



# WORLD BOXING ASSOCIATION

GILBERTO MENDOZA

President

**Resolution No. 201505061412**  
**WBA Championships Committee**  
*Super Middleweight Division*  
*May 06, 2015*

## I. REQUEST

On April 20, 2015, on behalf of WBA Super Middleweight Champion Andre Ward ("Ward"), David Itskowitch of RocNation Sports-Boxing ("RocNation") requested the WBA grant a special permit for Ward to face Paul Smith ("Smith"), in a ten (10) round non-title fight June 20, 2015 in Oakland, California.

The WBA provided notice of Ward's request to potentially interested parties, including champion of the division, Carl Froch ("Froch"), Interim Champion of the division, Fedor Chudinov ("Chudinov"), and Felix Sturm ("Sturm"), the WBA ranked #2 contender in the division. The WBA received comments in opposition to Ward's request from Chudinov's representative asserting Ward's inactivity, that there is nothing special about the proposed bout, and that the bout was announced publicly without first receiving the special permit from the WBA.

## II. BACKGROUND

On February 27, 2015, the WBA designated Froch and Ward as each other's next mandatory bout. Froch has since stated publicly that he may not fight again and Ward has submitted the instant Special Permit Request for what is, in essence, a tune-up fight after his long period of inactivity.

Andre Ward. Ward won the WBA's Super World Super Middleweight title on November 21, 2009 by defeating Mikkel Kessler ("Kessler") via technical decision in Oakland, California. Since then, Ward successfully defended the title on six (6) occasions, the most recent being a unanimous decision over Edwin Rodriguez on November 16, 2013 in Ontario, California. As Super Champion, Ward should be active but need only face a WBA mandatory every eighteen (18) months. Leading up to the Rodriguez bout, a promotional dispute effectively minimized opportunities for Ward to continue regular defenses of the title. Moreover, opponents have not been eager to face Mr. Ward. Notwithstanding, the promotional dispute recently resolved, freeing Ward to proceed with defending his title.

Carl Froch. On May 25, 2013, Froch won the WBA title by unanimous decision over Kessler in London, UK. Since then, Froch successfully defended the title twice against George Groves, the last of which was on May 31, 2014. As Champion, Froch should be defending the title against a mandatory contender every nine (9) months. WSBA Rule C.11. Froch's inactivity period is now eleven (11) months and he has indicated no interest in facing Ward again (Ward defeated Froch by unanimous decision December 17, 2011 in Atlantic City, New Jersey). Froch appears to have no plans to further defend his title. Also, in light of the fact that Froch vacated his IBF title, he is no longer recognized as a unified champion because he no longer holds two championships.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

A. The WBA may modify the periods for mandatory defenses for good cause, either in response to a request for a Special Permit, or on its own initiative. WBA Rule C.16.

B. The WBA may modify or suspend the strict application of these rules when the WBA deems them justified in its sole discretion to accommodate special circumstances. WBA Rule C.46. Those reasons include to "engage in a non-title bout," to "extend or otherwise modify a mandatory defense period," or for any other reason the Committee and President deem just. WBA Rule C.46.a, c, and g.

C. The WBA may grant Special Permit Requests and require conditions. "The Committee and the President in their sole discretion shall consider the best interests of boxing, the purposes and policies of the Association, and such other factors that may be relevant, and shall make their best effort to balance competing interests." WBA Rule C.47.

D. Boxers and promoters are obligated to "know and be familiar with all Association rules," including those "for Special Permits." WBA Rule C.14.

E. A Super Champion defends his title per the criteria established by the WBA President and Championship Committee. WBA Rule C.18. "An official contender for a World Championship Title shall not thereby be considered to be an official contender for a Super Championship." As such, Chudinov's objections are improperly directed at Ward, but instead apply to Froch.

F. Ward routinely and successfully defended his title prior to his promotional dispute. That, combined with his general difficulty in finding qualified opponents willing to face him, sometimes for a second time, create circumstances that warrant Ward a non-title bout prior to defending it after a long period of inactivity.

## **III. DECISION**

A. Based upon the above-mentioned Rules, Ward's Special Permit Request is conditionally granted subject to compliance with the conditions in this Resolution and all other

applicable WBA rules, regulations, and payment of the usual and customary fees associated with a title bout, including the special permit fee. While Smith cannot win Ward's title in the non-title bout, the WBA reserves the right to review Ward's recognition if his performance in said bout warrants the same.

B. As his mandatory defense, Ward must face Froch on or before September 26, 2015. Notwithstanding, Froch's recognition as Champion is hereby removed due to his failure to timely defend his title or make efforts to do so per prior WBA instructions.

C. If Froch is unwilling to face Ward as the mandatory, Ward must face the winner of the Chudinov v. Sturm bout, or Chudinov if a draw, that is currently scheduled for May 9, 2015. This bout shall determine the Champion of the division now that Froch's recognition has been removed. Ward will be granted no further special permits until he complies with his mandatory defense obligations.

Date: May 07, 2015



Gilberto Jesus Mendoza, Jr.  
Championship Committee Chairman