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DPOR Statement on *Colón vs. Williams* Investigation Report

Investigation into Oct. 17, 2015, boxing contest finds no regulatory violations

Our hearts go out to Prichard Colón and his family, friends, and fans. All of us at DPOR, along with the boxing community, continue to hold out hope for his recovery. We fully appreciate that no report can ever truly make sense of the tragedy that occurred in Fairfax, Virginia, on Oct. 17, 2015.

Nonetheless, we take very seriously our role in protecting the health and safety of boxers, and so DPOR immediately began an investigation. The goal of the inquiry was to perform a top-to-bottom review of the circumstances surrounding the incident. As with all agency investigations, our scope was confined by law to those statutes and regulations under the jurisdiction of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR).

The inquiry was conducted by Deputy Director Nick Christner, who oversees the agency's Regulatory Programs and Compliance Section, the unit responsible for administration of the boxing program as well as all investigations. To summarize the report's main findings:

- No regulatory violation appears to warrant disciplinary action against Williams, a Virginia-licensed boxer.
- Cooper, the contract referee, generally maintained control of the contest (despite noted disagreement over some foul calls and consistency of point deductions); consulted with the ringside physician; and complied with regulatory requirements to attend to Colón's health.
- Ashby, the contract ringside physician, determined Colón's fitness to compete based on a pre-fight medical questionnaire and physical evaluation; rendered medical aid by talking to Colón and looking at his eyes; and allowed him to continue boxing "as he did not have impaired vision, severe lacerations, or apparent broken bones and Colón was coherent, responsive, and able to stand on his own after taking some additional rest time."
- No one action (or failure to act) can be identified that is so apparent or egregious to justify holding accountable any one person.

Many individuals have shared their opinions about what conclusions should be drawn based on their own interpretations of the fight. We understand some will disagree with the report and its conclusions. When there's a terrible outcome, it's only natural to want to find someone or something to blame. Strong feelings can generate healthy debate, but our judgment as a regulatory body cannot rest on subjectivity or matters outside our legal jurisdiction.

Although there is no evidence of foreseeable wrongdoing on the part of any particular individual, looking back at the "what ifs" is indeed heartbreaking. DPOR remains committed to fighter safety, doing what we can to protect fighters despite the inherent risks of combative sports like boxing, and praying for Prichard Colón.

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