

SPEAKING OF DISCLOSURE.....

Written by Charles Jay
Wednesday, 31 July 2002 18:00

Within Section 11 of the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, covering "SANCTIONING ORGANIZATIONS", the following passage appears under "Public Disclosure":

"(1) FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION FILING- A sanctioning organization shall not be entitled to receive any compensation directly or indirectly in connection with a boxing match unless, not later than January 31 of each year, it submits to the Federal Trade Commission and to the ABC--

`(A) a complete description of the organization's ratings criteria, policies, and general sanctioning fee schedule;

`(B) the bylaws of the organization;

`(C) the appeals procedure of the organization for a boxer's rating; and

`(D) a list and business address of the organization's officials who vote on the ratings of boxers.

`(2) FORMAT; UPDATES- A sanctioning organization shall--

`(A) provide the information required under paragraph (1) in writing, and, for any document greater than 2 pages in length, also in electronic form; and

`(B) promptly notify the Federal Trade Commission of any material change in the information submitted."

Section 12 deals a little more with disclosures by sanctioning bodies, this time "TO STATE BOXING COMMISSIONS".

Section 13 concerns "REQUIRED DISCLOSURES BY PROMOTERS".

Section 14 covers "REQUIRED DISCLOSURES FOR JUDGES AND REFEREES".

That's a lot of disclosure.

And there's nothing wrong with any of that; in fact, it's probably necessary.

But there seems to be an omission in the law regarding disclosures, and that is, disclosures by the ABC-member boxing commissions themselves - not only of their own laws, standards and practices, but also which government employees or appointees are ultimately responsible for enforcing those laws, rules, and standards.

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During the course of researching this report, I have endeavored to look into the specific rules by which some of these state commissions function, and more often than not I hit a dead end; while I am nearing a self-imposed deadline I find that the only way I'm going to get some factual information is by filing for it, in writing, where there is a lag time of anywhere from a week to six weeks in receiving something that should be readily available online.

Naturally, things should be different.

If members of the ABC - the Association of Boxing Commissions - are going to, at least ideally, be as strict as they are about that which is made public by entities they intend to regulate, then perhaps they should be just as forthcoming with the information they possess that is supposed to be for public consumption.

There are 43 state commissions which currently belong to the ABC. I'm fairly certain that in each one of those 43 states, there is some form of "sunshine" law in which records and information are readily available to the public.

However, of those 43 states, only 30 of them actually have a home page which is in any way, shape, or form, dedicated to the boxing commission. And of those sites, there are only TWELVE which make available both their commission's rules and regulations AND the actual names of the commissioners in a way in which they can be accessed in TWO CLICKS OR LESS (which I think is reasonable) from that home page. That means there are only 12 of 43 jurisdictions (28%) where any member of the general public can find out exactly how they conduct business in their state, or who is charged with overseeing that process.

It is disappointing that they would not feel any particular sense of urgency to stand up and lead by example.

The website for the ABC itself (

<http://www.abcboxing.com>

) gets mixed reviews. As I explored it today I found that there is a copy of the ABC Constitution (good), and also it has the national suspension list framed from where it appears on the Sports Network website (good). There is a list of boxers who have applied for Federal ID's across the country, a list of commission address and e-mails (which could use some updating), and a page where you can access legislation such as the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, or either version of the Professional Boxer Safety Act (1995 and 1996).

On the other hand, it also lists pages dedicated to "Boxers", "Managers", "Promoters", "Referees", and "Commission". On each one of these pages is the same message -

"Sorry - This page is not completed yet. Many sections of this site are still under construction"

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(not so good).

I have no idea what is supposed to be on those pages.

Below is the "scorecard" in terms of what different states are making accesible to the public. The standard we used for content is that it has to be available to access no more than TWO CLICK-THROUGHS from the commission's primary page. The categories we were looking for are those which I would consider to be essential (and I dare say, highly reasonable) - whether there is in fact a website, or something that could pass for one; the actual rules and regulations by which the commission governs fights in its state, and the names of the people responsible for such enforcement, i.e., the commissioners.

State

Website

Rules

Commissioners

ARIZONA

X ARKANSAS

X X CALIFORNIA

X X X COLORADO

X X X CONNECTICUT

X X FLORIDA

X X X INDIANA

X X KENTUCKY

X X X LOUISIANA

X X X MAINE

X MARYLAND

X X MASSACHUSETTS

X X MICHIGAN

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X X X MISSOURI

X X X NEBRASKA

X X X NEVADA

X X X NEW JERSEY

X X X NEW MEXICO

X X NEW YORK

X NORTH CAROLINA

X X OHIO

X OKLAHOMA

X X X OREGON

X PENNSYLVANIA

X X SOUTH CAROLINA

X X X TENNESSEE

X X TEXAS

X X UTAH

X X VERMONT

X X WASHINGTON

X X WISCONSIN

X X Take note - there are seven states without a boxing commission - Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Kansas, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Obviously they are not going to have a web page. The rest of the states have not established a web presence as of yet (although we know some of them, including Georgia, for instance, are in the process of doing so). As for Arizona, John McCain's home state, we found commission rules, but no web page. Go figure.

Just thought you'd like to know this stuff.

In the interest of full disclosure, of course.

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fightpage@totalaction.com

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