

CHAPTER 20:81:05
MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

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20:81:05:21 Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Unified Rules of
Mixed Martial Arts.

20:81:05:01. Applicability. This chapter applies to all amateur and professional mixed martial arts bouts or contests unless specifically exempted.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:02. Rounds. Three rounds is the maximum number of rounds for ~~a~~ an amateur mixed martial arts bout, ~~except for a championship bout, for which the maximum number of rounds is five rounds.~~ Each round may not exceed a three minute duration, with a one minute rest period between rounds. Five rounds is the maximum number of rounds for a professional mixed martial arts bout. Each round may not exceed a five minute duration, with a one minute rest period between rounds.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:03. Mouthpiece required. All contestants are required to wear a mouthpiece during competition. The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece is dislodged during competition, the referee shall ~~call time and~~ have the mouthpiece replaced at the first opportune moment, without interfering with the immediate action. The referee may deduct points if the mouthpiece is being spit out intentionally.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:04. Weight classes. The classes for contestants participating in a mixed martial arts bout or contest are as follows:

(1) <u>(1)</u> Strawweight	<u>up to 115 pounds</u>
(+) (2) Flyweight	up <u>over 115 pounds</u> to 125 pounds
(2) <u>(3)</u> Bantamweight	over 125 pounds to 135 pounds
(3) <u>(4)</u> Featherweight	over 135 pounds to 145 pounds
(4) <u>(5)</u> Lightweight	over 145 pounds to 155 pounds
(5) <u>(6)</u> Welterweight	over 155 pounds to 170 pounds
(6) <u>(7)</u> Middleweight	over 170 pounds to 185 pounds
(7) <u>(8)</u> Light Heavyweight	over 185 pounds to 205 pounds
(8) <u>(9)</u> Heavyweight	over 205 pounds to 265 pounds
(9) <u>(10)</u> Super Heavyweight	over 265 pounds

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:05. Weigh-ins. The time and place of the official weigh-in for a contest must be approved by the commission. The Commission may conduct the official weigh-in in a setting closed to the public. Unless otherwise arranged, the contestant must be weighed at least eight hours but not more than thirty hours before the contest. The contestants must be weighed in the presence of a representative of the Commission on scales approved by the Commission. A contestant must be allowed to be present for an opponent's weigh-in. A representative of the Commission shall conduct the weigh-in and shall inform all contestants of the process for the weigh-in.

The official weigh-in must take place within a period of two hours. The Commission may allow for an open weigh-in during a specific two-hour period or for a specific time of weigh-in for each fighter during a specific two-hour period. Additional time for a contestant to make weight is determined by the process for the weigh-in period.

Only those contestants who have been approved for the contest may be weighed during the official weigh-in.

A contestant who has contracted at a given weight class may not be permitted to compete if the contestant's weight exceeds that class unless the contract provides for the opposing contestant to agree to a weight differential. Under no circumstances may the weight differential exceed ~~ten percent~~ five pounds above the originally scheduled weight class, except for a super heavyweight bout.

If any contestant fails to reach the weight limit determined in the applicable category, at the indicated date and time for the official weigh-in, and even if the opposing contestant does not agree with the weight differential, each contestant, or both, has up to two additional hours to make the prescribed weight subject to the time allowed for the weigh-in period, provided that weight loss

does not exceed ~~five percent of the contracted weight for the contestant~~ two pounds in a two-hour period.

If the contestants fail to make weight after the ~~two-hour~~ allowable period, the bout may be cancelled. Contestants over the contracted weight by more than five ~~percent~~ pounds at the time of the weigh-in are subject to suspension by the Commission.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 42 SDR 101, effective January 7, 2016; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10(1).

Law Implemented: 42-12-10(1).

20:81:05:06. Scales. The scales to be used during the official weigh-in must be available to all contestants at least two hours before the official weigh-in at the place of the official weigh-in. ~~For a title fight, there~~ There must be two scales: one for the official weigh-in and one for the contestants' use. For any title fight, the official scale must be certified and calibrated within the preceding twelve months.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 42 SDR 101, effective January 7, 2016; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10(1).

Law Implemented: 42-12-10(1).

