

NY Commission Postpones Decision To Grant Margarito License

Written by Michael Woods

Friday, 18 November 2011 12:24



The New York State Athletic Commission decided this afternoon to postpone the decision to grant Antonio Margarito a license to fight in NY.

Chair Melvina Lathan, and deputies Edwin Torres and Tom Santino, after a public session, convened behind closed door and came back with an announcement that they want Margarito to submit to an exam by a doctor chosen by the commission, if he still desires to seek a NY license. After conferring, Top Rank acquiesced to the ruling. Their attorney sought to set up a powwow between NYSAC physicians and doctors who are definitively inclined to allow Margarito to box, in lieu of the exam. Lathan nixed that concept, and held firm to her wish, to have the NY doc give the Mexican-born hitter a thorough eye exam. Top Rank gave in, and they

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will set up a session for the doc to examine Margarito. They did get one concession--the doc will travel half-way to the boxer, who is training in Mexico, so as not to disrupt his camp. The hearing was at times almost heated, with Lathan at one point sticking up for herself and the commission, saying she was "pissed" that the NYSAC was getting heat, when in fact, she said, Top Rank hadn't furnished sought-for medicals until the end of October, when they were asked for much earlier.

Top Rank head Bob Arum had an inkling that the ruling would go against Margarito, after a Wednesday session which featured for and against testimony from various doctors, he told Sports Illustrated's Chris Mannix on Thursday. So it is likely that he was surprised when the commission, led by Lathan, announced the decision to put off the up or down vote on licensing.

The commission added another curveball when Lathan said that they'd like Margarito to decide if he wants to submit to the exam within one hour. Promoter Bob Arum indicated he'd be open to that, according to Dan Rafael, but said that he wanted to OK the doctor who will do the exam. He backed off this potential sticking point quickly.

Texas would seem to be the odds on favorite to land the rematch of the 2008 bout, if Top Rank decides to move the fight, and not prolong the licensing issue, or if the boxer flunks the proposed exam. But as of now, NY is still the site for the rematch. That could change--Mannix Tweeted not long after the NYSAC announcement, "Bob Arum tells SI that Texas, Denver and Mississippi will be looked at as alternate venues. Announcement will come at end of the day." By the end of the day, or by 6 PM ET, no call had come from Top Rank that talked of moving the event, or cancelling it.

Margarito received a license to fight Manny Pacquiao there in November 2010 following the January 2009 disclosure that he attempted to use hardened hand wraps for his scheduled fight with Shane Mosley. Texas is seen as a "soft" commission, which makes sense if you're looking at it from an ideology perspective. It's something of a "live and let live" state, so their commission basically follows that: if the Texas commission gets clearance from doctors who say that Margarito's eye situation--he has a manmade lens in the right eye--shouldn't disqualifyt from fighting, then we're guessing that would pass muster with them. NY, home to the 1983 Luis Resto-Billy Collins-Panama Lewis debacle/tragedy, looks at such issues through a different lens, no pun intended.

The rumor mill has been most active the last couple weeks regarding this issue. Sides have

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been taken, with some pointing the finger at the commission, and accusing them of various motivations (they are taking a moral stand against Margarito for cheating, etc), and others at Top Rank (they dropped the ball not setting the table for the boxer to be licensed months ago). For all involved, I'd say it would be best if this deal didn't drag on much longer...

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Radam G says:

The NYBC is full of sh*t! Stop the sickling charade and let da man FIGHT! Holla!

TerryIgnacio says:

I hope that, more than wishing he pass the exam, Margarito's eye injuries are really healed. It's sad when fighters have to end their careers due to injuries. Good luck Margarito!