



**ATHLETIC COMMISSION  
500 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243  
615-741-1831**

**Meeting Minutes for September 16, 2019  
Conference Room 1B  
Davy Crockett Tower**

The Tennessee Athletic Commission convened on September 16th, 2019, in the first floor conference room of the Davy Crockett Tower in Nashville, Tennessee. Glenn Kopchak called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and the following business was transacted:

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Hannah, Patrick Wrenn, Christy Halbert, and Dan McGrew

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Donald Wynn

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Glenn Kopchak, Pamela Spicer, Katie Long, Angela Nelson

**ROLL CALL / NOTICE OF MEETING**

Director Kopchak called the meeting to order and took roll. Upon establishing quorum, he read the Notice of Meeting into the record.

**AGENDA**

Director Kopchak requested that the Commission disregard the board meeting dates on the agenda as they were already voted upon at the last meeting. Dr. Halbert motioned to adopt the agenda as amended, which was seconded by Mr. Hannah. The motion passed unanimously.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Hannah put forth a motion to adopt the minutes as written, which was seconded by Dr. Halbert. The motion passed unanimously.

**DIRECTORS REPORT**

***Budget***

Director Kopchak reviewed the budget and provided a thorough analysis of the items that impact the program such as inspections and legal costs. He highlighted the April surplus which was large enough to ensure program solvency through the end of the year. Director Kopchak also stated that the budget for the total fiscal year would be addressed at the Commission's next meeting.

***USFMMA Sanctioning Body Review***

Director Kopchak let the Commission know that Mr. Justin Brown, Executive Director of USFMMA, and Mr. Chandler Goins were present at the meeting to answer any questions they may have. Director Kopchak

directed the Commission to the Amendment to Rule 0145-05-.02 (Effective August 6<sup>th</sup>) which states, "The Commission will only approve and recognize those amateur sanctioning organizations that are able to establish and enforce rules regarding safety and rules regarding amateur conduct during unarmed combat as strict as, or stricter, than those established by the Commission for professional unarmed combat contests." Director Kopchak reminded the Commission that they had previously determined that USFMMA's governing body formation and leadership qualifications were sufficient. He also reminded the Commission that should they have any complaints in the future about USFMMA, they have the authority to suspend their activities until further review can be completed. Mr. Hannah motioned to approve USFMMA as a sanctioning body, which was seconded by Mr. Wrenn. The motion passed unanimously.

### ***VFC Letter***

Director Kopchak let the Commission know that the letter from Valor Fighting Challenge (VFC) contained a few points that the President of the organization wanted to address with them. However, there were no representatives from the organization present at the meeting. Director Kopchak introduced Mr. Justin Brown, Executive Director of USFMMA, to address the issue of submitting amateur fight results to the ABC database. Mr. Brown stated that without the Commission forwarding those results to the database, it appears that fighters are taking part in an "unsanctioned" event, and therefore the results do not count towards their records. He expressed concern that without these results, it could lead to potential safety issues for fighters. Director Kopchak stated to the Commission that historically they only sanctioned the event itself and did not forward the results so as not to appear that they were regulating amateur fights. Director Kopchak suggested that the issue could be resolved administratively by reaching out to ABC to verify their requirements and confirming that the events are in fact sanctioned.

## **LEGAL**

### ***Legal Report***

1. Case No.: 2019051931  
First Licensed: 01/31/2018  
Expiration: 01/30/2020  
Type: Promoter  
History: None.

This is an administrative complaint which was opened against Respondent, a licensed promoter, as a result of the following events. On the day of the event three of the Department employees spoke with Respondent about the title events that were scheduled to occur. At that time, Respondent and the announcer for the event were informed that the title events scheduled that evening could not be announced as title events because the owners of the belt were not present for the event. Respondent became irate and began using profanity and requested to speak to someone at the ABF, who sanctions the title event. Respondent spoke with the President of ABF on speakerphone, continuing to get angry, cursing and threatening to run them out of boxing. Respondent then requested to speak to another employee from our Department and was still angered while talking to him. While Respondent's anger and frustration were not directed towards the Commission, he did present an uneasy, hostile environment during the course of the interactions and meeting.

Recommendation: Letter of Warning

Commission Decision: APPROVED

2. Case No.: 2019047561

First Licensed: 03/29/2019

Expiration: 03/18/2019

Type: Event Permit

History: None. (Note: 2018050141 similar complaint involving payment of payment of the purse-closed with no action)

The complainant in this complaint is the manager of one of the combatant's at a boxing event in May 2019. The combatant's purse was \$4,000.00 and \$450.00 for travel expenses. Said checks were returned as insufficient funds. Complainant confirmed that Respondent paid all monies due within 4 weeks of the fight.

Recommendation: Authorize formal hearing. Authorize settlement by consent order with \$250 civil penalty due to failure to pay combatants timely.

Commission Decision: APPROVED

3. Case No.: 2019052441

First Licensed: 5/18/2019

Expiration: 5/19/2019

Type: Event Permit

History: None.