20:81:05:07. Conduct of contests. A mixed martial arts contest is subject to the following:

- (1) A mixed martial arts contest may not be less than ~~twenty~~ eighteen rounds or more than forty-five rounds of mixed martial art competition on any one program of mixed martial arts;
- (2) At each regulated contest, there must be in attendance a licensed referee who shall direct and control the contest;
- (3) At each regulated contest, there must be in attendance three licensed judges who shall at the termination of each mixed martial arts bout render a ~~decision~~ decision; ~~and~~
- (4) At each regulated contest, there must be in attendance a licensed timekeeper who shall keep the official time of each bout; ~~and~~
- (5) At each regulated contest, the Commission shall act as the official scorekeeper for each bout.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:08. Appearance and attire. In a mixed martial arts contest, each contestant must meet the following appearance and attire requirements:

- (1) Each contestant must be clean and present a tidy appearance;
- (2) Each contestant must have the person's fingernails and toenails cut and trimmed;
- (3) The excessive use of grease or any other foreign substance may not be used on the face, hair, or body of the contestant. The referee or Commission designee shall cause any excessive grease or foreign substance to be removed. The Commission designee shall determine whether head and facial hair present any hazard to the safety of the contestant or opponent or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the contest or exhibition. The contestant may not compete in the contest or exhibition unless the circumstances are corrected to the Commission designee's satisfaction;
- (4) A contestant may not wear any jewelry or piercing accessories while participating in the contest;
- (5) A male contestant ~~may~~ must wear mixed martial arts shorts, kickboxing shorts, or lightweight elastic polyurethane fabric bike-shorts, any combination of the foregoing, or other clothing approved by the Commission. A female contestant ~~may~~ must wear mixed martial arts shorts, kickboxing shorts, or lightweight elastic polyurethane fabric bike-shorts, or any combination of the foregoing, and a tight-fitting top, or other clothing approved by the Commission. Clothing of a contestant may not have any pockets;
- (6) A contestant must use a mouthpiece that has been individually fitted;
- (7) All contestants shall secure their hair in a manner that does not interfere with the vision or safety of either contestant, including no products or ornaments;
- (8) No contestants may use cosmetics, perfumes, colognes, or other fragrances;

(9) Male contestants shall wear groin protection;

(10) A contestant may ~~not~~ wear ~~any supports or wraps~~ a neoprene or similar wrap on an ankle. Tape of any kind for support on the ankle or toes is prohibited; and

(11) A contestant may wear a neoprene or similar material wrap on a knee. Metal, plastic, or fiberglass support braces on a knee are prohibited. A wrap must be approved by the Commission.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:09. Bandage and glove requirements. In a mixed martial arts contest, the following bandage and glove requirements apply:

(1) The gloves will be approved at the weigh-in by the commission, or its designee. The gloves will be examined by the commission, or its designee, to make sure they are whole, clean, and in sanitary condition. The padding may not be misplaced or lumpy. No breaking, roughing, or twisting of gloves is permitted;

(2) The gloves for every bout that is ~~designed~~ designated as a main event or title fight must be new, furnished by the promoter, and made to fit the hands of the contestant;

(3) The gloves of each contestant must be put on in the dressing room under the supervision of a commission designee and examined in the ring by the referee. If a glove is found to be unfit, it must be replaced with a glove that meets the requirements of this section;

(4) The contestants must wear gloves that weigh not less than four ounces and not more than eight ounces;

(5) The bandages may not exceed one winding of surgeon's adhesive tape, not over one and one-half inches wide, and placed directly on the hand to protect the part of the hand near the wrist. The tape may cross the back of the hand twice, but may not extend within three-fourths of an inch of the knuckles when the hand is clenched to make a fist;

(6) Each contestant shall use a soft surgical bandage not over two inches wide, held in place by not more than six feet of surgeon's adhesive tape for each hand. No more than one 15-yard roll of the bandage may be used to complete the wrappings on each hand. Strips of tape may be used between the fingers to hold down the bandage. Bandages must be applied and adjusted in the presence of the commission or its designee; and

(7) The use of water or any other liquid or material on the tape is prohibited.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 42 SDR 101, effective January 7, 2016.
General Authority: 42-12-10(1).
Law Implemented: 42-12-10(1).

