



CENTRAL COMBATIVE SPORTS COMMISSION

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS: UNIFIED RULES

September 2019 Update – Rev0

PREFACE

For the purposes of this documents, “Commission” or “CCSC” means the Central Combative Sports Commission or its designated representative(s).

For better understanding of the contents of these rules, and to assist in future updates, please note the following:

- It is the intent that the core of this ruleset align fully to the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports (ABC) Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts (for professional bouts), as approved by the membership of the ABC in 2016. The core unified rules have been imbedded into this document. For improved context, the ABC’s August 1, 2018 amendment with procedures was used, with much of the procedural content also included in this rule set.
- The following documents were also referenced and used to provide supplemental content:
 - The prior CCSC MMA ruleset.
 - ABC Amateur Mixed Martial Arts rules (online document, not dated);
 - ABC Discussion and Review on Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts, July 2009;
 - Town of Penhold Bylaw 748/18, which provides the authority to the Commission, pursuant to the Municipal Government Act. It is important to note that this Bylaw, in its entirety, forms an integral part of this ruleset.

WEIGHT AND WEIGH INS

WEIGHT DIVISIONS

1. Mixed martial arts (MMA) fighters will be divided into the following weight classes:

DIVISION	WEIGHT RANGE	MAX WEIGHT DIFFERENTIAL
Atomweight	105 pounds and under	7 pounds
Strawweight	Over 105 to 115 pounds	10 pounds
Flyweight	Over 115 to 125 pounds	10 pounds
Bantamweight	Over 125 to 135 pounds	10 pounds
Featherweight	Over 135 to 145 pounds	10 pounds
Lightweight	Over 145 to 155 pounds	10 pounds
Super Lightweight	Over 155 to 165 pounds	10 pounds
Welterweight	Over 165 to 170 pounds	10 pounds
Super Welterweight	Over 170 to 175 pounds	10 pounds
Middleweight	Over 175 to 185 pounds	10 pounds
Super Middleweight	Over 185 to 195 pounds	10 pounds
Light Heavyweight	Over 195 to 205 pounds	10 pounds
Cruiserweight	Over 205 to 225 pounds	20 pounds
Heavyweight	Over 225 to 265 pounds	30 pounds
Super Heavyweight	Over 265 pounds	40 pounds

2. In all cases, the Commission must be satisfied that any bout between two fighters has a reasonable expectation of being fair, safe, and competitive.
3. At the weigh-in, fighters must weigh within the range permitted for the weight class of the fight, with a 1-pound overweight allowance.
4. The Commission may round weights out to the nearest half-pound, provided all competing fighters are weighed using the same criteria for the same event.

CATCH WEIGHT BOUTS

5. The Commission may approve catch weight bouts, subject to its review and discretion. This includes scenarios where the opponents are not in the same weight class, or when one or both opponents exceed the agreed upon weight.
 - a. Weight Miss Catch Weight: If a person misses the contracted weight and the two competitors are in different weight classes, the heavier opponent shall not exceed five (5) lbs. of the lower weighing fighter.

- b. Contracted Catch Weight(s): there is no weight spread allowance between contracted catch weight fighters, so long as both competitors are below the contracted weight. Commissions may deny Catch Weight fights if they see the weight differential as a large enough disparity to the safety of either of the fighters.
 - i. Generally, the Commission will require that catch-weight fighters not exceed the maximum weight differential (as listed in the weight division table above) for the class of the lighter participant.
- c. There is no overweight allowance for catch weight bouts.

WEIGH-INS

- 6. Unless otherwise approved, the official weigh-in for an event must take place no more than 36 hours before the scheduled start of the event.
- 7. The official scales will be made available at least 30 minutes prior to the weigh-in, during which time the fighters may weight themselves.
- 8. A competing fighter who is overweight at the time of the weigh-in will be allowed a grace period of up to one hour to attain the required weight. Weight loss in excess of 2 pounds is not permitted during this grace period. At the end of the grace period, the fighter will be given a second chance to weigh-in.
- 9. If a fighter is still over the maximum allowable weight following the weigh-in and the grace period, the Commission can cancel the fight. The opponent may, however, still accept the fight, subject to commission approval and penalties for the fighter who failed to make weight.
- 10. Weight gained by any fighter during the grace period will not be considered by the Commission in approving a bout.
- 11. The Commission may require fighters to be weighed more than once for any reason.
- 12. The Commission, with advance notice, may limit the amount of weight a fighter can gain between the official weigh-in and their bout.
- 13. In order to be cleared to compete, fighters must be examined by a Commission appointed physician. This examination must take place during the official weigh-in, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
- 14. Gloves must be available for all fighters at the weigh-in for fitting.

CAGE AND RING REQUIREMENTS

15. Mixed martial arts bouts may be held in either a fenced area (cage) or in a ring.
16. The required size and specification for the fighting area will be determined by the Commission, in line with industry standard.

Deviation from the fighting area requirements policy must be approved by the Commission.

