

'I said to Billy in August, 'The most important thing is that this deal

Eamon Carr: How did you allow Billy Walsh to leave? **Joe Christie:** On February 20 Billy said he'd received an offer from USA Boxing and had gone to see their facilities during the Christmas break and had discussions with them.

He said he'd asked for "crazy money" on the basis that he didn't want to go. He said, "They've come back and offered me the crazy money." He said, "I'd like to see what you guys can do for me." He was open and honest, although we never saw the offer. He was within his rights. He was looking for an increase in remuneration, not at that stage, any other non-financial terms. Our budget was set for the West world and I'm going to get past the Board and that we were trying to solve the problem. In fairness to the Sports Council they can't

were that Billy was a permanent member of staff whereas most head coaches in almost every other sport would be on a fixed-term contract. We could have been left with a situation where he would have been earning far in excess of anyone else in our organisation with no comfort for future funding because the Irish Sports Council couldn't guarantee it. They themselves would have to wait and see what their budget would be from the Minister and Billy would have been entitled to his remuneration until retirement. That would have put the Association in an invidious position. EC: Negotiations continued for months but there was a last minute glitch? Is that correct? JC: The Sports Council had appointed Fergus Barry of the

IMI to be Billy's consultant for the purposes of conducting negotiations. CEO Fergal Carruth, both on his own and with the chief financial officer of the IABA, who's also the HR chief, tried to negotiate various options. They seemed to be getting nowhere and in August we were called to a meeting to meet Kieran Mulvey and representatives of his board including Bernard Allen and Liam Sheedy. We all agreed that there were differences between the parties but we all wanted to keep Billy. We had our concerns. The ISC wanted to keep Billy at any cost. On the IABA side, they wanted to keep him at a reasonable cost, having regard to some serious concerns including our future financial viability. Kieran Mulvey said he'd brokered a deal. This was in August. EC: The Minister got involved and things appeared to have been sorted? JC: The Minister said he wanted to see us in Athlone. He said, "I want you to offer Billy Walsh a fixed-term contract and pay him for the change of status." He also said that the Sports Council recognised that at all levels of the IABA the remuneration is less than other NGBs (national governing bodies for sport). One of the points we wished to emphasise was that any bonus would not be for one coach but be shared 50/50 with all coaches and boxers. We said we'd sign up to that. We met up on the Monday and Billy shook my hand. I said to him, "The most important thing

is that this deal satisfies you to such a degree that the risk of you going to America is now at an end." "That's what the IABA and ISC want and that's what the Minister for Sport wants. If it doesn't do that, it's no use to anyone." He said, "I'm satisfied with the deal." We sent out a contract within days with all the terms that had been agreed in Athlone. John Treacy then said, "What about the non-financial aspects of the contract?" I asked, "What is of difficulty?" He said, "He doesn't know if he's a leader or not." I said, "He's called the head coach and he continues to be called the head coach and he's called all report to him and he reports to the chief executive."

short statement accepting his resignation with regret. EC: What of claims that he wasn't allowed to pick his team and that he required written permission to speak to the media? CK: There was a clause in his contract about needing permission to speak to the media and it was there ever since he began his employment with the IABA. It's in all contracts and it's a prudent clause. Never once it suggested that he was prevented from speaking to the media. He's the most high-profile member of the IABA. That clause is perfectly normal and it relates to should an employee talk about issues which were damaging to an association. Every employer reserves that right. It certainly not intended to prevent him doing his job, which obviously entails interaction with the media. In relation to the selection of teams, there's been a long-standing policy in the IABA that Billy produced his team which was then put forward for ratification by the Boxing Council. Never has any member of a team he's selected been deselected. There would have been the occasional addition to the team, most notably when Paddy Barnes was added to the team for the World Championships in Chicago and performed brilliantly. In that regard, we felt that their forceful intervention, and their subsequent interventions after the resignation, and the outrageous unsubstantiated allegations made against us, have only inflamed the matter. That is why we released a statement. EC: Is there a concern that the fallout from the Billy Walsh matter could damage the image of amateur boxing administration in Ireland? CK: We've suffered reputational damage but that's not the case on the receiving end of attacks by the Irish Sports Council. They were totally unwarranted. For the first time in our history, we've won a men's senior gold medal in the World Championships with Michael O'Brien and Michael O'Reilly won bronze. That's a marvellous achievement and a wonderful story. It's fundamental position is, and has always been, that a) We never wanted Billy to leave the organisation, and did everything within reason to meet his demands; b) The success of Irish boxing due to a combination of an island network of dedicated local clubs, coaches, boxers and a High Performance Unit which incorporates a team of highly skilled coaches and talented athletes. This is an effective and highly successful IABA structure that has delivered phenomenally for this country, providing close to 60% of all Irish Olympic medals won to date; and, very importantly - c) This credit only goes to Billy Walsh or any individual per se (and we are ungrateful about this point). This is about what is the best interests of Irish boxing and its continued success at all levels. That is the starting and ending point for the IABA as the guardians of the sport, and as a body of volunteers, the length and breadth of the island, that lives eats and breathes this great sport. Our position focuses on four broad areas, all fundamentally linked to what we believe are in the best interests of Irish boxing, those areas being: - our decision not to communicate extensively on an external basis; - our efforts to retain Billy's services; - the unhelpful, highly questioning and disingenuous intervention by Sport Ireland in its attack on the IABA and boxing in Ireland this week; - and the structures we now have in place that positions Ireland as strongly as ever for international competition and the forthcoming Olympic Games.

