



Charity and Corporate Boxing: Harm Mitigation

INTRODUCTION

Boxing is a contact sport that typically results in minor injuries; unfortunately, however, major injury and death can also occur.

Boxing contests are commonly categorised as ‘Amateur/Olympic’ or ‘Professional’; both have their own associations, rules and standards. An emerging and distinct category is ‘Charity and Corporate’ boxing. These contests can be held by either ‘Amateur/Olympic’ or ‘Professional’ boxing associations, provided they have the requisite approval. Importantly, ‘Charity and Corporate’ boxing does not have its own association, rules or standards but is aligned to those used in ‘Olympic/Amateur’ or ‘Professional’ boxing.

Charity or Corporate boxing involves contestants from the general population; that is, those who do not participate in ‘Amateur/Olympic’ or ‘Professional’ boxing. The purpose of Charity and Corporate boxing is to raise funds for designated charities. These events are more frequent in New Zealand; however, this category of boxing is also held in Australia.

Irrespective of the category, boxing in New Zealand and Australia is subject to Government regulation. Each Government defines who can host, promote and participate in contests; however, the degree to which contestants are protected by local regulations can vary significantly.

SUMMARY OF RACS POSITION AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS

In New Zealand and Australia boxing contests are subject to local regulations; it is the variation in these regulations, and the consequent risk this places on contestants which is of serious concern to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS).

Standardised legal regulation is required for all forms of boxing; however, it is particularly necessary for Charity and Corporate boxing contestants who have the least amount of experience and are therefore at the greatest risk of harm.

It is recommended that national bodies in New Zealand and Australia (New Zealand Medical Association, Australian Medical Association) and the RACS Trauma Committee work collaboratively to define mandatory rules that safeguard the health and well-being of contestants.

KEY ISSUES

- Charity and Corporate boxing is distinct from Amateur/Olympic and Professional Boxing.
- In New Zealand and Australia there is no legal documentation regulating the promotion and conduct of Corporate and Charity boxing contests.
- Mandatory and consistent regulation is required to protect Corporate and Charity boxing contestants.

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NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand, boxing contests are promoted and held by associations approved in accordance with the Boxing and Wrestling Act 1981 (1). As at October 2016, there were 52 boxing/wrestling associations “approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs under section 4 of the Act to promote or approve contests” (2). These associations affiliate with either Amateur/Olympic or Professional boxing organisations.

Amateur/Olympic boxing is represented by Boxing New Zealand (BNZ); and, Professional boxing is represented by either the New Zealand Professional Boxing Association (NZPBA) or the New Zealand National Boxing Federation (NZNBF).

Discrepancy exists between these organisations in relation to the role of Medical Practitioners in Charity and Corporate boxing contests: BNZ operates in accordance with the International Boxing Association (AIBA) “AIBA 2016 Medical Handbook”(3) and its “Pre-bout medical - notes for examiner” document (4); whereas the NZPBA does not mention ‘Medical Examination’ or ‘Practitioner’ on its “Corporate rules” webpage. No information was located on the NZNBF.

To ensure consistent contestant safeguards are applied in all contests, RACS recommends that the Boxing and Wrestling Act 1981 is updated. The New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs is encouraged to work with RACS, the New Zealand Medical Authority, the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia as well as BNZ and the NZPBA. The Act should:

- Mandate comprehensive pre- and post-bout medical tasks for charity boxing, and
- Enable the Medical Practitioner to cease a contest.

AUSTRALIA

In Australia, Amateur/Olympic or Professional boxing is separately regulated by each State and Territory; noting that the Northern Territory and Queensland do not have their own regulations but rely on those from interstate.

Amateur/Olympic boxing is represented by Boxing Australia (BA) via its State and Territory branches; and, Professional boxing is represented by the Australian National Boxing Federation (ANBF).

Variation exists between the ‘Acts’, ‘Regulations’, ‘Rules’, or ‘Standards’ in Australia as to who can host, promote, and participate in boxing contests, as well as who should be in attendance during each contest. Boxing Australia, like BNZ, defines the role of the Medical Practitioner in accordance with the “AIBA 2016 Medical Handbook”(3). The ANBF, however, defines contestant care via its ‘Medical Examinations and Requirements’ (5). This variation is a concern due to the lack of clarity regarding the roles of Medical Practitioners.

It is recommended that the Australian Institute of Sport lead the development of uniform Charity and Corporate boxing rules; and, that these are adopted via legislation by all States and Territories. These rules should be developed in consultation with RACS, the Australian Medical Association, the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia as well as BA and ANBF. These rules should:

- Mandate comprehensive pre- and post-bout medical tasks for charity boxing
- Enable the Medical Practitioner to cease a contest.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

- [International Boxing Association, Technical & Competition Rules, \(2019\).](#)
[Neurosurgical Society of Australasia, Policy on Sport: Prevention and Management of Head and Spine Injuries in sport, \(2013\)](#)
[World Medical Association, Statement on Boxing \[press release\]. \(12 November 2018\).](#)

REFERENCES

1. New Zealand Government. Boxing and Wrestling Act 1981. Department of Internal Affairs
2. New Zealand Government. Boxing and Wrestling Act 1981. (Webpage) 2017 [Available from: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Boxing-and-Wrestling-Act-1981>].
3. AIBA 2016 Medical Rules for ringside doctors, (2016).
4. Boxing New Zealand. Pre-bout Medical - Notes for Examiner. Contract No.: 27/3/2019.
5. Australian National Boxing Federation. Rules and Regulations, (2019).

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