EQUIPMENT AND THE TECHNICAL ZONE

17. The Technical zone is the moat area, surrounding the cage or ring (often referred to as the “ringside” or “cage side” area). A bout may not begin until the Technical Zone is set up and secure to the satisfaction of the Commission. Instructions outlining the Commission’s standard Technical Zone requirements will be provided to the promoter in advance of the event.

COMPETITION TIMEFRAMES

IN-COMPETITION PERIOD

18. Fighters are considered to be “in competition” for a consecutive period of time surrounding their participation in a mixed martial arts event. Unless otherwise approved in advance by majority vote of the Commission, the “in-competition” period begins 36 hours before the scheduled start of the event, and ends after the completion of a fighter’s medical examination and any anti-doping testing or procedures, following the fighter’s last round of competition at the event

EVENT PERIOD

19. Unless otherwise approved in advance by majority vote of the Commission, the event period begins at the call time (or scheduled arrival time for fighters at a combative sports event and ends simultaneously with the conclusion of the in-competition period for each fighter. The event period overlaps with the latter portion of the in-competition period.

FIGHTERS

HANDWRAPPING

20. In all weight classes, a maximum of one roll (no more than 2" wide by 15 yards in length) of white, soft, cloth gauze is permitted per hand. The gauze may not exceed the wrist of the competitor's glove. The exposed thumb is an option to be protected.
21. A maximum of one roll (no more than 1.25" wide by 10' in length) of white athletic tape is permitted per hand. The tape may not exceed the wrist of the competitor's gloves. Tape may be placed through the fingers but may not cover the knuckles. The exposed thumb is an option to be protected.
22. The bandages must be evenly distributed across the hand.
23. A single layer of elastic or flex-type tape is allowed to be applied over the completed wrap.
24. Bandages and tape must be placed on all fighter's hands in the presence of the Commission. Under no circumstances are gloves to be placed on the hands of a competing fighter until the approval of the Commission is received.
25. Hand wrapping materials should be supplied by the promoter and must be approved by the Commission.
 - a. Approved tape/gauze of all brands may be allowed, at the sole discretion of the Commission.

MOUTHPIECES

26. All fighters are required to wear a mouthpiece during competition. The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece is dislodged during competition, the referee will call time and have the mouthpiece replaced at the first opportune moment, without interfering with the immediate action. Points may be deducted by the referee if he/she feels the mouthpiece is being purposefully spit out. The mouthpiece will be subject to examination and approval by the Commission and attending physician.
27. If the mouthpiece is involuntarily dislodged during competition, the referee will call time, give the fighter the option to have the mouthpiece cleaned, and ensure the mouthpiece is reinserted without delay. Generally, this stoppage will be called as soon as possible after the mouthpiece is dislodged, but without interfering with the immediate action.

GLOVES

28. All competing fighters will wear open-finger, MMA-style gloves which weigh at least 4 ounces and typically no more than 6 ounces. Certain larger sized gloves (e.g. 2XL to 4XL) may be allowed, even though they exceed 6 ounces.
29. Gloves should be supplied by the promoter and approved by the commission. No fighter will be permitted to supply their own gloves for participation.
30. Gloves must be new or in good condition or they must be replaced.
31. Both opponents in a bout must have the same brand and type of glove, unless otherwise approved by the Commission, with the consent of both opponents.

ATTIRE / OTHER PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT / APPEARANCE

32. All mixed martial artists will be required to wear such protective gear as deemed necessary by the Commission. In all cases, fighter attire and protective equipment must be deemed appropriate by the Commission.
33. Male and female mixed martial artists shall wear the appropriate trunks, mouthpiece, and gloves. [*Mouthpiece and glove requirements have been described in the previous sections of these rules*] Male mixed martial artists shall also wear the appropriate groin protection during competition.
 - a. Appropriate shorts may include compression trunks, MMA shorts, or kickboxing/muay-thai shorts.
 - i. The hem of the trunks may not extend below the knee.
 - ii. The top of the shorts shall not extend above the waistline.
 - iii. Fighting shorts/trunks shall not have exposed Velcro, pockets, zippers, or any other adornments/attachments that may create either a hazard or an advantage.
 - b. Female competitors will follow the same requirements for bottom covering as the male competitors, minus the requirement for groin protection. Female fighters may choose to wear a combat sports-appropriate groin protector.
34. Female mixed martial artists shall wear a short sleeved (above the elbow) or sleeveless form fitting rash guard and/or sports bra(s) [*More than one sports bra may be worn*]. No loose-fitting tops and/or breast protectors shall be allowed.
35. Male contestants shall not wear any form of clothing on their upper body.

