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August 21, 2013

Tim,

The following is a recap of the August 10, 2013 boxing event at Thief River Falls, Minnesota. The event was promoted by Jim White, d.ba. Rez Promotions, and regulated by the Red Lake Nation Athletic Commission.

Pre-Bout:

I was contacted to serve as ABC observer for the event by RLMAC members Bud Beaulieu and Michael O'Neill. I attended the weigh-in on August 9. The commission was prepared to start the weigh-ins on time, but some of the boxers were late, as there was some road construction that delayed their arrival. There was an issue with the promoter supplying the contracts prior to the scheduled start time of the weigh-in. The RLNAC made sure he complied so that the contracts could be reviewed and weights entered on the weigh-in sheet prior to the start of the weigh-in. I discussed with the commission the importance of verifying identity of the boxers by reviewing their Federal IDs. Credentials were issued to the boxers and corner men.

The gloves were collected by the commission at weigh-in.

Dr. Mangiamele conducted pre-bout physicals prior to the event and served as ringside physician.

The ring was inspected and was found to be in excellent condition, and the lead inspector Cheri Goodwin ensured that the lower rope was loosened when it was found to be too tight. The lighting was also thoroughly checked, as this was an outdoor show. The lighting was very good and enabled the referees to clearly see the face and eyes of the boxers.

The commission did not have a copy of the promoter's insurance policy prior to the weigh-in, and made it clear to the promoter that the policy needed to be on file before the bouts started. The promoter was able to produce the policy prior to the start of the event.

Bout Time:

As bout time approached, the locker rooms were available for the contestants, and water, ice, and towels were available in the locker room areas.

The ambulance, ambulance personnel and ringside physician were all in their assigned area prior to the start of the event.

Inspectors examined the contestants' hand wraps prior to the gloves being put on.

Score cards were not correctly printed prior to the event, but the commission made the needed adjustments. Tally sheets were correctly completed by RLNAC member Bill May.

An unlicensed corner man was observed working one of the bouts, and the commission will refine their procedures to ensure compliance with corner men licensing requirements in the future.

Post bout:

Payouts were coordinated by the commission, ensuring that each official and boxer was paid. There was some confusion and delay as the promoter was in and out of the payout room, but the commission made sure that all payees signed off for their money.

A report of the event results, including suspensions, was compiled by Michael O'Neill and submitted to the Fight Fax.

Summary:

The Red Lake Nation Athletic Commission did a good job regulating the event. There were many elements of the event that made it a good learning experience. The event was a pro-am event, so there was extra traffic in the locker rooms during the amateur portion of the show. Not only was it the first event for this particular group of commissioners, but it was also the first show promoted by the promoter.

The RLNAC has been working very hard the past year, and has made great strides toward becoming a fully functional athletic commission.

It was a great pleasure for me to work with the Red Lake Nation Athletic Commission, and I look forward to their continued development. It would be my honor to assist them in the future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Erickson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jim Erickson
2nd VP Association of Boxing Commissions

Tim,

The following is a recap of the January 17, 2015 MMA event at 7 Clans Casino in Red Lake, Minnesota. The event was promoted by Driller Promotions and regulated by the Red Lake Nation Athletic Commission.

Pre-Bout:

I was contacted to serve as ABC observer for the event by RLNAC members Bud Beaulieu and Michael O'Neill. I attended the weigh-ins on January 16. The commission was prepared to start the weigh-ins on time, but some of the fighters were late due to routing/mapping issues. The commissioner responsible for bringing the weigh-in sheet forgot it, but the weights were still properly recorded. The commission was properly set up to issue licenses and all National ID cards were checked. There were some communication issues regarding what licenses the promoters had agreed to pay for, but those issues were easily resolved. There was also some confusion between the commission and the promoter as to who was responsible for knowing what licensing requirements were needed for each fighter. I discussed with the commission the importance of continuously communicating with the promoter as to what is needed for licensing and not relying on the promoter to just assume what is needed. A few fighters did not obtain a National ID card prior to the event. However, these fighters were making their debuts so the commission allowed them to fight and then immediately placed them on an indefinite suspension until those cards are obtained.