A lone and tortured road to US for man who did not want to leave

Ston unravelling of his authority was, for Irish coach, the breaking point after eight months of often hostile negotiations with the IABA

IT was February last when Billy Walsh was called into Fergal Carruth's office to inform him of the offer from America. He was pleased to find IABA chairman, Joe Christie, sitting with the CEO, joking to them both "Great, I can kill two birds with the one stone here!" USA Boxing wanted the "Westford man" to oversee their women's programme and had put together a lucrative package designed to persuade him to relocate to Colorado. Walsh told Carruth and Christie that he understood the Association would never be in a position to match the financial aspects of the American offer, but he also said that he did not want to leave. Their response gave him an early sense of foreboding. It was suggested that, when the time came, they should issue a joint, amicable press release, announcing his departure. No exploration of what it might take to keep him in Ireland then. No expression of concern that a man who has been so central to one of Europe's great sporting revolutions might be lost to Irish boxing. Within seconds of Walsh mentioning America, the IABA officers seemed - to him - to be all but working out the structure of a resignation statement. UNREMARKABLE He subsequently produced a five-point proposal of what it would take to see off the American interest. The financial aspect to it was unremarkable. Although he had been in charge of the High Performance Unit since 2008, he still retained the title (and salary) of a Head Coach. Walsh's request was simply a salary that would be closer to that of high performance directors in other sports. The remainder of his proposal centred on matters of autonomy. He sought the restoration of a basic per diem allowance of €15 to his coaching staff while on trips abroad, something that had been in place as a basic courtesy since the inception of High Performance, but was scrapped by Carruth on his appointment as CEO. Walsh sought assurances too about the movement of staff, having seen his administrative secretary relocated to another office without prior notice (something he had sought HR advice about in January). And he reiterated that he had a long-held desire to, as the head of High Performance, have a right to pick teams for competition without having to submit them to committee



for approval. His proposal went before the IABA Board and was rejected on every issue. *****

THOSE WHO attended negotiations on Walsh's behalf during the past six months were left bemused by yesterday's IABA statement and, specifically, the reference of its chairman, Joe Christie, to Walsh as "our friend" and "a valued and esteemed colleague". Walsh's request was simply a salary that would be closer to that of high performance directors in other sports. The remainder of his proposal centred on matters of autonomy. He sought the restoration of a basic per diem allowance of €15 to his coaching staff while on trips abroad, something that had been in place as a basic courtesy since the inception of High Performance, but was scrapped by Carruth on his appointment as CEO. Walsh sought assurances too about the movement of staff, having seen his administrative secretary relocated to another office without prior notice (something he had sought HR advice about in January). And he reiterated that he had a long-held desire to, as the head of High Performance, have a right to pick teams for competition without having to submit them to committee

