

IN THE MATTER OF

BETWEEN:

ENGLAND BOXING

- and -

PAUL SMITH

SAFEGUARDING REVIEW PANEL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the written decision of the England Boxing Safeguarding Review Panel (“**SRP**”) consisting of [REDACTED] (Chair), [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] in the matter of Mr Paul Smith (“**PS**”) presented by England Boxing (“**EB**”) in accordance with s4.1(ii) and s4.1(iii) of the England Boxing Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures policy (the “**Policy**”) version 2.1 (dated 28 March 2023).

2. FIRST HEARING

Hearing particulars

- 2.1 The panel has been formed under the following provisions of the Policy:
- (a) s4.1(ii) Upon receipt of a concern or referral relating to a safeguarding matter or investigation; and
 - (b) s4.1(iii) Upon notification of a breach or potential breach of the EB Safeguarding Policy and/or the EB Adults at Risk Policy and/or any other EB safeguarding provision.
- 2.2 The SRP first sat on Wednesday 22 January 2025 at 6:00pm, virtually via Zoom.
- 2.3 The first panel was attended by the SRP and Mr Anthony Sheppard (“**AS**”) on behalf of EB. PS did not attend the first hearing.
- 2.4 Prior to the first hearing the SRP were provided documentation by AS on behalf of EB consisting of:
- (a) the PS panel pack; and
 - (b) appendices A to Q.

Breaches reported by EB

- 2.5 At the first hearing the SRP were asked to consider the evidence put forward by AS in support of the allegations made against PS in relation to 7 key elements:
- (a) breaches of the Safeguarding Policy and incorporated Code of Conduct, Policies and Guidelines related to safeguarding;
 - (b) transportation of young people in PS’s vehicle without an additional adult chaperone;
 - (c) communication with young people in a closed group via digital media;

(d) [REDACTED]

(e) [REDACTED]

(f) [REDACTED]

- 2.6 In addition to the points raised at paragraph 2.5, the SRP were notified of 19 potential policy breaches put forth by EB.

Burden and standard of proof

- 2.7 The burden of proving the breaches was on EB.
- 2.8 The applicable standard of proof was the balance of probability meaning that the SRP will need to be satisfied that the breaches put forth by EB, based on the evidence provided and mitigating points raised by PS, were more likely than not a breach of the Policy.

Jurisdiction

- 2.9 In accordance with s4.2 of the Policy the SRP shall have jurisdiction to deal with the matter in accordance with the provisions of the Policy.
- 2.10 The SRP found that the Policy can be applied to PS as he was actively involved with EB at the time of the accused breaches.

First hearing decision

- 2.11 The SRP considered the evidence put forth by AS and the statements in defence of PS and under ss4.11, 4.12, and 6.1 imposed an interim suspension on PS for 3 months to allow AS and EB to gather additional evidence as a number of questions were raised on the evidence provided ahead of the first hearing.
- 2.12 The SRP imposed the interim suspension in accordance with s6.5(iv).

Post-first hearing

- 2.13 PS was advised of his interim suspension for up to an additional 3 months (on top of his already served suspension during the investigation process) and was advised the SRP would reconvene at a date within the 3 months.

3. SECOND HEARING

Hearing particulars

- 3.1 The SRP reconvened following AS producing additional evidence in support of the original key points raised in allegations of a breach by PS, in particular paragraph 2.5(a), 2.5(b), and 2.5(c) above.
- 3.2 The SRP reconvened on Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 6:00pm, virtually via Zoom.
- 3.3 Ahead of the second hearing the SRP considered it appropriate for PS to attend and be provided the opportunity to provide context to the allegations raised against him and for the SPR to have the opportunity to raise questions to PS.
- 3.4 During the hearing PS gave context to each allegation under paragraph 2.5 above and the SRP raised multiple questions.

