

Statement re refereeing and judging at the Olympic Games 1948

Owing to the fact that the Olympic Games had not been held for twelve years and that the majority who officiated then were no longer acting in those capacities, there was no established body of referees and judges in existence from which a sufficient number to officiate at the 1948 Games could be selected. At the European Championships in Dublin, 1947, a number of referees and judges were classified as of the necessary international standing but there were not sufficient for the purpose of the Olympic Games and as they all belonged to European countries the list was not sufficiently representative for what in fact is a world championship.

The Executive Committee of A. I. B. A. therefore invited all affiliated Associations to nominate two of their members as referees and judges with a third name as a reserve in case of necessity. Affiliated Associations were urged only to nominate officers who possessed the necessary standard of refereeing and judging suitable for the Olympic Games. Unfortunately this direction was not in most cases complied with and any blame for inadequacy in judging and refereeing attaches to those Associations who nominated officers not possessing the necessary qualifications.

Owing to the large number of entries for each event it seemed likely that it would be necessary to use two rings at the same time for one or more of the earlier days which would mean that 8 officials would have to function at one time and owing to the necessity of providing these and of avoiding an official possessing the same nationality as one of the other officials or either of the boxers engaged, a fairly large selection had to be provided for the early stages.

The Executive Committee also nominated 16 gentlemen to act as a Jury d'Appel. These gentlemen belonged to 16 different countries in all parts of the world and were known individually for their experience and reputation in amateur boxing. In fact only 10 of these attended at the Games and formed the Jury d'Appel. The Jury sat continuously during the whole of the boxing at the Olympic Games.

Among these nominated for the Jury d'Appel were some of the best referees in existence but it was thought desirable to retain their services for the Jury d'Appel in order to have the benefit of their experience in that body. The other members of the Jury d'Appel were all gentlemen of great experience in refereeing and judging and of the Rules of Boxing.

The Executive Committee instructed the Jury d'Appel to observe the conduct of referees while in the ring and also the scoring papers of judges so that only the officials who possessed the highest standards should be made available for selection in the later stages of the boxing events.

This was duly carried out with the result that before the commencement of the semi-finals a « short list » of 8 referees and 16 judges was recommended by the Jury d'Appel and from these gentlemen the officials for the semi-finals, third places and finals were ultimately selected.

At the same time a list of other officials was authorised for publication as international referees and judges. These will be duly graded according to their conduct during the later stages of the boxing contests and will be published to affiliated Associations in due course.

The publication of the list of those finally graded as international referees and judges will provide a body of recognised officials from whom referees and judges for future Olympic Games and other international tournaments can be drawn. It is hoped that with the example of these gentlemen and the experience drawn from officiating at the Olympic Games, the standard of refereeing and judging may be raised in all countries and thus avoid a repetition of the criticisms levelled at the officials in 1948. The Executive Committee will consider whether any method can be adopted of testing the efficiency of officials before the commencement of an international event, possibly by a theoretical and practical examination. On the night before the commencement of the 1948 Boxing all referees and judges were required to attend a meeting at which they were addressed by members of the Jury d'Appel and copies of the Address were circulated to all present. A number of questions dealing with any points that might arise during the Boxing were also answered.

It is to be regretted that certain officials chose to consider the fact that they were not selected to officiate at the later stages as a personal affront to themselves and their countries. This was certainly not the case as the sole object of the Jury d'Appel was to ensure that only the best possible standard of refereeing and judging should be available in the interests of the boxers, whose claims must be paramount to all other considerations. In only one case were the services of an official dispensed with entirely and this was not on account of the way he carried out his duties as a referee and judge but owing to the fact that he took part in a noisy demonstration after the announcement of a verdict affecting a boxer of his own country. Such conduct was quite rightly considered to be not compatible with the high standard of impartiality and correct behaviour which one has the right to expect of a referee and judge at the Olympic Games.
