

Nevada Athletic Commission KOs call for open scoring

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Acknowledging he and other promoters have let the sport erode, Bob Arum tried unsuccessfully Friday to get Nevada boxing officials to allow open scoring on a trial basis.

During a contentious hour-long appearance before the Nevada Athletic Commission, Arum contended open scoring was needed to restore public confidence in a sport he said has been declining the last two decades.

"On our watch we've let this sport of boxing decline," Arum said. "We let it decline because we were too greedy, we wanted instant gratification and we didn't look for

the long-term viability of the sport."

Arum's comments came as he tried to get the commission to try open scoring in a May 8 Las Vegas card topped by a WBC super bantamweight title defense by Erik Morales against Juan Carlos Ramirez.

He failed in that effort, but not before a series of heated exchanges between Arum and commission members.

"I think what you are doing is a disservice to boxing and is in some ways inexcusable," Arum told the commission.

There will be open scoring Saturday night on a fight card in Washington, but Nevada

commissioners said there were far more questions posed than answered by telling fans what the judge's scores are after each round.

"By saying no to you today, hopefully we will show other states they, too, can say no," commission vice chairman James Nave said.

Arum's attempt to get judge's scores posted after the rounds for the May 8 card came in the wake of the scoring controversy in the Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield heavyweight title fight in New York.

Arum said commentators on HBO and Showtime, which show big fights on pay-per-

view, often mislead viewers into thinking fights aren't being judged correctly. He claimed that could be corrected if the actual scoring was shown after each round.

Commissioners, though, expressed concern about how boxers would react in late rounds if they knew they were trailing badly or winning by a lot of points.

They said open scoring was a knee-jerk reaction to the Holyfield-Lewis fight, and that if the fight had been in Las Vegas the judges would have been experienced Nevada judges and the fight would have been scored correctly.

Muhammad Ali backs boxing reforms at Senate hearings

WASHINGTON (AP) — He uttered not a word, but Muhammad Ali's presence at a Senate hearing last week spoke volumes about the state of professional boxing and lent support to Sen. John McCain's efforts to clean up the sport.

The former heavyweight champion, who suffers from Parkinson's syndrome and has trouble speaking, told the Senate Commerce Committee through longtime friend Howard Bingham that the Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield heavyweight draw in New York last month was the "lowest point" for a sport beset with problems.

"Ali has become increasingly upset about the scandals that have occurred in professional boxing," Bingham said as Ali gazed intently at committee



MUHAMMAD ALI

members from a witness table.

Ali is particularly interested in the parts of McCain's boxing reform bill that would stop exploitation of boxers by promoters. One provision would prohibit "coercive option" contracts that prevent fighters from controlling their careers.

McCain, an Arizona

Republican and year 2000 presidential aspirant, told Ali: "Your support of this legislation is absolutely vital to our chances of passing it."

In the disputed fight, the three judges scored it a draw even though most boxing observers believe Lewis clearly had beaten the champion.

The fight is under investigation by the Manhattan district attorney's office and the New York state Athletic Commission.

McCain's bill would establish new standards for sanctioning organizations that rank fighters; create new financial disclosure requirements for promoters and event organizers; and require that state boxing commissions be informed when charges, costs and fees are taken from a boxer's

purse. McCain, who attended the Lewis-Holyfield fight, said the sport has too few ethical boundaries and a ranking system, controlled by promoters, that "defies all reason."

"When honest and open competition is inhibited, it is the boxers who suffer most," McCain said. "But millions of ticket-buying fans in America are also hurt by monopolistic practices in boxing."

Former boxing referee Mills Lane, a retired Nevada judge who now has his TV court show, said boxing's credibility suffers because sanctioning bodies — the

IBF, WBA and WBC — play too large a role in which judges and referees work the matches.

"These subtle pressures are there and nobody can tell me they're not," Lane told the committee.

But Walter Stone, counsel to the International Boxing Federation, said fight organizers are working to address the problems.

For example, a new IBF rule says the No. 1 ranking cannot simply be taken over by a boxer who moves up just because of losses by fighters rated ahead of him.

Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., expressed concern that the McCain bill might unfairly

target certain promoters and invite legal challenges.

He said the bill must address multiyear broadcast contracts in which contenders stay under a network's control in return for a shot at the champion.

"There is no question when it comes to revenues, the broadcast industry packs the biggest wallop," said Reid, whose state is the site for many championship fights.

McCain is likely to move the bill through the Commerce Committee later this year.

An identical measure last year passed the Senate but went nowhere in the House.

Mourners

(Continued from Page 3) physical and emotional focus away from the high school, where heavily armed classmates Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed 12 students and one teacher before committing suicide.

Deputies suspended their investigation and media briefings for the day, concentrating instead on directing traffic for the service.

The public debate over what caused the Columbine rampage didn't stop.

On NBC's "Meet the Press," former Education Secretary William Bennett pinned some of the blame on the shooters' parents, teachers and other influential adults. Bennett objected to how the gunmen were allowed to wear black trench coats, idolize Hitler and indulge in gory video games and violent rhetoric.

Police found a diary detailing the plot over the past year, as well as bomb-making materials and weapons in plain view in the bedroom of one of the dead suspects.

"These kids were immersed in a culture of death that gives them instructions on how to take life and hate life," Bennett said. "We have to be a little more intrusive into the things that are destroying our kids."

The cost of bad parenting are much worse than they used to be."

Attorney General Janet Reno stressed the importance of getting the parents' version of events.

"I think that it is important that we identify who is responsible for them having guns — what they knew or should have known and take appropriate steps," she said on the TV program.

Later on Sunday, the families of victims Daniel Mauser and Kelly Fleming planned a joint funeral for their children.

Slowly, life in Littleton is returning to normal, even as memorials and investigations continue.

Jefferson County school officials said Columbine's 1,800 students would return to classes on Thursday at Chatfield High School, a few miles south.

They said Columbine's graduation ceremony will be held May 22 at Fiddler's Green, a large suburban amphitheater normally used for rock concerts and dance performances.



Tuesday thru Saturday 5 pm to 11 pm
Sunday 12 pm to 9 pm

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