36. Mixed martial artists shall not wear shoes in the cage or ring.
37. Mixed martial artists in the same match, contest, or exhibition may wear different color trunks or be designated by glove taping and/or glove coloring to the corner they are assigned.
38. The wearing of jewelry (including piercings) will be strictly prohibited during all contests.
39. Wearing body cosmetics shall be prohibited during all contests. Wearing facial cosmetics shall be at the discretion of the Commission and/or referee.
40. The Commission will determine whether a fighter's head or facial hair presents any hazard to the safety of the participants or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the fight. If this is the case, the fighter may not compete unless the circumstances are corrected to the satisfaction of the Commission.
 - a. When deemed necessary by the referee all mixed martial artists shall have their hair secured in a manner that does not interfere with the vision and safety of either contestant.
 - b. No object can be worn to secure the contestant's hair which may cause injury to either contestant.
41. Joint/Body Coverings.
 - a. Other than the competitor's hands, there will be no taping, covering, or protective gear, of any kind, on the upper body. This includes, but is not limited to: joint sleeves, padding, or any form of brace/body tape.
 - b. A competitor may use a soft neoprene type sleeve to cover only the knee and/or ankle joints. Approved sleeves may not have: padding, Velcro, plastic, metal, ties, or any other material considered to be unsafe or that may create an unfair advantage. Tape, gauze, or any materials other than the approved sleeves are not permitted.
42. In addition to the above restrictions, fighters must not wear or use any of the following items during competition:
 - i. hard contact lenses;
 - ii. spectacles;
 - iii. removable false teeth;
 - iv. a watch;
 - v. a headband or hair net;
 - vi. a hearing aid;
 - vii. gauze, a Band-Aid, or dressing to the face, scalp, neck, arm, back or chest area;
 - viii. a plaster or fibre-glass cast;
 - ix. butterfly or steri-strip sutures on the face, neck, scalp, chest, arm or back area;

- x. suture material of any kind on the skin of a fighter's face, ears, neck, scalp or chest;
- xi. subcuticular suture in the face, neck, ear or chest;
- xii. collodion (surgical dressing) or a similar substance;
- xiii. an implanted device which uses electricity or any substance which may alter bodily function;
- xiv. tape anywhere on the body except the hands;
- xv. metal supports.

43. Grease (petroleum jelly or similar) may be applied solely to the facial area of a competing fighter, immediately prior to a bout in the presence of the Commission. Excessive grease may not be used.

- a. The reapplication of petroleum jelly or another similar substance, to the face, may be allowed between rounds and shall only be applied by an approved cutman or licensed cornerman.

44. Finger and toenails must be trimmed, sufficiently short as to not be deemed a hazard in the opinion of the Commission/referee.

BANNED SUBSTANCES

45. As a condition of the participation in a mixed-martial arts event, fighters agree to be bound by the Commission's drug testing, anti-doping and wellness policies and procedures.

- a. On request of the Commission, a competing fighter must report for and comply with anti-doping procedures, including testing for the presence of prohibited substances, at any time during the in-competition period.

46. Unless otherwise approved by the Commission, only water or non-caffeinated electrolyte drinks deemed acceptable by the Commission may be consumed by fighters during the event period.

47. During the event period, competing fighters may only consume food approved by the Commission.

CONTESTANTS WITH DIABILITIES

48. The Commission, at its sole discretion and on a case-by-case basis, may make reasonable accommodations in order to facilitate the participation of fighters with disabilities. However, in all cases, the Commission must still be satisfied that a contest is fair, safe and competitive.

FIGHT RULES

49. A mixed martial arts bout may not start or continue unless:
- at least one assigned physician and one representative of the Commission are present in the Technical Zone area, in addition to the judges, the timekeeper and the referee;
 - required emergency response personnel (paramedics/EMTs) and ambulance are onsite and in an accessible location deemed acceptable to the Commission
50. A competing fighter may not enter the cage unless they have met with the assigned referee prior to the bout to review the rules.

ROUND LENGTH

51. Each round shall consist of a five (5) minute duration (professional), with a one (1) minute rest period between rounds.
- No contests shall exceed five (5) rounds and/or twenty-five (25) minutes.
 - Bouts may consist of one (1), two (2), three (3), four (4), or five (5) rounds, with a five (5) minute duration.
 - No contestant shall exceed competing more than five (5) rounds and/or twenty-five (25) minutes of fighting in a twenty-four (24) hour period.

JUDGING AND SCORING

52. All bouts will be evaluated and scored by a minimum of three (3) judges:
- Judges will evaluate the bout from different locations;
 - The referee of a bout may not be one of the judges for the same bout.
53. If any competing fighter protests the assignment of a judge, the matter will be heard by the Commission, if time permits. Protests not made in a timely manner may be summarily rejected.
54. The 10 Point Must System will be the standard of scoring a bout. Under the 10-Point Must Scoring System, 10 points must be awarded to the winner of the round and nine points or less must be awarded to the loser, except for a rare even round, which is scored (10-10).
- No fraction of points can be awarded.
55. Judges shall evaluate Mixed Martial Arts techniques, such as effective striking/grappling (Plan A), effective aggressiveness (Plan B), and control of the fighting area (Plan C). Plans B and C are not taken into consideration unless Plan A is weighed as being even.
56. Evaluations shall be made ***in the specific order in which the techniques appear in (55) above***, giving the most weight in scoring to effective striking/grappling, and effective aggressiveness, and control of the fighting area.

57. Effective striking is judged by determining the impact/effect of legal strikes landed by a contestant solely based on the results of such legal strikes. Effective grappling is assessed by the successful executions and impactful/effective result(s) coming from: takedown(s); submission attempt(s); achieving an advantageous position(s); and reversal(s).

