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EC clinches boxing deal

Aim is to help revive boxing in province

By MESULI ZIFO

IN a first for provincial boxing, the Eastern Cape Department of Sports, Arts and Culture has entered into a partnership with Boxing SA (BSA) to sponsor all provincial boxing titles.

The deal was sealed by BSA and the department's HOD Bubele Mfenyana in King Williams' Town this week.

BSA spokesperson Loyiso Mtya said the partnership would revive boxing in the province which has undergone a steady decline with several top fighters migrating to Gauteng.

Currently no Eastern Cape boxer holds a world title.

The department will help finance all boxing tournaments featuring provincial title fights to assist in resuscitating provincial boxing.

"It is the first time that our government has come to the aid of boxing," Mtya said. "Talking to them we realise that the government has always wanted to come aboard but no platform was created for them to do so."

Mfenyana said the department had been concerned about the steady decline of provincial boxing as Eastern Cape fighters left to seek greener pastures in other provinces such as Gauteng.

"As a result of this exodus, the province gradually lost its reputation as the Mecca of boxing in the country," Mfenyana said.

"We as the department decided to sit up and do something about this problem and fortunately BSA approached us."

To launch the partnership, a tournament featuring four provincial titles will be staged on July 2 in a venue yet to be decided.

"We want to make a dramatic introduction of the partnership by staging a gigantic tournament," Mtya said.

The two parties were reluctant to reveal the figures involved in the partnership. Mfenyana said the financial backing would depend of the titles at stake and the venue.

However insiders revealed that the department would splash out R100 000 per tournament.

Mtya said BSA would invite promoters to bid for the provincial title tournaments.

"Conditions will apply such as the promoters to stage these tournaments should fall within a specific category."

BSA categorises promoters into international, national and development levels. Provincial tournaments are likely to be staged by development promoters.

BSA, Buhlalu heading for courts

By MESULI ZIFO

BOXING SA board members were locked in a heated meeting yesterday discussing a decision to change Irvin Buhlalu's SA lightweight title defence against Benedict Dlamini into a non-title fight.

And Buhlalu's manager/promoter Mzi Mnguni waited with bated breath ready to instruct his lawyers to move in for the kill against BSA should the board uphold the decision to declare the fight a non-title fight.

The stand-off between Buhlalu's camp and BSA stems from the latter's surprising letter to the fighter that due to the premature ending of the 12th round the fight had been reduced to a non-title fight.

Buhlalu beat Dlamini on points in defence of his SA lightweight title at Gugu Dlamini Park in Durban on May 5

against Mr Ingle for failing to execute his duties and bringing boxing into disrepute," he said.

Naidoo also gave Buhlalu five days to give reasons why a rematch should not be ordered.

"Failure to do so will automatically mandate BSA's sanctioning committee to order a rematch between you and Dlamini within 90 days," Naidoo wrote.

Responding Buhlalu said he could not be held responsible for the incompetence of the time-keeper who was officiating on behalf of BSA.

"I defended my title under the rules and regulations as set out in the Boxing Act enshrined by BSA," he said.

"I therefore consider myself as having defended my title against Dlamini."

Mnguni yesterday threatened to go as far as the high court should BSA uphold its decision to reduce the fight to a non-title fight.

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DAILY DISPATCH

BSA boss

suspended

Board formulating charges to fire him

By MESULI ZIFO

THE LONG arm of the law finally caught up with Boxing SA general manager Krish Naidoo when the body suspended him indefinitely at the weekend after a litany of administrative bungles.

Although no-one from Boxing SA (BSA) was prepared to comment officially, insiders confirmed that Naidoo has been suspended indefinitely on full pay.

In the meantime the board of BSA are said to be formulating charges in order to fire him.

BSA spokesperson Loyiso Mtya refused to comment on the matter, referring all queries to chairman Dali Mpofo, who failed to return messages left on his cellphone.

And Naidoo could also neither deny nor confirm the suspension. He insisted that Mpofo should first release a statement before he could comment.

"It is only fair that I comment after the chairman has made the matter official," he said.

Naidoo has been walking a tightrope regarding BSA following a series of administrative bungles which include taking vital decisions without consulting the board.

It is believed his latest decision

to change Irvin Buhlalu's SA lightweight title defence against Benedict Dlamini into a non-title fight was the last straw for the board.

As reported in the Saturday Dispatch, Naidoo ordered that Buhlalu's second title defence against Dlamini on May 5 in Durban should be reduced to a non-title fight after the 12th and final round of the bout was contested for only two minutes and not three minutes as is the norm.

This despite the fact that time-keeper Billy Ingle, who ended the round prematurely, was appointed by Naidoo.

Naidoo said BSA would deal with Ingle for failing to execute his duties and for bringing boxing into disrepute.

"However it was Naidoo who kept bringing boxing into disrepute by committing bungle after bungle which brought shame to boxing," a source within the board said.

Naidoo's other beef was the finances of BSA.

BSA's financial report was rejected in Parliament two months ago.

When quizzed about the rejection, Mpofo said: "I don't want to comment at this stage as there will be drastic measures taken

against some of our administrators."

Insiders said Naidoo was not accused of corruption but his financial management left much to be desired.

The decision to suspend Naidoo was taken at a time when BSA is scheduled to re-submit their financial report to Parliament on Friday.

"A lot of cleaning up regarding the financial mess Naidoo has landed us in must be completed before Friday," another source revealed.

No sooner had Naidoo been slapped with the suspension, than the board endorsed Buhlalu's fight as a title bout, and opted also to keep Dlamini as a top contender.

Buhlalu was allowed to proceed with a voluntary defence against an opponent of his choice but the winner will have to defend his crown against Dlamini.

Buhlalu's manager Mzi Mnguni, who had threatened to take the matter to the High Court, confirmed his fighter would be allowed to proceed with a voluntary defence before a rematch with Dlamini.

"It is better than what they wanted to do to my fighter because they wanted to rob him of his hard-earned title," he said.

SPORT COMMENT

Naidoo's leadership had passed its sell-by date

THE AXE finally had to come down on Boxing SA's (BSA) general manager Krish Naidoo.

While other officials were working tirelessly to clean up boxing's image, Naidoo was making decisions which sullied BSA's name.

This is the same man who suspended trainer Jabu Malinga despite ordering him to either face a 12-month suspension or pay a R20 000 fine, following a doping scandal involving his sons who are also in his fighting stable. When Malinga's suspension ended, Naidoo insisted he also pay the R20 000 fine - which the trainer refused, seeking court intervention.

That is all history now as not only did Malinga win the case but BSA was ordered to pay all the costs of the case.

Other questionable decisions Naidoo took include his handling of the contractual dispute between promoter Mzi Mnguni and his estranged former right-hand man, Champion Bakubaku.

Naidoo should be grateful Bakubaku never took the

matter to court otherwise BSA would have suffered another costly blow.

His latest decision to reduce Irvin Buhlalu's SA light-weight title defence against Benedict Dlamini to a non-title fight is laughable to say the least. Why Buhlalu should be held responsible for the incompetence of an official appointed by Naidoo himself, is beyond comprehension.

Naidoo should have taken time to study fights in which rounds ended prematurely.

One of these was Sizwe Sinyabi's SA junior-flyweight title defence against Thembelani Maphuma when time-keeper Nangamso Thethani erroneously rung the bell to end one of the rounds prematurely - just when Maphuma appeared poised for a knockout win.

Sinyabi fought back to knock out Maphuma in 10 rounds to retain his crown.

BSA took the correct decision by suspending Thethani but did not order Sinyabi to give Maphuma a rematch. Why should it be any different for Buhlalu?