

Day 2 of WBC Convention

Written by The Sweet Science
Tuesday, 13 December 2011 22:41

Several items on the agenda were discussed during the Tuesday morning general assembly meeting at the WBC's 49th annual convention, led by WBC President **Jose Sulaiman** at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

The motion was approved to inform the fighters' corners of the scores after the fourth and eight rounds wherever the WBC's open scoring is not used.

The motion was approved for the use of instant replay.

Several members of the WBC Board of Governors were disappointed that no state commissioners from the United States were in attendance at the convention except **Tim Lueckenhoff**, the President of the Association of Boxing Commissions and head of the Missouri state commission.

There was also disappointment among Board members that many commissions in the United States not only continue to resist many positive changes that the WBC has recently implemented, but many state commissioners don't even acknowledge – or maybe even realize – that many of the most important rules that they currently use to make boxing a better and safer sport originated with the WBC.

President Sulaiman said, "I believe that we can reach an agreement with the commissions of the United States because we are not asking to change all of the rules and constitution, we are not asking them to get out so we can be the boss. We are just asking to be accepted to apply and implement the important safety rules of the WBC. Because if they don't, the WBC will not continue communicating with the commissions that will not accept anything.

"The United States is a country of good people, it's a country of sensitivity to the poor. When

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there are disasters, they send planes full of clothes and food. It's a different country than some of the commissions. Some of the commissions are very discriminating of foreigners, but we still hope to reach an agreement with them. Everything they have has come from the WBC. They will not even admit that we implemented them.

"One of the most important issues is the implementation of the International Visa for fighters, and I'm happy with its approval because that will eliminate the abuse of boxers. It will eliminate the pirates of the gymnasiums, taking boxers for peanuts. It will eliminate bringing them without immigration papers. And I'm very happy about the announcement of the scores after the fourth and eighth rounds, because that will reduce many of the problems that we have today. Boxing is the only mysterious sport - everybody has to wait to see what three people are saying at the end of the fight without knowing what's going to happen.

"I'm also very happy with the instant video replay, which has brought out many, many injustices of the past. Two examples are where they disqualified **Humberto Soto** for hitting someone on the canvas, when the replay showed that the punch went over his head. Then the Dawson-Hopkins fight - same thing."

Regarding the International Visa, **Mauricio Sulaiman**, Executive of the WBC and Vice President, Mexico, of the North American Boxing Federation, said, "The NABF has been working very closely with Tim Lueckenhoff of the ABC. The problem is that in Mexico and the U.S.A. and many countries is that there are many managers or so-called promoters that steal boxers and bring them into the U.S.A. or Mexico with different names and different records. Many commissions do not have computers or even fax numbers. Their communications are not always efficient. We have had some examples of that where Mexican fighters come into the U.S.A. or American fighters come into Mexico. There is a lot of work still to be done, but I think we are going in the right direction."

Tim Lueckenhoff addressed the assembly and said, "I have so many thoughts running through my mind when we talk about this because in the United States, when we first started I.D. cards, there was a huge problem, a huge undertaking. There were fighters fighting under fake names here all the time. Unfortunately, that was occurring in my state prior to me being here, but the I.D. card all but stopped that. I hate to say mixed martial arts, but we have a database currently that all our commissions use for mixed martial arts that has a picture of the fighter there. So whenever I'm approving fights, I can see who that fighter is, so when I go the the weigh-in I know what he looks like, so that's another thought we might have. There has to be a database, number one, and all of the commissions have to import information to that database. I know that costs money, I realize we're talking a world-wide situation, but it's got to start somewhere. So I

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think that's the first goal that maybe WBC should speak about - contracting with some sort of database to import this information. There's no question that our commissions in the United States, if they had a database that they could go look at a fighter coming from outside of the country and learn about that fighter's past, they would use it. There's no question in my mind.

"Now of course, there's federal law in the United States that requires us to issue an I.D. card with an I.D. number, so we're going to have our own number regardless, because our law says that. But if there's an international number, that's fine, too. It's another way to identify that fighter. By all means I support that, love to have the meeting with Joe [Dwyer] and you, Jose, along with some of our commissions.

