



**CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

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Members of the Commission

Peter R. Villegas, Chair

Dr. Vernon Williams, Vice Chair

AnnMaria De Mars

Christopher Gruwell

Douglas Hendrickson

# COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

## MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 12, 2022

10:00 a.m. - Conclusion of Business

Location:

*Teleconference*

**Commissioners Present**

Chair Peter R. Villegas

Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams

Commissioner AnnMaria De Mars

Commissioner Christopher Gruwell

Commissioner Douglas Hendrickson

**Staff Present**

Andy Foster, Executive Officer

Patrisha Blackstock, Assistant Executive Officer

Kenneth Swenson, Legal Counsel

## **OPEN SESSION**

### **Agenda Item 1 – Call the meeting to Order / Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Peter Villegas. Executive Officer (EO) Andy Foster called roll and a quorum was established.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Chairman’s Opening Remarks**

Chair Villegas offered thoughts and prayers to the family of Commissioner Hardeman’s family. Chair Villegas noted the many accomplishments of Commissioner Hardeman and called for a moment of silence to honor him.

**Agenda Item 3- Review and possible action to approve October 24, 2022 Commission meeting minutes**

Chair Villegas presented the October 24, 2022 Commission meeting minutes for approval.

*Commissioner Gruwell moved to approve the October 24, 2022 meeting minutes.*

*Vice Chair Dr. Williams seconded the motion.*

No Commission or public comments

*The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.*

**Agenda Item 4- Discussion and possible action for a meal per diem and mileage pay increase for Officials and a review of the Officials pay scale**

EO Foster presented the proposed \$46 increase for meal per diem for officials. He explained that the cost of eating out has gone up and the per diem increase would be acceptable and be in line with what the state allows.

*Commissioner Gruwell moved to approve the meal per diem increase to \$46.*

*Commissioner Dr. DeMars seconded the motion.*

No Commission or public comments

*The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.*

**Agenda Item 5- Discussion and possible action to approve the Commission's 2023 Rulemaking Calendar**

EO Foster presented the 2023 Rulemaking Calendar that is required by the Office of Administrative Law. He explained that there are currently a few rulemaking packages the Commission is working on, including the Boxers Pension Plan Requirements and the Dehydration Rehydration package. EO Foster recommended the Commission give notice to the public of the projected dates on the calendar.

*Commissioner Hendrickson moved to approve the Rulemaking Calendar.*

*Vice Chair Dr. Williams seconded the motion.*

No Commission or public comments

*The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.*

**Agenda Item 6 – Review and possible action to approve the proposed 20223 Commission meeting dates**

Chair Villegas presented the proposed 2023 Commission meeting dates and locations. They are as follows:

- Monday, March 6, 2023 (location TBA)
- Monday, June 5, 2023 (Zoom)
- Monday, September 11, 2023 (Location TBA)
- Monday, December 11, 2023 (Zoom)

*Commissioner Gruwell moved to approve the proposed 2023 Commission meeting dates.*

*Commissioner Dr. DeMars seconded the motion.*

No Commission or public comments

*The motion passed by 5-0 roll call vote.*

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Agenda Item 7 – Pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(a)(1) the Commission conducted an annual review of the Executive Officer**

**OPEN SESSION**

**Agenda Item 8 – Review and discussion of the boxing statistical report provided by BoxRec**

EO Foster explained that BoxRec is helping compile data to enable the Commission to measure how it is performing but is not yet finished. EO Foster presented the data that was available, explaining that the Commission is still below the number of events it had pre-COVID, but that it is still had the most out of all the state Commissions. He presented a graph of the Boxers Boxing Severity Index (BSI) for fights held in California and explained how the BSI is a tool for bout approvals that helps him track boxer activity and performance.. Commissioner Dr. DeMars stated that it's helpful to be able to show the public that the EO's decisions have objective criteria behind them. EO Foster provided an example of a boxer that was retired by the Commission based on his performance and BSI rating.

No further Commission comments or public comments

**Agenda Item 9 – Review and discussion of the mix martial arts statistical report provided by the Combat Registry**

EO Foster explained how his use of the BSI led to him creating the MMA Severity Index (MMASI) with help from statisticians, former officials, and the MMA Database record keeper. He explained how the MMA Database provided data for over sixty thousand MMA bouts which allowed them to select the best version of the MMASI.

Commissioner Dr. DeMars asked about information regarding concussion data and sharing that with the public. EO Foster explained that he and Vice Chair Dr. Williams were speaking to Rose Gracie about concussion data and that he was waiting for Vice Chair Dr. Williams to review and approve the information before making it public.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams explained how challenging it has been to educate the public on concussions and how the data suggests that, despite providing information to the public, it has not altered athletes' and coaches' behavior regarding concussion injury. Vice Chair Dr. Williams wants to ensure that any information the Commission provides is as accurate as possible.

No Commission or Public Comments

**Agenda Item 10 – Executive Officer's Report**

**a. Budget update for the support fund, the neurological fund, and the pension program**

EO Foster stated that the Commission will already have revenue deposits of over a million dollars in the 2022-23 fiscal year. EO Foster estimated revenue will be about \$1,050,000 by the end of the first half of the fiscal year and if that is the case the Commission will be ahead of revenue projections for this fiscal year.

