

Muay Thai Happenings

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"In order to preserve and spread Muay Thai, the national sport of Thailand, and enhance Muay Thai for international appreciation and acceptance, it is hereby agreed that WBC (World Boxing Council) and SAT (Sport Authority of Thailand) to cooperate to promote Muay Thai worldwide renown."

"This agreement of cooperation between the WBC and SAT ensures that the rules and regulations for Muay Thai are adhered to and, furthermore, that Muay Thai competition attains the highest standards and recognition worldwide."

You have just read, verbatim, the opening paragraphs of an agreement signed on February 24, 2005 by Jose Sulaiman, WBC President; Saatiparb Tejavaniya, Governor of Sports Authority of Thailand; POL General Kovid Bhakdibhumi, Chairman WBC MUAYTHAI, and Chalermchai Bunrak, Deputy Governor of Sports Authority of Thailand.

This agreement, the first of its type since the modern era of Muay Thai began as a sport in 1925, stipulates that the WBC MUAYTHAI act as both the organizing source and sanctioning body for all Muay Thai rankings and championship events worldwide, while the SAT will provide information for MUAYTHAI education and development.

As of this writing, (June 2005) the WBC MUAYTHAI has stated that it plans to sanction the first WBC MUAYTHAI World Championships in Las Vegas, Nevada, sometime in July 2005. The championship card, "Big Bang" in Las Vegas will feature a card of four SUPERFIGHTS including the Heavyweight and Welterweight world titles for men, as well as two world titles in the women's division.

The Las Vegas event will be the showcase for the WBC MUAYTHAI WORLD

SERIES to be staged around the world. The series will feature seven events (five rounds each) on each card including four world title fights. All contests will allow the use of punches, kicks, knees and elbow strikes. It is anticipated that the series will be staged monthly in various designated cities throughout the world.

Well, what do you think, a marriage made in heaven? With guarded optimism, it sounds good to me but only time will tell! One thing is for sure, if the general public is exposed to the sport, its athleticism and action can't help but capture their hearts, and hopefully their pocketbooks.

Since we're talking about "full rules" Muay Thai, if you are a fan, you should definitely check out the action at the Plaza Hotel Casino in Las Vegas. Well-known promoter, Dennis Warner, has raised the bar for all promoters of Muay Thai in the U.S.A. His "IN SYNC Productions Company" has put together several outstanding events with two more planned before years end. While it has a ways to go before we can christen it Lumpini west, it's off to a great start.

Dennis' recipe for success begins with the talent, both domestic and imported. A partial list includes such outstanding homegrown talent as Bryce Krause; William Sriyapai; Baxter Humby and Romie Adanza. Stir into the mix transplanted Thais, Malaipet Sittrapom, and ex-Lumpini champion, Jongsanan Fairtex. Add a pinch of French flavoring with Tarik Benfkik, Dutch treats Marco Pique and Imro Main, a taste of Sweden in Niklas Winberg, Sachiyo Shibata and Hisayuki Kanazawa from the land of the rising sun, and some thunder from down under in the form of Steve McKinnon and David Hoy. Take it from me, the action was outstanding!

In addition to featuring some of the best international talent, the promotion has proved successful for several other reasons. As one of the more unique cities of the world, Las Vegas beckons visitors from all over the globe. In addition, Nevada's Muay Thai rules, with minor modifications, parallel the liberal rules permitted in Thailand. Lastly, for those fans so inclined, betting on the fights is legal, with all odds posted on the big board by the casino's Sports Book.

On second thought, if this isn't Lumpini west, it's the closest thing to it in the good old US of A. Your support will contribute to making the show even bigger and better. Check it out.

For more information on the September show, go to www.kickbox.com. Also, check your local listings for Black Belt TV and Fox Sports en Espanol for the previous events.

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