

### 1. Definition

MMA “Mixed martial arts” means unarmed combat involving the use, subject to any applicable limitations set forth in these Rules and other regulations of the applicable Commission, of a combination of techniques from different disciplines of the martial arts, including, without limitation, grappling, submission holds, kicking and striking.

### 2. Age Requirement

The minimum age requirement for an Amateur or Professional MMA Contestant Sanctioned by the MMAFA is restricted to a minimum of 18 years of age.

### 3. Weight Divisions

Except with the approval of the MMAFA, or its executive directors, the classes for mixed martial arts contests or exhibitions and the weights for each class shall be:

Weight Class	Minimum Weight	Upper Weight Limit
Straw weight	None	115lb (52.2 kg)
Flyweight	115lb (52.2 kg)	125lb (56.7 kg)
Bantamweight	125lb (56.7 kg)	135lb (61.2 kg)
Featherweight	135lb (61.2 kg)	145lb (65.8 kg)
Lightweight	145lb (65.8 kg)	155lb (70.3 kg)
Welterweight	155lb (70.3 kg)	170lb (77.1 kg)
Middleweight	170lb (77.1 kg)	185lb (83.9 kg)
Light Heavyweight	185lb (83.9 kg)	205lb (93.0 kg)
Heavyweight	205lb (93.0 kg)	265lb (120.2 kg)

In non-championship fights, there shall be allowed a 500gram weight allowance.

In championship fights, the participants must weigh no more than that permitted for the relevant weight division. The MMAFA may also approve catch weight bouts, subject to their review and discretion. For example, the MMAFA may still decide to allow a contest with the maximum weight allowed is 80kg if it feels that the contest would still be fair, safe and competitive. In addition, if one athlete weighs 118kg while the opponent weighs 129kg, the MMAFA may still decide to allow the contest if it determines that the contest would still be fair, safe and competitive in spite of the fact that the two contestants technically weighed in differing weight classes.

### 4. Ring/Fighting Area Requirements and Equipment

**Mixed martial arts contests and exhibitions may be held in a ring or in a fenced area known as a cage.**

A ring used for a contest or exhibition of mixed martial arts must meet the following requirements, unless agreed and acceptable by the MMAFA:

1. One corner shall have a blue designation and the corner directly opposite must have a red designation.
2. The ring floor must extend at least 18 inches beyond the ropes. The ring floor must be padded with rubber or similar closed-cell foam, with at least a 1-inch layer of foam padding. Padding must extend beyond the ring ropes and over the edge of the platform, with a top covering of canvas or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the ring platform. Material that tends to gather in lumps or ridges must not be used.
3. The ring platform must have suitable steps for the use of the contestants.
4. Ring posts must be made of metal, extending from the floor of the building and must be properly padded in a manner approved by the MMAFA.

A fenced area (cage) used for a contest or exhibition of mixed martial arts must meet the following requirements, unless agreed and acceptable by the MMAFA:

1. The fenced area must be circular or have at least four equal sides
2. The floor of the fenced area must be padded with rubber or another similar closed-cell foam, with at least a 1-inch layer of foam padding, with a top covering of canvas or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the platform of the fenced area. Material that tends to gather in lumps or ridges must not be used.
3. The platform of the fenced area must have suitable steps for the use of the contestants.
4. Fence posts must be made of metal, extending from the floor of the and must be properly padded in a manner approved by the MMAFA.

5. The fencing used to enclose the fenced area must be made of a material that will prevent an unarmed combatant from falling out of the fenced area or breaking through the fenced area onto the floor of the building or onto the spectators, including, without limitation, chain link fence coated with vinyl.
6. Any metal portion of the fenced area must be covered and padded in a manner approved by the MMAFA and must not be abrasive to the unarmed combatants.

## **5. Stools**

1. A seat/chair of a type approved by the MMAFA shall be available for each contestant.

## **6. Specifications for Hand wrapping**

1. In all weight classes, the bandages on each contestant's hand shall be restricted to soft gauze cloth of not more than 15 yards 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.
2. 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 back of the knuckles when the hand is clenched to make a fist but must not cover the front of the knuckles when the hand is clenched to make a fist. The Surgeon's adhesive tape may go between the knuckles to secure the gauze but must not cover the front of the knuckles.
3. The bandages shall be evenly distributed across the hand.
4. Bandages and tape shall be placed on the contestant's hands in the dressing room in the presence of an MMAFA qualified Inspector and if requested in the presence of the manager or chief second of his or her opponent.
5. Under no circumstances are gloves to be placed on the hands of a contestant until the wrapping has been approved by an MMAFA qualified Inspector.

