



# WORLD BOXING ASSOCIATION

## ASOCIACIÓN MUNDIAL DE BOXEO

GILBERTO JESUS MENDOZA

PRESIDENT



### **Resolution No. 202305091014 WBA Championships Committee Super Lightweight Division May 9, 2023**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

On March 1, 2023, Championships Committee Chairman Carlos Chavez wrote a number of boxers, including Albert Puello, Ismael Barroso, Ohara Davies, and Rolando Romero, updating them on “the status of Super Lightweight Division.” Among other matters, the letter clarified that Mr. Puello would “make a voluntary title defense against Rolando Romero on May 13, 2023.”

The letter also provided that the winner of the Puello-Romero bout would next have to fight the Official Challenger, Mr. Barroso. In addition, the letter authorized a “final eliminator” bout between Mr. Davies and Lewis Ritson.

On April 19, 2023, the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association (“VADA”) reported to the WBA on an adverse result of a urine specimen (Sample A) taken of Mr. Puello on April 5, 2023. On April 26, 2023, Mr. Chavez wrote Mr. Puello and others informing them of the opportunity for Mr. Puello to request an analysis of the “B” sample, and directed Mr. Puello to contact VADA for any second analysis. The letter also specified that the WBA intended to make a decision on the issue of the positive test result “no later than May 6, 2023, and therefore time is of the essence.” The WBA is unclear as to whether a request has been made to VADA for an analysis of the B sample.

Before the announcement by VADA of the test results, a bout between Mr. Puello and Mr. Barroso was scheduled to take place in Las Vegas, Nevada on May 13, 2023. Apparently because Mr. Barroso was previously scheduled to fight on the same date in Las Vegas, Mr. Barroso was offered to replace Mr. Puello for the bout due to the test results.

It is the understanding of the WBA that the Nevada Athletic Commission will consider at its meeting on May 17, 2023, action regarding the positive test from Mr. Puello. This

meeting will occur only days after the scheduled May 13 bout. Given that the matter will be considered by a duly authorized local commission, the WBA will refrain at this time from having any internal hearing or appeal regarding the positive drug test, and will await the decision and record of the Nevada Athletic Commission.

Beginning on April 19, 2023, the WBA received a number of emails from Mr. Lee Eaton, representing Mr. Davies, objecting to allowing a Barroso-Romero bout, arguing that Mr. Davies is considered the mandatory challenger for the Super Lightweight Championship. This Resolution deals with those objections and with the other matters set out above.

In addition, Mr. Adam Morallee emailed the WBA on May 3, 2023, arguing that, if “Mr. Puello is stripped and the World Title declared vacant,” Mr. Davies should fight Mr. Barroso for the vacant title.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

Because the Puello-Romero bout was not a mandatory defense of Puello’s title, Mr. Romero was permitted to fight for the title, even though he is currently rated #5 in the Super Lightweight Division. Mr. Puello is unable to defend his title in the voluntary defense against Mr. Romero for “justifiable ... legal, or other reasons reasonably beyond his control, ...” Rule C.22. (A second sample testing and possible related appeal, and the Nevada Athletic Commission meeting, will not have occurred by this date.) Mr. Puello therefore qualifies to be named in the interim (during which a second sample could be tested, or the Nevada Athletic Commission could decide against a suspension) as an “Inactive” or Champion in Recess. His regular title is thereby “vacated.” The Championships “Committee may select official contenders who will fight” for a title during this temporary period, and in such exceptional circumstances the Committee is not bound to name a Mandatory or Official Contender as one of these contenders. See Rule C.22.

As a consequence of Mr. Romero’s opponent not being able to engage in the upcoming bout, it is appropriate that the #1 ranked contender, Mr. Barroso, be allowed to replace Mr. Puello on the upcoming card.

Although Mr. Davies may have become a Mandatory Contender to fight a regular Champion, that status does not dictate the Committee’s choice of contender for the Interim Title under these exceptional circumstances.

Given the uncertainty on whether the second sample will be tested and whether the Nevada Athletic Commission will take any action on Mr. Puello, it is reasonable for a bout

to take place on May 13, and to defer any action vacating his temporary title, or demoting or removing him from the rankings.

If a challenge by Mr. Puello of his test results, or of an adverse decision of the Nevada Athletic Commission is unsuccessful, he then may be stripped of any title and lowered in the rankings.

The provisions of Rule C.28 are not applicable at this time.

### **III. DECISION**

Under these exceptional conditions, the Championships Committee has decided the following:

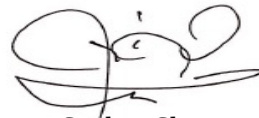
A. WBA places Mr. Puello as Champion in Recess, on an exceptional basis, and without setting a precedent, of the WBA World Super Lightweight Division until a decision is made by the Nevada State Athletic Commission hearing on extension of temporary suspension schedule for May 17, 2023, or a report by VADA of a negative test result on the B sample.

B. Mr. Barroso will be allowed to replace Puello in the bout against Mr. Romero for the vacant WBA title schedule for May 13, 2023. The winner of the Romero-Barroso bout will be required to defend his title against Mr. Davies no later than 120 days from May 13, 2023.

C. In the case of a draw or no contest in the Romero-Barroso bout, the Committee will reconsider the situation and may issue a further resolution dealing with this weight division.

D. All other issues that may arise shall be resolve by the interpretation of the WBA championship rules by the Committee.

Date: May 09, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos Chavez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carlos Chavez  
WBA Championships Committee  
Chairman