



**WBO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE  
RESOLUTION**

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**In the Matter of WBO Female Welterweight Division  
Request for immediate Return Match**

**Parties:**

Mr. Eddie Hearn

Promoter

Matchroom Boxing

On behalf of WBO Female Welterweight Champion Ms. Sandy Ryan

**ISSUES PRESENTED**

Whether the (i) split draw (SD) rendered by the judges in the Female WBO, WBA, WBC & IBF Female Unified Welterweight Championship bout between Sandy Ryan and Jessica McCaskill was substantially irregular or that there was a clear misapplication of the rules of boxing resulting in a manifest unfairness that warrants an immediate rematch; (ii) whether the WBO has jurisdiction to order a WBA and/or WBC Champion to fight a WBO Champion in a unification championship bout. We respond in the negative and explain accordingly.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

On September 23, 2023, the Sandy Ryan and Jessica McCaskill Unified Welterweight Championship contest was ruled a split draw (SD). This bout was conducted at the Caribe Royale Orlando, Orlando, Florida. The scores in question were 95-95, 96-94 (Ryan), and 97-93 (McCaskill).

On September 27, 2023, the WBO confirmed receipt of an email chain communication by Mr. Tom Dallas of Matchroom Boxing, on behalf of Team Ryan requesting that the sanctioning organizations collectively order an immediate rematch between Ryan/McCaskill. In support thereof, Matchroom argued (i) the scores rendered by two of three judges (95-95 Draw/97-3 for McCaskill) as they asserted that such scores did not reflect the justified result of contest; (ii) that the boxing community believed that Ryan won the contest in dominant fashion; (iii) scoring 2 or 3 rounds of favor of McCaskill's favor is simply unjust and unfair, and (iv) request an immediate rematch to be ordered collectively by the sanctioning organizations.<sup>1</sup>

On September 28, 2023, the World Boxing Association (WBA) Female Director, responded to Mr. Dallas' email and indicated that his request was submitted for the relevant analyst. On the following day, Ms. Jill Diamon of the World Boxing Council (WBC) confirmed receipt and responded to Mr. Dallas' request stating that Matchroom Boxing would get a proper response very soon.

On October 3, 2023, the WBC President Mauricio Sulaiman responded to the email informing Mr. Dallas that all the parties were advised that the winner of McCaskill/Ryan was obligated to fight Ivana Habazin. Nonetheless, the WBC would be reviewing Team Ryan's request accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Matchroom Boxing submitted in support of their contention various online reactions from the boxing community.



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On October 20, 2023, all the relevant organizations included in the email chain and their respective representatives, received an email from Ms. Malpartida on behalf of the WBA with their “Resolution”<sup>2</sup> in the matter. In summary, the WBA ruled that pursuant to their protocol, Team Ryan’s protest was sent to Mr. Luis Pabon head of the WBA Officials’ Committee. Accordingly, the Committee proceeded to re-evaluate the scoring on a round by round basis. The judges selected by the WBA were chosen from different parts of the world to ensure complete neutrality.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Committee determined that the bout had not been scored accurately by the judges during the live event. Per the Committee’s assessment, all rounds were in favor of Ryan.

Furthermore, consistent with Mr. Pabon’s results of the assessment of the bout and Mr. Dallas’ observations, the WBA Supervisor in attendance for the bout in question was Ms. Kina Malpartida, who also saw Ryan win every round of the fight. Consequently, the WBA ordered the enforcement of the immediate rematch and granted the parties 30 days to negotiate the terms of said rematch. If the parties cannot reach a deal, purse bid procedures would be ordered. Lastly, the parties were forbidden to engage in any other bouts until after the rematch occurred.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, on October 20, 2023, the WBC President Mauricio Sulaiman submitted an email communication to the involved parties advising that the WBC allowed with the knowledge of all the sanctioning organizations that the Ryan/McCaskill bout would be sanctioned with the condition that the winner had to fight the mandatory challenger, Ivana Habazin. Moreover, Mr. Sulaiman stated that their ruling stands with the following conditions: (i) McCaskill must fight next Ivana Habazin and the winner will be obligated to fight Sandy Ryan.

Therefore, having this Committee reviewed the facts and 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>1</sup> provides in relevant: “***These Regulations apply to all WBO Participants. The term WBO Participant 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.

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<sup>2</sup> WBA’s Resolution is incorporated by reference herein.

