

UTAH SPORTS AUTHORITY
PETE SUAZO UTAH ATHLETIC COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 21, 2008

4:00 p.m. (1 hour, 30 minutes, 1 second)

Attending: Commissioners: Alan Dayton, Chairman, Rich Montanez and Ty McCartney, Secretary: Bill Colbert and Guests: Mike Stidham (UCE), Travis Marx, James Saccamano, Jeremy Horn (Elite Fight Night), Jennifer Howe (Elite Fight Night), Lee Doss, Bill Rush and Griffen Reynaud.

Alan Dayton called the meeting to order.

Rich Montanez made a motion to approve the minutes for February 2, 2008. Alan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Currently Approved Scheduled Events

MMA UCE: Saturday, April 19th, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, April 26th, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Friday, May 2, 2008 @ 8:00 PM, SLCC West Jordan Campus, 3491 W. 9000 S.
Saturday, May 3, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, May 10, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, May 17, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, May 24, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, May 31, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Friday, June 6, 2008 @ 8:00 PM, SLCC West Jordan Campus, 3491 W. 9000 S.
Saturday, June 7, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, June 14, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Saturday, June 21, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Club Elevate, 155 W. 200 S., SLC
Throwdown Elite: Friday, April 18, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, McKay Events Center, 1200 S.
800 W., Orem, UT
MMA Fight Night, Inc.: Saturday, May 17, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Salt Palace Convention Center,
100 S. West Temple, SLC
I.S. Promotions: Saturday, May 31, 2008 @ 7:00 PM, Eccles Center, 2415 Washington
Blvd., Ogden, UT
Moab Combat Sports: Saturday, May 10, 2008, Old Spanish Trail Arena, 3641 S. Highway
191, Moab, UT

Mike Stidham requests the cancellation of the May 2 approved UCE event with the option to hold the previously sanctioned event for May 17 at Vernal and cancel the May 24 previously sanctioned event. The commissioners agree.

Bill reported that BCI information for Penny Johnston, Moab Combat Sports, was received and is clean.

Travis Marx Request for Reconsideration of Decision

Rich makes a motion to reverse the decision of April 5, after review of tapes, as premature referee stoppage. Ty seconded the motion. The standard of review for reversing a referee's decision was discussed and one tape was reviewed. Alan was not in favor of motion. Two to one decision with Rich and Ty in favor.

Lee Doss Request to Address the Commission

Ty asked Lee to come before the commission for unsportsmanlike conduct after his bout of April 5. Lee was administratively suspended. He apologized to his opponent on April 5 and to the commission today. *Ty made the motion to lift the suspension. Rich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.* Bill will follow up with a letter.

Update of Proposed Rule Changes

No public comment received, either written or oral, after public hearing regarding the white collar contest changes and changes to make license renewals on an annual basis. *Ty made the motion to approve rule changes for posting. Rich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.* Bill will post them and they will be effective May 1.

New Rule Making

Bill would like to restructure the rules to provide separate sections for boxing, MMA and white collar contests. Bill will provide a reorganized chapter for public comment at the next commission meeting. Medical insurance requirements and weigh-in procedures also need to be reviewed. Rich shares his proposals for the weigh-in process as follows: each unarmed combatant must weigh-in in the presence of his opponent, a representative of the commission and an official representative of the promoter on scales approved by the commission at any place designed by the commission. The unarmed combatant must have all weight stripped from his body before he is weighed in and may only wear shorts (or nothing); women may weigh-in in shorts and a top (or nothing). The commission may require an unarmed combatant to be weighed in more than once for any cause deemed sufficient by the commission. If any unarmed combatant fails to make the weight agreed upon in the bout agreement forfeits 25% of his purse if no lesser amount is set by the commission's representative or a lesser amount set by the secretary and approved by the commission unless the weight difference is 1 pound or less. The commission agreed with Rich's proposals as the direction they would like to go in. Rich feels it is time the commission establish some parameters on what they expect the promoter to supply his fighters in terms of insurance coverage. No draft is in place yet. Rich feels the insurance needs to have a minimum coverage and the coverage is primary unless the fighter has his own insurance. In the latter case, the promoter's insurance would be secondary. Rich will put his thoughts in writing.

Open Discussion (34:44)

The Commission asked for clarification of Casey Beckstead's bout on April 18, 2008. The referee did not see the foul (eye gouge) and the fight resulted in a no contest some seconds later because of Beckstead's eye injury. The physician prohibited the injured fighter from continuing. Argument is that the referee stopped the fight because he heard the fighter complaining instead of a foul or end of round decision.

Public Comment

Jeremy does not feel the commission should make the decision of allowing or not allowing MMA fighters to stand and strike. Bill indicated promoters can go before the commission to have the standing and striking rule waived. All MMA fights in Utah are reported to a reporting agency as professional fights. Mike would like the commission to revisit sanctioning amateur MMA fighting. There was heavy discussion. Alan suggested streamlining this and setting up some rules for amateur fighting in Utah and run it through the legislative session.

Mike's understanding is the two primary functions of the athletic commission are to a) ensure the safety of fighters and b) protect the public from being duped by promoters. He has heard a lot of false radio advertising. He is suggesting the commission do a better job of policing false claims. Alan suggested the next time this happens, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the commission. Potential actions of the commission were discussed in the event of future complaints. Alan suggested the promoters present be prepared for future actions/decisions by the commission based on presented evidence. Promoters need to be able to both stand by their advertising and be able to stand behind accusations. Alan suggested promoters base their advertising on the "reasonable person standard." What does the reasonable person expect to see based on what they have been told in advertising? Alan would like Bill to look at what the federal government standard is for false claims on product advertising.

Jennifer asked about paying event fees at the time events are scheduled to lock in a date. She is wondering if this rule is now in place and when it will be required. Bill said the event fee is based on attendance and is per event.

Alan requested the commission think of their top five statutory priorities by October for the next legislative session.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Closed Session for Disciplinary Action

Ty made the motion to adjourn for a closed session. Rich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ty made the motion to re-open the meeting. Alan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Alan stated that in the closed meeting the commission discussed three fighters who failed drug tests. *Alan made the motion that the following three fighters be suspended for 90 days; 1) John Thorkelson for violation of a controlled substance, 2) Sterling Niitsuma for violation of anabolic steroids and 3) David Bubel for violation of a controlled substance. Ty seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.* Due process and the ability to appeal the decision have been explained to them in a letter and they can respond to the commission in writing. Rich mentioned if there is a second offense, there will be a 180 day suspension and a mandatory completion of a supervised treatment program approved by the commission. The biggest concern of the commission, not minimizing the use of controlled substance, is the use of steroids. Bill indicated a positive result for controlled substances results in the fight being scratched and the commission can reverse a win decision if steroid use is proven after a fight. These findings will be federally reported in the MMA database.

Ty made the motion to adjourn. Rich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.