
Devastating Blow to IBA

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi

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The recent decision by the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) executive board to include boxing in the Los Angeles 2028 Games — under the management of the newly formed WorldBoxing rather than the long-established International Boxing Association (IBA) — delivers a devastating blow to the latter organization.

Pending what is expected to be a routine approval, the IOC has effectively dealt a final strike to the governing body that has overseen major boxing competitions since its founding in 1946, now deemed irresponsible in matters of governance and finance.

The ongoing dispute between the two entities, escalated to a personal level by Germany's Thomas Bach and Russia's Umar Kremlev, has only intensified despite the former's impending departure. International support for WorldBoxing, founded in 2023 and already backed by approximately 80 national federations, further deepens the rift.

It's worth recalling that boxing events at both the Tokyo 2020 and Paris

2024 Games were directly managed by the IOC after the IBA was stripped of its official recognition in 2023. The emergence of this new governing body seemed like a lifeline for the sport.

In fact, the IBA recently protested the speed with which its rival was endorsed — within just two days — after confirming its finances were stable. This came shortly after an auditor declared the IBA "over-indebted" in December.

The IBA alleges that on February 24, WorldBoxing signed an unclear sponsorship deal with an event company barely weeks old, which seemingly facilitated the transfer of millions of dollars into its accounts.

For its part, the IOC had requested a copy of the IBA's confidential financial agreements. The IBA agreed to display them but refused to share copies, a move deemed insufficient by the global sports authority, which emphasized the need for financial diversification.

The IBA also criticized the IOC's failure to investigate its financial troubles after initial allegations surfaced or to impose sanctions on its former president, Taiwan's Ching-Kuo Wu, following the organization's suspension in May 2019.

The lack of direct communication between the two bodies over the years was apparent — resulting in the IBA's efforts being ignored and dismissed, leading to today's severe consequences.

Now, WorldBoxing is expected to significantly expand its membership, potentially including Cuba — which, for now, remains without official membership but has not opposed the emerging organization. This would bring it closer to the IBA's current count of 203 member nations.

Despite not having organized a single official event yet, the new 12-rope governing body must now prove its ability to secure a better future for boxers, coaches, and national federations. Let's hope this doesn't spiral into a battle of egos.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