<sup>3</sup> WBA Officials’ Chairman, Mr. Luis Pabon is an active referee affiliated with all the recognized sanctioning organizations. Acting as chairman of officials and serving as referee could be subject to potential conflict of interests if any controversy arises that would warrant intervention. Mr. Pabon’s dual position serves as a fact finder and party, and therefore, conflictive.



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The WBO World Championship Committee's authority to consider the issue at hand is governed under Section 1 (b)(1) (19) 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:*

*(1) To determine the format and venue for making any determination that is the subject of the WBO World Championship rules; and,*

*(19) To recommend to the Executive Committee whether a direct return fight should be authorized; and,*

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

### SECTION 14. RETURN FIGHT

The WBO shall not allow a direct return fight, unless recommended by the World Championship Committee and authorized by the Executive Committee. A direct return fight is a fight between the new Champion and the former Champion from whom the new Champion won the title (or between a new Champion and the losing contestant in a Vacant title fight) before the new Champion defends his title against any of the other fighters classified in his category. If the World Championship Committee determines either that the resolution of a Championship Contest substantially irregular, or that there was a clear misapplication of the rules of boxing resulting in a manifest unfairness, such that either case the World Championship Committee, may in its discretion, recommend a direct return fight, which may be authorized only by the majority vote of the Executive Committee. The World Championship Committee may recommend a direct return fight for any other circumstance; in that event, a direct return fight shall only be authorized by the affirmative vote of not less than 75% of the Executive Committee.

### ANALYSIS

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 in question is straightforward, whether the scores rendered by the judges are substantially irregular, or that such scores represent a clear misapplication of the rules of boxing resulting in a manifest unfairness, such that in either case, the Championship was substantially unresolved. From the outset, it is paramount to indicate that (i) all scores rendered by the judges are presumed correct; (ii) in the absence of compelling proof of fraud, deceit, corruption, gross negligence or violation of law, the WBO lacks subject matter



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jurisdiction to terminate, reverse or modify official scores registered with the local boxing commission having jurisdiction over the bout even more so when such (scores) are discretionary.

The scores disputed by Matchroom Boxing are within the parameters and the applicable scoring system. In fact, the scores of 95-95 (Draw), 96-94 (Ryan), and 97-93 (McCaskill) indicate that the bout was competitive as evaluated and considered by the judges. The parties and/or the boxing public may disagree on the appreciation of the judges upon rendering their scores, however, the present circumstances do not suffice the claims presented by Matchroom Boxing in the absence of the above-mentioned actions.

**Surprisingly, the WBA's position via their official's committee ruling is that all the rounds should have been scored in favor of Ryan. Even more astonishing is the fact that consistent with Mr. Pabon's assessment of the bout, the WBA Supervisor in attendance, who does not score the bout, also saw Ryan win every round of the fight.** That is to say, the foregoing officials and representatives through their assessment content to override official bout scores presumed correct and registered with the local supervising commission. The foregoing protocol simply lacks merits. **Now, even under the assumption of declaring the scores questionable, a determination that we firmly reject, such are not beyond or contrary to the applicable parameters and governing criteria. There is no supported evidence nor grounds to rule otherwise.**

Conversely, the WBO is impaired to order its champion to face another champion from either the WBA, IBF, or the WBC, respectively. The same applies to our counterparts. Simply put, we lack jurisdiction thereof.<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding their lack of jurisdiction, the WBA pretends to order the rematch of a unification championship bout, a ruling we strongly believe is unenforceable. Unification bouts are voluntary agreements between the fighters and their respective teams with the approval of the relevant organizations. Therefore, in the absence of a voluntary agreement between the parties, the WBO cannot extend the scope of its jurisdiction.

Therefore, considering the above facts, circumstances, and governing WBO provisions, this Committee strongly believes that the claims provided by Matchroom Boxing do not merit an immediate return fight. Even under the assumption that a rematch is warranted, which this Committee strongly rejects, the WBO lacks jurisdiction to order Sandy Ryan versus Jessica McCaskill.

### **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 for an immediate rematch is hereby denied.
  - b. Ms. Sandy Ryan shall fight the mandatory challenger designated by the WBO World Championship Committee per the terms and conditions set forth by the WBO.

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<sup>4</sup> We question the legal foundation of the WBA's ruling pertaining to ordering a champion from the WBO to face their respective Champion. The WBA lacks subject matter jurisdiction.



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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. Lightweight 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: October 23, 2023  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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

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