

Case: Trib_2024/19

Decision

delivered by the
Boxing Independent Integrity Unit's Tribunal,
Sitting in the composition of:

Malek Badri, Chairperson;
Adrian Stangaciu, Member; and
Sally Clark, Member,

on **15 April 2025**

Regarding
disciplinary proceedings

involving
Takeyoshi Sonezaki, Japan, IBA certified competition official
boxing@jabf.or.jp

- Accused Party -

and
Ms. Manal Rmeity, BIIU Investigation and Prosecution Officer
West Bay, Al Bidaa Tower, Doha 27277, Qatar
manal.shakron@gmail.com

- Accusing Party -

I. Parties

1. According to Article 18 of the Boxing Independent Integrity Unit ("BIIU") Procedural Rules adopted by the IBA Board on 25 August 2023 ("BIIUPR"), the parties are the accusing and the accused party.

According to Article 18 BIIUPR, the accused party is a person bound by the IBA Disciplinary and Ethics Code enshrined at its Article 2, who allegedly committed a breach of the regulations made by the International Boxing Association ("IBA") Board in accordance with the IBA Constitution.

2. IBA ("Claimant") who originally filed a complaint to the BIIU's Tribunal ("Tribunal"), requested the Tribunal to open disciplinary proceedings against a number of individuals including Takeyoshi Sonezaki ("Accused Party") and alleged that he breached Article 25.6.8 of the IBA Technical & Competitions Rules effective as of 03 March 2024 ("T&C Rules").
3. The Accused Party is the party accused by the Claimant. The Accused Party is an IBA certified competition official. The Accused Party is bound by the IBA Disciplinary and Ethics Code adopted by the IBA Board on 8 December 2023 ("DEC") according to Article 2.1 DEC and therefore falls under the Tribunal's jurisdiction.
4. According to Article 18 BIIUPR, Ms. Manal Rmeity (Lebanese in-house Legal Counsel, based in Doha, Qatar) is the accusing party ("Accusing Party"), following her appointment by the Managing Director (under Article 24 BIIUPR) as an Investigation and Prosecution Officer ("IPO") responsible for investigating and prosecuting the case based on the applicable regulations.

II. Factual background

1. From 25 October to 03 November 2024, the U19 World Boxing's Championship ("Championship") was held by World Boxing, which is another analogous international governing boxing organization, at the Pueblo Convention Center in Colorado, USA.
2. The Accused Party participated in the Championship, in his capacity of referee and judge.

III. Proceedings

1. On 10 December 2024, the Tribunal received a written complaint (the "Complaint") from the IBA.
2. On 13 January 2025, disciplinary proceedings against the Accused Party were opened by decision of the Chairperson of the Tribunal as a result of the Complaint. The said proceedings are related to alleged breaches of Article 25.6.8 T&C Rules. In the said decision, the Chairperson informed the Accused Party of the appointment of Ms. Manal

Rmeity as an IPO and allowed the IPO to submit a written submission before the Tribunal within a specified deadline.

3. On 14 February 2025, the IPO filed her submission ("IPO Submission") to the Tribunal, alleging that the Accused Party committed a violation of Article 25.6.8 T&C Rules, as well as Article 33.2 and Article 41 DEC, and Articles 4.1 and 4.3 of the IBA Code of Conduct.
4. On 17 February 2025, the Chairperson of the Tribunal issued the decree of "Request for Submission" which informed the parties of the closing of the investigation stage and requested the parties to make a submission if:
 - the Accused Party wishes to submit a written reply to the IPO Submission; and
 - they wish a physical or an online hearing of the Tribunal to be held.
5. There had been no submission by the parties.
6. On 05 March 2025, the Chairperson of the Tribunal, according to Article 32.1 BIIUPR, Article 35.2 BIIUPR, Article 44 BIIUPR and Article 45.1 BIIUPR, issued a decision on the closing of proceedings namely:
 - informing the parties about the closing of the proceedings;
 - announcing that the Tribunal would deliberate by videoconference on 15 April 2025 solely based on the documentary evidence;
 - announcing the Tribunal's composition; and
 - informing that any request for the removal of any of the arbitrators must be submitted in substantiated writing to the BIIU Managing Board within five (5) days from the discovery of the grounds of challenge.
7. There has been no request for the removal of any of the arbitrators.

IV. Submissions of the Parties

A. The IBA's Complainant

1. On 10 December 2024, the IBA submitted the Complaint to the Tribunal as follows:

"the unauthorised participation of several IBA-registered Referees and Judges ("Non-Compliant R&Js") in the U19 World Boxing Championship, held at the Pueblo Convention Center in Colorado, USA, from 25 October to 3 November 2024 ("Event" - Exhibit 1). This participation occurred without obtaining the required prior written approval from the IBA Board of Directors, in direct violation of article 25.6.8 of the IBA Technical and Competitions Rules ("T&C Rules")."

"I kindly ask the Chairperson of the Tribuna (...) to open proceedings and rule on the matter, as per the recommendation of the R&J Committee, to revoke the IBA qualifications of all the Non-Compliant R&Js identified above."

B. The IPO's Submissions and Requests for Relief

2. On 14 February 2025, the IPO filed the IPO Submission to the Tribunal, claiming what follows:

"13. Despite this, he (the Accused Party) knowingly participated in the U19 World Boxing Championship without such approval, constituting a clear violation of Article 25.6.8 of the IBA T&C Rules and Article 33.2 and Article 41 of the DEC.

(...)

