



MIXED MARTIAL ARTS UNIFIED RULES FOR AMATEUR COMPETITION

[As of October 2022]

1) SCOPE:

Amateur Mixed Martial Arts [MMA] competition shall provide participants new to the sport of MMA the needed experience required in order to progress through to a possible career within the sport. The sole ethos of Amateur MMA is to provide the safest possible environment for combatants to train and gain the required experience and knowledge under directed pathways allowing them to compete under the confines of the rules set out within this document..

It is recognized, through the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation [IMMAF] that varying country legislation may differ from region to region and this can be reflected in the resultant documentation and rules sets from the member countries. The annual IMMAF MMA World Amateur Championships may be held in differing countries and as such changes shall be facilitated and known prior to competition. What we are striving for in conjunction with the unparalleled safety conscious nature of the combatants is a unified and an aesthetically common identity of the sport of Mixed Martial Arts for amateur competition.

2) DEFINITION:

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

3) JURISDICTION:

The Referee shall remain the sole arbiter of a contest. All contests and exhibitions of mixed martial arts must be conducted under the supervision and authority of the commission/host regulatory body.

4) ROUNDS:

Each contest under IMMAF regulation shall be 3 [three] rounds each to be 3 [three] minutes in duration, with a rest period of 1 [one] minute between each round.

5) **STOPPING THE CONTEST:**

The referee and the ringside physician are the only individuals authorized to enter the ring/fighting area at any time during competition, and the referee is the sole arbiter of a contest and is the only individual authorized to stop a contest.

6) **JUDGING:**

All contests will be evaluated and scored by three judges.

7) **TEN (10) POINT MUST SYSTEM:**

The 10-Point Must System will be the standard system of scoring a contest.

8) **WARNINGS:**

A single warning will be issued for the following infractions only:

- 1) Holding or grabbing fence
- 2) Holding onto opponent's shorts, gloves, shin-guards or rash-guard
- 3) Having the fingers outstretched, palm parallel to the floor toward opponent face

9) **FOULS:**

The following acts constitute a foul in mixed martial arts competition:

1. Butting with the head
2. Eye gouging of any kind
3. Biting or spitting at an opponent
4. Fish Hooking
5. Hair pulling
6. Spiking the opponent to the canvas onto the head or neck (pile-driving)
7. Strikes to the spine or the back of the head. The spine includes the tailbone
8. Throat strikes of any kind and/or grabbing the trachea
9. Fingers outstretched toward an opponent's face/eyes
10. Downward pointing elbow strike (12 to 6)
11. Groin attacks of any kind
12. Kneeing and/or Kicking the head of a grounded opponent
13. Stomping of a grounded fighter
14. Holding opponent's gloves, shorts, shin-guards or rash guard
15. Holding or grabbing the fence with fingers or toes
16. Small joint manipulation [fingers or toes]
17. Throwing an opponent out of the fighting area

18. Intentionally placing a finger into any orifice, or into any cut or laceration of your opponent
19. Clawing, pinching, twisting the flesh
20. Timidity (avoiding contact, or consistently dropping the mouthpiece, or faking an injury)
21. Use of abusive language in the fighting area
22. Flagrant disregard of the referee's instructions
23. Unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to opponent
24. Attacking an opponent after the bell has sounded the end of the period of unarmed combat.
25. Attacking an opponent on or during the break
26. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee
27. Interference from a mixed martial artist's corner or seconds
28. Applying any foreign substance to the head or body in order to gain an advantage

10) FORBIDDEN TECHNIQUES

In addition to the listed fouls above, techniques that shall remain forbidden in Amateur Mixed Martial Arts contests shall be:

- 1) Elbow and forearm strikes of any kind
- 2) Heel Hook
- 3) Twister, neck crank, can opener, sit through crucifix and/or any submission deemed as applying pressure to the neck or spine
- 4) Knees to the head of an opponent
- 5) Linear/front kicks directly targeting the knee

11) FOUL PROCEEDURE

Disqualification can occur after any combination of fouls or after a single flagrant foul.

Fouls resulting in a point[s] being deducted and as signaled by the referee must result in the deduction from the offending contestant's score and is to be notated by all three judges and official scorekeeper.

Only a referee can assess a foul, if the referee does not call the foul then judges must not make that assessment on their own.

A fouled contestant has **up to** 5 minutes to recuperate. This **is not** applicable to all fouls.

If a foul is committed the referee may call time should the fouled contestant show any visible sign of distraction or injury.

- 1) The referee shall call time.
- 2) The referee shall check the fouled contestant's condition and safety.

3) The referee shall then instruct the fouling contestant to a neutral corner, assess the foul to the fouled contestant, deduct points [if required] and notify the judges and official scorekeeper.