Determination

- 3.5 The SRP took account of all the written and live evidence presented by AS and PS and considered the appropriate decision of the panel.
- 3.6 The SRP determined that the main points of concern were:
- (a) the multiple and continued intentional breaches of the Policy by PS with no remorse and understanding that the actions by PS were breaching his responsibility and duties as an

EB registered coach under the Safeguarding Policy along with being in a position of power with his athletes and students;

- (b) when questioned about transporting young people without the appropriate chaperones PS's responses raised concerns about his knowledge of the Safeguarding Policy and what actions should be taken when transporting young adults. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- (c) when questioned about messaging young people in a closed environment PS outright denied having any instances of this except for when he initially started the Athena club in which his number would be used for the main profile. PS claimed he would receive messages asking about class times and events and he would reply but didn't ask people their ages when doing so. The SRP considered this to be contradictory to the evidence provided [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- (d) PS's approach to his knowledge and understanding of the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct of EB, and also his attitude towards the requirements of the Safeguarding Policy and the reason for it being in place, do not meet the expectations of a responsible member and ambassador of the EB community, especially one who has been involved with the sport for ~20 years.

3.7 The SRP considered the mitigating responses put forth by PS, mainly:

- (a) his long-standing involvement with EB and his commitment to providing a space for young female boxers to have the opportunity to advance in the sport;
- (b) his awareness of safeguarding concerns relating to a number of his students [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- (c) numerous supporting statements by affluent members of the EB community and parents of the students he coaches.

3.8 Considering the points at paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7, the SRP made the following determinations of facts on the balance of probabilities;

- (a) there was evidence provided that supported the allegation at paragraph 2.5(c) however there was insufficient evidence that raised a significant concern of the risks to young people and the threat to the safety of a young person;
- (b) the evidence that supported the allegation at paragraphs 2.5(a) and 2.5(b) were substantial [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- (c) the multiple allegations raised and Safeguarding Policy breaches were substantial, enough to evidence a lack of care and attention when applying safeguarding rules and a lack of awareness and understanding of how to ask accordingly with the Safeguarding Policy when dealing with young people and vulnerable adults.

4. OUTCOME

4.1 The SRP decided that the interim suspension applied at the first hearing was no longer necessary and would cease to be in place from the evening of the second hearing, Wednesday 26 February 2025.

4.2 There have been substantial breaches of the Safeguarding Policy by PS and his responses to the allegations posed a threat to upholding the terms of the Safeguarding Policy.

4.3 The SRP concluded that PS is required to improve his knowledge and awareness of the Safeguarding Policy and as such, the SRP imposed the following actions in accordance with ss4.10(iii) and 4.10(vii) of the Policy;

- (a) PS is to attend and complete to a satisfactory level, according to EB, the England Boxing Online Safeguarding Course (booked through Locker);
- (b) PS is to attend and complete to a satisfactory level, according to EB, the Safeguarding Reflective Practice Workshop (booked through a link provided following completion of the course at 4.3(a) above);
- (c) PS is to complete the actions of paragraphs 4.3(a) and (b) within 8 weeks of the date of this decision; and
- (d) PS's coaching licence and membership of EB is conditional on the above being completed to a satisfactory level, according to EB. Non-compliance with the above will result in the suspension of PS's licence pending further investigation by EB.

Additional points to note

4.4 The SRP want to make the point clear to PS that it has considered the multiple statements in support of PS and have considered his actions against the allegations raised and provided PS with any and all benefits of a doubt that can possibly be applied.

4.5 The SRP wants it written that it did not take the allegations lightly and the points of concern at paragraph 3.6 above are serious. The SRP understands there are positives to the programme that PS runs through Athena boxing and the outcomes it can have on the community of young female boxers and it would be a shame for PS to put the programme at jeopardy due to his actions.

4.6 The SRP believe with sufficient training and a willingness of PS to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy then there should be minimal concern with PS's conduct after completing his requirements at paragraph 4.3. [REDACTED]

4.7 The SRP makes no order for costs as none was sought.

5. RIGHT OF APPEAL

5.1 A right of appeal is available to both EB and PS in accordance with s7 of the Policy.

6. ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINARY MATTER

6.1 [REDACTED]

6.2 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On behalf of and agreed by the Safeguarding Review Panel

4 March 2025