



MICHIGAN UNARMED COMBAT RULES UPDATE

Effective March 21, 2023



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UNARMED COMBAT RULES **UPDATE**

This *spotlight* is intended to provide an overview of the newest update to the rules promulgated pursuant to the [Michigan Unarmed Combat Regulatory Act](#) (the “Act”), MCL 338.3601 et seq. The rules are intended to regulate ring officials, contestants, and promoters and to develop standards that protect the health and safety of contestants. Note that this spotlight is only a summary of the rule changes and is not intended to cover all aspects of the newly promulgated ruleset. Promoters, officials, inspectors, ringside physicians, contestants, and other event participants are strongly encouraged to review all changes to the rules to ensure compliance with the new requirements. A link to the “draft rule language” can be found [here](#), and the “final rule language” can be found [here](#).



WHAT'S NEW IN UNARMED COMBAT SPORTS IN MICHIGAN?

The most recent change to the Unarmed Combat Rules promulgated licensing rules and rules of engagement for Muay Thai and Kickboxing in the state of Michigan. In addition to Muay Thai and Kickboxing, the ruleset also addresses the safety and integrity of unarmed combat events in Michigan and, where possible, mimic rules previously adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions.

These rules apply to events occurring and documents and applications submitted on March 21st, 2023, or later.

DEFINITIONS OF KICKBOXING AND MUAY THAI

"Kickboxing" – is defined as a form of boxing in which blows are delivered with the hand and any part of the leg below the hip, including the foot.

"Muay Thai" – is defined as a form of boxing in which blows are delivered with the hand, elbow, any part of the leg below the hip, including the foot, and clinching.

Rules: Mich Admin Code, R 339.201(h) & (k).

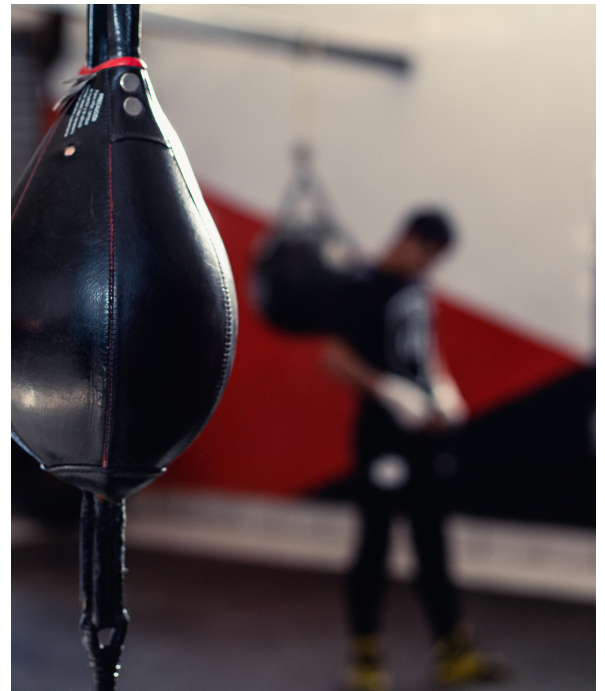


KICKBOXING AND MUAY THAI: WHAT APPLIES?

While kickboxing and muay thai may be newly regulated unarmed combat sports in Michigan, the **same requirements** for boxing events, set out in **section 54a of the Act**, still apply. Additionally, unless a rule specifically states otherwise, all kickboxing and muay thai contests must comply with the rules for boxing contests set out in **part 2** of the ruleset.

Section of the Act: MCL 338.3654a.

Rules: Mich Admin Code, R 339.104 & R 339.201 to 339.271.



LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL KICKBOXING AND MUAY THAI

“To obtain a license in professional kickboxing or muay thai, an applicant should provide a fight record with at least 5 amateur contests *or* provide proof of an active professional kickboxing *or* muay thai license in this state *or* another state, territory, country, *or* tribal nation. An applicant must also obtain a national identification card if not already held by the applicant.

To apply for any unarmed combat license or a national identification card, an applicant must apply online through the Commission’s MiCLEAR system, [here](#).

Rules: Mich Admin Code, R 339.205(5) & (6).

KICKBOXING AND MUAY THAI

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Several new sport-specific rules of engagement were promulgated to ensure the safety and integrity of kickboxing and muay thai contestants and officials participating in events held in this state.

Rule 223b: Injuries and cuts; kickboxing; **Rule 223c:** Injuries and cuts; muay thai – Outlines procedures for injuries and cuts for both kickboxing and muay thai.

Rule 225a: Knockouts; kickboxing and muay thai – Defines and outlines knockouts for both kickboxing and muay thai.

Rule 226b: Types of contest results for kickboxing events; **Rule 226c:** Types of contest results for muay thai events – detail the types of contest results for kickboxing and muay thai.

Rule 230a Judging; kickboxing; **Rule 230b** Judging; muay thai – outline how judges must evaluate and score kickboxing and muay thai contests.

Rule 232a Fouls; kickboxing; **Rule 232b** Fouls; muay thai – list different types of fouls and outline other specific procedures when fouls occur during contests.

Rule 246b Dress and protective equipment for kickboxing and muay thai contestants – outlines dress and protective equipment requirements for kickboxing and muay thai contestants.

Rules: Mich Amin Code, R 339.223b; R 339.223c; R 339.225a; R 339.226c; R 339.226c; R 339.230a; R 339.230b; R 339.232a; R 339.232b; and R 339.246b.



EVENT OFFICIALS: DUTY OF IMPARTIALITY

Impartiality of judges, timekeepers, and referees is essential to ensure the integrity of all unarmed combat sports in this state. Newly promulgated **Rule 204a** imposes a duty of impartiality on all approved event officials before, during, and immediately after an event and prohibits specific conduct:

- Publicly criticizing or praising any other official, the performance of any contestant, or the appointment of any other event official **30 days** before, during, or immediately after an event.
- Communicating with a promoter or promoter's employee before a contest or event, unless it relates to travel and hotel accommodations, or compensation for their services.
- Communicating with or establishing a financial relationship with a manager, second, trainer, or contestant **30 days** before an event.
- Placing wagers on any type of event or contest involving unarmed combat.

Rule: Mich Admin Code, R 339.204a.

DOLLAR CONTRACTS ARE BANNED



To protect the integrity of unarmed combat sports and prevent any exploitation of contestants, contracted purse amounts paid to a professional contestant must not be less than \$100.00 per contracted round. This means that “dollar contracts” and other contracts for less than \$100.00 per contracted round, are **strictly prohibited**. Promoters, managers, and contestants are encouraged to review all contracts carefully to ensure compliance with the rule change.

Rule: Mich Admin Code, R 339.267(3).



Rule: Mich Admin Code, R 339.230.

Changes to Judging MMA Contests

*The newly amended Rule 230 changes the requirements for judges in determining a score in MMA contests. The new language added “**effective aggressiveness**” to the list of techniques a judge must evaluate and expanded on which techniques must be given priority and consideration in scoring. Officials and contestants are encouraged to **review the full text of Rule 230** for more details on these specific rule changes.*

Miscellaneous Rule Changes

- Use of the term “ring” changed to “**cage**” for MMA rules throughout the ruleset.
- Rule 201(3)(a) was amended to add the MMA weight class of “**Atomweight**,” which is up to and including 105 pounds.
- “**Double knockout**” was added to Rule 226(k) as a new type of MMA contest result, where the referee may stop a contest when neither contestant is in a condition to continue, and the contest is considered a technical draw.

Rules: Mich Admin Code, R 339.201(3)(a) and R 339.226(k).



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