

# **Mixed Martial Arts Rules**

## **Section 1 – Commission Direction**

### **Commission direction**

- 1(1) Every mixed martial art event shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of mixed martial arts set out in this part and every licence holder involved in an event shall ensure that the rules are complied with in respect of an event.

## **Section 2 - Weight Classes and Weigh-ins**

### **Weight classes of mixed martial artists**

- 2(1) Mixed martial artists shall be divided into the following classes:
- a. Flyweight: under 125.9 pounds;
  - b. Bantamweight: 126 pounds to 134.9 pounds;
  - c. Featherweight: 135 pounds to 144.9 pounds;
  - d. Lightweight: 145 pounds to 154.9 pounds;
  - e. Welterweight: 155 pounds to 169.9 pounds;
  - f. Middleweight: 170 pounds to 184.9 pounds;
  - g. Light Heavyweight: 185 pounds to 204.9 pounds;
  - h. Heavyweight: 204 pounds to 264.9 pounds; and
  - i. Super Heavyweight: over 265 pounds.

### **Weigh-ins**

- 3(1) The weigh-in for an event must take place between 24 and 30 hours before the scheduled start of the event, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
- (2) The Commission shall select and approve official weigh scales, and their location, for optimum weight accuracy.
- (3) The official weigh scales are to be made available to each contestant at least 2 hours before the weigh-in, during which time the contestants may weigh themselves on the official scales.
- (4) At the weigh-in, each contestant shall be weighed by a person authorized by the Commission in the presence of the opponent and a Commission appointed official.
- (5) There is a 1 pound allowance for non-title matches.

- (6) Allowance in weight class is the weight difference permitted between contestants.
- a. There may not be a difference of more than three pounds between contestants in weight classes from flyweight up to and including the bantamweight class;
  - b. There may not be a difference of more than five pounds between contestants in weight classes from featherweight up to and including the welterweight class;
  - c. There may not be a difference of more than seven pounds between contestants in weight classes from middleweight up to and including the heavyweight class, unless approved by the Commission.
- (7) A contestant who is overweight at the time of the weigh-in shall be permitted an additional hour to attain the proper weight.
- (8) No contestant shall be compelled to compete against an opponent who, at the conclusion of the weigh-in and lee-way period, is over the maximum weight for the weight class.
- (9) If an event is postponed for more than 24 hours, a second weigh-in and an additional medical examination are required on the day of the match.

#### **Catch-weight match**

- 4(1) In this section, “catch-weight match” means;
- a. a match between contestants in which the contestants are not in the same weight class, or
  - b. a match between contestants at least one of whom exceeds his or her agreed upon weight.
- (2) Despite subsection 2(1) or the contestants’ agreed upon weights, if the contestants agree to compete, the Commission may allow a catch-weight match if the Commission is satisfied that the match between the particular contestants would be fair, safe and competitive.

## **Section 3 – Contestant Rest, Equipment and Uniform**

#### **Contestant match frequency**

- 5(1) No contestant shall take part in more than one match on the same day.

#### **Mandatory rest periods after a mixed martial art match**

- 6(1) Following a match, regardless of where the match is held, a contestant shall take the following mandatory rest periods:
- a. 14 days of rest on completing up to 3 rounds;
  - b. 21 days of rest on completing up to 4 or 5 rounds.

### **Bandages on a mixed martial artist's hands**

- 7(1) No person shall apply bandages to a contestant's hands unless the materials have been approved by the Commission and are applied in accordance with the requirements in this section.
- (2) In all weight classes, the bandages on each contestant's hand shall be restricted to soft gauze cloth not more than 45 feet in length and two inches in width, held in place by not more than 10 feet of surgeon's tape, one inch in width, for each hand.
- (3) Surgeon's adhesive tape shall be placed directly on each hand for protection near the wrist. The tape may cross the back of the hand twice and extend to cover and protect the knuckles when the hand is clenched to make a fist.
- (4) The bandages shall be evenly distributed across the hand.
- (5) Bandages and tape shall be placed on the contestant's hands in the dressing room in the presence of the dressing room supervisor and if requested, in the presence of the chief second of his or her opponent.
- (6) Under no circumstances are gloves to be placed on the hands of a contestant until the approval of the dressing room supervisor is received.