self-employed contractor on a gross salary of €115,000 (his existing salary was €72,000) for an 18-month term, something that he indicated in April would not be acceptable to him, given the absence of any job security beyond that term. The alternative offered was to remain a full-time employee on his current figure, with the IABA seeking funding from the Sports Council for a bonus arrangement for all of the High Performance coaching staff. By July, a third option had been drawn up offering Walsh a three-year fixed-term contract of €115,000 per annum, again on the basis of him resigning from his permanent position. Although mindful that the US offer would not be on the table indefinitely, the Westford man's priority throughout this period was the preparation of his boxes for the inaugural European Championships. RETURN It was just after his return from the latter that he was summoned to the Clayton Hotel in Leopardstown. Having briefly exchanged courtesies in the lobby with IABA representatives, Fergal Carruth and former rugby international, Deo Fitzgerald, he went in to meet Kieran Mulvey and John Treacy. On the IABA's invitation, the Council wanted to identify the stumbling blocks to progress and, after implying Walsh's sole focus was to have been Carruth and Fitzgerald. The following day, August 22, more meetings at the same venue and, it seemed, the brokering of an agreement. Walsh hurried away afterwards to a radio appointment on RTE, believing that that agreement would be presented for approval to the IABA Board the following Tuesday night. Mulvey was of a similar view, telling an Olympics meeting last Wednesday that the respective parties "shook hands" at the end of a four-hour meeting. The deal, favourable to both Mulvey



and Walsh, was that the Westford man retained his permanent position with the IABA on a new salary of €97,000 per annum. This, presumably, will have been news to Mulvey and Treacy. On September 8, the IABA negotiators called a meeting with Walsh at short notice. As Barry was in London on business that day, he organised for an experienced trade union official, Tommy Cummins, to attend on Billy's behalf. That meeting took place at the Hilton Hotel on Charlemont Place and Cummins interpreted it as acquiring an instantly hostile tone from Carruth's opening observation that Walsh was an employee of the IABA, not the Irish Sports Council. Cummins reflected afterwards that, in 30-odd years of industrial conflict, resolution, he had never experienced anything like the attitude of the IABA negotiators in a meeting lasting may be 40 minutes. Christie's recall of a subsequent meeting at the Institute of Management offices in Sandyford on Monday, September 14 seemed to suggest that a final deal - brokered by Minister Ring - had been agreed with Walsh. It had, but only subject to the presentation "of a fair contract". No paperwork was put before

Walsh's people were in agreement with the financial side, brokered by the Minister and funded by the Sports Council. But they remained suspicious of the terms of employment that would ultimately be attached. Why? Because the High Performance Unit's history with the IABA has long been one gloriously short on trust. At the Beijing Olympics in 2008, the head of the programme, Gary Keegan, was denied accreditation, the association instead appointing a manager to the Irish team who would have minimal contact with the boxers. It meant that Keegan had no formal access in China to a team he had been effectively preparing for the previous five years. And Walsh, who has run that programme since Keegan's subsequent departure to the Institute of Sport, was then overlooked for the post of HP Director, the position being given instead to the then president of the Association, a move that prompted the Sports Council to withhold funding for the role. Despite their awareness of the pressure that Walsh was under from America on September 14, it took three days for the IABA to finally deliver their contract to his solicitor. And it proved, as his representatives had

feared it would, unacceptable. Walsh was advised legally that it would be unwise to sign. The contract had glaring issues on the autonomy of his job description and the most basic issues of authority. Mulvey this week highlighted one of the most staggering clauses inserted. It is number 24, under the heading "Communication with Outside Agencies". It reads: "24.1 Any contact with the Sports Council, Olympic Council or any other outside agency must be approved in advance by writing to the CEO." At its most basic level, the notion that the man running the High Performance programme would need written permission simply to communicate with people he, clearly, had to communicate with offers a glimpse of the document's prevailing tone. And this was one of many clauses that, on request, the Association would refuse to amend. Walsh's wish to be clearly identified as Head of the High Performance Unit was also denied, the response being that that status belonged to the IABA themselves. The view of Walsh's representatives was that, on a number of levels, the contract offered was ludicrous. They considered it a virtual denigration of Ireland's most successful Olympic coach, his solicitor eventually seeking in excess of 60 amendments. Legal advice was that the contract offered him no employment protection. If anything, he was being downgraded. The IABA had to then be twice informed to respond to those amendments. On October 5, Walsh's representatives were told that they were doing well. He saw the standards set by everyone in Doha. Ever being alone with his own bleak thoughts at night over there offered him consolation. He was not alone. From the first pebbles tossed by himself, Keegan and Antia in '03, Irish boxing is now an avalanche. "Sure it's a million miles away," he said to me, "but we've had our own journey. Now we're at a point of that journey where it's almost automatic. "I just saw a moment with this team now. There are warriors there and they will carry themselves through. They will go in, all guns blazing. There's a belief in the team. It may affect some of them more than others that I am proud of. The team but, in general, they will rally. "There's only one thing missing (for High Performance) now. And that's an element of a definite decision after the fact. I hope to see it happen but, unfortunately, I'll be sitting there with a different country now."