15. The lack of cooperation by the Accused Party, demonstrated by his failure to respond to the IPO's inquiry email dated 13 January 2025, further indicates disregard for the investigation process and failing to provide any justification for his unauthorized participation.

(...)

28. In light of the above, the undersigned IPO respectfully requests the BIIU Tribunal to:

- a. Declare the Accused Party in violation of Article 25.6.8 of the IBA T & C Rules, as well as Article 33.2 and Article 41 DEC, and Articles 4.1 and 4.3 of the IBA Code of Conduct.*
- b. Withdraw the IBA certification of the Accused Party.*
- c. Suspend the Accused Party from all IBA-related activities for two (2) years with immediate effect.*
- d. Acknowledge the failure of the Accused Party to cooperate with the IPO during the investigation stage."*

V. Jurisdiction

1. According to Article 25.1 of the Boxing Independent Integrity Unit Rules adopted by the IBA Board on 08 December 2023 ("BIIUR"), the Tribunal has jurisdiction to hear cases where a breach of the regulations made by the IBA Board in accordance with the IBA Constitution allegedly accrued.
2. According to Article 11.1 BIIUPR, the Tribunal shall declare whether it is competent to hear the case.
3. Disciplinary proceedings against the Accused Party were opened on 13 January 2025 by the Chairperson of the Tribunal. The proceedings were related to alleged breaches of Article 25.6.8 T&C Rules, Article 33.2 and Article 41 DEC, and Articles 4.1 and 4.3 of the IBA Code of Conduct according to the IPO Submission.
4. The IPO's allegation relates to an alleged breach of the regulations made by the IBA Board in accordance with the IBA Constitution.

5. According to Article 2.1 DEC, the DEC applies to all officials, boxers, coaches, managers, promoters, and other persons elected, appointed, contracted or accredited by the IBA, a Confederation or a National Federation.
6. In particular, as per Article 33 DEC, the Tribunal has the competence to rule on any failure to perform Competition Officials' duties, including by imposing the downgrade of the Official from his/her level and/or his/her suspension from his/her activities until he/she satisfies the requirements decided by the Tribunal.

VI. Applicable Law

1. According to Article 93.3 BIIUPR: *"The procedures which are pending before adoption of these Procedural Rules remain subject to the IBA Procedural Rules approved by the IBA Board on 8 April 2021, 5 November 2022 and 15 July 2023 respectively, unless both Parties request the application of these Procedural Rules. In case the IBA Procedural Rules approved by the IBA Board on 8 April 2021 and/or 5 November 2022 and/or 15 July 2023 do not regulate any matter significant for the proceedings, these Procedural Rules shall apply."*
2. Since the disciplinary proceedings against the Accused Party were opened on 13 January 2025, the BIIUPR shall be applied to these proceedings.
3. According to Article 52.1 DEC: *"This Code is adopted by the Board on 8 December 2023 and comes into force immediately"*.
4. According to Article 52.2 DEC: *"This Code applies to any Disciplinary or Ethics proceedings which have been formally opened after the date when this Code came into force. Any offence shall be governed by the substantive rules in force on the date of which the offence has been committed, unless the principle of lex mitior applies (implying that this Code is more favourable to the offender than prior regulations)."*
5. Since it is alleged by the Accusing Party that the breaches of the Accused Party were conducted between 25 October and 03 November 2024, the DEC shall be applied in these proceedings.

VII. Merits

1. According to Article 27.2 BIIUR, in principle, the Tribunal has decided not to communicate the grounds of a decision in this case.

VIII. Costs

1. According to Article 47 BIIUPR, no procedural costs shall be imposed. The Tribunal therefore does not impose procedural costs.
2. According to Article 48 BIIUPR, no costs of the parties related to the proceedings are awarded. Therefore, the parties shall bear their own costs incurred by this procedure.

**The Boxing Independent Integrity Unit's Tribunal,
decides what follows.**

1. The Accused Party is found guilty of participation in another analogous international governing boxing entity without obtaining prior written approval from IBA Board of Directors in breach of Article 25.6.8 T&C Rules.
2. The Accused Party's certification shall be downgraded by one level lower than his current level as Referee and Judge within the sense of Article 2.1 of the IBA Referee and Judge Regulations.
3. The other requests made by the Accusing Party are dismissed.
4. No procedural costs are imposed.
5. The parties shall bear their own costs incurred by this procedure.
6. The present decision is notified to the parties by email, immediately.

Boxing Independent Integrity Unit's Tribunal



**Malek Badri,
Chairman**



**Adrian Stangaciu,
Member**



**Sally Clark,
Member**

Request for grounds of decision

According to Article 27.2 of the Boxing Independent Integrity Unit Rules adopted by the IBA Board on 08 December 2023, the parties have **ten (10) days from receipt of this decision** to request, in writing, the grounds of the decision, and that failure to do so will result in the said decision becoming final and binding.

According to Article 27.3 of the Boxing Independent Integrity Unit Rules, if a party requests the grounds of the decision, the motivated decision will be communicated to the parties in full, written form. The time limit to lodge an appeal, where applicable, begins upon receipt of this motivated decision.

Notice of appeal

According to Article 89 of the Boxing Independent Integrity Unit Procedural Rules adopted by the IBA Board on 25 August 2023, the present decision may be appealed in English **within twenty-one (21) days after its reception** before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, which will resolve the dispute definitively in accordance with its procedural rules.

Copy by email to:

- Boxing Independent Integrity Unit (BIIU), Managing Director, director@biu.sport
- International Boxing Association (IBA), represented by its CEO and Secretary General, info@iba.sport