**b. Report on the pending and proposed regulations**

EO Foster explained there are currently two regulation packages being processed:

- Dehydration and rehydration regulation would allow the Commission to cancel any bout in which a fighter has weighed in on event day 15% over what they weighed on weigh-in day. EO Foster predicts few if any fights will be canceled due to the regulation because it will force matchmakers and promoters to adjust matches and bout contracts according to the appropriate weight.
- Pension Plan regulation is still being worked on to include other items and to remove the break in service requirement.

Chair Villegas complemented the leadership of the Commission on their innovation and working on regulations other states have not yet considered.

**c. Status update of delegated entities**

- **California Amateur Mixed Martial Arts Organization (CAMO)**

JT Steele, President of CAMO, submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Steele explained how CAMO plans to use Herb Dean's inspector certification course at the amateur level to allow inspectors a better pathway to become inspectors with the Commission. Mr. Steele explained the training course will not be mandatory but will allow prospective inspectors more education beyond on the job training and shadowing.

Mr. Steele stated the officials pay scale increase will take effect January 1, 2023.

- **USA Boxing**

Mr. Mike McAtee, Executive Director of USA Boxing, submitted his written report to the Commission which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. McAtee explained that USA Boxing updates were late due to an employee leaving. They will be submitting an amendment to the report before the next meeting.

USA Boxing just finished their National Championships in Lubbock, TX. California had the second most participants with 14% of 840 total boxers. Mr. McAtee noted that 25% of participants were female which was up from 20% in previous years. Mr. McAtee also noted that out of 422 bouts in all 6 days of the Championships they had less than 1 knockout and credited that to EO Foster's suggestion of using minimum win percentages in addition to a minimum bout requirement. Mr. McAtee explained that using the Boxing Severity Index worked to increase the competition level and increase the health and safety of the athletes.

Mr. McAtee introduced the new board members joining USA Boxing in 2023. He also explained that USA Boxing received a \$25,000 grant for the Grant for Gyms program and awarded 50 gyms grant money. Mr. McAtee noted that the Southern California market requested a \$2 increase to annual license fees for officials and boxers. He explained this money stays within California to help run the local boxing clubs. Mr. McAtee highlighted the Junior High Performance Camp USA Boxing held in Chula Vista and the regional training facility they are working on developing.

Commissioner Dr. DeMars asked what the Grants for Gyms provides money for. Mr. McAtee explained that the Grant provides gyms with money to pay for various membership fees as well as equipment and apparel for the fighters.

- **United States Fight League (USFL)**

Jon Frank of the USFL submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Frank informed the Commission that the USFL had 6 events since the last meeting but have been combining shows with CAMO. Mr. Frank explained that all of their officials are also CAMO officials, but they decided to have one dedicated referee that works on the youth bouts due to the differing rules in both sports. Mr. Frank noted that there have been no injuries in the events they held since the last meeting. Mr. Frank explained that the USFL is moving forward with working with Cedars-Sinai Kerlan-Jobe Institute on their study of the benefits versus the risks for youth in this sport. Mr. Frank would like to add a baseline concussion testing like Impact or C3 Logix. Mr. Frank noted that the Kravis Leadership Institute is nearly complete and ready to roll out. Mr. Frank also noted that the USFL plans to reinstate their USFL Champion Ring program which would require fighters that participate in a certain number of fights. They would have to participate in the leadership program and the study to obtain the championship ring.

Mr. Frank highlighted their seventh former youth fighter, Raul Rosas Jr., who made it to the UFC. He also mentioned the 9 California athletes that qualified for the US National Team at the UFC Performance Institute Selection Camp being held in November.

- **International Kickboxing Federation (IKF)**

Toni Fossum of IKF submitted her written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mrs. Fossum presented IKF's report to the Commission, explaining that they held 12 events from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Fossum noted that IKF sanctioned 79 female bouts in 2022, with 12 being championship bouts. Mrs. Fossum also noted the very first Promoters Zoom call held by IKF where they discussed issues and ideas. The IKF plans to hold these Zoom meetings biannually. Mrs. Fossum explained the IKF opened registration for their Steve Fossum Memorial IKF West Coast Classic. Mrs. Fossum explained IKF has been allowing for online registration for fighters and will be working on setting-up online payments in California in 2023. Mrs. Fossum explained that IKF will not be increasing their sanctioning fees in 2023 and will instead focus on increasing officials pay starting January 1st.

Mrs. Fossum noted that IKF sanctioned 649 bouts in 2022 and only had 5 medical transports, none being serious.

Mrs. Fossum stated that IKF will be holding training courses for officials next year with the first being held in January.

Chair Villegas suggested that Mrs. Fossum reach out to other sports associations that are facing challenges recruiting officials to promote opportunities for officials and inspectors.

**d. Staffing Update**

EO Foster noted that the Commission has now hired Sean Wells as the Assistant Chief Athletic Inspector. The Commission office now currently has 6 employees, 4 in the Sacramento office and 2 working remotely. There are currently vacancies, but EO Foster explained he is waiting on the budget to be more transparent before those are filled.

**e. Upcoming Event Schedule**

EO Foster pointed out that the first event to be held on network TV in about 10 years will be Bellator 290 in Inglewood on February 4, 2023. EO Foster noted that more promoters and events are televising their events.

**Agenda Item 11 – Public Comment on items not on the agenda**

Cameron Frizzell updated the Commission on his progress in his training to become a professional boxing referee.

**Agenda Item 12 - Adjournment**

Chair Villegas thanked everyone for joining and thanked everyone for their work in making California a high-quality state for combat sports.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.