## **7. Mouthpieces**

1. All contestants are required to wear a mouthpiece during competition. The mouthpiece shall be subject to examination and approval by the attending physician.
2. The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece in place.
3. If the mouthpiece is involuntarily dislodged during competition, at the first opportune moment where there is a break or lull in the action, the referee shall call time and have the contestant reinsert the mouthpiece. This will be done without interfering with the immediate action so there is no advantage or disadvantage to either fighter.

## **8. Protective Equipment**

1. Male mixed martial artists shall wear a groin protector of their own selection, of a type approved by the MMAFA.
2. Female mixed martial artists may choose to either wear or not to wear a groin protector of their own selection, of a type approved by the MMAFA.

## **9. Gloves**

1. All contestants shall wear fingerless MMA gloves which are at least 4 ounces each and are approved by the MMAFA. Generally, gloves should not weigh more than 6 ounces without the approval of the MMAFA. Due to larger sizes containing more material, certain larger sized gloves, e.g. 2 XL - 4 XL, may be allowed even though they may slightly exceed 6 ounces.
2. Amateur contestants may be permitted to wear fingerless MMA gloves which have extra padding and weigh 6 or 8 ounces if previously agreed and approved by the MMAFA.
3. Gloves should be supplied by the promoter and approved by the MMAFA. No contestant shall supply their own gloves for participation.

## **10. Apparel**

1. Each contestant shall wear mixed martial arts shorts (board shorts), biking shorts (vale tudo shorts), kick-boxing shorts or other shorts provided they do not extend below the knee. Long grappling or yoga pants, long compression pants, shorts with pockets, shorts with exposed ties, shorts with exposed zippers are prohibited.
2. Female contestants must wear either a sports bra or a form-fitting rash guard during the competition.
3. Gi's, shirts, rash guards are prohibited during competition with the exception of form fitting rash guards for female fighters or unless requested by a promotion previously and approved by the MMAFA.
4. Shoes and any type of padding on the feet are prohibited during competition.
5. If there is an apparel or wardrobe malfunction during competition, at the first opportune moment where there is a break or lull in the action, the referee shall call time and have the contestant adjust the apparel.

This will be done without interfering with the immediate action so there is no advantage or disadvantage to either fighter.

## 11. Appearance

1. Each unarmed combatant must be clean and present a tidy appearance.
2. The use of grease or any other foreign substance may not be used in the hair, on the face, legs or any part of the body of an unarmed combatant. The referees or an MMAFA Inspector shall cause any grease or foreign substance to be removed, if the substance cannot be removed to the satisfaction of the MMAFA inspector or referee, the bout will be cancelled and the contestant will forfeit the match.
3. The MMAFA Inspector shall determine whether head or facial hair presents any hazard to the safety of the unarmed combatant or his opponent or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the contest or exhibition. If the head or facial hair of an unarmed combatant presents such a hazard or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the contest or exhibition, the unarmed combatant may not compete in the contest or exhibition unless the circumstances creating the hazard or potential interference are corrected to the satisfaction of the MMAFA Inspector.
4. An unarmed combatant may not wear any jewelry or other piercing accessories while competing in the contest or exhibition.

## 12. Round Length

1. Each non-championship mixed martial arts contest is to be for 3 rounds, each round no more than 5 minutes duration, with a rest period of 1 minute between each round.
2. Each championship mixed martial arts contest is to be no more than 5 rounds, each round no more than 5 minutes duration, with a rest period of 1 minute between each round. At the discretion of the MMAFA this may also include non-championship main event mixed martial arts contest.
3. Under special circumstances the MMAFA may allow a 4<sup>th</sup> sudden victory round of no more than 5 minutes duration, with a rest period of 1 minute between each round.
4. **Amateur** mixed martial arts contests is to be 3 rounds, each round no more than 3 minutes duration, with a rest period of 1 minute between each round

## 13. Stopping Contest

The referee or the ringside physician may stop a contest if they consider one or both combatants are taking unnecessary punishment from their opponent with little or no attempt to intelligently defend themselves or if one or both combatants are not responding to the referees instructions. The referee may also take advice from the ring side physician and/or the Government Authority with respect to the decision to stop a contest.

The referee and the ringside physician are the only individuals authorized to enter the ring/fighting area during a competition and only once the bout has been stopped or paused by the referee, other than the rest periods and subsequent to the contest ending.