If a bottom contestant commits a foul, unless the top contestant is injured, the contest will continue without referee intervention.

- 1) The referee will verbally notify the bottom contestant of the foul.
- 2) When the round is over, the referee will assess the foul and notify both corners, the judges and the official scorekeeper.

12) **INJURIES SUSTAINED BY FAIR BLOWS AND FOULS:**

Fair Blows: If injury is severe enough to terminate a contest, the injured fighter loses by TKO.

Fouls:

Intentional

- 1) If an injury is severe enough to cause the immediate termination of a contest, the contestant causing the injury loses by disqualification.
- 2) If an injury is produced and the contest is allowed to continue, the referee will notify the authorities and automatically deduct 2 points from the contestant who committed the foul. Point deductions for intentional fouls will be mandatory.
- 3) If an injury as described in (b) above is the cause of the contest being stopped in a later round, the injured boxer will win by TECHNICAL DECISION, if he is ahead on the scorecards.
- 4) If an injury as described in (b) above is the cause of the contest being stopped in a later round, the contest will result in a TECHNICAL DRAW, if the injured contestant is behind or even on the scorecards.
- 5) If a contestant injures himself while attempting to foul his opponent, the referee will not take any action in his favor, and the injury will be the same as one produced by a fair blow.

Accidental

- 1) Any injury severe enough for the referee to stop the contest immediately, will result in a NO CONTEST if stopped before 2 rounds have been completed in a 3 round contest or if stopped before 3 rounds have been completed in a 5 round contest.
- 2) Any injury severe enough for the referee to stop the contest immediately after 2 rounds of a 3 round contest, or after 3 rounds of a 5 round contest have occurred, the contest will result in a TECHNICAL DECISION, awarded to the contestant who is ahead on the score cards at the time the contest is stopped.
- 3) If injury (b) above occurs, there will be no scoring of an incomplete round.
- 4) If injury (b) above occurs, and the referee penalizes either contestant, then point(s)

shall be deducted from the final score.

13) WEIGHT DIVISIONS:

Except with the approval of the commission/host regulatory authority the weight classes for mixed martial arts contests shall be:

Straw-weight	under 115 pounds
Flyweight	over 115 to 125 pounds
Bantamweight	over 125 to 135 pounds
Featherweight	over 135 to 145 pounds
Lightweight	over 145 to 155 pounds
Welterweight	over 155 to 170 pounds
Middleweight	over 170 to 185 pounds
Light Heavyweight	over 185 to 205 pounds
Heavyweight	over 205 to 265 pounds
Super Heavyweight	over 265 pounds

Weigh-ins for amateur contestants shall be on the day of competition, and each subsequent day of competition that an athlete progresses.

14) MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTESTANTS:

All athletes are required to complete all pre competition medical examinations and tests as set out by the commission/host regulatory authority. This can be found in the competition license and registration handbook or the statutes as defined by the IMMAF. The medical requirements set out pre competition shall be mandatory.

The commission/host regulatory authority licensing the contest shall conduct or supervise all pre-contest weigh-ins and supervise a rules meeting for all contestants and their cornermen.

Post-Contest medical examination:

- 1) Immediately following a contest, each contestant shall be given a medical examination by a physician approved by the commission/host regulatory authority. The medical examination may include any examinations or tests the commission deems necessary to determine the post-contest physical fitness of a contestant.
- 2) Any contestant who refuses to undergo a post-contest medical examination shall be immediately suspended for an indefinite period for an investigation to take place.

15) IMMAF EQUIPMENT SECTION

Competitors participating in IMMAF official events should comply with the IMMAF regulations. National federations of the competing athletes are responsible for ensuring

that athletes are wearing IMMAF Approved kit that comply with the rules.

In IMMAF tournaments, it is a mandatory requirement under IMMAF competition for all IMMAF Approved equipment to be worn at all times during competition. Competitors will be issued two sets of kit; one in red and one blue, with each set consisting of the following items: gloves, shin guards, rash guard, and a pair of shorts. Competitors will retain both sets of kit at the end of the competition.

Protective Kit

Gloves

The gloves shall be new for all events and in good condition or they must be replaced. Only gloves supplied by the commission/host regulatory authority with prior approval from the IMMAF Technical Committee can be used for the duration of the competition. All athletes shall wear gloves with protective padding weighing a minimum of no less than 6 ounces and no more than 8 ounces. The gloves for amateur competition shall be recognised as visibly different to those used under professional rules and have the aesthetic of such. Athletes are not permitted to supply their own gloves. Gloves are to be open handed with finger and thumb loops to facilitate grappling. The wrist shall be supported by means of a Velcro strap. No lace up gloves are permitted. Gloves shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

Shin guards

The use of shin guards and rash guards shall be a mandatory requirement for amateur mixed martial arts competition. The type of shin guard used shall be able to facilitate the grappling aspects associated with competition. As such the preferred type shall be a tight fighting pull-on sock/neoprene type shin guard. The use of shin guards with Velcro type strap fasteners or utilizing any substance other than which the shin guard is made of shall be forbidden. Shin guards shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

Groin Protectors

All male athletes must provide and wear a groin protector. Females may choose to wear a groin protector should they so wish.

