The WBC made some news today when they announced that they were making Sergio Martinez their "meritus champion" and installing Seb Zbik the new middleweight champ. Here is the release they sent out; it sort of sounds like it was crafted by the talented Mr. Luntz.

WBC MIDDLEWEIGHT DIVISION UPDATE

The WBC is proud to announce the appointment of **Sergio Martinez** as Emeritus Champion.

Sergio Martinez is a two-time world champion, as he conquered the WBC super welterweight championship and then defeated great champion **Kelly Pavlik** to conquer the WBC middleweight championship.

He then defeated **Paul Williams** with a dramatic “Knockout of the Year.”

Sergio Martinez is a true example for the youth outside the ring and is constantly active in the WBC Cares Program, visiting children’s hospitals, underprivileged children’s housing, and has a formal company in support of abused women making him a true influence all around the world.

With Sergio Martinez’ designation as Emeritus Champion and Ambassador of Good Will and Peace, WBC interim champion **Sebastian Zbik** of Germany becomes the WBC world middleweight champion and must face the mandatory contender
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

I asked someone associated with the WBC to clarify what this all means.

"Emeritus" means that he can come back and challenge for the title whenever he wants to, but he is no longer champion," I was told.

I followed up. "Would he if he wanted to be Zbik's first challenger... or Zbik has to fight his mandatory first?"

"The mandatory comes first," the insider replied. "Martinez wouldn't do it - because of his HBO commitment, of course - which is why he lost the title in the first place."

Further, I was told, the WBC discussed this development in October. Their release then read: "World champion Sergio Martinez of Argentina has a voluntary title defense scheduled against No. 2 ranked Paul Williams of the United States on November 20. The winner of this fight must fight WBC interim champion Sebastian Zbik. A final eliminator was ordered to determine the mandatory challenger between No. 3 ranked David Lemieux of Canada and No. 4 ranked Marco Antonio Rubio of Mexico. WBC Silver champion and No. 1 ranked Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. of Mexico has the option to make a mandatory challenge against the winner of Martinez-Williams, in which case the winner of Lemieux-Rubio would become the next mandatory challenger.

The insider continued, "WBC ratings say that the last middleweight mandatory defense was made by Kelly Pavlik on Feb. 21, 2009, so it is way overdue." I asked if exceptions hadn't in the past been made, so a champ was given more time to fight non mandatories...

"I can't think of any off the top of my head, but I'm sure that there have been exceptions in the past when the champion worked out a "step aside" deal with the mandatory challenger. To my knowledge, Martinez' representatives didn't try to work out a deal with Zbik. They fight for HBO, HBO has no interest in Zbik, and apparently they just go with that."

So there you go. Maybe a bit more clarity for you. You already know that Martinez will glove up on March 12, against Sergiy Dzinziruk in Connecticut.

Thoughts?

Comment on this article

FighterforJC says:

...say what?

Radam G says:

What THE FUDGE! I'm wordless. Playing boxers as Emeritus Champions is WBC's way of stopping another 30mil-d lawsuit on its arse. The We Be Collecting [Conning]-- WBC --has become genius. Danggit! No more lawsuit from the like of yours truly and Graciano Rocchigiani and a couple of other money makers, BIG-HEART breakers. Time out on WBC's stripping of title belts, just take and make. That way you won't have to declare bankruptcy and settle, settle and settle. You can just eat that CAKE. SNAKE! And keep gettin' on that corrupted mettle. Holla!

brownsugar says:

it wouldn't be so much of an insult if they gave it Pirog... but they give it to a guy that Chavez Jr is chomping at the bit to fight... Thereby possibly letting their boy into a championship fight via the back door... and no doubt fulfilling a promise to Chavez Sr. everybody wins but the fans.