58. In evaluating a round, judges will assess the effectiveness of striking/grappling, with a focus on impact, dominance and duration.

- a. **Impact:** A judge shall assess if a fighter impacts their opponent significantly in the round, even though they may not have dominated the action. Impact includes visible evidence such as swelling and lacerations. Impact shall also be assessed when a fighter's actions, using striking and/or grappling, lead to a diminishing of their opponent's energy, confidence, abilities and spirit. All of these come as a direct result of impact. When a fighter is impacted by strikes, by lack of control and/or ability, this can create defining moments in the round and shall be assessed with great value.
- b. **Dominance:** As MMA is an offensive based sport, dominance of a round can be seen in striking when the losing fighter is forced to continually defend, with no counters or reaction taken when openings present themselves. Dominance in the grappling phase can be seen by fighters taking dominant positions in the fight and utilizing those positions to attempt fight ending submissions or attacks. Merely holding a dominant position(s) shall not be a primary factor in assessing dominance. What the fighter does with those positions is what must be assessed.
- c. **Duration:** Duration is defined by the time spent by one fighter effectively attacking, controlling, and impacting their opponent, while the opponent offers little to no offensive output. A judge shall assess duration by recognizing the relative time in a round when one fighter takes and maintains full control of the effective offense. This can be assessed both standing and grounded.

59. Effective aggressiveness means aggressively making attempts to finish the fight.

60. Fighting area control is assessed by determining who is dictating the pace, place and position of the bout.

61. The following objective scoring criteria shall be utilized by the judges when scoring a round;

- a. **10-10** A round is to be scored as a 10-10 Round when both contestants have competed for whatever duration of time in the round and there is no difference or advantage between either fighter.
- b. **10-9** A round is to be scored as a 10-9 Round when a contestant wins by a close margin; where the winning fighter lands the better strikes or utilizes effective grappling during the round;

- c. **10-8** A round is to be scored as a 10-8 Round when a contestant wins the round by a large margin by impact, dominance, and duration of striking or grappling in a round.
 - d. **10-7** A round is to be scored as a 10-7 Round when a contestant is completely dominated by impact, dominance, and duration of striking or grappling in a round.
62. Scoring of Incomplete Rounds: There should be scoring of incomplete rounds. If the referee penalizes either contestant, then the appropriate points shall be deducted when the scorekeeper calculates the final score for the partial round.

GENERAL RULES

63. Fighters must protect themselves at all times during a round, until otherwise instructed by the referee.
64. The referee is the sole arbiter of a bout and is the only individual authorized to stop a contest. This shall not preclude a video or other review of a decision under the procedure of the applicable regulatory authority [*the Commission*] if a protest is filed claiming a clear rule violation.
- a. The authority of a referee begins when the inspector(s) exit the cage/ring at the start of a fight and does not end until the inspector(s) re-enter the cage/ring, upon conclusion of the fight.
65. Other than the referee, the Commission and ringside physicians are the only individuals authorized to enter the fighting area at any time.
66. A competing fighter is not permitted to leave the fighting area during any rest period between rounds of competition.
67. If an MMA bout is being conducted in a ring and if a fighter is knocked out of the ring, the fighter must return to the ring unassisted by spectators or his/her seconds. If assisted by anyone, the fighter may lose points or be disqualified with such a decision being within the sole discretion of the referee. Once knocked from the ring, the competitor will have five (5) minutes to return to fighting surface, similar to an accidental foul, but shall be examined by the ringside physician before returning to action.

68. Before a bout begins the referee or Commission will check the bandages, gloves, mouthpieces and protective equipment of the participants and will ensure that no unauthorized substances have been applied to the gloves, bandage, bodies, hair or attire of the fighters.
69. Instant replay may be used to review a "Fight Ending Sequence" and shall only be used after a fight has been officially stopped. Once instant replay has been used to review a fight ending sequence, the fight shall not be resumed.
70. The Commission and the referee have the authority to make decisions on all matters regarding the conduct of a mixed martial arts bout not specifically addressed in these rules.

SECONDS

71. For the purposes of these rules, the term 'seconds' refers to all corners (including, without limitation, coaches, managers, assistants, trainers).
72. No competing fighter will have more than three seconds during competition, except in a championship bout or a special event, when the Commission may authorize four seconds.
73. Only two of a fighter's assigned seconds are allowed to enter the fighting area during a rest period, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
74. A second may not coach excessively or disruptively from the corners during a bout and may not simulate sounds which could be confused for the bell, horn, whistle or clacker.
75. Any violation of the rules by a second may be grounds for disqualification of the fighter with whom the second is associated, at the discretion of the referee or the Commission, at any time before, during, or after a bout.