WHAT SAID THIS WEEK IN BOXING'S WAR OF WORDS
SEAN MCGOLDRICK

BILLY WALSH: "It's like a death in the family walking away." He returned myself. I've been with him since he cried this morning when I pressed 'send' on that email. But in other ways I'm sort of relieved that it's come to an end because it was very, very tough. And I'm mindful of the boxes first of all, the support staff and the people that worked with me for so many years. "I know what's it like. Gary (Keegan) left (in 2008) and we were all sort of lost for a time and, obviously, I had to become the leader. The group will now have to find a new leader."
JOE CHRISTIE: Chairman of the IABA Board of Directors. "We met Billy and did a deal with him at the Institute of Management. In the meeting in the Institute of Management, the last thing that I said - having phoned each and every director of the IABA to ask for their approval, and got their unanimous approval - I said to Billy Walsh 'this deal must be acceptable to you' and 'must remove the threat of you going to America because that is what the IABA want.' "He said to me, 'I am satisfied with the deal.' He looked me in the eye and he offered his hand and so did

FERGAL CARRUTH: Chief Executive of the Irish Amateur Boxing Association. "The IABA is deeply disappointed not to retain his invaluable services and, for the avoidance of any doubt, the IABA has done its utmost to retain Billy Walsh as head coach. However, Billy himself has made the decision to resign and take up a position with USA Boxing, and we wish him every success. "This conveyor belt of boxing talent will continue to be developed and coached by the dedicated High Performance Unit team, and the IABA is confident of the continuing success of our elite boxing athletes as they prepare for next year's Olympic Games."
KATIE TAYLOR: Olympic gold medalist and five-time World champion. "I genuinely thought it would be myself. He was so important early in my career. I'm shocked to think he could be in the opposite corner in Rio. "I was speaking to him. I was asking him how he was and he said 'I'm just drained...'. I was crying all last night but I have to do what's best for myself' and I respect that. What I heard in his voice is that he doesn't want to go."

OLYMPIC silver medalist JOHN JOE NEVILL: "IABA boxing should be ashamed!"
KIERAN MULVEY: Chairman of Sports Ireland "I got so upset at that meeting that Iwards the end) had to ask the [boxing] directors presents "Do you want to keep Billy Walsh?" I got an answer saying yes they did it was the most unconvincing 'yes' I've heard in my professional career. What was Billy Walsh looking for? I think he was looking for respect. And my God he did deserve it. The second thing he was looking for was authority, reasonable authority, to run the high performance programme without petty bureaucratic interference."

MINISTER of State MICHAEL RING: "I met the Irish Amateur Boxing Association yesterday, I brought them in to see what went wrong and one thing I asked them to do - and to do it today I hope they asked them to do - and to do it today they said 'yes' and they assured me that they will be making a statement. I told them that they have to put their side of the argument out to the people and the people have a right to know that. There's never one side to any argument."
JOHN TREACY: Chief Executive of Sports Ireland "We were told last week that the deal is done. I

KENNETH EGAN: Olympic silver medalist. "There's fierce politics going for and we hear on Monday that it has fallen down on the non-financial aspects which is between an employer and employee and which begins belief. It's clear a ridiculous situation to be in, fell down on the non-financial aspects of the deal and that is really around the leadership of the programme."

Double Olympic bronze medalist PADDY BARNES: "Billy leads the

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satisfies you... he said, 'I'm satisfied with the deal'

Pat Ryan (IABA board member) asked, "John, have all your concerns been addressed by the IABA?" And he said, "Yes." So we all left believing it's a done deal. The Minister had said he wanted it signed by Friday. There was a meeting of all the coaches called for Tuesday morning to finalise the budget figures. Billy said he'd be there. He went on with Marian Finucane on the weekend and then came the shock announcement on Monday morning. EC: How come the IABA didn't explain what was happening? JC: We had an obligation to an employee, particularly one who was a friend and a leading colleague, and we didn't think it was appropriate to discuss the terms and conditions in the public domain. We issued a

