Case Title: Applicant v Boxing Australia

Determination

National Sports Tribunal

General Division

sitting in the following composition:

Member

The Honourable Steven Strickland KC

in the arbitration between

Applicant

Represented by Authorised Representative

And

Boxing Australia (Respondent)

Represented by Dinah Glykidis, Chief Executive Officer, Jonathan Hall, High Performance Manager, and Wayne Tolton, Legal Representative

INTRODUCTION

- 1. This is a first instance selection appeal being heard by way of an arbitration by the Applicant from their non-selection by Boxing Australia ("the **Respondent**") to the Australian team for the 2025 World Boxing Championships.
- 2. The Applicant was notified of their non-selection by the Respondent on Friday, 11 July 2025.
- 3. The Boxing Australia Selection Appeals Policy ("Appeals Policy") provides in clause 5.1(a), that a selection appeal cannot be commenced unless the provisions of clause 5.1 have been complied with. The National Sports Tribunal ("NST") has been provided with documents which indicate that, subject to one issue, that requirement has been satisfied, and, in any event, neither party to this appeal has suggested otherwise. The one issue is that the Applicant sought to challenge the initial selection decision made on 5 June 2025, but that challenge was not accepted by the Respondent because it was out of time. The NST Member will refer to this issue again later in these Reasons.
- 4. On 18 July 2025, the Applicant lodged their Application with the NST seeking to appeal their non-selection.
- 5. The NST Member has been advised by both parties that there are no Interested Parties to this appeal.

THE JURISDICTION OF THE NATIONAL SPORTS TRIBUNAL

- 6. The jurisdiction of the NST is engaged by section 23(1) of the *National Sports Tribunal Act 2019* (Cth) and clause 5.2(a) of the Appeals Policy.
- 7. The NST Registry conducted a Pre-Hearing Conference which resulted in an Arbitration Agreement signed by the Applicant on 24 July 2025 and by the Respondent on 25 July 2025.
- 8. Pursuant to clause 52 of the *National Sports Tribunal (Practice and Procedure)*Determination 2024, where the NST Member considers it appropriate to do so, and all the parties agree, the NST Member may determine the dispute without a hearing. There is a similar provision in clause 5.2(f)(ii) of the Appeals Policy.
- 9. Both parties agreed to have the matter determined on the papers without a hearing, and subject to one matter, the NST Member considered it appropriate to determine the appeal in that way. That one matter was that the NST Member directed that the parties be available at the time initially fixed for a hearing, namely 3:00pm on Monday, 28 July 2025, in the event that the NST Member had any questions for any of the parties after receiving and considering all of the submissions and the evidence.

- 10. That indeed occurred, and the NST Member held a brief hearing on Monday 28 July 2025 to address certain questions. Both parties appeared at the hearing with their authorised representatives and the Respondent's legal representative.
- 11. Neither party objected to the proposed arbitration, the arbitrator, or the procedure adopted by the NST Member for the purposes of the arbitration.

THE DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE NST MEMBER

- 12. At the Pre-Hearing Conference, a timetable was agreed between the parties for the filing of written submissions, any witness statements, evidence and all other documents they wished to rely upon.
- 13. Both parties complied with this timetable, and subsequently the NST Member collated all of those documents and incorporated them into an Arbitration Book.

THE GROUNDS OF APPEAL AND THE OUTCOMES SOUGHT

- 14. Clause 5.2(b) of the Appeals Policy provides the grounds on which a non-selected athlete may bring an appeal to the NST, noting that the Applicant bears the onus of making out the ground(s) of the appeal.
- 15. Those grounds of appeal are as follows:
 - (a) that the Selection Policy was not properly applied by Boxing Australia with respect to the non-selected athlete;
 - (b) the non-selected athlete was not afforded a reasonable opportunity by Boxing Australia to satisfy the Selection Policy;
 - (c) Boxing Australia was affected by actual bias in making its decision to not select the non-selected athlete: and
 - (d) there was no material on which Boxing Australia's decision could be reasonably based.
- 16. The Applicant did not confine their grounds of appeal to those set out in clause 5(b) of the Appeals Policy. It is an open question as to whether an Applicant can rely on other grounds of appeal, but the Respondent did not object to the Applicant doing so here. Their grounds of appeal are as follows:
 - (a) Selection Policy not properly applied (clause 5.2(b)(i));