FOULS

76. The following acts constitute fouls in a mixed martial arts bout and may result in penalties, at the discretion of the referee, if committed:
- a. Butting with the head;
 - i. The head may not be used as a striking instrument in any fashion. Any use of the head as a striking instrument whether head to head, head to body or otherwise is illegal.
 - b. Eye gouging of any kind;
 - i. Eye gouging by means of fingers, chin, or elbow is illegal. Legal strikes or punches that contact the fighter's eye socket are not eye gouging and shall be considered legal attacks.
 - c. Biting or spitting at an opponent;
 - i. Biting in any form is illegal. A fighter must recognize that a referee may not be able to physically observe some actions, and must make the referee aware if they are being bit during an exhibition of unarmed combat.
 - d. Fish Hooking;
 - i. Any attempt by a fighter to use their fingers in a manner that attacks their opponent's mouth, nose or ears, stretching the skin to that area will be considered "Fish hooking". Fish hooking generally is the placing of fingers into the mouth or your opponent and pulling your hands in opposing directions while holding onto the skin of your opponent.
 - e. Hair pulling;
 - i. Pulling of the hair in any fashion is an illegal action. A fighter may not grab a hold of his opponent's hair to control their opponent in any way. If a fighter has long hair, they may not use their hair as a tool for holding or choking in any fashion.
 - f. Spiking the opponent to the canvas onto the head or neck (pile-driving);
 - i. Any throw with an arc to its motion is to be considered a legal throw. It does not matter if the opponents head hits the canvas. A pile driver is considered to be any throw where you control your opponent's body placing their feet up in the air with their head straight down and then forcibly drives the opponents head into the canvas or flooring material. It should be noted when a fighter is placed into a submission hold by their opponent, if that fighter is capable of elevating their opponent they may bring that opponent down in any fashion they desire because they are not in control of their opponent's body. The fighter who is attempting the submission can either adjust their position, or let go of their hold before being slammed to the canvas.

- g. Strikes to the spine or the back of the head;
 - i. The back of the head starts at the Crown of the head with a one (1) inch variance to either side, running down the back of the head to the occipital junction.
 - ii. This area stretches out at the occipital junction (nape of the neck) to cover the entire width of the neck. It then travels down the spine with a one (1) inch variance from the spine's centerline, including the tailbone.
- h. Throat strikes of any kind and/or grabbing the trachea;
 - i. No directed throat strikes are allowed. A directed attack would include a fighter pulling his opponents head in a way to open the neck area for a striking attack. A fighter may not gouge their fingers or thumb into their opponent's neck or trachea in an attempt to submit their opponent. If during stand-up action of a fight a strike is thrown and the strike lands in the throat area of the fighter, this shall be viewed as a clean and legal blow.
- i. Fingers outstretched toward an opponent's face/eyes;
 - i. In the standing position, a fighter that moves their arm(s) toward their opponent with an open hand, fingers pointing at the opponent's face/eyes, will be a foul. Referees are to prevent this dangerous behavior by communicating clearly to fighters. Fighters are directed to close their fists or point their fingers straight up in the air when reaching toward their opponent.
- j. Downward pointing elbow strike (12 to 6);
 - i. The use of a linear "straight up straight down" elbow strike is prohibited. Any variation of this straight up and down linear elbow strike makes the strike legal. Any arc, or any angle change from straight up to straight down makes the strike legal. Any variation of position does not alter the legality of the strike.
- k. Groin attacks of any kind;
 - i. Any attack to the groin area including, striking, grabbing, pinching or twisting is illegal. It should be clear that groin attacks are the same for men and women.
- l. Kneeing and/or Kicking the head of a grounded opponent;
 - i. A grounded fighter is defined as: Any part of the body, other than a single hand and soles of the feet touching the fighting area floor. To be grounded, both hands palm/fist down, and/or any other body part must be touching the fighting area floor. A single knee, arm, makes the fighter grounded without having to have any other body part in touch with the fighting area floor. At this time, kicks or knees to the head will not be allowed.

- m. Stomping of a grounded fighter;
 - i. Stomping is considered any type of striking action with the feet where the fighter lifts their leg up bending their leg at the knee and initiating a striking action with the bottom of their foot or heel.
 - ii. Axe kicks are not stomping. Standing foot stops are NOT a foul. As such, this foul does not include stomping the feet of a standing fighter.
- n. Holding opponent's gloves or shorts;
 - i. A fighter may not control their opponent's movement by holding onto their opponent's shorts or gloves. A fighter may hold onto or grab their opponent's hand as long as they are not controlling the hand only by using the material of the glove, but by actually gripping the hand of the opponent. It is legal to hold onto your own gloves or shorts.
- o. Holding or grabbing the fence or ropes with fingers or toes;
 - i. A fighter may put their hands on the fence and push off of it at any time. A fighter may place their feet onto the cage and have their toes go through the fencing material at any time. When a fighter's fingers or toes go through the cage and grab hold of the fence and start to control either their body position or their opponent's body position it now becomes an illegal action. A fighter may not grab the ropes or wrap their arms over or under the ring ropes at any time. The fighter may not purposely step through the ropes. If a fighter is caught holding the fence, cage or ring rope material the referee may issue a one-point deduction from the offending fighters scorecard if the foul caused a substantial effect in the fight. If a point deduction for holding the fence occurs, and because of the infraction, the fouling fighter ends up in a superior position due to the foul, the fighters should be re-started by the referee, standing in a neutral position.
- p. Small joint manipulation;
 - i. Fingers and Toes are small joints. Wrists, Ankles, Knees, Shoulders and Elbows are all large joints. Grabbing the majority of fingers/toes at once is allowed.
- q. Throwing an opponent out of the ring or caged area;
 - i. A fighter shall not throw their opponent out of the ring or cage.
- r. Intentionally placing a finger into any orifice, or into any cut or laceration of your opponent;
 - i. A fighter may not place their fingers into an open laceration in an attempt to enlarge the cut. A fighter may not place their fingers into an opponent's, nose, ears, mouth, or any body cavity.
- s. Clawing, pinching, twisting the flesh;
 - i. Any attack that targets the fighter's skin by clawing at the skin or attempting to pull or twist the skin to apply pain is illegal.