statement accepting his resignation with regret. EC: What of claims that he wasn't allowed to pick his team and that he required written permission to speak to the media? CK: There was a clause in his contract about needing permission to speak to the media and it was there ever since he began his employment with the IABA. It's in all contracts and it's a prudent clause. Never once it suggested that he was prevented from speaking to the media. He's the most high-profile member of the IABA. That clause is perfectly normal and it relates to should an employee talk about issues which were damaging to an association. Every employer reserves that right. It certainly not intended to prevent him doing his job, which obviously entails interaction with the media. In relation to the selection of teams, there's been a long-standing policy in the IABA that Billy produced his team which was then put forward for ratification by the Boxing Council. Never has any member of a team he's selected been deselected. There would have been the occasional addition to the team, most notably when Paddy Barnes was added to the team for the World Championships in Chicago and performed brilliantly. In that regard, we felt that their forceful intervention, and their subsequent interventions after the resignation, and the outrageous unsubstantiated allegations made against us, have only inflamed the matter. That is why we released a statement. EC: Is there a concern that the fallout from the Billy Walsh matter could damage the image of amateur boxing administration in Ireland? CK: We've suffered reputational damage but that's not the case on the receiving end of attacks by the Irish Sports Council. They were totally unwarranted. For the first time in our history, we've won a men's senior gold medal in the World Championships with Michael O'Brien and Michael O'Reilly won bronze. That's a marvellous achievement and a wonderful story. It's fundamental position is, and has always been, that a) We never wanted Billy to leave the organisation, and did everything within reason to meet his demands; b) The success of Irish boxing due to a combination of an island network of dedicated local clubs, coaches, boxers and a High Performance Unit which incorporates a team of highly skilled coaches and talented athletes. This is an effective and highly successful IABA structure that has delivered phenomenally for this country, providing close to 60% of all Irish Olympic medals won to date; and, very importantly - c) This credit only goes to Billy Walsh or any individual per se (and we are ungrateful about this point). This is about what is the best interests of Irish boxing and its continued success at all levels. That is the starting and ending point for the IABA as the guardians of the sport, and as a body of volunteers, the length and breadth of the island, that lives eats and breathes this great sport. Our position focuses on four broad areas, all fundamentally linked to what we believe are in the best interests of Irish boxing, those areas being: - our decision not to communicate extensively on an external basis; - our efforts to retain Billy's services; - the unhelpful, highly questioning and disingenuous intervention by Sport Ireland in its attack on the IABA and boxing in Ireland this week; - and the structures we now have in place that positions Ireland as strongly as ever for international competition and the forthcoming Olympic Games.

IABA position re resignation of Billy Walsh



FRIDAY 23 October 2015: The Irish Amateur Boxing Association Ltd (IABA) wishes to put on the record its position in relation to the resignation of our colleague and friend Billy Walsh as head coach of the IABA's High Performance Unit.

Our fundamental position is, and has always been, that a) We never wanted Billy to leave the organisation, and did everything within reason to meet his demands; b) The success of Irish boxing due to a combination of an island network of dedicated local clubs, coaches, boxers and a High Performance Unit which incorporates a team of highly skilled coaches and talented athletes. This is an effective and highly successful IABA structure that has delivered phenomenally for this country, providing close to 60% of all Irish Olympic medals won to date; and, very importantly - c) This credit only goes to Billy Walsh or any individual per se (and we are ungrateful about this point). This is about what is the best interests of Irish boxing and its continued success at all levels. That is the starting and ending point for the IABA as the guardians of the sport, and as a body of volunteers, the length and breadth of the island, that lives eats and breathes this great sport. Our position focuses on four broad areas, all fundamentally linked to what we believe are in the best interests of Irish boxing, those areas being: - our decision not to communicate extensively on an external basis; - our efforts to retain Billy's services; - the unhelpful, highly questioning and disingenuous intervention by Sport Ireland in its attack on the IABA and boxing in Ireland this week; - and the structures we now have in place that positions Ireland as strongly as ever for international competition and the forthcoming Olympic Games.

1) The decision not to communicate extensively: Heretofore, the IABA felt it was inappropriate to publically comment, whilst discussions were underway with Billy in relation to his employment contract.

However, at this stage we have no choice now but to put firmly on the record our position, (and we are more than happy to do so at this point) following what we believe has been a scurrilous, disingenuous and highly questionable attack on Irish boxing by Sport Ireland (formerly the Irish Sports Council), its Chief Executive, Mr John Tracey and its Chairman, Mr Kieran Mulvey.

The IABA looks forward to the opportunity to participate in any independent review process, which the Minister for Sport may set in train. Equally, we are happy to have accepted an invitation by the Joint Committee on Transport and Communications to present to it. This would be welcomed by the Board of Directors.