"Working with the 78 or so commissions that are members of the Association of Boxing Commissions is like herding sheep. There's some that, I guarantee you, unfortunately if you'd ask them what the WBC or the NABF was, they wouldn't know what the hell you were talking about. What's unfortunate in our country is that we have governors that are appointing commissioners or executive directors like me that don't have a clue about boxing. They're political people, and we struggle with that on a daily basis.

"I can tell you that there are people that fight in the United States on suspension. I just got emailed a little bit ago, a fighter that fought in Florida this past weeked was on the national suspension list. The bottom line with that is that a promoter submits a name at the last minute, and the commission says, 'Aw, they're okay, there's no problem.' They don't check the database and bang, they've got a kid on suspension. That happens on a regular basis, we find it every day. We try to educate our members, I call everyone when there's a problem like that.

"By all means, I want you to know that we support that and you have an open invitation to come to our meeting next summer in Clearwater, Florida, or if we could meet at another location, I'd love to do it."

Promoter **Don Majeski** addressed the assembly about the necessity of having neutral officials for fights. He said, "Every other country in the world agrees to assign a neutral referee and judges for world title fights - the United States is the only country in the world that does not. Jose, one of the problems you have is that you're 100 steps ahead of everybody else. You need to be only five steps ahead of them so they can catch up." Mr. Majeski also referred to the recent world title fight of another organization in the U.S. where the local referee controversially penalized the champion from England two points and cost him the title.

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Arif Khatib, founder and president of the Multi Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame, announced his organization's first inductees. He said, "I thank the WBC for partnering with us to give us an opportunity to induct some of these incredible fighters into the Multi Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame. We don't look at race. We look at their accomplishments and their contributions to society.

"It is indeed my pleasure to be part of that historical process and for those of you who are here, or see it on film, be grateful because history is made today in front of you. It has not happened before and it is not likely to happen again because the WBC has gathered some of the greatest champions in the world, and they are here."

The first inductee was trainer **Eddie Futch**. His award was accepted by his wife, Eva, who said, "I really appreciate this. I know Eddie would be very honored. Thank you, Mr. Sulaiman, and the whole WBC organization, especially since Eddie was part of breaking the racial barriers traveling with

Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson

during World War II. So we've come a long way, breaking down the racial barriers. We even have an African-American President now. Americans have a habit of hiding their minorities to clean up their messes. Also, it takes a team behind a great man, and there are people here today that I want to thank –

Shelly Williams

, who assisted us,

Thell Torrance

, former partner and business manager,

Kenny Norton

is here, sadly

Joe Frazier's

lost his life. I could go on and on, but I will keep it short. Thank you, everybody."

The second inductee was **Joe Frazier**. His award was accepted by his business manager **Les Wolfe**

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The third was **Marvelous Marvin Hagler**, who accepted the award himself and said, "I apologize for my voice – traveling too much – but I'm very touched and very honored. I want to thank President Sulaiman, the WBC, also the Multi Ethnic group that is acknowledging my achievements in boxing. I believe with this award, I have accomplished everything I wanted in the boxing game and I thank you for it. This convention has been very important for all us

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fighters, Mr. President, because we deal on the outside looking in, seeing the great work that you did in protecting us all from harm, and I appreciate it - but I still think we should have 15 rounds.”

Jeff Fenech was the fourth inductee.

The fifth was **Thomas Hearn**s, who said, “Jose, does this mean I made it? It is an honor and pleasure to be here to accept this award and I thank the WBC. I never dreamed of this happening, I just dreamed of becoming a fighter, a boxer, and it wasn’t long after becoming a boxer that I dreamed of becoming a world champion. And from that dream, I decided that I wanted to hold more than just one title - I wanted to hold several titles, and that all came true for me. I thank God now, because it wouldn’t have been possible without his blessing. He gave me his blessings to become the man I am today. I thank God, I thank the WBC. Jose, my good friend, from day one has always treated me very nice, a very respectful man. I just thank the world for being behind me, for supporting me, for being there whenever I stepped into the ring and start to perform and look out and see all these people, it just made me want to do so much better. I would give you my best at all times. Today I’m very pleased, I’m honored to accept this award. I never thought in my wildest dreams that this would be happening to me in my life.”