There were a total of four (4) fighters that came in overweight. The commission was unsure how to handle this issue so I discussed with them some of the options that include giving a fighter a set amount of time to attempt to cut the weight, getting their opponent to agree to the overage and possibly surrendering a portion of their purse, and cutting the fight all together. In the end, the fighters were given two (2) hours to cut the weight and/or their opponents signed off on the overage. The amount of weight that the fighters were over was not significant enough to drop the fights.

All of the fighters were sized for gloves at weigh-ins, the gloves were bagged and marked with the fighters' name, and the bags were given to the commission.

Dr. Gene Stringer, and his wife Christie Stringer, conducted all pre-bout physicals prior to the event and served as ringside physician. All fighters passed their pre-bout physicals.

The cage was properly inspected and found to be in excellent condition. The commission set up barriers around the cage to create a separation between ringside personnel and the crowd. There was a clear path blocked off from the locker rooms to the cage. The commission had a separate room away from the locker rooms to use as a medical room in the event that Dr. Stringer needed to administer sutures or do a more thorough check-up post-bout.

The commission had a copy of the promoter's insurance policy and the fighters were made aware of the procedure for making any claims.

The commission was still trying to get a feel for navigating the MMA database and taking advantage of some of the uses it makes available. Because of this, the commission asked for my assistance in putting together the master results sheet. I worked with Michael O'Neill before, during, and after the event date to help him navigate the site and figure out how to use it.

The commission did not have a template to create individual round score cards or master score sheets. I was able to supply the commission with the template I use and created these documents for this event.

Bout Time:

As bout time approached, the locker rooms were available for the fighters, and water, ice, and towels were available in the locker room areas.

The ambulance, ambulance personnel, and ringside physician were all in their assigned area prior to the start of the event.

There were a total of eight (8) inspectors at the event. Six of the inspectors were part of the RLNAC and two of the inspectors were part of the Minnesota Office of Combative Sports. The two MNOCS inspectors were asked by the RLNAC to attend the event as they are two of the MNOCS most senior inspectors and had helped with past events. The two MNOCS inspectors were able to help answer questions and give suggestions. The six RLNAC inspectors did a great job considering this was the first event for most of them and they didn't have any prior formal training.

Once the referee and three judges arrived I took a few minutes to greet each of them and get a little information on their background in combative sports. The referee is currently licensed in North Dakota and Minnesota as a MMA judge and referee. He has worked numerous bouts and his experience showed in the cage, he did an excellent job. What I discovered with the judges was that they had very little, if any, experience or training in judging MMA. Most of the judges' experience was in boxing. I spoke with the commission about the importance of training officials in the sport that they are being assigned to. For this event we had a retired MMA fighter sit alongside the judge with the least experience to help him throughout the event. There were no decisions and the fighter informed me that the judge had scored all the rounds exactly how he would have scored them.

The master score sheets, and results sheet, were correctly completed by the commission.

There were a few corners that got a little overly excited and were hanging on the cage or standing out of their seat. The inspectors quickly handled the situation and nothing escalated beyond their control.

Post Bout:

Payouts went off without any issues. The promoter paid out all the fighters after each bout and the commission oversaw this process. The officials were all paid at the conclusion of the event.

A report of the event results, including suspensions, was compiled by Michael O'Neill and submitted to the MMA database.

Summary:

The Red Lake Nation Athletic Commission did a great job regulating the event. This was only the second MMA bout that they have regulated and they are still learning. They are still getting a feel for the differences in regulating MMA as opposed to boxing, but are definitely improving. The RLNAC may want to look at getting some training classes set up for their officials and inspectors. Getting some classroom instruction for these guys would greatly improve the overall regulation.

The RLNAC continues to improve and with a couple more events they should become a fully functional athletic commission.

I enjoyed working with the commission and welcomed all questions that were asked of me. I will continue to work with the RLNAC in the future whenever called upon.

Respectfully,

Matt Schowalter

State Program Administrator

MN Office of Combative Sports