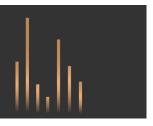


- (b) failure to afford a reasonable opportunity to satisfy the Policy (clause 5.2(b)(ii));
- (c) lack of reasonable basis (clause 5.2(b)(iv));
- (d) procedural fairness and natural justice;
- (e) failure to adhere to clause 5 of the Selection Policy Considerations for Discretionary Selection;
- (f) failure to publish amendments to clause 5 of the Selection Policy;
- (g) failure to provide a fair and reasonable opportunity to meet selection criteria;
- (h) inappropriate use and application of the Boxing Profile Tool;
- (i) lack of transparency and supporting documentation in scoring; and
- (j) unreasonable, insufficient and unclear appeal timeframe.
- 17. Plainly, there is a doubling up with some of these grounds, and the NST Member will address that when considering the same.
- 18. As for the outcome, in the application the Applicant sought "selection", and in their submissions in support of the appeal, they sought that Boxing Australia:
 - reconsiders the Applicant's selection to the Australian team for the World Championships as a fully selected athlete, without conditional targets that are inconsistently applied;
 - (b) provides written clarification on the reasoning for the Applicant's conditional status if the appeal is not upheld, including a breakdown of the Boxing Profile Tool score and how it was weighted.
- 19. The NST Member will proceed on the basis that the Applicant seeks that they be selected in the Australian team for the World Championships.
- 20. The NST Member notes the Applicant's second request in their submissions, but indicates that that is not an outcome that the NST Member can provide.
- 21. The Respondent seeks that the appeal be dismissed in accordance with clause 5.2(h) of the Appeals Policy.

THE RELEVANT SELECTION GUIDELINES/POLICIES

- 22. First, there is Boxing Australia's "Selection Guidelines (Athletes)" (**Selection Guidelines**) which applies to the selection of athletes of all Boxing Australia Teams, and secondly there is Boxing Australia's Selection Policy for the 2025 World Boxing Championships.
- 23. The Selection Guidelines are to be read and applied in conjunction with the applicable selection criteria in the Selection Policy for the specific competition. The latter though, is the overriding document and sets out the requirements to be met by an athlete in order to be considered for selection for different events at the 2025 World Boxing Championships.
- 24. For "Major Competitions", of which this is one, the Selection Guidelines specify that the selection criteria will include:
 - (a) Selection event to be held to determine the athlete pool; and
 - (b) A requirement that the Boxing Australia selection panel apply a system substantially similar to the "priority system for selection events", as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Guidelines, to establish the order in which athletes will be selected for the Team.
- 25. Clause 3 of the Selection Policy sets out the criteria for athletes to be eligible for selection in the Team. It is agreed between the parties that the Applicant satisfies these eligibility criteria.
- 26. Importantly, it is also agreed that the Applicant has been listed within Boxing Australia's entry list for the 2025 World Boxing Championships, subject to the outcome of the appeal.
- 27. It is necessary to set out the following from the Selection Policy:
 - "2. Selection Policy Aims.
 - 2.1 The Boxing Australia Limited philosophy aims to facilitate the following outcomes through the selection of athletes for the 2025 World Boxing Championships.
 - 2.2 The BAL selection philosophy is to:
 - 2.2.1 Select the maximum number of athletes to compete at the 2025 World Boxing Championships who meet the priority objectives below:





- (a) Priority 1: To identify for selection those boxers who will achieve Podium level results for Australia at the 2025 World Boxing Championships;
- (b) Priority 2: To identify for selection, those boxers who demonstrate potential for Top 8 performances at the 2025 World Boxing Championships, Podium level results at future events including the 2026 Commonwealth Games, 2027 World Boxing Championships and 2028 Olympic Games.
- (c) Priority 3: To identify for selection, at the Selection Panel's discretion, those boxers who demonstrate the ability to be competitive and well matched for weight divisions at the 2025 World Boxing Championships not filled by athletes selected under Priorities 1 and 2.
- 2.2.2 Respect and reward athletes' historical boxing performances in conjunction with rewarding successful participation in the Boxing Australia Selection event.
- 2.2.3 In all cases, the Selection Panel will consider each athlete's competitive record and demonstrated ability to plan the peak of their season at a major championship.