Mike Tyson was the sixth inductee. He said, “I’m truly humbled by this moment right now, and happy to be here, and happy to be with my friend, Mr. Sulaiman, who I’ve known since I was a little boy. I’m just a simple guy, I’ve just been blessed with a lot of gifts and a lot of chances in life. I never had nothing. **Jose Napoles, Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran**, all these guys, this is what I’m about. It’s so ironic, because once I stopped fighting, I didn’t know how to be anyone, I didn’t know how to be a human being because my whole life was focused on fighting. That’s all I ever wanted to be – a world champion. That’s all I knew how to be, and I’m just gifted to be here. I’m like a little girl with a crush on a bunch of football players – this is just what is it with me. This is what I’m all about. The greatest fighters in the world, and I’m in the midst of them, and they think I’m somebody special. That’s big to me!”

Ray Leonard, the seventh inductee, said, “I can’t put into words how incredibly happy I feel being a part of such an incredible organization, team, family like the WBC. Jose, always - God bless you. You know, I have so many fond memories of trying to be somebody. To reiterate on what Mike was saying, I could never envision myself being in this position. All I knew in life as a kid was that I wanted to be special and if I had a chance, I would work hard to be that individual. Of all the sports that I could have participated in, boxing became a part of my life. I was a poor kid, I was a sad kid, introverted, but boxing was my safe haven. And in boxing, I could control the surroundings. So much has happened in my life, good, bad, ugly and indifferent, but you

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know what? When I'm with my boxing family, I feel at home. So thank you so much – God bless you all, and congratulations to all the champions.”

President Sulaiman said, “When Mike Tyson was a kid, he won his first title and I gave him his first championship belt. This is the first one – it had only two circles of flags. When he won it, he wore it the whole night going around the hotel, and the rest of the week. Somebody stole the belt from him, so on behalf of the WBC, I'm very proud to give it back. This represents the glories of your lifetime – you have it back.”

World champions and contenders in attendance at Monday morning's opening ceremonies, in alphabetical order:

Rosendo Alvarez, Saul Alvarez, Vito Antuofermo, Takahiro Aoh, Paul Banke, Iran Barkley, arif Bogere, Sh

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Francois Botha

,
Cornelius Boza-Edwards

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Livingstone Bramble

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Celestino Caballero

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Randy Caballero

,
Miguel Callist

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Hector Camacho

,
Francisco Javier Castillejo

,
Ruben Castillo

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Jorge Castro

,
Isaac Chilemba

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Miguel Cotto

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Pipino Cuevas

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Oscar de la Hoya

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Tony DeMarco

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Alexander Dimitrenko

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Roberto Duran

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Jeff Fenech

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B.J. Flores

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George Foreman

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Giacobbe Fragomeni

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Naoko Fujioka

,

Humberto Gonzalez

,

Jhonny Gonzalez

,

Marvelous Marvin Hagler

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Ricky Hatton

,

Thomas Hearn

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Joe Hupp

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Larry Holmes

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Evander Holyfield

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Julian Jackson

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Roy Jones Jr.

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Mariana Juarez

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Zab Judah

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Tomoki Kameda

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Momo Koseki

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Juan LaPorte

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Donny Lalonde

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Oscar Larios

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James Leija

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David Lemieux

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Ray Leonard

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Rafael Marquez

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Christy Martin

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Floyd Mayweather Sr.

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Mike McCallum

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Milton McCrory

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Wayne McCullough

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Manuel Medina

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Ray Mercer

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Erik Morales

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Jelena Mrdjenovich

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Eddie Mustafa Muhammad

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Jose Napoles

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Jackie Nava

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Azumah Nelson

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Toshiaki Nishioka

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Terry Norris

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Ken Norton

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Ajose Olusegun

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Carlos Ortiz

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Carlos Palomino

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Jean Pascal

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Vinny Pazienza

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Edwin Rodriguez

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Marco Antonio Rubio

,

Salvador Sanchez II

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Laura Serrano

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Earnie Shavers

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Humberto Soto

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Leon Spinks

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Mia St. John

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John Stracey

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Ismayl Sillakh

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George Tahdooahnippah

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Naomi Togashi

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Scott Welch

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Chauncey Welliver

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Krzystof Wlodarczyk

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Winky Wright

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Shinsuke Yamanaka

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Daniel Zaragoza

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Carlos Zarate

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