



## **MIXED MARTIAL ARTS UNIFIED RULES FOR YOUTH COMPETITION**

**[February 2019] \*Rev B**

### **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 or indeed any IMMAF open tournament globally 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.

There shall be an “over and above” policy instructed to officials when it comes to dealing with the safety of the youth participants, this shall be further detailed throughout this document.

The IMMAF currently recognizes and regulates 5 [five] different categories of Amateur Mixed Martial Arts competition:

- IMMAF Senior 18+
- IMMAF Juniors 18 - 20s (U21)
- IMMAF Youth A 16-17s (U18)
- IMMAF Youth B 14-15s (U16)
- IMMAF Youth C 12-13s (U14)

The rules as set out in this document shall be applied to, and be in accordance with, any IMMAF Youth tournament held globally.

**2) DEFINITION:**

“Mixed Martial Arts” means a combat competition involving the use, subject to any applicable limitations set forth in these IMMAF Unified Rules for Youth Competition, of a combination of techniques from different disciplines of the martial arts, including, without limitation, grappling, 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 in conjunction with the IMMAF.

**4) ROUNDS:**

Each contest under IMMAF Youth regulation shall consist of the following:

IMMAF Youth A 16-17s (U18) 3 x 2 minute rounds duration with a 1 minute rest period.  
IMMAF Youth B 14-15s (U16) 1 single round of 4 minutes duration.  
IMMAF Youth C 12-13s (U14) 1 single round of 3 minutes duration.

*The premise here is in granting the participants the necessary additional and incremental competition times [increasing with age] during matches, rising from 3 to 4 to 6 minutes respectively.*

No contest should be allowed over a two round format as the likelihood for a drawn result significantly increases.

**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 the referee and a 2<sup>nd</sup> official/table judge should the need to confer arise.

**7) SCORING SYSTEM:**

The Unified Criteria currently utilized at IMMAF Senior & Junior tournaments shall be applied and used in determining the winner of a contest based upon its effective use and application.

**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 remain forbidden throughout all levels and age groups of Amateur Mixed Martial Arts contests shall be:

- 1) Elbow and forearm strikes of any kind to the head or body
- 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

In addition to the listed fouls **and** forbidden techniques for amateur competition the following restrictions shall also apply to the youth age category in which they are listed:

**There shall be no striking to the head or face for any and all levels of Youth A, B and C competition permitted.**

### **Youth C 12-13 years old**

1. No striking with the knees in any fashion
2. No grounded striking of any fashion
3. No bicep or calf crush
4. No wristlocks
5. No leg submissions of any description
6. No omoplata submission
7. No suplex, elevated/shoulder throws or slams
8. No guillotine chokes of any description
9. No linear kicks to the knee
10. No up-kick from a grounded position
11. No foot stomps

*Any throw must be of a hip or hip toss variation and have both head and arm control.*

*The premise on which the youngest group of amateurs shall compete shall be based heavily upon applying and adapting the techniques of mixed martial arts in an enhanced safety environment. The technical restrictions detailed above shall both allow and facilitate young competitors to garner the necessary time and experience in a competitive format without the risk of unnecessary injury or trauma suffered.*

*As a result the referee's shall be instructed to allow the techniques to be freely and openly used and applied but not necessarily finished. In other words a young competitor who has been caught in a legal submission hold shall not be permitted the same leniency and time that an advanced senior would have to utilize an escape. We must recognize that at such an early age the emphasis will be exaggerated from a safety first perspective in not allowing or risking unnecessary injury to our young athletes. As a result "Technical Submission's" shall be a more frequent occurrence to both decide and end a match.*

### **Youth B 14-15 years old**

1. No striking with the knees in any fashion
2. No grounded striking of any fashion
3. No bicep or calf crush
4. No wristlocks
5. No knee-bar [legal leg attacks are straight Achilles lock and figure four ankle lock with straight leg only]
6. No omoplata submission
7. No suplex, elevated/shoulder throws or slams
8. No standing guillotine chokes
9. No linear kicks to the knee
10. No up-kick from a grounded position
11. No foot stomps