- t. Timidity (avoiding contact, or consistently dropping the mouthpiece, or faking an injury;
 - i. Timidity is defined as any fighter who purposely avoids contact with his opponent, or runs away from the action of the fight. Timidity can also be called by the referee for any attempt by a fighter to receive time by falsely claiming a foul, injury, or purposely dropping or spitting out their mouthpiece or other action designed to stall or delay the action of the fight
- u. Use of abusive language in the fighting area;
 - i. The use of abusive language is not allowed during MMA competition. It is the sole responsibility of the referee to determine when language crosses over the line to abusive. It should be clear that fighters can talk during a match. The mere use of auditory language is not a violation of this rule. Examples of abusive language would be (Racially motivated or Derogatory language).
- v. Flagrant disregard of the referee's instructions;
 - i. A fighter MUST follow the instructions of the referee at all times. Any deviation or non-compliance may result in the fighter's disqualification.
- w. Unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to opponent;
 - i. Every athlete competing in the sport of MMA is expected to represent the sport in a positive light emphasizing sportsmanship and humility. Any athlete that disrespects the rules of the sport or attempts to inflict unnecessary harm on a competitor who has been either taken out of the competition by the referee or has tapped out of the competition shall be viewed as being unsportsmanlike.
- x. Attacking an opponent after the bell has sounded the end of the period of unarmed combat;
 - i. The end of a round is signified by the sound of the bell and the call of time by the referee. Once the referee has made the call of time, any offensive actions initiated by the fighter shall be considered after the bell and illegal.
- y. Attacking an opponent on or during the break;
 - i. A fighter shall not engage their opponent in any fashion during a time-out or break of action in competition.
- z. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee;
 - i. Once the referee has called for a stop of the action to protect a fighter who has been incapacitated or is unable to continue to compete in the fight, fighters shall cease all offensive actions against their opponent.
- aa. Interference from a mixed martial artist's corner or seconds;
 - i. Interference is defined as any action or activity aimed at disrupting the fight or causing an unfair advantage to be given to a corner's combatant. Corners are not allowed to distract the referee or influence the actions of the referee in any fashion.

- bb. Applying any unauthorized or foreign substance to the body, hair, ring attire or gloves to gain a potential advantage.
- 77. Fouls may result in a point or points being deducted from the offending fighter's score, based on the severity and circumstances of the foul, as determined by the referee.
- 78. The referee may disqualify a fighter who commits any combination of two or more fouls, or after any single foul which the referee deems to be intentional or flagrant.
- 79. During a bout, only the referee can assess a foul and determine whether it was accidental or intentional. If the referee does not call a foul, the judges are not permitted to make that assessment on their own. Judges must never factor an uncalled foul into their scoring calculation.

INTENTIONAL FOULS

- 80. If an intentional foul causes an injury, and the injury is severe enough to terminate the bout immediately, the fighter causing the injury shall lose by disqualification.
- 81. If an intentional foul causes an injury and the bout is allowed to continue, the referee shall notify the authorities and deduct two (2) points from the fighter who caused the foul. Point deductions for intentional fouls will be mandatory.
- 82. If an intentional foul causes a laceration and/or swelling and the bout is allowed to continue, and the injury results in the fight being stopped in any round after $\frac{1}{2}$ of the scheduled rounds plus one (1) second of the fight has been completed, by either another legal or illegal strike, the injured fighter will win by TECHNICAL DECISION if they are ahead on the score cards; and the bout will result in a TECHNICAL DRAW if the injured fighter is behind or even on the score cards.
- 83. If the fighter injures himself/herself while attempting to intentionally foul their opponent, the referee will not act in their favor, and this injury shall be the same as one produced by a fair blow.
- 84. If the referee feels that a fighter has conducted themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner, they may stop the action of the fight to deduct points or stop the bout to disqualify the fighter.