2) Efforts to retain the services of Billy Walsh: In late February of this year, Billy approached the Chairman and CEO of the IABA, indicating that he had received an offer by Team USA to manage the women's boxing team for what Billy himself termed as "crazy money". From then on and up until his surprise resignation earlier this week, the IABA never sought to remove Billy from his post as head coach or to change the terms of his employment. In the interests of Irish boxing, we had no stage wanted Billy to leave his position.

Sport Ireland, as the primary administrator of public funds to Irish boxing was immediately contacted by the IABA and Billy's demands were communicated to the agency. Subsequently, a number of proposals were put to Billy and his advisors.

There was an initial urgency to the process at Billy's insistence, but that urgency subsequently subsided due to overseas tournaments and competitions and US work visa issues, which took a number of months to complete.

On 22 August a meeting took place and a draft proposal was presented by Sport Ireland to the IABA. In the interests of Irish boxing, the IABA attendees expressed their concerns with the draft proposal. We were given assurances at that point that those concerns would be addressed, however, what transpired was a different draft proposal.

Notwithstanding this, the draft proposal was presented by the Chairman to the Board of IABA on the 25 August, but no formal vote was taken as the Chairman was of the opinion that the vote would be negative, which would have made it more difficult for the organisation to retain Billy's services as head coach. At this point, we received a communication from Sport Ireland indicating that they had no further role in this matter.

Subsequently, through the good offices of Minister Michael Ring TD, a proposal was brokered by him that was agreed to in full by all parties and then presented to Billy and his advisors in mid September. Formal contracts then followed. Billy's solicitors reverted with a series of suggested amendments to the contracts, many of which were accepted by the IABA. Those contracts as amended were again forwarded to his solicitors. The next communication the IABA received was the resignation on 19 October.

This was hugely surprising and disappointing news to the IABA. Billy's resignation letter and public announcement were so definite that the organisation, again in the interests of Irish boxing as a whole, had no choice but to accept that resignation, with regret.

It is important to point out that in all of our dealings with Billy during this process, the vast majority of the discussions related to remuneration matters. To suggest otherwise, is a total misrepresentation of the facts.

3) Sport Ireland intervention: THE IABA was shocked by the very public attack on it and on Irish boxing, by the Chairman and CEO of Sport Ireland. An attack, that was totally disingenuous and plainly part of a campaign by a statutory state body to exercise control over the IABA's High Performance Unit.

This, we believe is yet another clear example of Sport Ireland's officials, seeking to go beyond their authority and its statutory mandate and act Ultra Vires their statutory power or remit. The agency has a track record and form in this regard and has paid dearly for it in the past.

The Board of the IABA has full confidence in its leadership team, ably led by CEO, Fergal Carruth. The organisation abides and attests to best practice governance guidelines. The financial accounts of the organisation are fully audited and the IABA rejects in the strongest possible terms the unsubstantiated inferences by Sport Ireland that the IABA is not governed effectively. We hereby call upon the Chairman and CEO of Sport Ireland to unreservedly withdraw the derogatory comments and unsubstantiated allegations made by them against our CEO.

We will vigorously defend the disgraceful allegations made by Sport Ireland, both directly in our future interactions with the agency, and reserve the right to take whatever further action we deem appropriate.

This is a defence of Irish boxing against claims by individuals who have absolutely no experience, knowledge or credibility in this sport, a sport akin to the GAA that is driven at a local level by people passionate about their sport, who are providing the pipeline of boxers that will bring continued success to Ireland on the world stage.

What we find most reprehensible is that Sport Ireland appears to have ulterior motives, does not have the best interests of Irish boxing at heart, has made unsubstantiated allegations, and we believe, have issued threats to funding Irish boxing that are fundamentally illegal and beyond its authority. The organisation was greatly relieved and heartened to hear the comments of Minister's Donoghue and Ring who have stated that there will be no reduction in the funding of Irish boxing arising out of the resignation of Billy Walsh.

4) Moving on: Billy made his decision to move to Team USA. We respect that decision and wish him the very best in the future.

Irish boxing has to move on now to ensure sustained and continued success. To that end, Zaur Antia has been appointed on an interim basis as Head Coach. We are grateful to Zaur for agreeing to step into the role and look forward to supporting him and the rest of the coaching team during this transition phase.

We can say with confidence that we have a unified team committed to redoubting efforts to prepare our athletes for Olympic qualification events and to prepare and assist those already qualified for Rio 2016.

The Board of the IABA will meet in early October to institute a process to recruit and appoint a new Head Coach who will build on the successful legacy of Billy Walsh.

To conclude, the IABA reiterates that at all times our only concern was to deal with this issue in the best interests of Irish boxing.