### **Mouthpieces**

- 8(1) All contestants are required to wear a mouthpiece during competition. The mouthpiece shall be subject to examination and approval by the Commission.
- (2) The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece in place.
- (3) If the mouthpiece is involuntarily dislodged during the match, the referee shall call time at the first opportune moment, without interfering with the immediate action, hand the mouthpiece to the second to clean, and the second will reinsert the mouthpiece.

### **Protective equipment**

- 9(1) Male mixed martial artists shall wear a groin protector of their own selection, of a type approved by the Commission.
- (2) Female mixed martial artists may wear a chest protector during competition. The chest protector shall be subject to approval of the Commission.

### **Gloves**

- 10(1) All contestants shall wear four, five or six ounce gloves, supplied by the event permit holder and approved by the Commission. No contestant shall supply their own gloves for participation in a match.
- (2) The gloves shall be new for all main events and in good condition for all other matches or they must be replaced.

- (3) Gloves must be fitted for all contestants at the weigh-in.
- (4) Both opponents must have the same brand & type of gloves.

### **Contestant uniform & appearance**

- 11(1) Each contestant shall wear mixed martial arts shorts, biking shorts, or kickboxing shorts that do not extend above the waistline or reach further than above the knee. Shorts must not have pockets or zippers.
- (2) For female contestants, a sports bra or rash guard may be worn.
- (3) Shoes are prohibited during competition.
- (4) The Commission shall determine whether head or facial hair presents any hazard to the safety of the contestant or his or her opponent or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the match. If the head or facial hair of a contestant presents such a hazard or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the match, the contestant may not compete in the match unless the circumstances creating the hazard or potential interference are corrected to the satisfaction of the Commission.
- (5) Finger and toe nails must be trimmed.
- (6) Jewelry or piercing accessories are prohibited during competition.
- (7) No adhesive tape will be allowed anywhere on the body aside from the hands.
- (8) Neoprene braces are permitted at the Commission's discretion. No metal supports can ever be worn.
- (9) Vaseline may be applied solely to the facial area at the ring/fenced area in the presence of an event inspector, referee, or a person designated by the Commission. Any contestant applying anything other than Vaseline in an approved fashion at the appropriate time could be penalized a point or subject to loss by disqualification.

### **Ring/Fenced area requirements**

- 12(1) A ring used for an event must meet the following requirements:
  - a. The ring must be no smaller than 18 feet square and no larger than 32 feet square within the ropes;
  - b. The ring floor must extend at least 30 inches beyond the ropes;
  - c. The floor of the ring shall be padded with a 1 inch layer of Ensolite, or the equivalent, placed over building board or other suitable material;
  - d. The padding shall be covered with canvas, duck, or similar material tightly stretched and laced securely in place under the ring apron;
  - e. The ring platform must not be more than 4 feet above the floor of the building and must have suitable steps for use;

- f. Ring ropes shall be 5 in number and not less than 1 inch in diameter and shall be strung tightly at heights varying from 12 inches to 54 inches;
- g. Ring ropes shall be wrapped securely in soft material and fastened to the floor;
- h. The ring shall be equipped with 4 metal corner posts that are padded and covered with a protective material at their upper end in a manner approved by the Commission in writing; and,
- i. The ring ropes shall be secured on all sides by two ties equidistant from the corner posts so that the ropes cannot be separated farther apart than they are at the corner posts.

(2) A fenced area used for an event must meet the following requirements:

- a. The fenced area canvas shall be no smaller than 18 feet wide and no larger than 32 feet wide. The fenced area canvas shall be padded in a manner as approved by the Commission in writing, with at least one inch layer of foam padding. Padding shall extend beyond the fenced area and over the edge of the platform. No vinyl or other plastic rubberized covering shall be permitted.
- b. The fenced area platform must not be more than 4 feet above the floor of the building and must have suitable steps for use;
- c. The fenced area canvas shall not be more than four feet above the floor of the building and shall have suitable steps or ramp for use by the participants. Posts shall be made of metal not more than six inches in diameter, extending from the floor of the building to a minimum height of 58 inches above the fenced area canvas and shall be properly padded in a manner approved by the Commission in writing.
- d. The fenced area canvas shall be enclosed by a fence made of such material as will not allow a fighter to fall out or break through it onto the floor or spectators, including, but not limited to, vinyl-coated chain link fencing. All metal parts shall be covered and padded in a manner approved by the Commission in writing and shall not be abrasive to the contestants.
- e. The fence shall provide two separate entrances onto the canvas.