. . .

- 4. Process of selection to the Boxing Australia Team.
 - 4.1 After the Selection Event, the number of Priority Athletes at each level of prioritisation will be determined. This will form an Athlete Pool.
 - 4.2 The maximum number of athletes representing their respective National Federation per weight division is one (1). The maximum Team size is twenty (20).

4.3 <u>Selection Step 1</u>:

Priority 1 Athletes: Boxers who have "won" their weight category as listed in clause 3.8 at the 2025 BAL Selection Event. Boxers may be selected at the discretion of the BAL Selection Panel for the 2025 World Championships. (See clause 5i-vi Considerations for Discretionary Selection).

4.4 Selection Step 2:

Priority 2 Athletes: Athletes winning uncontested divisions at the BAL Selection Event need to demonstrate on track attributes against the



WITTW. Boxers may be selected at the discretion of the BAL Selection Panel for the 2025 World Championships. Selection may be conditional to be confirmed at the [International Event] and assessed against the WITTW and clause 2. (See clause 5i-vi Considerations for Discretionary Selection).

. . .

4.7 Notwithstanding the prioritisation process set out in clauses 4.3-4.5 above, Boxing Australia is under no obligation to consider for selection/select to the Australian Team to the 2025 World Championships any boxer who has not met Priority 1 Athlete Pool status.

. . .

5 Considerations for Discretionary Selection.

Boxers will be evaluated for discretionary selection to the Australian Team to the 2025 World Championships based on their skill and performance assessed by:

- i. International competition performance within an eighteen (18) month window, with a particular emphasis on the quality of opposition and placing achieved.
- ii. The boxers' capabilities assessed against WITTW and attributes that make up a boxing performance (i.e. physical, tactical, technical, psychological, psycho-social).
- iii. Performances at the BAL Selection Event.
- iv. The boxer's potential to achieve future Podium levels performances at BME and pinnacle events.
- v. The boxer's ongoing commitment and application, including communication with Boxing Australia staff, national coaches, adherence to individual training plans, motivation to succeed and use of all available resources within a daily performance environment to increase performance.
- vi. The boxer's willingness to commit to and maintain the level of training necessary to achieve the desired performance.

If a boxer, in the Selection Panel's view is not up to the required international standard in his or her weight category and has not demonstrated the ability to achieve the aims of the Selection Policy (clause 2) or be appropriately matched, they may not be recommended for selection to the Australian Team



for the 2025 World Championships. For the avoidance of doubt noting in the Selection Criteria operates so as to require the Selection Panel to fill all available positions in this Team."

BACKGROUND FACTS

- 28. The Respondent is the governing body for boxing in Australia.
- 29. The Selection Panel for the Australian Team consisted of Jonathan Hall (chair), Santiago Nieva, Jamie Pittman, and Geoff Peterson.
- 30. The Applicant competed at the Selection Event.
- 31. The Selection Panel met as required on 1 June 2025 following the Selection Event.
- 32. On 5 June 2025, the chair of the Selection Panel wrote to the Applicant advising them that they had been conditionally selected to the Team for the 2025 World Boxing Championships, with the conditions being that they achieve:
 - (a) a score of over 140 in the Boxing Profile Tool as assessed by the Panel, or
 - (b) a Podium performance (top 4) in their weight division at the International Event.
- 33. Initially, the Applicant accepted this decision but subsequently they sought to challenge the same. As referred to above, unfortunately the Applicant could not pursue that discrete challenge because they were out of time, and they did not seek an extension of time.
- 34. The Applicant competed at the International Event but failed to achieve a Podium performance, not progressing past the first bout.
- 35. The Applicant also failed to achieve a score over 140 in the Boxing Profile Tool.
- 36. The Selection Panel met on 8 July 2025 to finalise the selection of the Team for the 2025 World Boxing Championships.
- 37. The Applicant was not selected and they were advised of this by the chair of the Selection Panel on Friday, 11 July 2025.
- 38. The Applicant's appeal before the NST Member is framed as an appeal against both the conditional selection and the final selection. Although the appeal cannot be solely from the conditional selection for the reasons already expressed, the Respondent properly conceded at the brief hearing on 28 July 2025, that the two decisions are inextricably linked, and it is relevant to consider them both when addressing the appeal. Indeed, the same Selection Policy applied to both decisions.