*Figure four ankle locks are to be applied to a straight leg only, no bending of the knee whilst applying the submission allowed.*

*Guillotine chokes must be of "arm-in" type and finished from a grounded position.*

### **Youth A 16-17 years old**

1. No striking with the knees in any fashion
2. No kicking to the body of a downed opponent - Closed fist striking to the body only
3. No bicep or calf crush
4. No wristlocks
5. No suplex, elevated/shoulder throws or slams
6. No standing guillotine chokes
7. No linear kicks to the knee
8. No up-kick from a grounded position
9. No foot stomps

*Figure four ankle locks are to be applied to a straight leg only, no bending of the knee whilst applying the submission allowed.*

*Guillotine chokes must be finished from a grounded position.*

**11) FOUL PROCEEDURE**

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

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 the 2<sup>nd</sup> official/table judge and official scorekeeper.

Only a referee can assess a foul.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> official and official scorekeeper.

If the 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/match is over, the referee will assess the foul and notify both corners, the 2<sup>nd</sup> official/table judge 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 contestant 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 contestant 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 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.

*The protocol and point deduction criteria currently utilized in Junior/Senior IMMAF competition shall be the same throughout the youth tournaments, the premise being that we are compete under and adhering to as close to a single and unified rule-set as possible for all IMMAF tournaments.*

*In youth C and B categories where a single round is contested technical decisions shall not be employed. If a referee determines that a contestant cannot continue as the result of an accidental foul the uninjured contestant shall advance in the tournament. Only in Youth Category A contested over three rounds can we revert to our standard protocol*

### **13) WEIGHT DIVISIONS:**

Weigh-ins for amateur contestants shall be on the day of competition, and each subsequent day of competition that the athletes progress.

All athletes must weigh in on the official competition scale in shorts and t-shirt/rash guard, most preferably the official IMMAF apparel. Youth contestants **are not** permitted to strip above or below the waist to underwear or bare torso. To facilitate this all contestants at all official weigh ins shall be granted an additional 1lb [454gr] allowance over and above their designated weight category as detailed below.

**Youth category C 12 – 13 years old**

**Male & Female [under]**

-31kg/ 68.3 lbs

-34kg/ 75 lbs

-37kg/ 81.6 lbs

-40kg/ 88.2 lbs

-44kg / 97 lbs

-48kg/ 105.8 lbs

-52kg/ 114.6 lbs

-57kg/ 125.7 lbs

+57kg/ 125.7

**Youth category B 14 – 15 years old**

**Male & Female [under]**

-40 kg/ 88.2 lbs

-44 kg/ 97 lbs

-48 kg/ 105.8 lbs

-52 kg/ 114.6 lbs

-57 kg/ 125.7 lbs

-62 kg/ 136.7 lbs

-67 kg/ 147.7 lbs

-72kg/ 158.7 lbs

+72 kg/ 158.7 lbs



**Youth category A 16-17 years old [as per current unified IMMAF rules]**

**Male [under]**

Strawweight: -52.2 kg /115 lbs

Flyweight: -56.7 kg /125 lbs

Bantamweight: -61.2 kg /135 lbs

Featherweight: -65.8 kg /145 lbs

Lightweight: -70.3 kg /155 lbs

Welterweight: -77.1 kg /170 lbs

Middleweight: -83.9 kg /185 lbs

Light Heavyweight: -93.0 kg /205 lbs

Heavyweight: -120.2 kg /265 lbs

**Female [under]**

Atomweight: - 47.7kg /105 lbs

Strawweight: -52.2 kg /115 lbs

Flyweight: -56.7 kg /125 lbs

Bantamweight: -61.2 kg /135 lbs

Featherweight: -65.8 kg /145 lbs

Lightweight: -70.3 kg /155 lbs

Welterweight: 77.1 kg /170 lbs

#### 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) EQUIPMENT

##### **Gloves:**

- 1) 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.
- 2) All contestants 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 recognized as visibly different to those used under professional rules and have the aesthetic of such. Contestants are not permitted to supply their own gloves.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Gloves shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