### **Ring/Fenced area equipment**

13(1) A stool, of a type approved by the Commission in writing, shall be available for each contestant.

(2) An appropriate number of stools or chairs, of a type approved by the Commission in writing, shall be available for each contestant's seconds. Such stools or chairs shall be located near each contestant's corner.

(3) All stools and chairs used must be thoroughly cleaned or replaced after the conclusion of each match.

(4) For each match, the event permit holder shall provide a clean water bucket and sealed bottled water in each corner.

(5) For officials located at the ring/fenced area, the event permit holder shall provide:

- a. tables and chairs for the judges, ringside physician and the timekeepers;
- b. a bell or similar device approved by the Commission in writing;

- c. a set of steps to the ring/fenced area for the use of the ringside physician; and
- d. sealed bottled water and clean towels.

## **Section 4 – Round Length**

### **Rounds – Mixed Martial Arts**

- 14(1) There shall be no less than 80 minutes of scheduled mixed martial arts on any event, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
- (2) No mixed martial arts match shall be more than 5 rounds in length.
- (3) Rounds shall be between 3 and 5 minutes' duration and there shall be a rest period of 1 minute between rounds.
- (4) For any event, the Commission may establish or limit the number of rounds of each match, within the maximum of 5 rounds.
- (5) Mixed martial arts matches must only be scheduled for 3 or 5 rounds, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.

## **Section 5 – Evaluation & Scoring of Mixed Martial Arts**

- 15(1) All matches will be evaluated and scored by three judges.
- (2) The 10-Point Must Scoring System will be the standard system of scoring a match. Under the 10-Point Must Scoring System, the following objective scoring criteria shall be utilized by the judges when scoring a round:
  - a. A round is to be scored as a 10-10 round when both contestants appear to be fighting evenly and neither contestant shows clear dominance in a round;
  - b. A round is to be scored as a 10-9 round when a contestant wins by a close margin, landing the greater number of effective legal strikes, grappling and other maneuvers;
  - c. A round is to be scored as a 10-8 round when a contestant overwhelmingly dominates by striking or grappling in a round.
- (3) No fraction of points may be given.
- (4) Evaluation shall give the most weight in scoring to (in order) effective striking, effecting grappling, control of the fighting area and effective aggressiveness and defense.

- (5) Effective striking is judged by determining the total number of legal heavy strikes landed by a contestant.
- (6) Effective grappling is judged by considering the amount of successful executions of a legal takedown and reversals. Examples of factors to consider are take downs from standing position to mount position, passing the guard to mount position, and bottom position fighters using an active, threatening guard.
- (7) Fighting area control is judged by determining who is dictating the pace, location and position of the match. Examples of factors to consider are countering a grappler's attempt at takedown by remaining standing and legally striking; taking down an opponent to force a ground fight; creating threatening submission attempts; passing the guard to achieve mount; and creating striking opportunities.
- (8) Effective aggressiveness means moving forward and landing a legal strike.
- (9) Effective defense means avoiding being struck, taken down or reversed while countering with offensive attacks.
- (10) Points for each round must be awarded immediately after the end of the round.
- (11) The decision of the judges is final.

### **Warnings**

- 16(1)** The referee shall issue a single warning for the following infractions. After the initial warning, if the prohibited conduct persists, a penalty will be issued. The penalty may result in a deduction of points or disqualification:
- a. Holding or grabbing the fence;
  - b. Holding opponent's shorts or gloves; or
  - c. The presence of more than one second on the fighting area perimeter.

### **Points deducted for a foul**

- 17(1)** When the referee determines that it is necessary to deduct a point or points because of a foul, the referee must warn the offender of the penalty to be assessed.
- (2) The referee must, as soon as it is practical after the foul, notify the official scorekeeper and both contestants of the number of points, if any, to be deducted from the score of the offender. The scorekeeper, not the judges, will be responsible for calculating the true score after factoring in the point deduction.
  - (3) Any point or points to be deducted for the foul must be deducted in the round in which the foul occurred and may not be deducted from the score of any subsequent round.