ACCIDENTAL FOULS

85. If an accidental foul causes an injury severe enough for the referee to stop the bout, the bout will result in either a NO CONTEST or DISQUALIFICATION if stopped before ½ of the scheduled rounds plus one (1) second of the fight has been completed.
86. If an accidental foul causes an injury severe enough for the referee to stop the bout, after ½ of the scheduled rounds plus one (1) second of the fight has been completed, the bout will result in a TECHNICAL DECISION awarded to the fighter who is ahead on the score cards at the time the bout is stopped.
- a. Partial or incomplete rounds will be scored. If no action has occurred, the round should be scored as an even round. This is at the discretion of the judges.
87. If a fighter, during the course of a round, visibly loses control of bodily function (vomit, urine, feces), the fight shall be stopped by the referee and the fighter shall lose the contest by a Technical Knockout (TKO) due to Medical Stoppage.
- a. In the event a loss of bodily function occurs in the rest period between rounds, the ringside physician shall be called in to evaluate if the combatant can continue. If the combatant is not cleared by the ringside physician to continue, that combatant shall lose by a Technical Knockout (TKO) due to Medical Stoppage.
 - b. If fecal matter becomes apparent at any time, the contest shall be halted by the referee, and the offending combatant shall lose by a Technical Knockout (TKO) due to Medical Stoppage.

FOUL PROCEDURES

88. If a foul is committed:
- (1) The referee shall Call Time;
 - (2) The referee shall direct the offending fighter to a neutral location;
 - (3) The referee shall check the fouled mixed martial artist's condition and safety;
 - (4) The referee shall assess the foul for potential point(s) deductions and/or time considerations.
 - a. The referee will notify the offending fighter, the Commission, the seconds, the judges and the scorekeeper of the decision on whether the foul was accidental or intentional and, if applicable, the points deduction or decision.

- b. Time considerations include only the following:
 - i. If a foul to the groin (**LOW BLOW**) occurs and the competitor is able to continue, the fouled contestant may have up to five (5) minutes to recover.
 - 1. The fouled fighter may determine the length of their own recovery period, up to the 5-minute limit, unless the ringside physician determines that the fighter is not fit to continue on in the bout. The referee will only restart the bout when the fighter is able to continue.
 - 2. If the fighter goes over the 5-minute time allotment, the round cannot be restarted and the bout must end.
 - ii. Fighters injured severely enough by a foul (other than a low blow) to require medical consultation may be given up to five (5) minutes, at the referee's discretion, for evaluation by the ringside physician before a decision to continue is rendered.

(5) At no time may a referee call a time-out to evaluate the impact of a legal strike, other than when a laceration is present.

(6) During all time out procedures, there shall be no coaching of a contestant permitted.

Exception to foul procedure:

(7) If a bottom fighter commits a foul, and the top fighter does not appear injured, the round can continue, so as not to jeopardize the dominant fighter's superior positioning at the time. In that case:

- a. The referee will verbally notify the bottom fighter of the foul.
- b. When the round is over the referee will assess the foul and notify the Commission, the seconds, the judges and the scorekeeper.

(8) In all cases after a foul, the action taken will depend on the fighter's condition, as follows:

- a. If the referee and ringside physician determine that **the fouled fighter is fit to continue**, and the foul did not constitute grounds for disqualification, the referee will restart the fight, as soon as is practical.
- b. If the referee and ringside physician determine that **the fouled fighter is not fit to continue**, the referee will immediately call a halt to the bout and render a decision based on the criteria in the next section.

FIGHT OUTCOMES

89. A mixed martial arts bout may end by:

(1) Submission

- a) Tap Out: When a contestant physically uses of their body to indicate that he or she no longer wishes to continue;
- b) Verbal Tap Out: When a contestant verbally announces or voluntarily/involuntarily screams in pain or distress to the referee that they do not wish to continue;
- c) Technical Submission: When a legal submission act results in unconsciousness or broken/dislocated bone(s)/joint(s).

(2) Technical Knockout

- a) Referee Stoppage: the referee stops the contest because the combatant IS NOT INTELLIGENTLY DEFENDING HIMSELF/HERSELF;
 - i. Strikes
 - ii. Laceration
 - iii. Corner Stoppage
 - iv. Did Not Answer the Bell
- b) TKO due to Medical Stoppage;
 - i. Laceration
 - ii. Doctor Stoppage
 - iii. Loss of control of bodily function.

(3) Knockout (KO)

- a) Referee Stoppage: the referee stops the contest because the combatant CANNOT INTELLIGENTLY DEFEND HIMSELF/HERSELF.
 - i. Due to Strikes

(4) Decision (via. scorecards)

(a) Unanimous Decision

When all three judges score the bout for the same contestant.

(b) Split Decision

When two judges score the bout for one contestant and one judge scores for the opponent.

(c) Majority Decision

When two judges score the bout for the same contestant and one judge scores a draw.

(d) Technical Decision

When a bout is prematurely stopped due to injury from an accidental foul and a contestant is leading on the score cards.

(e) Unanimous Draw

When all three judges score the bout a draw

(f) Majority Draw

When two judges score the bout a draw

(g) Split Draw

When all three judges score differently and the score total results in a draw

(4) Disqualification

- a) When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul is severe enough to terminate the contest, multiple fouls have been assessed, and/or there is flagrant disregard for the rules and/or referee's commands.

(5) Forfeit

- (a) Fighter ends the bout for reasons other than injury or by indicating a tap out.
(b) A second ends the bout on their fighter's behalf.