- 39. Relevantly, the NST Member has been provided with the Minutes of the meeting of the Selection Panel on 1 June 2025, as well as the Minutes of the meeting of the Selection Panel on 8 July 2025.
- 40. It is necessary to set out the relevant parts of those Minutes as follows:

(Minutes removed for publication).

DISCUSSION

The First Ground of Appeal – Selection Policy not properly applied (clause 5.2(b)(i) of Appeals Policy)

- 41. The Applicant submits that they fulfilled all eligibility requirements under clause 3 of the Selection Policy, and they won their weight division at the Selection Event.
- 42. Neither of those facts are in dispute. However, the Applicant then submits that despite this, they were not fully selected to the Team, and that is inconsistent with the Selection Policy "that winners may be selected without conditions".
- 43. It is here that the Applicant's position falters, and the Applicant has misunderstood the Selection Policy. The steps identified in clauses 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Selection Policy are to allow the formation of three pools of athletes, with the next step being the application of the Selection Policy Aims in clause 2, in conjunction with the discretionary factors in clause 5, to determine who from the three pools should be selected.
- 44. In this regard, the first step of the selection process was correctly applied on 1 June 2025. With the second step, in their responding submission, the Respondent indicated that at that stage ten athletes from the three pools were identified "for discretionary selection" to the Team, and nine athletes, including the Applicant, were identified as not having satisfied the criteria significantly to be "nominated for discretionary selection" (the NST Member observes that apparently one athlete did not proceed with their application to be selected, and thus the nine athletes became eight).
- 45. It is apparent from the Minutes of the meeting that the Selection Policy Aims in clause 2 and the discretionary factors in clause 5 were considered by the Selection Panel in concluding that the Applicant was one of the ultimately eight athletes who did not satisfy the Selection Policy Aims, and in respect of whom the discretionary factors did not allow for selection directly to the Team.
- 46. That should have been the end of the matter under the Selection Policy, but as explained by the Respondent, and as confirmed in the Minutes of the meeting, given that there were nine athletes, and ultimately eight unsuccessful at that stage, the chair of the Selection Panel petitioned the Board of Boxing Australia to grant those athletes an



additional opportunity to be selected by competing at an international event or improving their Boxing Profile Tool score.

- 47. The Board acceded to this request and ultimately those eight athletes, including the Applicant, were given the further opportunity to gain selection through either performance at an international event or by achieving a Boxing Profile Tool score of over 140.
- 48. The Respondent conceded, at the brief hearing on 28 July 2025, that the imposition of these conditions was not provided for in the Selection Policy in relation to athletes who won their division at the Selection Event (see clause 4.3), namely the Applicant, but, the Selection Policy does allow for such conditions to be imposed for athletes who won uncontested divisions at the Selection Event (see clause 4.4). Thus, it is argued that it was part of the existing policy and it was appropriate that it be applied to those athletes who had not gained selection to provide them with an opportunity to be selected.
- 49. It is difficult to see how it is appropriate for the Applicant to complain about the imposition of the conditions when it was "an act of goodwill" which did not have to be offered and entirely favoured the athletes.
- 50. What must be remembered here is that, as a result of the application of the Selection Policy, the Applicant did not gain selection, and that by the imposition of the conditions they were given a second chance.
- 51. Understandably, the Applicant took up this opportunity but unfortunately was unsuccessful.
- 52. Plainly, once it is demonstrated that the Selection Policy had been properly applied, it was not open to the Applicant to promote as part of a Ground of Appeal that the Respondent had failed to properly apply the Selection Policy by allowing this additional opportunity. The Ground of Appeal must stand or fall on whether the Selection Policy of the Respondent was properly applied or not, and here the NST Member finds that it was. Thus, this Ground of Appeal fails.

The Second Ground of Appeal – Failure to afford a reasonable opportunity to satisfy the Policy (clause 5.2(b)(ii) of Appeals Policy)

- 53. It is readily apparent that the detail of this ground does not match the ground, and it must fail.
- 54. The Applicant complains that the imposition of the conditions was inconsistent and lacked transparency. However, even if relevant to the ground, neither of these claims can be substantiated by the Applicant, and of course they have the onus of establishing them.