## **Scoring decisions**

- 18(1) At the conclusion of a mixed martial arts round, each judge shall hand his or her completed score card to the scorekeeper, who shall in turn hand the score cards to a Commission appointed official.
- (2) A Commission appointed official shall tally the points awarded to each contestant and, if one of the contestants has a majority of points, shall endorse on each of the score cards the name of the winner of the match or, if the number of points awarded to each contestant is equal, endorse on each of the score cards that the match is a 'draw'.
- (3) If no knockout or technical knockout occurs, the winner of the match is to be determined based on a majority of the decisions of the judges.
- (4) When the Commission's appointed official has checked the scores, the official must inform the ring announcer of the decision and the announcer must inform the audience of the decision over the speaker system.

## **Types of bout results**

19(1) The following are the types of match results:

- a. Submission by:
  - i. Tap out: When a contestant physically uses his hand to indicate that he or she no longer wishes to continue; or
  - ii. Verbal tap out: When a contestant verbally announces to the referee that he or she does not wish to continue.
- b. Technical knockout by:
  - i. Referee stops match;
  - ii. Ringside physician stops match; or
  - iii. When an injury as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a match.
- c. Knockout by failure to rise from the canvas.
- d. Decision via score cards:
  - i. Unanimous: When all three judges score the match for the same contestant;
  - ii. Split decision: When two judges score the match for one contestant and one judge scores for the opponent; or
  - iii. Majority decision: When two judges score the match for the same contestant and one judge scores a draw.
- e. Draws:
  - i. Unanimous: When all three judges score the match a draw;
  - ii. Majority: When two judges score the match a draw; or



- iii. Split: When all three judges score differently and the score total results in a draw.
  - f. Disqualification: When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul is severe enough to terminate the match.
  - g. Forfeit: When a contestant fails to begin competition or prematurely ends the match for reasons other than injury or by indicating a tap out.
  - h. Technical draw: When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul causes the injured contestant to be unable to continue and the injured contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage.
  - i. Technical decision: When the match is prematurely stopped due to injury and a contestant is leading on the score cards; and
  - j. No contest: When a match is prematurely stopped due to accidental injury and a sufficient number of rounds have not been completed to render a decision via the score cards.
- (2) If the referee, at any stage, determines that both contestants are in such condition that to continue might subject them to serious injury and stops the match, the result shall be deemed a technical draw.

## **Section 6 – General Rules of Mixed Martial Arts**

### **Authority of referee**

- 20(1)** The referee has the authority to make decisions on all matters regarding the conduct of a mixed martial arts match not specifically addressed in these rules.

### **Stopping a match**

- 21(1)** The referee and ringside physician are the sole arbiters of a match and are the only individuals authorized to enter the fighting area at any time during competition and authorized to stop a match.

### **Preliminary inspection**

- 22(1)** Before a match begins, the referee or a Commission appointed official shall check the bandages, gloves, mouthpieces and foul-proof guards of the contestants, and shall ensure that no unauthorized foreign substances have been applied to the gloves, bandages, trunks or bodies of the contestants.

### **Final instructions**

- 23(1)** Before a match begins, the referee may call the contestants together and give them their final instructions, and a contestant may be accompanied by his or her chief second.

### **Informing judges of deduction**

24(1) A referee who deducts points from a contestant shall inform the judges immediately.

### **Accidental fouls**

- 25(1) A referee who determines that there has been an accidental foul, shall determine whether:
- a. The contestant who has been fouled is able to continue; and
  - b. The chances of winning for the contestant who has been fouled have been seriously prejudiced by the foul.
- (2) If the referee determines that the chances of the contestant winning the match have not been seriously prejudiced under clause 25(1)(b), the referee may order the match to continue after an interval of no more than 5 minutes.
- (3) The referee must inform the Commission appointed official of his or her determination that the foul was accidental.