## 14. Fouls

The following acts constitute fouls in a contest or exhibition of mixed martial arts, these fouls are for all contestants Professional or Amateur, with additional fouls listed for Amateur contestants. Fouls may result in penalties, at the discretion of the referee, if committed:

1. Butting with the head
2. Eye gouging of any kind
3. Biting
4. Spitting at an opponent
5. Hair pulling
6. Fish hooking
7. Groin attacks of any kind
8. Putting a finger into any orifice or any cut or laceration of an opponent
9. Small joint manipulation
10. Striking downward using the point of the elbow (12-6 elbow)
11. Striking to the spine, neck or back of the head
12. Throat strikes of any kind, including, without limitation
13. Clawing, pinching or twisting the flesh
14. Kicking the head of a grounded opponent
15. Kneeing the head of a grounded opponent
16. Stomping a grounded opponent
17. Fingers outstretched towards an opponent's face/eyes
18. Holding, grabbing and/or inserting your fingers or toes into the fence/cage or ring/ropes

19. Holding, grabbing and/or inserting your fingers into the gloves, shorts or top (rash guard, sports bra) of an opponent.
20. Using abusive language in fenced ring/fighting area
21. Engaging in any unsportsmanlike conduct
22. Attacking an opponent on or during the break
23. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee
24. Attacking an opponent after the bell has sounded the end of the round
25. Timidity, including, without limitation, avoiding contact with an opponent, intentionally or consistently dropping the mouthpiece or faking an injury
26. Throwing opponent out of ring/fighting area
27. Flagrantly disregarding the instructions of the referee
28. Spiking an opponent to the canvas on his head or neck
29. Interference by the corner
30. Applying any foreign substance to the hair or body to gain an advantage

#### **Additional fouls for Amateur contestants**

31. NO Elbow strikes (Standing or on the Ground)
32. NO Neck cranks
33. NO rotational ankle or knee locks
34. NO linear kicks to the knees while standing
35. NO knee's to the head

Fouls may result in an offending contestant receiving the following;

A warning, 1 or 2 points being deducted or disqualification. This is at the referee's discretion.

Judges will note the point deduction on the scorecards at the referee's instructions but will not calculate the deduction from the score.

The scorekeeper, not the judges, will be responsible for calculating the true score after factoring in the point or points deduction

Disqualification may occur after any combination of fouls or after a flagrant foul at the discretion of the referee.

Only a referee can assess a foul. If the referee does not call the foul, judges or the scorekeeper must not make that assessment on their own and should not factor such into their scoring calculations.

1) If a foul is committed:

- The referee shall call timeout.
- The referee shall order the offending contestant to a neutral location.
- The referee shall check the fouled contestant's condition and safety.
- If a fighter has been fouled it is up to the referee to assess the intention of the foul (accidental or intentional) and the severity of the foul. Based on this assessment it is the referee's discretion on how to penalize the offending fighter. The referee may issue a warning, deduct up to two points or disqualify the offending fighter, depending on the severity of the foul.
  - A. If a bottom contestant commits a foul, unless the top contestant is injured, the contest will continue and:
  - B. The referee will verbally notify the bottom contestant of the foul.
  - C. When the round is over, the referee will assess the foul and notify the commission, the corners, the judges and the official scorekeeper.
  - D. The referee may terminate a contest based on the severity of a foul. For such a flagrant foul, the contestant committing the foul shall lose by disqualification.
  - E. Low Blow Foul:
  - F. A fighter who has been struck with a low blow is allowed up to 5 minutes to recover from the foul as long as in the ringside doctor's opinion the fighter may possibly continue on in the contest.
  - G. If the fighter states that they can continue on before the five minutes of time have expired, the referee shall, as soon as practical, restart the fight.
  - H. If the fighter goes over the 5 minute time allotment, and the fight cannot be restarted, the contest must come to an end with the outcome determined by the round and time in which the fight was stopped. See Section 16 below.
  - I. Fighter Fouled by other than low blow:
  - J. If a contest of mixed martial arts is stopped because of an accidental foul, the referee shall determine whether the unarmed combatant who has been fouled can continue or not. If the unarmed combatant's chance of winning has not been seriously jeopardized as a result of the foul and if the foul did not involve a concussive impact to the head of the unarmed combatant who has been fouled, the referee may order the contest or exhibition continued after a recuperative interval of not more than 5 minutes. Immediately after separating the unarmed combatants, the referee