(6) Technical Draw:

(a) When an injury is sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul and the bout is allowed to continue, then later the injury requires stoppage from either a legal or illegal strike to the affected area after $\frac{1}{2}$ of the scheduled rounds plus one (1) second has been completed, if the injured contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage, the decision is a Technical Draw

(b) When the referee determines that both fighters are in such a condition that to continue might subject the fighters to serious injury (i.e. Double Knockout)

(8) No contest:

(a) When a contest is prematurely stopped due to accidental injury and a sufficient amount of time has not been completed to render a decision via the score cards.

(b) Reversal of the original decision by the Commission in the event of a dispute.

90. In instances where the fight has to be concluded due to unforeseen, **non-combat** related issues, the fight may go to the scorecards if one-half the scheduled rounds, plus one second ($\frac{1}{2} +1$) have been completed.

- a. If the non-combat stoppage occurs prior to the $\frac{1}{2} +1$ mark, the fight is to be scored a "No Contest"

POST-FIGHT

91. Following an event, competing fighters will be given a mandatory medical suspension (period of rest) by the Commission, in consultation with the physician.

CHANGING A RESULT

92. The official outcome of a bout may be reviewed by the Commission, upon receiving a written appeal from a competing fighter or on the Commission's own initiative. Any reviews which could affect the official result of a bout must be heard by a Commission Hearing Panel.
 - a. If a contestant wishes to dispute a contest that they have participated in, they must make a written formal declaration to the commission within 24 hours of the contest. No disputes will be accepted after 24 hours.
93. Upon reviewing the facts of the case, the Commission Hearing Panel may either:
 - a. Rule that the original outcome should remain unchanged; or
 - b. Modify the official result of the bout, if warranted, subject to the strict limitations in the following sections.
94. The Commission Hearing Panel is only permitted to change the official result of a bout if one of the following occurs
 - a. The Commission determines that there was collusion affecting the result of the bout;
 - b. The compilation of the scorecards of the judges discloses an error which shows that an incorrect decision was rendered;
 - c. As the result of an error in interpreting these rules, the referee has rendered an incorrect decision;
 - d. The Commission is convinced that an intentional, flagrant foul, committed by a winning fighter, directly determined the outcome of a bout; or
 - e. A competing fighter is confirmed to have committed a doping violation.
95. Regardless of the circumstances, the Commission Hearing Panel is only permitted to adjust the result of a disputed bout to a no contest. The only exception to this is following a confirmed scorecard counting error, in which case the decision may be adjusted to reflect the accurate result of the scorecards.

EXHIBITION BOUTS

96. Exhibition bouts may only take place with advance approval by majority vote of the Commission.
97. Exhibition bouts will be subject to the same rules as professional mixed martial arts contests, unless otherwise approved in advance by majority vote of the Commission.

AMATEUR RULES

98. Amateur mixed martial arts bouts will be contested using either "Novice Amateur" or "Advanced Amateur" rules.
99. Novice Amateur rules are designated for fighters who have limited experience in sanctioned mixed martial arts fights. This will generally include fighters who have had three or less amateur fights that have been appropriately regulated by a commission.
100. Advanced Amateur rules are intended for fighters who, in the sole opinion of the Commission, have sufficient experience to begin transitioning to professional rules. These fighters will typically have more than three amateur fights that have been appropriately regulated by a commission.

NOVICE AMATEUR RULES

101. All rules governing professional MMA bouts will also apply to Novice Amateur contests, with the following exceptions:
 - a. All amateur bouts will consist of no more than 5 rounds, each lasting 3 minutes with a rest period of at least 90-seconds between rounds. Amateur bouts will generally only be scheduled for 3 or 5 rounds, with 5-round bouts typically reserved for championship fights and main events. Exceptions to this standard may be permitted if approved by majority vote of the Commission.
 - b. Any foul, even if it is determined to be accidental, may result in immediate Disqualification.
 - c. In addition to the regular list of fouls, the following are also considered fouls in Amateur bouts:
 - i. Elbow strikes of any kind to any area;
 - ii. Kneeing the head of an opponent;
 - iii. Kicks to the head of an opponent;
 - iv. Linear kicks to the knee joint;

- v. Neck cranks; Any hold that places the fighter's neck in jeopardy from a crank;
- vi. All twisting leg submissions;
- vii. Heel hooks and toe holds. (Straight knee bars and the straight ankle locks are permitted);
- viii. Spine locks;
- ix. Smothering (Covering an opponent's mouth or nose to disrupt breathing);
- x. Strikes to the head of a grounded opponent.

ADVANCED AMATEUR RULES

- 102. Advanced Amateur bouts will be contested under the Novice Amateur Rules in the Section above, with the following exception:
 - a. In an Advanced Amateur bout it is legal to strike to the head of a grounded opponent using hands and fists only. All other fouls listed in the Amateur Rules remain prohibited.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revised by	Changes
August 2019	Rick VH	First draft 2019 re-write: ABC Unified MMA rule recheck, alignment and added procedural detail.
Sept 10, 2019	Rick VH	As approved.