##### **Contestant's Apparel:**

- 1) Each contestant 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.
- 2) Contestants may not wear shoes of any kind during competition.
- 3) The shorts shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

All equipment as detailed above is a mandatory requirement under IMMAF competition for all athletes to be worn at all times during competition.

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.

**Shin-guards and rash guards:**

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The type of rash guard to be used shall be of tight fighting stretch material and carry 3 letter country codes on the upper back of the garment.
- 4) All rash guards are to be of short sleeve type. No long sleeve rash guards are permitted.
- 5) Both the rash and shin guards shall be coloured either Red or Blue.

**Groin Protectors:**

- 1) All male contestants must provide and wear a groin protector. Females may choose to wear a groin protector should they so wish.

**Mouthpieces:**

- 1) All contestants are required to wear a well-fitting mouthpiece, which shall be subject to examination and approval.
- 2) A round will not begin until both contestants have their respective mouthpieces in place.
- 3) 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.

## 16) COMPETITION AREA REQUIREMENTS

### **Competition Area:**

- 1) The competition 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 across and no larger than 32 feet in diameter/cross section. The competition 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 that shall extend beyond the competition area. The safety fenced competition area is to be a free standing floor arrangement with no external walkway or apron.
- 2) The competition area shall have a vinyl floor covering. Canvas covers are not permitted unless for a single day competition or final.

### **Safety Fence:**

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

Youth contestants **do not** have to have their hands wrapped if they so wish. It is not a compulsory requirement.

- 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:**

**Submission by:**  
Physical Tap Out

Verbal tap out

Knock out [body]

**Technical Knockout (TKO) by:**

Referee stopping contest

Referee Stopping the contest on the advice of the Ringside Physician/Corner

**Decision via the referee and [if required] 2<sup>nd</sup> official/table judge.**

Disqualification

Forfeit

In a tournament format where contestant progression and medal placing is needed, no contests and draws cannot be applied. In such instances if the three rounds of competition [Youth category A only] have resulted in a draw [point deduction] 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 Referees evaluation and decision remains final.

## 19) SCORING TECHNIQUES:

Effective Striking/Grappling shall be considered the first priority of round assessments.

### 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. 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.

### **Scoring:**

Under IMMAF Youth competition the referee in charge of the match shall determine the winner of the contest based upon the evaluation and use of the criteria as set out within this document. For Youth Category A matches contested over 3 rounds the referee shall carry a small notepad and pen kept with the 2<sup>nd</sup> official/scorekeeper for notation of scores applied to the round and these are to be made within the one minute rest period.

The referee, at their sole discretion can utilize the opinion and consultation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> official/table judge to deliberate and determine the winning contestant in a close match.

It should be noted that prior to commencement of any youth tournament the criteria and protocol for decision making is to be made known to the contestants and their coaching team. It shall also be strictly and firmly stated that there will be a zero tolerance policy for remonstrations and/or determined un-sportsman like or aggressive behavior toward any officials as to the decisions made.

This is an amateur sport and in this particular format designed and designated for the youth and ultimately the future of the sport. The behavior that they both witness and employ today shall be the image and portrayal of the sport of mixed martial arts tomorrow and as such a respectful “fair play” attitude is to be expected and encouraged at all times.

The appeals process **is not** for review of any rendered decision made by a referee. The process is there for any illegal or missed action that could have resulted in a differing outcome of the match. Examples include a missed foul or a submission missed by an official. This procedure shall also be firmly and clearly communicated prior to the commencement of the tournament.

**NOTES.**