- shall inform the Commission's representative of his determination that the foul was accidental.
- K. If a fighter is fouled by blow that the referee deems illegal, the referee should stop the action and call for time. The referee may take the injured fighter to the ringside doctor and have the ringside doctor examine the fighter as to their ability to continue on in the contest. The ringside doctor has up to 5 minutes to make their determination. If the ringside doctor determines that the fighter can continue in the contest, the referee shall as soon as practical restart the fight. Unlike the low blow foul rule, the fighter does not have up to 5 minutes of time to use, at their discretion, and must continue the fight when instructed to by the referee.
  - L. For a foul other than a low blow, if the injured fighter is deemed not fit to continue, by the referee, the referee must immediately call a halt to the bout. If the fighter is deemed not fit to continue, by the referee, even though some of the 5 minute foul time is still remaining, the fighter cannot avail himself of the remaining time and the fight must be stopped.
  - M. If the referee stops the contest and employs the use of the ringside doctor, the ringside physician's examinations shall not exceed 5 minutes. If 5 minutes is exceeded, the fight cannot be re-started and the contest must end.

## 15. Injuries Sustained by Fair Blows and Fouls

- A. If an injury sustained during competition as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a bout, the injured contestant loses by technical knockout.
- B. If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul, as determined by the referee, is severe enough to terminate a bout, the contestant causing the injury loses by disqualification.
- C. If an injury is sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul, as determined by the referee, and the bout is allowed to continue, the referee shall notify the scorekeeper to automatically deduct two points from the contestant who committed the foul.
- D. If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul, as determined by the referee, 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 scorecards. If the injured contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage, the outcome of the bout shall be declared a technical draw.
- E. 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.
- F. If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul, as determined by the referee, is severe enough for the referee to stop the bout immediately, the bout shall result in a no contest if stopped before two rounds have been completed in a three round bout or if stopped before three rounds have been completed in a five-round bout.
- G. If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul, as determined by the referee, is severe enough for the referee to stop the bout immediately, the bout shall result in a technical decision awarded to the contestant who is ahead on the score cards at the time the bout is stopped only when the bout is stopped after two rounds of a three round bout, or three rounds of a five round bout have been completed.
- H. Incomplete rounds should be scored utilizing the same criteria as the scoring of other rounds up to the point said incomplete round is stopped.

## 16. Types of Contest Results

- 1) Submission by:
  - a) Physical Tap Out
  - b) Verbal Tap Out
- 2) Knockout – TKO or Doctor Stoppage :
  - a) when Referee or Doctor stops the contest (TKO)
  - b) when an injury as a result of a legal maneuver is sever enough to terminate a bout (TKO)
  - c) when contestant being rendered unconscious due strikes or kicks (KO)
- 3) Decision via the scorecards, including:
  - a) Unanimous Decision - When all three judges score the contest for the same contestant
  - b) Split Decision - When two judges score the contest for one contestant and one judge scores for the opponent
  - c) Majority Decision - When two judges score the contest for the same contestant and one judge scores a draw
- 4) Draws, including:

- a) Unanimous Draw - When all three judges score the contest a draw
  - b) Majority Draw - When two judges score the contest a draw
  - c) Split Draw - When all three judges score differently
- 5) Disqualification
  - 6) Forfeit
  - 7) Technical Draw
  - 8) Technical Decision
  - 9) No Decision

## 17. Judging

- 1) All bouts will be evaluated and scored by 3 judges who shall evaluate the contest from different locations around the ring/fighting area. The referee may not be one of the 3 judges.
- 2) The 10-Point Must System will be the standard system of scoring a bout. Under the 10-Point Must Scoring System, 10 points must be awarded to the winner of the round and 9 points or less must be awarded to the loser, except for a rare even round, which is scored (10-10).
- 3) Judges shall evaluate based on the following Prioritized Criteria

### Effective Striking/Grappling

Legal blows that have immediate or cumulative impact with the potential to contribute towards the end of the match with the IMMEDIATE weighing in more heavily than the cumulative impact.

Successful execution of takedowns, submission attempts, reversals and the achievement of advantageous positions that produce immediate or cumulative impact with the potential to contribute to the end of the match, with the IMMEDIATE weighing more heavily than the cumulative impact.”

It shall be noted that a successful takedown is not merely a changing of position, but the establishment of an attack from the use of the takedown.

Top and bottom position fighters are assessed more on the impactful/effective **result of their actions**, more so than their position.

