly and unequivocally to designate Nikolai Valuev as its undisputed heavyweight champion,” King said from New York just before boarding a plane bound for Helsinki where he will make his case in person. “Nikolai has been patient in waiting for Chagaev to become medically fit to fight. We applaud the WBA for making every effort to allow Chagaev to return, but it is clear now that we must move on.”

Valuev and then-WBA heavyweight champion Chagaev were scheduled to meet on July 5, 2008, but Chagaev was unable to fight after rupturing his left Achilles’ tendon. The WBA subsequently named Chagaev champion in recess and allowed Valuev and John Ruiz to fight for the WBA heavyweight championship on Aug. 30, 2008—a fight Valuev won by decision.

King is scheduled to arrive in Helsinki on Saturday morning at 8:50.

Team Ruiz demanding purse

bid for Valuev-Ruiz III

LAS VEGAS (May 29, 2009) – Upon today's announcement that Valuev-Chagaev II has been canceled, Team Ruiz is demanding an immediate purse bid in order for Valuev-Ruiz III to be held by August 30 for the World Boxing Association heavyweight title.

Two-time World Boxing Association heavyweight champion John "The Quietman" Ruiz (43-8-1, 29 KOs) lost to Valuev last August 30th in Berlin by 12-round split decision. Team Ruiz petitioned the WBA for a variety of reasons regarding the conduct of the fight and in response to the appeal, the WBA declared Ruiz as its mandatory challenger for the winner of the Valuev-Chagaev title fight scheduled for this weekend in Finland.

"Enough is enough," Ruiz said. "Chageav has never fulfilled his obligation to fight mandatory defenses. German promoters have gotten their way with the WBA in the past, but the WBA has to do the right thing – strip him of his title and drop him from the ratings. I knew something would happen because he is either injured or it's something else where he doesn't fight. That's why I've been working so hard at the gym in Las Vegas to get ready. I'm glad that this situation will finally be settled and I'll be fighting for the title."

Team Ruiz believes the consistent rumor that Chagaev has Hepatitis B was the reason he failed his medical exam, noting that since the rumors began, Chagaev hasn't fought outside of his home-base in Germany.

"We believe Chageav's 'Champion in Recess' is now completely meaningless," Ruiz' advisor Anthony Cardinale explained. "He last fought for the WBA title in April of 2007 and he owed Valuev a mandatory when he got hurt last year. Now this has occurred and he should be stripped of that title and removed from its rankings. If the rumors are true, where can he fight outside of Germany, and how was he even allowed to fight there? Valuev hasn't defended his title since August 30, 2008 and John is the mandatory challenger.

"The WBA ruled that, no excuses, Chageav had to engage in this fight or he would be stripped of his 'Champion In Recess' title. The WBA is legally obligated to follow its ruling in this regard. Without this 'Champion In Recess' nonsense, Valuev is obligated by WBA rules to defend the title against the mandatory challenger – John is the WBA mandatory challenger -- before August 30, 2009, which is why we're asking the WBA to set-up an immediate purse bid so the fight can occur in a timely fashion. "

Then Chagaev's promoter, Universum, expressed bewilderment at the turn of events:
Statement Universum Box-Promotion: Chagaev vs. Valuev cancelled

We cannot understand all this. Ruslan Chagaev is ready to box. His bloodwork has been stable for several years, including before this fight. The German Boxing Federation (BDB), the WBA and Prof. Dr. Walter Wagner, the doctor representing the Austrian Boxing Federation (FVA) which regulates cards of Sauerland Events, have all classified him as safe. They are trying to dodge Ruslan Chagaev here by hook or by crook. We will examine this situation very closely and take any steps necessary.

And late last night, the WBA sent out word regarding the situation:

*****WBA to decide in seven days*****

The WBA will make a decision about the cancelled title fight between heavyweight champion Nikolai Valuev and “champion in recess” Ruslan Chagaev in seven days. The fight was called off on late Friday evening because Chagaev could not fulfill the local medical requirements. “We are now waiting for the WBA´s decision,” Sauerland Event General Manager Chris Meyer said. “Of course Nikolai Valuev is the WBA heavyweight champion. Once again it showed that health-wise Ruslan Chagaev is not able to fight for the world title.”

Universum doubted the legitimacy of the Finnish federation´s decision. “I am healthy and ready to fight,” said Ruslan Chagaev. “I don´t understand the decision.”

It was not before Friday afternoon (after the weigh-in) that Universum turned in up-to-date blood tests which had been requested by the Finnish federation. Since the documents could not rule out a danger of infection for Nikolai Valuev, the Finns did not grant Chagaev a license for the title fight in Helsinki.