The Third Ground of Appeal – Lack of reasonable basis (clause 5.2(b)(iv) of Appeals Policy)

- 55. This ground too must fail. The Minutes of the meeting indicate the Selection Panel considered the Selection Policy Aims in clause 2 and the discretionary factors in clause 5, and the Applicant has not demonstrated that there was no material on which the decision could be reasonably based.
- 56. In relation to clause 5(i) of the Selection Policy of the discretionary factors, the Applicant points to their achievements back as far as 2017, overlooking that it is only performances within the past eighteen months that are to be taken into account. In any event, as outlined in the submission of the Respondent, the Selection Panel had available to it the Applicant's international performances during the relevant period and were able to assess the same with a particular emphasis on the quality of the opposition, and the placings achieved by the Applicant. As submitted, the Selection Panel was able to conclude that "the Applicant's performances did not merit" the exercise of their discretion to select them.
- 57. It is plain that the "material" on which the decision was based was the Selection Panel's assessment of the Applicant's achievements, ability and potential to satisfy the Selection Policy Aims and the discretionary factors.

The Fourth Ground of Appeal – Procedural fairness and natural justice

- 58. It is difficult to understand this Ground of Appeal. Plainly, the Applicant must be afforded procedural fairness and natural justice, but it is not apparent as to how that has not been the case here, and of course the Applicant has the task of establishing this.
- 59. It seems that the Applicant is again seeking to challenge the imposition of the conditions which provided them with a further opportunity to gain selection. Specifically, the Applicant complains that they were not given the opportunity to challenge or understand the rationale behind this decision.
- 60. However, as referred to above, it is not appropriate for the Applicant to challenge the imposition of these conditions. Their challenge must be directed to the decision that they did not satisfy the Selection Policy Aims and the discretionary factors with the result that they were not selected.
- 61. There is no merit in this Ground of Appeal.

The Fifth Ground of Appeal – Failure to adhere to clause 5 of the Selection Policy – Considerations for discretionary selection

62. Again, the Applicant misses the point here.



- 63. Yes, the imposed conditions were new, subject to what the NST Member has said above, and strictly they did not form part of the Selection Policy, but that does not provide a basis for the Applicant to challenge to their non-selection.
- 64. The conditions were imposed in the context of providing the Applicant with a further opportunity to gain selection following it being determined, pursuant to the Selection Policy, that they could not be selected. To repeat, any challenge can only be to the latter decision, and the NST Member has already dealt with that.
- 65. This Ground of Appeal also fails.

The Sixth Ground of Appeal – Failure to publish amendments to clause 5 of the Selection Policy

- 66. What happened here was not an amendment of the Selection Policy. The Selection Policy was applied and resulted in the Applicant not being selected. However, the Applicant was provided with a further opportunity to still be selected. They were advised of this in the communication of 5 June 2025, and the Applicant took up that opportunity; they competed at the International Event, and there was sufficient time to improve their Boxing Profile Tool score to the level required.
- 67. There is no merit in this Ground of Appeal.

The Seventh Ground of Appeal – Failure to provide a fair and reasonable opportunity to meet selection criteria

- 68. Again, this Ground of Appeal must fail.
- 69. Boxing Australia was not obliged under the Selection Policy to provide a further opportunity for the Applicant to gain selection, but it did.
- 70. Boxing Australia enabled the Applicant to compete at the International Event. It also provided for the Applicant to participate in the AIS Training Camp, providing an opportunity for the athlete, together with them competing at the International Event, to improve their Boxing Profile Tool score.

The Eighth Ground of Appeal – Inappropriate use and application of the Boxing Profile Tool

The Ninth Ground of Appeal – Lack of transparency and supporting documentation in scoring

