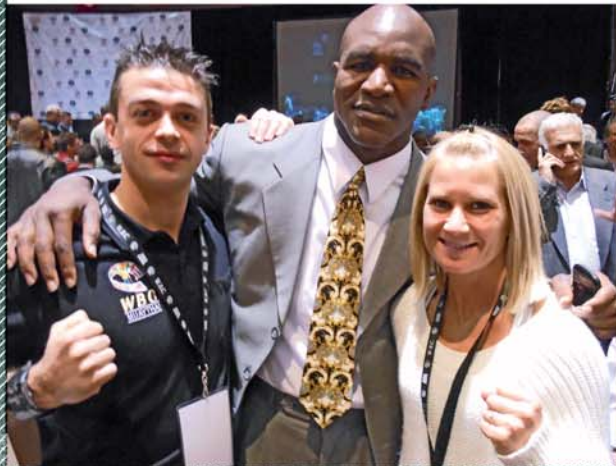




**Lorne Castle looks back over the last WBC Annual Conference that saw Muaythai come under the aegis of the famous Boxing association.**

Over the last few years Muaythai and Boxing have been brought closer and closer by Boxing's largest organisation, the **World Boxing Council** and the work of **Lorne Castle** who set up the UK committee back in September 2010. The WBC was originally asked to help build and promote the growth of Muaythai back in November 2001 when **His Majesty The King of Thailand** met with WBC chairman, **Dr. Jose Suliman**, at the Bangkok Palace.

With the introduction of the **WBC Cham-**



**ampionship belt** Muaythai fighters have the chance to earn the famous green belt that has become a household symbol thanks to such legends as **'Iron' Mike Tyson, Muhammed Ali** and **Manny Pacquiao**. Through the careful and passionate guidance of Dr. Jose Suliman the WBC has become the biggest and most respected Boxing association in the world, with regular re-evaluation of the rules, regulation, promotion and also safety aspects - for example it was the WBC who first reduced the world title Boxing criteria from 15 rounds down to 12 rounds purely with the fighter's long term health in mind.

This constant careful evaluation of how to move the sport forward is discussed at the **Annual Conference** every year, where each country's committee comes forward to discuss the promotions for the year ahead, the title shots (along with bids from promoters for those fights) and any rule changes. It is also packed out with inspirational workshops for officials, fighters and trainers and is attended by a vast number of champions, both past and present.

With Muaythai now sitting at the WBC table Thailand's national art can benefit from, not only the constant professional development that WBC Boxing is getting from elite medics and coaches, but WBC Muaythai champions are recognised alongside some of Boxing's greatest. With the 2013 conference only weeks away, it's a great chance to re-cap on the scope of the 2012 event held at **Mandalay Bay Resort**, Las Vegas where WBC World Muaythai champion, **Denise Mellor**, mixed with champions and the UK WBC Muaythai committee gained a great step forward for UK Muaythai. Such was the respect from boxers towards the WBC that over 90 current and former champions attended the week long conference, making it the largest ever.



One of the most interesting lectures was delivered by a leading US plastic surgeon and covered the medical and legal reasons of when the referee should stop a fight due to bleeding (specific places and the reasons behind that) in order to protect the fighter. Another was from a Californian State drugs tester on the effects and signs of different forms of doping and stimulants - and their effects and side effects on contestants. With Muaythai following this professional structure and development, a very positive future must be on the horizon...

The Muaythai WBC committee was itself attended by many countries, with over 40 officials from around the world coming together. Some main points were discussed and moved forward on were:  
 ■ The subject of



scoring rounds was summed up by WBC USA Thai official, **Nokweed**, when talking about the 10-9 scoring, "Each round should be judged separately, like you are judging five separate fights and nothing like a marathon, which some countries seem to adopt."  
 ■ It was agreed that for the duration of 2012 ALL female WBC fights must be the same duration as the male fights [5 x 3 minute rounds] to make them valid WBC title matches.  
 ■ A new -45kg minimum weight category was added to the female division due to a lot of activity in the lower two existing weights.

WBC UK events will have the chance to support the **WBC Cares** charity - with the Bournemouth event being the UK's first event to do so by donating to **Pooler Children's Hospital**. In exchange, the WBC Cares charity produced autograph cards for the UK champions.



MUAYTHAI MEETS BOXING



MUAYTHAI



The event itself was surrounded with a week long trade fair and 5-star meals every night where everyone had the chance to rub shoulders with legends. However, the most cherished and possibly valuable memory to take away was the recognition by Boxing champions that a WBC Muaythai champion was a worthy colleague. Denise Mellor spent the week with legends who would have seemed a world away for many Muaythai fighters. The possibility of Denise moving into Boxing and to earn a WBC Boxing title shot was also discussed, with Denise facing off with the current Boxing World champion in Minimum-weight, **MomoKosaki**. With so many people working together within the WBC the future is looking very bright for WBC Muaythai and its champions...



WBC Boxing also celebrated its unique commercial relationship with **Corona Beer** becoming their longest standing partner after 50 years of sponsorship - a mark of respect in ANY business industry and one that shows the value of WBC Boxing to them. In the UK, **Chang Beer** is hoping to emulate that with their sponsorship of the last three WBC Muaythai events held in Bournemouth under the **Muaythai World Series** banner ([www.muaythai-worldseries.com](http://www.muaythai-worldseries.com)) and featuring WBC national, international and world title fights. *Muaythai World Series* also introduced the **Chang Cup** in 2012, which covers the area and national titles in the level below WBC (UK WBC does not do

area titles, just national ones and only under full Thai rules at that). **Chang UK** general manager, **Geoff Tirrell**, stated at the end of 2012, "I have been very pleased with our support of Muaythai in the UK and look forward to 2013."

The year 2012 has seen US, European and Thai champions fly to the UK for the chance to fight for the WBC belt - all events have been supported by **Chang Beer**. Current UK WBC champions, **Denise Mellor**, **Sally McCarthy**, **Bernie Mendeta** and challenger, **Harry Baker**, were invited to a photoshoot at **Chang** sponsored **Everton FC**, along with WBC champion coach, **Lorne Castle** - one of the perks of having a WBC belt.

This year's conference marks the WBC's 50th year and will be held in Cancun early December. ■