Mouthpieces

All athletes are required to wear a well-fitting mouthpiece, which shall be subject to examination and approval. A round will not begin until both athletes have their respective mouthpieces in place.

If a mouthpiece is involuntarily dislodged during competition, the referee will call time and replace the mouthpiece at the first opportune moment, which does not interfere with the immediate action. Athletes are responsible for sourcing their own non-branded mouth guards.

Athlete's Apparel

Shorts

Each athlete must wear mixed martial arts shorts/compression shorts. No pockets, zips, fasteners or any foreign substance other than that of the material that the shorts are made of shall be permitted to present on the shorts. No external lace up waistband on the outside of the shorts are permitted, it must be inside the waist band of the shorts. The shorts shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

Rash guards

The type of rash guard to be used shall be of tight fighting stretch material. The rash guard will carry 3 letter country codes and the surname of the athlete on the upper back of the garment in tournaments where back numbers are applicable. All rash guards are to be of short sleeve type. No long sleeve rash guards are permitted. The rash guards shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

Special Considerations

IMMAF understands and gives special dispensation to all cultural and religious belief and practice. Any female athlete wishing to wear either/or long sleeve rash guards and tights to cover the skin can do so with prior written notification to the commission/host regulatory authority.

Shoes

Athletes may not wear shoes of any kind during competition.

Equipment Control procedure

Athletes' equipment/kit must be exempt from stains and must not show any signs of being worn out. If the condition of the equipment is assessed as unsatisfactory, the athlete must obtain replacement equipment from the Equipment Room.

Replacements will only be issued in the following cases:

- Torn Equipment
- Bloodstains or any other apparent stains
- Worn out
- Lost or stolen kit (at discretion of the Equipment Manager)

The surname of the athlete on the accreditation card has to correspond with the surname on the back number.

Long hair must be tied up out of the way.

World Champion Athletes

At the IMMAF World Championships IMMAF will issue gold kit to previous athletes who are gold medallists under ALL of the following conditions:

- Athlete is a Gold medallist from any tournament since the last World championships including the previous year's Worlds tournament
- Athlete is fighting in the same weight category as when they won gold
- Athlete is fighting at the same level of competition (e.g., seniors' tournament).

The gold kit is not compulsory and can be swapped for the red/blue kit if preferred at the Equipment Manager's discretion.

Note:

1. In the instance that both athletes in the bout are in gold kit; one or both athletes will be issued with the red/blue protective kit for the bout as per the corner specified for the athlete on the bout card.
2. If the gold kit is not available, the athlete will be defaulted to blue/red as per the corner specified for the athlete on the bout card.

16) FIGHTING AREA REQUIREMENTS

Where possible and it is practically reasonable host federations should be using the IMMAF Approved Fighting Area for all competitions. Details can be found here:

<https://immaf.org/immaf-fighting-area/>

In all other instances where the IMMAF approved fighting area is not used the following specification for the fighting areas should be strictly followed. Close & detailed fighting area inspections should take place before the start of IMMAF competitions and each subsequent day of competition to ensure the highest of safety standards.

Fighting Area:

1) The fighting area must be circular, or may form another shape such as hexagonal or octagonal and have equal sides and must be no smaller than 20 feet x 20 feet and no larger than 32 feet x 32 feet in diameter/cross section. The fighting area floor shall be padded in a manner as approved by the commission/host regulatory authority with at least a 40mm layer of high-density foam padding. Padding shall extend beyond the ring/fighting area and over the edge of the platform. The ring/fighting area shall have a vinyl covering. Canvas covers are not permitted unless for a single day competition or final.

Fence:

- 1) The canvas/vinyl floor covering of the fighting area shall be enclosed by a fence made of such material as will not allow a contestant to fall out or break through it onto the floor or spectators; including, without limitation, chain-link fence coated with vinyl. Any metal portion of the fenced area must be covered and padded in a manner approved by the and must n commission/host regulatory authority and must not be abrasive to the contestants.
- 2) The fenced area must have 2 gated entrances [which must open outward] preferably on opposite sides of the fenced area.
- 3) There must not be any obstruction on any part of the fence surrounding the area in which the contestants are competing.