This criterion will be the deciding factor in a high majority of decisions when scoring a round. The next two criteria must be treated as a backup and used ONLY when Effective Striking/Grappling is 100% equal for the round.

### Effective Aggressiveness

Aggressively making attempts to finish the fight. The key term is ‘effective’. Chasing after an opponent with no effective result or impact should not render in the judges’ assessments.

Effective Aggressiveness is only to be assessed if Effective Striking/Grappling is 100% equal for both competitors.

### Fighting Area Control

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

Fighting Area Control” shall only to be assessed if Effective Striking/Grappling and Effective Aggressiveness is 100% equal for both competitors. This will be assessed very rarely.

## Round Scoring:

### 10–10 Round

A 10 – 10 round in MMA is when both fighters have competed for whatever duration of time in the round and there is no difference or advantage between either fighter.

A 10 – 10 round in MMA should be extremely rare and is not a score to be used as an excuse by a judge that cannot assess the differences in the round.

A 10 – 10 round in MMA is a necessity to have for the judge’s possible score, mainly due to scoring incomplete rounds. It is possible to have a round where both fighters engage for 5 minutes and at the end of the 5-minute time period the output, impact, effectiveness and overall competition between the two fighters is exactly the same. It is possible, but highly unlikely. If there is any discernable difference between the two fighters during the round the judge shall not give the score of 10 – 10. Again, this score will be extremely rare.

### 10–9 Round

A 10 – 9 Round in MMA is where one combatant wins the round by a close margin.

A 10 – 9 round in MMA is the most common score a judge assesses during the night. If, during the round, the judge sees a fighter land the better strikes, or utilize effective grappling during the competition, **even if by just one technique** over their opponent, the judge shall give the winning fighter a score of 10 while assessing the losing fighter a score of 9 or less.

It is **imperative** that judges understand that a score of 9 is not an automatic numerical score given to the losing fighter of the round. The judge must consider: Was the fighter engaged in offensive actions during the round? Did the losing fighter compete with an attitude of attempting to win the fight, or just to survive the offensive actions of their opponent?

A score of 10 – 9 can reflect an extremely close round or a round of marginal domination and/or impact.

### **10–8 Round**

A 10 – 8 Round in MMA is where one fighter wins the round by a large margin.

A 10 – 8 round in MMA is not the most common score a judge will render, but it is absolutely essential to the evolution of the sport and the fairness to the fighters that judges understand and effectively utilize the score of 10 – 8. A score of 10 – 8 does not require a fighter to dominate their opponent for 5 minutes of a round. The score of 10 – 8 is utilized by the judge when the judge sees verifiable actions on the part of either fighter. Judges shall ALWAYS give a score of 10 – 8 when the judge has established that one fighter has dominated the action of the round, had duration of the domination and also impacted their opponent with either effective strikes or effective grappling maneuvers that have diminished the abilities of their opponent.

Judges must CONSIDER giving the score of 10 – 8 when a fighter shows dominance in the round even though no impactful scoring against the opponent was achieved. MMA is an offensive based sport. No scoring is given for defensive maneuvers. Using smart, tactically sound defensive maneuvers allows the fighter to stay in the fight and to be competitive. Dominance of a round can be seen in striking when the losing fighter continually attempts to 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. If a fighter has little to no offensive output during a 5 minute round, it should be normal for the judge to consider awarding the losing fighter 8 points instead of 9.

Judges must CONSIDER giving the score of 10 – 8 when a fighter IMPACTS their opponent significantly in a round even though they do not dominate the action. Effectiveness in striking or grappling which leads to a diminishing of a fighter's energy, confidence, abilities and spirit. All of these come as a direct result of negative impact. When a fighter is hurt with strikes, showing a lack of control or ability, these can be defining moments in the fight. If a judge sees that a fighter has been significantly damaged in the round the judge should CONSIDER the score of 10 – 8.

#### **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 opponents' energy, confidence, abilities and spirit. All of these come as a direct result of impact. When a fighter is impacted with strikes, by lack of control and/or ability, this can create defining moments in the round and shall be assessed with great value.

#### **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.

#### **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.

### **10–7 Round**

A 10 – 7 Round in MMA is when a fighter completely overwhelms their opponent in Effective Striking and/or Grappling and stoppage is warranted.”

A 10 – 7 round in MMA is a score that judges will rarely give.

It takes both overwhelming DOMINANCE of a round, but also significant IMPACT that, at times, cause the judge to consider that the fight could be stopped.