### **Injuries to contestants committing fouls**

26(1) If a contestant injures himself trying to foul an opponent, the referee shall take no action in favor of the contestant, and the injury shall be considered as having been produced by a fair blow from the opponent.

### **Suspension to consult physician**

27(1) If in the referee's opinion a contestant appears to be injured and unable to continue, the referee may suspend a match by calling time out in order to consult the ringside physician on the advisability of permitting the match to continue.

### **Violations by others**

28(1) Any violation of the rules of mixed martial arts as set out in these rules by a manager, second, or trainer shall be grounds for disqualification of the contestant with whom the manager, second, assistant, or trainer is associated, at the discretion of either the referee or by the Commission appointed official, at any time before, during, or after a match.

### **Contestants to leave ring or cage**

29(1) After the decision of the judges has been announced, both contestants and their seconds shall leave the ring or cage promptly and retire to their medical rooms.

### **Extension of rest**

- 30(1)** If a contestant requires a medical examination between rounds, the rest period between rounds may be extended beyond 60 seconds by the ringside physician, who shall signal a time-out if it is apparent that more than 60 seconds is required.

### **Dropping mouth protector**

- 31(1)** If a contestant loses a mouth protector during the progress of a round, the referee shall call a time-out as soon as is practical, retrieve the mouth protector, have it washed and replaced. A contestant who, in the opinion of the referee, deliberately spits out a mouth protector during the course shall be given a warning for the first occurrence; a point shall be deducted for the second occurrence; and the offending contestant shall be disqualified for the third occurrence or have a point deducted.
- (2) The mouthpiece can only be replaced in the contestant's mouth by the contestant or the second.

### **Forfeit during competition**

- 32(1)** A contestant's corner can retire the contestant by having both the second and a Commission appointed official both stand and signal the referee to end the match.

### **Suspension of progress for cause**

- 33(1)** The referee, of the referee's own volition or on the direction of a Commission appointed official, may stop or suspend the progress of a match or have a point deducted.

### **Fouls**

- 34(1)** The following are fouls and will result in penalties if committed:
- a. Butting with the head;
  - b. Eye gouging of any kind;
  - c. Biting or spitting at an opponent;
  - d. Hair pulling;
  - e. Fish hooking;
  - f. Groin attacks of any kind;
  - g. Intentionally placing a finger in any orifice, or into any cut or laceration of your opponent;
  - h. Downward pointing of elbow strikes;
  - i. Small joint manipulation;
  - j. Strikes to the spine or back of the head;
  - k. Heel kicks to the kidney;
  - l. Throat strikes of any kind; including, without limitation, grabbing the trachea;
  - m. Clawing, pinching, twisting the flesh or grabbing the clavicle;
  - n. Kicking the head of a grounded opponent;
  - o. Kneeing the head of a grounded opponent;

- p. Stomping of a grounded fighter;
  - q. The use of abusive language in fighting area;
  - r. Any unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to opponent;
  - s. Attacking an opponent on or during the break;
  - t. Attacking an opponent who is under the referee's care at the time;
  - u. Timidity (avoiding contact, or consistent dropping of mouthpiece, or faking an injury);
  - v. Interference from a mixed martial artist's seconds;
  - w. Throwing an opponent out of the fighting area;
  - x. Flagrant disregard of the referee's instructions;
  - y. Spiking an opponent to the canvas on his or her head or neck;
  - z. Attacking an opponent after the bell has sounded the end of the round; and
  - aa. Applying any foreign substance to the hair, body, clothing or gloves immediately prior to or during a contest or exhibition that could result in an unfair advantage.
- (2) Disqualification occurs after any combination of three of the fouls listed in clause 34(1) above or after a referee determines that a foul was intentional and flagrant.
- (3) Fouls will result in a point being deducted by the official scorekeeper from the offending mixed martial artist's score.
- (4) Only a referee can assess a foul. If the referee does not call the foul, judges shall not make that assessment on their own and cannot factor such into their scoring calculations.
- (5) A fouled fighter has up to five minutes to recuperate.
- (6) If a foul is committed, the referee shall:
- a. Call time;
  - b. Check the fouled mixed martial artist's condition and safety; and
  - c. Assess the foul to the offending contestant, deduct points, and notify each corner's seconds, judges and the official scorekeeper.
- (7) If a bottom contestant commits a foul, unless the top contestant is injured, the fight shall continue, so as not to jeopardize the top contestant's superior positioning at the time.
- a. The referee shall verbally notify the bottom contestant of the foul;
  - b. When the round is over, the referee shall assess the foul and notify both corners' seconds, the judges and the official scorekeeper; and
  - c. The referee may terminate a match based on the severity of a foul. For such a flagrant foul, a contestant shall lose by disqualification.