Ring Stools:

- 1) A ring stool of a type approved by the commission/host regulatory authority must be available for each fighting area in use and for both red and blue corners. All ring stools must be thoroughly cleaned or replaced [if damaged/mislaid] after each contest.
- 2) An appropriate number of stools or chairs shall be available for each contestant's seconds in the corner.

Other Equipment:

For each contest, the licensed promoter shall provide each contestant's corner with:

- 1) A clean water bucket with clean towel
- 2) A clear plastic bottle containing water.

Only water in clear plastic bottles is to be consumed by athletes at all times during competition.

17) SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:**Specifications for Bandages on Contestants' hands:**

- 1) In all weight classes, the bandages on each contestant's hand shall be restricted to soft open weave gauze cloth not more than 20 yards in length and 2 inches in width, held in place by not more than 10 ft. of surgeon's/zinc oxide tape, 1 inch in width, for each hand.
- 2) Surgeon's/zinc oxide adhesive tape shall be placed directly on each hand for protection near the wrist. Strips of tape may be used between the fingers to hold down the bandages.
- 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 the commission/host regulatory authority.
- 5) Under no circumstances are gloves to be placed on the hands of a contestant until the

approval of the commission/host regulatory authority is received. Each glove shall be sealed and taped either in red or blue. Athletes may not remove the gloves once sealed until the competition bout has taken place.

Contestant's Physical Appearance:

- 1) Each contestant must be clean and present a tidy appearance.
- 2) The use of Vaseline/grease or any other foreign substance, including, without limitation, grooming creams, lotions or sprays, may not be used on the face, hair or body of a contestant. The referee or the commission's representative shall cause any excessive grease or foreign substance to be removed.
- 3) The commission/host regulatory authority representative shall determine whether head or facial hair presents any hazard to the safety of the contestant or his opponent or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the contest. If the head or facial hair of a contestant presents such a hazard or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the contest, the contestant may not compete in the contest unless the circumstances creating the hazard or potential interference are corrected to the satisfaction of the commission's representation. Without limiting the foregoing standard, head hair must be trimmed or tied back in such a manner that it will not interfere with the vision of either contestant or cover any part of a contestant's face.
- 4) Contestants may not wear any jewelry or other piercing accessories while competing.

18) TYPES OF CONTEST RESULTS:

1) Submission:

Tap Out: When a contestant physically uses of their body to indicate that he or she no longer wishes to continue; or

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;

Technical Submission: When a legal submission act results in unconsciousness or broken/dislocated bone(s)/joint(s).

2) Technical Knockout (TKO):

Referee Stoppage: the referee stops the contest because the combatant **IS NOT INTELLIGENTLY DEFENDING THEMSELF**

Strikes, Laceration, Corner Stoppage, Did Not Answer the Bell

TKO due to Medical Stoppage, Laceration, Doctor Stoppage, Loss of control of bodily function.

3) Knockout (KO):

Referee Stoppage: the referee stops the contest because the combatant **CANNOT INTELLIGENTLY DEFEND THEMSELVES**

No combatant can be saved by the bell in **any** round. If the referee determines that the fighter was knocked out or submitted [including technically] when the round bell sounds he/she shall lose the contest.

4) Decision via the scorecards, including:

- 1) Unanimous Decision - When all three judges score the contest for the same contestant
- 2) Split Decision - When two judges score the contest for one contestant and one judge scores for the opponent
- 3) Majority Decision - When two judges score the contest for the same contestant and one judge scores a draw
- 4) Draw, 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 Contest

In a tournament format where fighter progression and medal placing is needed, no contests and draws cannot be applied. In such instances if the three rounds of competition have resulted in a draw then a fourth period/over time round shall be contested. In the event of a point deduction that results in a score draw in the over time round then the fighter who committed the foul and had the point deduction shall be eliminated from the tournament, the opponent who did not commit the foul advances. This rule can only be applied to the fourth overtime round.

Only in a tournament format should overtime rounds be contested. At all other times the judges evaluation and score remains final.

19) SCORING TECHNIQUES:

Effective Striking/Grappling shall be considered the first priority of round assessments. Effective Aggressiveness should not be considered unless the judge does not see ANY advantage in the Effective Striking/Grappling realm. Cage/Ring Control should only be needed when all other criteria are 100% even for both competitors.

1) 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 weigh 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.

Submission attempts that cause an opponent to tire and weaken, taking considerable effort to escape shall be given greater weight when scoring than those attempt that are easily defended and escaped without effort.

High amplitude and impactful throws and takedowns are weighed more heavily than athletes who are tripped or bundled to the mat.

This 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.

2) 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.

3) 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:

The 10 point must system shall be utilized when scoring a fight.

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.

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.

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 score of 10 – 8 does not require a fighter to dominate their opponent for the entire 3 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.

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, namely amateur competition is a score that judges will rarely give.