71. The NST Member considers that it is appropriate to address these two Grounds of Appeal together.



- 72. Unfortunately, once again there is a misunderstanding on the part of the Applicant. The Applicant suggests that the Boxing Profile Tool was used as "the final selection determinant", but that is not correct.
- 73. In order to be considered for final selection, once the Applicant had been initially unsuccessful as a result of the application of the Selection Policy, they were given the opportunity to either achieve a Podium performance at the International Event or achieve a score over 140 in the Boxing Profile Tool.
- 74. In any event, here, the Applicant complains of the use and application of the Boxing Profile Tool. However, this cannot be maintained.
- 75. First, the use and application of the Boxing Profile Tool is provided for in the Selection Policy. It is one of the discretionary factors in clause 5, namely clause 5(ii), and the Applicant would have been familiar with it given that it had been utilised in boxing for ten years.
- 76. It was used by the Selection Panel in considering the Selection Policy at the meeting on 1 June 2025, and the Applicant's score at that time was 131, insufficient to allow the exercise of discretion in their favour when considering selection.
- 77. The score the Applicant achieved following their attendance at the training camp and then competing at the International Event was 125.33, not only well below the required 140, but also below their earlier score.
- 78. The Boxing Profile Tool is applied by each selector separately and then the scores are averaged. Here, three of the four selectors used the Boxing Profile Tool with the fourth selector not being experienced enough to do so.
- 79. Plainly, the Boxing Profile Tool contains subjective criteria and the Applicant points to differences in the scores given by each selector. However, it is understandable that there would be differences between the scores given by different selectors, but that cannot detract from its use by experienced persons, and when it is the average which becomes the score.
- 80. The Applicant challenges the score they achieved, claiming that two of the three Selection Panel members were not present at the International Event. Apparently, that was the case, but the chair of the Selection Panel explained at the brief hearing on 28 July 2025, that those two members viewed replays of the Applicant's bout.
- 81. The Applicant also complains of a lack of transparency and supporting documentation resulting in the scores being either unsubstantiated or applied in a manner inconsistent with the Selection Policy. However, this complaint has not been substantiated by the Applicant, and of course they have that onus.



- 82. Plainly, the Applicant was aware of the use and application of the Boxing Profile Tool, and the NST Member accepts the submission of the Respondent that throughout the selection process the use of the Boxing Profile Tool was flagged and Boxing Australia provided "multiple opportunities for athletes and coaches to seek clarification, to ask questions, and to understand how the achievements could be improved".
- 83. The Respondent also makes the valid point that if the requirement of achieving a Boxing Profile Tool score of over 140 is removed because of any doubts arising from the issues raised by the Applicant, the Applicant still would not have been selected because the only requirement would then have been to achieve a Podium performance at the International Event, which did not happen.
- 84. It is also relevant to point out that the reason for providing a condition of achieving a Boxing Profile Tool score as an alternative to a Podium performance was to cater for the circumstance of an athlete who did not achieve a Podium performance as a result of a "tough random draw where they lose to a high-quality athlete early in the tournament".
- 85. The Applicant also complains about not being provided with their score until one day before the appeal deadline, despite having requested that well before.
- 86. The Respondent does not directly respond to this complaint, save and except to say that Boxing Australia was "open at all times" to fielding requests for information, and suggesting that no specific request was made. And further, saying that "detailed information was shared with the (Applicant) once data was consolidated and other athletes scores removed".
- 87. The NST Member is not in a position to determine whether that was the case or not, but makes the comment that it would be unfortunate if all information relevant to the selection process was not made available in a timely manner to the athletes.
- 88. These Grounds of Appeal must fail.

The Tenth Ground of Appeal – Unreasonable, insufficient and unclear appeal timeframe

- 89. The timeframes are set, and the NST Member accepts the submission of the Respondent that "the appeals policy process" "was circulated and provided to athletes on multiple occasions".
- 90. However, given that the majority of the affected athletes, including the Applicant, were overseas, an additional 48-hour period was allowed by Boxing Australia for those athletes to challenge the decision. The Respondent was not obliged to do that, but in doing so clearly acted reasonably.
- 91. That also explains the "typo" in the communication of 11 July 2025, and cannot provide a basis for this Ground of Appeal to succeed.



- 92. The Respondent clearly has to balance the well-being of the athletes and their stress in receiving an unwelcome communication against providing the athletes with sufficient time to challenge the decision, and have that process completed before the actual event or any entry guidelines.
- 93. Again, this Ground of Appeal must fail.

CONCLUSION

94. None of the Grounds of Appeal have merit, and thus the appeal must be dismissed.

THE NST MEMBER THEREFORE DETERMINES

1. The appeal be dismissed.

Date: 1 August 2025 (Determination given 29 July 2025)

The Honourable Steven Strickland KC