### **Injuries sustained during competition**

- 36(1)** If an injury sustained during competition as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a match, the injured contestant loses by technical knockout.

- (2) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul is severe enough to terminate a match, the contestant causing the injury loses by disqualification.
- (3) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul and the match is allowed to continue, the referee shall notify the scorekeeper to automatically deduct two points from the contestant who committed the foul.
- (4) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul causes the injured contestant to be unable to continue at a subsequent point in the contest, the injured contestant shall win by technical decision, if he or she is ahead on the score cards. If the injured contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage, the outcome of the match shall be declared a technical draw.
- (5) If a contestant injures himself or herself while attempting to foul his or her opponent, the referee shall not take any action in his or her favor, and the injury shall be treated in the same manner as an injury produced by a fair blow.
- (6) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul is severe enough for the referee to stop the match immediately, the match shall result in a no contest if stopped before two rounds have been completed in a three-round match, or if stopped before three rounds have been completed in a five-round match.
- (7) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul is severe enough for the referee to stop the match immediately, the match shall result in a technical decision awarded to the contestant who is ahead on the score cards at the time the match is stopped only when the match is stopped after two rounds of a three-round match, or three rounds of a five-round match have been completed.
- (8) There will be no scoring of an incomplete round. However, if the referee penalizes either contestant, then the appropriate points shall be deducted when the scorekeeper calculates the final score.

## **Section 7 – Use of Substances and Drug & Alcohol Testing**

### **Drugs, stimulants, and substances**

- 37(1) No person shall administer to a contestant and no contestant shall use a drug or stimulant, including smelling salts and ammonia, either before or during a match.
- (2) No contestant shall ingest any substance other than plain water during an event.
- (3) A second may use only the following on a contestant during a match:
  - a. thrombin, avetine and thrombin-soaked pads;
  - b. adrenalin 1/1000 solution, but only for topical hemostasis of cuts and nosebleeds

- c. petroleum jelly;
- d. gauze pads;
- e. adhesive surgeon's tape;
- f. clean towels;
- g. plain water;
- h. cotton swabs;
- i. ice in bags;
- j. bandage scissors;
- k. eye iron.

(4) The use of "iron base" coagulants such as "monsel's solution" or any of its derivatives is prohibited.

### **Prohibited items**

**38(1)** No contestant shall wear or use any of the following items during a match or a weigh-in for an event:

- a. hard contact lenses;
- b. spectacles;
- c. individual removable false teeth;
- d. a watch, ring, earring, bracelet, charm or necklace;
- e. a headband or hair net;
- f. a hearing aid;
- g. any plastic or metallic attachment to the trunks;
- h. gauze, a Band-Aid or dressing to the face, scalp, neck, arm, back, or chest area;
- i. a plaster or fiber-glass cast;
- j. butterfly or steristrip sutures on the face, neck, scalp, chest, arm or back area;
- k. suture material of any kind on the skin of a contestant's face, ears, neck, scalp or chest;
- l. subcuticular suture in the face, neck, ear or chest;
- m. collodion (surgical dressing) or a similar substance;
- n. An implanted device which uses electricity or any substance which may alter bodily function;  
and
- o. Surgical tape anywhere on the body except the hands.

### **Drug and alcohol testing**

**39(1)** On request of the Commission, a contestant must report for and provide samples for testing for the presence of a banned substance.

(2) For the purposes of these rules, the World Anti-Doping Agency's list of prohibited substances and methods applies as amended from time to time. The most current edition of the Prohibited List may be obtained, free of charge, at the address [www.wada-ama.org](http://www.wada-ama.org).

(3) A contestant must not compete in an event if the contestant fails to comply with a request under clause 39(1).