20:81:05:10. Ring or fenced area requirements. Mixed martial arts contests may be held in a ring or in a fenced area. A mixed martial arts contest may not be permitted in any ring or area unless such ring or area has been inspected and approved by the Commission or its designee.

(1) The following requirements apply to a ring used in a contest of mixed martial arts:

(a) A ring may not be less than sixteen feet or more than thirty-two feet square inside the ropes;

(b) The ring floor must extend at least eighteen inches beyond the ropes. The ring floor must be padded with Ensolite or similar closed-cell foam, with at least a one-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 duck or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the ring platform. Material that tends to gather in lumps or ridges may not be used;

(c) The ring may not be more than four feet above the floor and must have suitable steps for the use of contestants;

(d) Ring posts must be made of metal, not more than three inches in diameter, extending from the floor to a minimum height of fifty-eight inches above the ring floor, and must be properly padded in a manner approved by the Commission. Ring posts must be at least eighteen inches away from the ring ropes;

(e) There must be a minimum of five ring ropes, with ties at appropriate intervals, with a minimum of two ties per side, not less than one inch in diameter and wrapped in soft materials. The lowest ring rope must be twelve inches above the ring floor;

(f) There must not be any obstruction or object, including, without limitation, a triangular border, on any part of the ring floor; and

(g) There must be at least ten feet between the edge of the apron of the ring and the first row of ticketholders. This area around ring must be denoted with a barrier to provide access for the Commission and officials around the entire ring;

(2) The following requirements apply to a fenced area used in a contest of mixed martial arts:

(a) The fenced area must be circular or have at least four equal sides and must be no smaller than sixteen feet wide or larger than thirty-two feet wide;

(b) The floor of the fenced area must be padded with Ensolite or similar closed-cell foam, with at least a one-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 duck or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the ring platform. Material that tends to gather in lumps or ridges may not be used;

(c) The platform of the fenced area may not be more than four feet above the floor and must have suitable steps for the use of contestants;

(d) Fenceposts must be made of metal, not more than six inches in diameter, extending from the floor to between five and seven feet above the floor of the fenced area, and must be properly padded in a manner approved by the Commission;

(e) The fencing used to enclose the fenced area must be made of a material that will prevent a contestant from falling out of the fenced area or breaking through the fenced area onto the floor or onto spectators, including, without limitation, chain linked fence coated in vinyl;

(f) All metal portion of the fenced area must be covered and padded in a manner approved by the Commission and must not be abrasive to the contestants;

(g) The door to the ring must be aligned with the stairs used to enter the ring to allow for direct access by the ringside physician and any necessary medical equipment;

(h) There may not be any obstruction on any part of the fence surrounding the area in which the contestants are to be competing; and

(i) The ring must be assembled to provide ringside seating for assigned officials and the Commission at least fifteen feet from any ticketholders for the event. The space must be demarcated by a barrier to allow ringside officials and the Commission access to the entire space around the ring without interference from ticketholders.

The ring must be assembled and available for inspection by the Commission at least ~~two~~six hours prior to the first scheduled bout.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:11. Ringside equipment. The promoter shall provide the following items which must be available for use as needed by the corner:

- (1) Two buckets;
- (2) Chairs and stools;
- (3) Rubber gloves;
- (4) Towels; and
- (5) Receptacles for soiled towels and trash.

The promoter must designate the corner for each contestant's team and provide a chair for each corner and an assigned inspector to be seated in the corner area.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 42 SDR 101, effective January 7, 2016; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10(1).

Law Implemented: 42-12-10(1).

20:81:05:12. Use and administration of drugs, stimulants, or nonprescription preparations. The use or administration of drugs, stimulants, or nonprescription preparations taken by or given to a contestant, other than the following, is prohibited:

- (1) Petroleum jelly for discretionary use around the eyes and cheek only;
- (2) Adrenalin or epinephrine in a manufacturer's premeasured vial in a 1/1000 solution; and
- (3) Coagulant limited to avitine, thrombin, thrombinplastin, fibroplastic, or jellfoam powder.

All substances must be clearly labeled and available for inspection by the Commission.

