



## WBO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

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**In the Matter of Jr. Welterweight Contender Arnold Barboza, Jr.**

**Parties:**

Mr. Arnold Barboza, Jr.  
WBO Participant

Mr. Rick Mirigian  
Manager  
On behalf of Arnold Barboza, Jr.

### **ISSUE PRESENTED**

Whether designation of the Mandatory Challenger is warranted in the WBO Jr. Welterweight Division; having reviewed our governing provisions, we respond in the negative and explain below accordingly.

### **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

On June 10, 2023, Teofimo Lopez, Jr., won the WBO Jr. Welterweight Championship via unanimous decision (UD) defeating former Undisputed and Lineal Jr. Welterweight Champion Josh Taylor on June 10, 2023, at the Madison Square Garden Theater in New York, New York.

Thereafter, on July 14, 2023, the WBO World Championship Committee confirmed receipt of an email communication on your behalf requesting designation of Mandatory Challenger in the Jr. Welterweight Division. In support thereof, you argue that (i) your dedication, hard work, and countless victories demonstrate your readiness to take on the current champion; (ii) that you have earned this opportunity and prepared to showcase your skills on the grandest stage; (iii) have vied the Intercontinental and International WBO regional championships and have defended them successfully; (iv) consistently demonstrated dedication and commitment to the organization; (v) have taken additional risks willingly and have successfully completed them with excellent results; (vi) believe that your track record showcases the ability to handle increased challenges and contribute to the WBO's growth; (vii) have invested considerable time and effort in expanding my skill set to align with the requirements of the role; (viii) confident to enhanced knowledge and expertise that would enable me to excel in this opportunity; (ix) deep understanding of the WBO's vision, values, and diverse culture; and (x) have built strong relationships within the boxing community and have earned respect through effective collaboration and leadership that would align with the WBO.

Accordingly, on July 17, 2023, the WBO President Paco Valcárcel, Esq., forwarded your petition for this Committee consideration. Therefore, having this Committee reviewed the arguments mentioned herein and having examined the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests their applicability, and enforcement in this matter, and having the authority conferred by our rules, it is hereby determined as follows:

### **APPLICABLE PROVISIONS**

All parties agree that they are bound by the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests. Section 35(f)<sup>i</sup> provides in relevant: **“These Regulations apply to all WBO Participants. The term WBO Participant**



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**includes, but not limited to, WBO World Champions and WBO World Championship Contenders. All WBO Participants who participate in any WBO sanctioned activity do so on the express condition that such WBO Participant is bound by and subject to these WBO World Championship Rules and all WBO Rules and Regulations**". [Emphasis Added]. As such, this Committee has jurisdiction and the authority conferred by its rules to resolve the matter at issue accordingly.

The WBO World Championship Committee's authority to consider the issue at hand is governed under Section 1(b) (4), (5), (17) and (22) respectively of the WBO Rules and Regulations of World Championship Contests, which provide, in relevant as follows:

### **SECTION 1. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE**

*(b) The World Championship Committee shall have the following powers and discretion:*

*(4) To determine if there is a good cause to extend the time during which a Champion must make a Mandatory Challenger; and*

*(5) To determine the terms and conditions under which a Champion may extend the time for a Mandatory Challenger so as to compete in a Unification Bout or a Unification Tournament; and*

*(17) To recommend to the Executive Committee whether a boxer should be designated as a Super Champion; and*

*(22) To make or recommend exceptions or variations from the rules as the World Championship Committee determines are necessary; and*

### **SECTION. 5 DEFENSE OF THE TITLE**

In relevant, this section provides as follows:

(a) Each WBO World Champion except in the Heavyweight Division shall defend his title at intervals not greater than nine (9) months counting from the date of the acquisition thereof or from the last compulsory defense as the case may be, in a twelve (12) round fight, against the Mandatory Challenger, as determined by the Championship Committee according to these Regulations, unless an exception is made pursuant to these Regulations. For reasons unique to the Heavyweight Division, the WBO World Champion in the Heavyweight Division shall defend his title at intervals not greater than twelve (12) months counting from the date of the acquisition thereof or from the last compulsory defense as the case may be in a twelve (12) round fight, against the Mandatory Challenger, as determined by the Championship Committee according to these Regulations, unless an exception is made pursuant to these Regulations.

### **ANALYSIS**



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We begin our *ratio decidendi* referencing an excerpt of the WBO preamble<sup>1</sup>, which states in relevant “...The World Boxing Organization’s Regulations of World Championship Contests are intended to reconcile the interests of all necessary elements of World Championship Boxing in a manner that is in the best interests of the sport. The most important interests are those of the Championship contestants themselves and their worldwide fans...”

Now, the issue before this Committee is simple; whether a Mandatory Challenger designation is warranted in the Jr. Welterweight Division and whether Barboza, Jr., satisfies the criteria outlined in the relevant provision for such determination.

At the outset, we must empathize that this Committee ordinarily convenes and renders the relevant ruling(s) when deemed appropriate. In the present case, the petitioner’s request is premature considering that there is no mandatory title defense to be discharged at this time. No mandatory is due.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Teofimo Lopez, Jr., is currently in a voluntary period and can defend his title against any of the 15 world-rated contenders in the Jr. Welterweight Division. Therefore, the issue before us is not ripe for our intervention.

Conversely, it is important to highlight that pursuant to our governing rules and regulations, the mandatory defense obligation may be extended or modified considering numerous circumstances, including but not limited to (i) good cause to extend the mandatory title defense; (ii) sanction approval of Unification Championship contests; (iii) if the WBO Champion is granted “Super Champion” status recognition with the rights and privileges conferred by such designation; (iv) rulings considered by the WBO that best serve boxing’s interests; etc.

Therefore, until this Committee determines that a mandatory title defense shall be discharged in the WBO Jr. Welterweight Division, it is then there that we shall convene and rule accordingly, including the selected contender in the Jr. Welterweight Division. Although we acknowledge Barboza, Jr.’s continued interest and support to the WBO, we must abide by our rules and proceed with their enforcement when relevant.

Notwithstanding today’s ruling, we strongly recommend Barboza, Jr., to keep active and compliant with the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests.

### **DECISION - WBO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE**

Having carefully reviewed and appraised the facts stated herein, having reviewed the relevant provisions and having examined our governing rules and regulations, this Committee resolves as follows:

1. The WBO Championship Committee hereby rules as follows:
  - a. The request is hereby denied.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Preamble of the WBO Regulations of World Championship Contests

<sup>2</sup> The Mandatory Challenger Designation does not operate automatically.



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2. The Committee reserves its right to issue all further rulings and determinations necessary, helpful, and convenient to accomplish the purposes, policies, and intent of the WBO Rules and Regulations, including but not limited to serving the best interests of boxing, World Boxing Organization, and its Jr. Welterweight Division.

This is a final decision of the WBO Championship Committee. The affected WBO participant may appeal such determination to the Complaint and Grievance Committee as per Rule 34, which as per Article 3(e) of the WBO Appeals Regulation must be submitted in writing to the WBO President within fourteen (14) days of this decision as its sole and exclusive remedy.

Dated: July 31, 2023  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

**WBO CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE**  
By: Luis Batista Salas, Esq.

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Chairman/Championship Committee  
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Cc: Francisco Valcárcel, Esq./President

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<sup>i</sup> See, WBO Regulation §35(f).