Complainant was a competitor in a MMA event in May 2019 and Respondent held the event permit for the event. Complainant alleges he suffered a dislocated toe which he believes can be directly related to the condition of a wet mat. The event was held outside and Complainant claims a thunderstorm caused the mat to become wet.

Respondent confirms the event had a brief rain delay but explains that before, during and shortly after the rain delay, the cage canvas was covered with a heavy duty vinyl tarp that prevented much of the cage floor from being affected by the rain. Before beginning the event, the head of UMMAF performed his own tests on the surface of the cage and determined Respondent had met the standards to continue with the event. At that time, Respondent ran through the amateur portion of the card which was 7 bouts. After the amateur card was complete, the commission designee accessed the cage and ensured it met the objective standards to continue with the event. There were 6 professional bouts before Complainant competed (13 total), all occurring without incident. No medical proof was provided by the Complainant that the mat conditions caused injury to him. Respondent provided 15 witness statements all that support Respondent's account of the events and state that the mat was not wet or dangerous in any way.

Recommendation: Closure

Commission Decision: APPROVED

4. Case No.: 2019054581  
First Licensed: 06/10/2019  
Expiration: 06/09/2021  
Type: Combatant  
History: None.

Complainant is the matchmaker and Respondent is the licensed combatant. Complainant alleges that Respondent agreed to face an opponent in a bout in June 2019. Respondent signed the contract and was licensed to compete. On weigh-in day, Complainant contacted Respondent to see what time he was to arrive in Tennessee. Respondent stated he was having transportation issues and based on the statements by the Respondent, the Complainant offered to provide for transportation for Respondent and arrange for a weigh-in at a later time to allow him to travel by bus. The contract allowed for financial penalties if Respondent was late, but Complainant told him that he would not enforce them if Respondent showed up. After several hours of ignoring Complainant's attempts to contact him, Respondent explained that he was injured and would not be showing up for the event. Complainant claims the expenses total \$1,787.01.

Respondent provided a response acknowledging the issues with transportation but states that the concussion was the other part of the reason that he failed to attend the event.

Recommendation: Closure as this is a contract dispute outside the jurisdiction of the Department.

Commission Decision: APPROVED

### ***Legislative Updates***

Director Kopchak stated that there were no legislative updates at this time. The Vinyl Mat and the Female Boxing rules package are still in the review process.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. McGrew stated that he had some concerns regarding a recent event he attended that he wanted to share with the board. He explained there was some activity that could be viewed as threatening to the integrity of the sport. Mr. McGrew expressed that this kind of behavior should not be tolerated and asked Director Kopchak how to go about reporting these actions. Director Kopchak stated that it would have to be handled through the complaint process. Statements can be obtained from the inspectors and should it be determined through due process that inappropriate actions were taken, penalties can be imposed, including license suspension or revocation.

Director Kopchak introduced another topic to the Commission for discussion. Director Kopchak reviewed Rule 68-115-403(c), which states, "A professional combatant shall be subject to additional blood testing for infectious diseases if more than ninety (90) days have elapsed since the combatant's license was issued." Currently, the Commission has used their discretion with applying this statute to require the additional testing within ninety (90) days, however they have the ability to administratively change it if they so choose, pushing the requirement out to 180 days as other states have. On September 10, 2018, the Commission indicated that they were in favor of allowing additional testing to mirror that of other surrounding states which require additional testing within 180 days, but would not like to limit any administrative discretion where the staff felt the need to require additional blood testing within the ninety (90) days on a case by case basis.

Director Kopchak introduced Mr. Matt Young of Tristar Boxing Promotions to discuss the matter further. Mr. Young appealed to the Commission to consider the 180 day change due to the invasive nature of drawing blood and the cost to promoters to have blood drawn four (4) times a year versus two (2) times a year. Mr. Young also suggested that this requirement is causing promoters to lose events to other states. Director Kopchak emphasized to the Commission the wording of "shall be subject" and stated that should they want to change the language to 180 days and eliminate administrative discretion, it would require a rule change. Mr. Young stressed that he was only speaking on behalf of boxing, and not MMA due to the two sports having different amounts of bodily contact.

Mr. Hannah directed a few questions at Director Kopchak in an effort to better address the issue. First, he asked if the Commission has the ability to differentiate between boxing and MMA. Director Kopchak acknowledged that it would have to be researched to determine if they could treat the two sports differently. Second, he asked if the UFC played a part in the ninety (90) day rule, and if that is consistent with their needs. Director Kopchak stated that typically UFC fights are generating new fighters each time and therefore are subject to testing as new licensees. Finally, he asked if the Commission has received many additional requests to change the rule to 180 days. Director Kopchak stated that he did not have a number available, but stated that it is primarily the promoters impacted by this rule which is a very small group represented in the industry.

***Mr. Hannah exited the board meeting at 2:54 p.m.***

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, a motion was made by Dr. Halbert and seconded by Mr. McGrew to adjourn at 2:58 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.