If a contestant tests positive for an illegal or unauthorized substance, the Commission shall amend the results of the bout to a no contest decision if the offending contestant won the bout. If the substance is a controlled substance as defined by SDCL 22-42-1 subdivision (1) or a counterfeit substance as defined by SDCL 22-42-1 subdivision (2) the Commission shall provide a copy of the laboratory report and any Commission investigative reports in the matter to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:13. Scoring system. Each judge of a bout of mixed martial arts shall score the bout and determine the winner through the use of the ~~following system:~~ Ten Point Must System.

~~(1) The better contestant of a round receives ten points and the opponent proportionately less;~~

~~(2) If a round is even, each contestant receives ten points;~~

~~(3) No fraction points may be given;~~

(4) If a point is deducted, the referee must inform each judge at the time of the foul and a point must be deducted on the judge's scorecard;

~~(5)~~ Points for each round must be awarded immediately after the end of the period of mixed fighting style in the round;

~~(6) Judges will score the round based upon the following criteria:~~

~~(a) Effective striking;~~

~~(b) Effective grappling;~~

~~(c) Ring control; and~~

~~(d) Effective aggressiveness and defense;~~

~~(7)~~ After each round, the scorecards will be collected from the judges by the Commission or its designee; ~~and~~

~~(8)~~ At the conclusion of the bout, the Commission, or its designee, will tabulate the scorecards and ~~give them~~ provide the bout result to the announcer who will inform the contestants and audience of the decision.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

Reference: Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Unified Mixed Martial Arts Rules (Adopted July 30, 2009 revised; August 2016)
<http://www.abcboxing.com/unified-rules/>.

20:81:05:14 Fouls. Repealed.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 47 SDR 67, effective December 3, 2020.

20:81:05:15. Accidental fouls. If a bout of mixed martial arts is stopped because of an accidental foul, the referee shall determine whether the contestant who has been fouled can continue. If the contestant's chance of winning has not been seriously jeopardized as a result of the foul or if the foul did not involve a concussive impact to the head of the contestant who has been fouled, the referee may order the bout continued after a recuperative interval of not more than five minutes. Immediately after separating the contestant, the referee shall inform the Commission of the determination the foul was accidental.

If the referee determines that a bout may not continue because of an injury suffered as a result of an accidental foul, the bout must be declared a no contest if the foul occurred during the first two rounds of a bout that is scheduled for three rounds or less; or, if the fouls occurred during the first three rounds of a bout that is scheduled for more than three rounds.

If an accidental foul renders a contestant unable to continue the bout after the complete second round of a bout that is scheduled for three rounds or less; or after the completed third round of a bout that is scheduled for more than three rounds, the outcome must be determined by scoring the completed rounds and the round during which the referee stopped the bout.

If an injury inflicted by an accidental foul later becomes aggravated by fair blows and the referee orders the bout stopped because of the injury, the outcome must be determined by scoring the completed rounds and the round during which the referee stops the bout.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:16. Deduction of points. If a contestant fouls an opponent during a bout of mixed martial arts, the referee may penalize the contestant by deducting points from the contestant's score, whether the foul was intentional or accidental. The referee may determine the number of points to be deducted in each instance and shall base the determination on the severity of the foul and its effect upon the opponent.

The referee shall, as soon as practical after the foul, notify the judges and both contestants of the foul, and the number of points, if any, to be deducted from the score of the offender. Any point, or points, to be deducted for a foul must be deducted in the round in which the foul occurred and may not be deducted from the score of any subsequent round.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:17. Stalling or faking. A referee shall warn a contestant if the referee believes the contestant is stalling or faking. If, after a proper warning, the referee determines the contestant is continuing to stall or fake, the referee shall stop the contest at the end of the round. If the referee determines that either or both contestants are stalling or faking, or if a contestant refuses to fight, the contest shall be terminated and announced as a no contest and the contestant or contestants in violation shall forfeit their pay as provided for in this Chapter.

