

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**ENGLAND BOXING**

**&**

**MS SAPHIRE LEE**

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**DISCIPLINARY PANEL DECISION**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. This is the decision of the Disciplinary Panel, consisting of Mr Lawrence Selby (Chair) and Mr Stuart Tennant, in the matter of Ms Saphire Lee, pursuant to the “Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures” [the “Procedure”], of September 2010.

**JURISDICTION**

2. Section 6.1 of the Procedure states:

“The Disciplinary Panel shall be made up of 3 members. In extra ordinary circumstances, 2 members may sit however, the Respondent must give

written authority to allow this.”

3. Ms Lee provided her written authority for the Panel to consist of only 2 members, given the late withdrawal of Mr Steve Osbalderston.
4. Furthermore, Ms Lee also provided her written authority for the Hearing to proceed as a “Virtual Hearing”, namely with some parties participating via FaceTime and/or conference call.
5. In all the circumstances, the Panel was most grateful to Ms Lee for her co-operation and assistance, in both these regards.

## **PARTIES**

6. The following participated in the Hearing, on Sunday 16 October 2016:
  - Mr Lawrence Selby (Panel Chair) – 9 Bedford Row, London
  - Mr Stuart Tennant (Panel Member) – 9 Bedford Row, London
  
  - Mr Gordon Valentine (EB National Compliance Manager) – 9 Bedford Row, London
  - Mr Richard Paton-Philip (on behalf of the Complainant, Mr Ian Cahill) – 9 Bedford Row, London
  
  - Ms Sapphire Lee (Respondent) – via conference call

## **THE CHARGES AND PLEAS**

7. Ms Lee faced a single charge, contrary to section 8.3.1b(i) of the AIBA Disciplinary Code and the England Boxing Code of Conduct, namely that, in her role as Supervisor of a bout on 14 May 2016 at Peterborough Town Hall between Fomin of Wisbech and Meins of Peterborough Police, she procured an advantage for Fomin by falsely representing one or more of the judges scorecards so that Fomin was declared the winner of the bout.
8. It is not proposed to rehearse the facts of the charge in any detail; (i) they are well known to all parties; (ii) they are, in essence, self-explanatory; (iii) the relevant facts are referred to below.
9. Pursuant to section 10.2 of the Procedure, the Charges were put to Ms Lee, who indicated that she did not admit the Charges.

## **MATTERS TO BE DETERMINED**

10. The Panel confirmed that:
  - (a) it was for England Boxing to satisfy the Panel of Ms Lee's guilt;
  - (b) the applicable standard of proof required for this case was the civil standard, namely, the balance of probability – i.e. was it more likely than not that Ms Lee had committed the offences, as alleged.

## THE EVIDENCE

11. The following is a summary of the principal evidence/submissions provided to the Panel.
12. It does not purport to contain reference to all the points made, however the absence in these reasons of any particular point, or submission, should not imply that the Panel did not take such point, or submission, into consideration when the members considered the matter.
13. For the avoidance of doubt, the Panel carefully considered all the evidence and materials furnished with regard to this case.
14. Mr Paton-Philip, on behalf of the Complainant, called the following evidence:

Ian CAHILL, who stated

- He was invited to Judge some of the bouts;
- He confirmed that he had worked with Ms Lee previously and described her as “upstanding”;
- He scored the bout in favour of Meins;
- He found it surprising that Ms Lee, as Supervisor, collected the tickets at the end of each round, although he did not raise this;
- He was surprised at the result;

- He said nothing about it on the night as he did not want a confrontation but stated that he made a complaint a couple of days after the event;
- He was confronted by Ms Lee at the end of the bout and found this suspicious;
- He accepted that there was a potential for error in the scoring, although he had not seen it happen.

Steve ELLIOTT, who stated:

- As far as he was concerned, this was a normal night and he didn't realize there was anything untoward;
- He was judging that night;
- He was almost certain that he had scored the bout for Meins and therefore he thought the outcome was strange but surmised that these things happen in boxing;
- Explained how the scoring and tear-away scorecards worked;
- It was not beyond the realms of probability that the score had been written down incorrectly; it had happened before;
- He remembered that the Time Keeper had a funny look on his face.

15. Mr Paton-Philip also read the statements of Linda BOWEN; Frank ALLEN; Philip TRASK; Wendy PAYNE and Chris BAKER.

16. The most salient fact to emerge being that BOWEN had scored the bout in favour of FOMIN.

17. Furthermore, with the agreement of Ms Lee, the Panel allowed the introduction of (i) an email from ELLIOTT, dated 31 May 2016, showing the date of his initial statement to England Boxing and (ii) a tear-away scorecard, similar to the ones used on the night.

18. Ms Lee, on her own behalf stated that:

- She had been in boxing since 1974;
- She collected the tickets, because of a previous incident with Trask;
- This had been approved by England Boxing;
- Once the MC had announced the decision for Fomin, no-one said anything;
- She saw Trask mouthing “She’s got that wrong”
- As a result, she approached him and told him, in a voice which was not raised, that the tickets were on her desk, should anyone wish to see them;
- No-one made a complaint;
- There was no advantage to her in changing the scores;
- She goes all over the country without any problem;
- She shredded the score slips after 7 days; a usual course of action if there was no complaint;
- She believed Fomin was the winner;
- She had done nothing wrong.

19. On hearing all the evidence, the Panel then retired to consider its

decision against Ms Lee.

## **FINDINGS**

20. The Panel determined that England Boxing had failed to prove its case, given that the Panel could not conclude that:

- a) the announced result was not, in fact, the same as that marked on the scorecards; furthermore
- b) even if there were a discrepancy between the announced result and the marked scorecards, any discrepancy was not as a result of a genuine error; furthermore
- c) even if there were an error, it was made, deliberately, by Ms Lee.

21. The Hearing was then reconvened and the Panel announced its findings to the Parties, making sure that Ms Lee understood that she had been completely exonerated of any wrongdoing.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

22. Ms Lee was asked whether she considered that the hearing had been fair. She confirmed that she did.

23. Corruption is an anathema to all sports and to all those involved in sport and, as such and notwithstanding its finding, the Panel fully endorses the decision by England Boxing to bring these proceedings against Ms Lee, something that Ms Lee, herself, also expressly acknowledged.

24. With his in mind and in order to protect the integrity of sport and its stakeholders, the Panel respectfully recommends that England Boxing consider whether the current “tear-away” scorecard system should be reviewed – possibly by (a) ensuring that these scorecards are in duplicate; (b) that all parts of the scorecard be retained for a minimum of 14 days, by the relevant people (ie. Judges, etc.); (c) any/all complaints, re scoring, be reported as soon as possible and not later than 10 days after the bout in question; and (d) any failure to retain/report be, in itself, a disciplinary matter.

25. It is hoped that such a review would ensure that the innocent are protected and that the guilty are readily caught.

Signed:

Dated: 25 October 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Selby', written in a cursive style.

Lawrence JC Selby

Chair