A contestant who falls down without being struck or otherwise actively participating in the contest must immediately be examined by the physician. After conferring with the physician, the referee may disqualify the contestant and the contestant may be required to forfeit pay.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:18. Results of contests. A contest of mixed martial arts may end under the following results:

- (1) Submission by:
 - (a) Physical tap out, when a contestant physically indicates the contestant no long wants to continue; or
 - (b) Verbal tap out, when the contestant verbally indicated the contestant no longer wants to continue;
- (2) Technical knockout by the referee stopping the contest, which occurs when:
 - (a) The referee stops the bout because the contestant can no longer defend himself or herself;
 - (b) The ringside physician advised the referee to stop the bout; or
 - (c) An injury as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate the bout;
- (3) A decision via the scorecards, including:
 - (a) Unanimous decision in which all three judges score the bout for the same contestant;
 - (b) Split decision in which two of the three judges score the bout for one contestant and the other judge scores the bout for the other contestant;
 - (c) Majority decision in which two judges score the bout for the same contestant and one judge scores the bout a draw;
- (4) A draw, including:
 - (a) A unanimous draw in which all three judges score the bout a draw;
 - (b) A majority draw in which two judges score the bout a draw; or
 - (c) A split draw in which all three judges score the bout differently and the score total results in a draw;

(5) A technical decision in which the bout is stopped prematurely due to an injury and a contestant is leading on the scorecards;

(6) A technical draw in which an injury sustained during the bout as a result of an accidental foul causes the injured contestant to be unable to continue and the sufficient number of rounds has been completed with the results of the scorecards being a draw;

(7) A disqualification in which an injury is sustained during the bout as a result of an intentional foul severe enough to terminate the bout;

(8) A forfeit in which a contestant fails to begin the bout or prematurely ends the bout for reasons other than injury or indicating a tap out;

(9) A no contest in which a bout is prematurely stopped due to an accidental injury and a sufficient number of rounds have not been completed to render a decision via the scorecards; or

(10) A second stop in which the chief second indicates either physically or verbally that the contestant does not wish to continue.

The Commission may on its own initiative review or investigate any bout or contest to determine compliance with South Dakota law pursuant to 20:81:10. ~~If the Commission determines that the licensee failed to abide by SDCL chapter 42-12 or any rule promulgated pursuant thereto, the Commission may officially amend the results of the decision, which may include declaring a different contestant as the winner or loser of the bout or declaring the bout a no contest. If the Commission determines that an official acted in error or reached a decision that was not in accordance with SDCL chapter 42-12 or any rules promulgated thereto, the Commission may similarly amend the results of the decision if such error or decision affected, or could have reasonably affected, the outcome of the bout.~~

~~A contestant may request a review of a bout result by making such request, in writing, within five days of the bout to be reviewed. Such request must describe the result being challenged and the alleged error. The Commission may review or investigate the alleged error, as the Commission deems necessary. If the Commission determines there was an error in determining the contest result, the Commission may officially amend the result of the bout, which may include declaring a different contestant as the winner or loser of the bout or declaring the bout a no contest. If the Commission determines that an official acted in error or reached a decision that was not in accordance with SDCL chapter 42-12 or any rules promulgated thereto, the Commission may similarly amend the results of the decision if such error or decision affected, or could have reasonably affected, the outcome of the bout.~~

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:19. Automatic suspensions following contest. The Commission shall issue a suspension to each contestant following a bout. Such suspension shall be reported to a national mixed martial arts database. Contestants, under any circumstances, may not compete or appear in a contest less than seven days after the completion of the contestant's last bout. Fighters may not compete or appear in a contest for up to ninety days after being unable to defend themselves in a bout. Fighters severely injured or knocked out in a bout may be suspended indefinitely, subject to medical clearance to compete.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014; 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:20 Amateur contests -- Requirements and rules. For all bouts or contests under the jurisdiction of the Commission in which an amateur contestant competes, the Association of Boxing Commission's Recommended Rules of Amateur Mixed Martial Arts apply. The Commission has final decision-making authority concerning the enforcement, implementation, and interpretation of these rules and regulations.

Source: 41 SDR 7, effective July 28, 2014.

General Authority: 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: 42-12-10.

20:81:05:21. Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts. Unless otherwise addressed in SDCL chapter 42-12 or ARSD article 20:81, the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts apply to all mixed martial arts bouts. The South Dakota Athletic Commission has final decision-making authority concerning the enforcement, implementation, and interpretation of these rules.

Source: 44 SDR 102, effective December 18, 2017.

General Authority: SDCL 42-12-10.

Law Implemented: SDCL 42-12-10.

Reference: Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Unified Mixed Martial Arts Rules (Adopted July 30, 2009 revised; August 2016)
<http://www.abcboxing.com/unified-rules/>.