

Office of Combative (OCS) Sports Legislative Changes

Article 4 of Jobs/Labor Omnibus SF3035/[CH 53](#)

Effective July 1, 2023

Definitions

Simplify the definition of “tough person contest” to be a *“boxing match or similar contest where each combatant wears headgear and gloves that weigh at least 12 ounces”*.

Advisory Council

Reduces the number of required members on the council from nine to five and deletes the requirement that one member be a retired judge and that a certain number of members have knowledge of the boxing or MMA industries. Alters appointment terms to align with Minnesota Statutes, sections 15.059 and 15.0597, and exempts meetings from the requirements of Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law when the meeting is convened for purposes of advising the commissioner on issues related to a challenge to the outcome of a combative sport contest.

Regulatory Authority; Tough Person Events

Makes all professional and amateur tough person events subject to the most recent version of the Unified Rules of Boxing, as promulgated by the Association of Boxing Commissions.

Prelicensure Requirements

Removes promoter requirements that are event specific and moves them to an “Event Approval” section. Modifies and clarifies pre-licensure medical examination requirements for combatants including physical and ophthalmological examinations, blood work, and other appropriate neurological or physical examinations if the commissioner determines the examination is desirable to protect the health of the combatant. Physical and ophthalmological exams and blood results are valid for one year from the date of the exam. Modifies prelicensure requirements for referees, judges, and timekeepers to require proof of qualifications such as certified training from the Association of Boxing Commissions, licensure with other regulatory bodies, professional references, or a log of bouts worked. Applicants for a ringside physician license must submit proof that they are licensed to practice medicine in Minnesota and are in good standing.

License Expiration and Renewal

Changes the annual expiration date of combative sports licenses from Dec. 31 to one year after the date of issuance, effective for licenses issued on or after Jan. 1, 2023.

Amateur Combatant and Trainer/Second (Corner) License Fees

Lowers license fees for amateur combatants from \$50 to \$35 and trainers/seconds (corners) from \$80 to \$40.

Officials Payment Schedule

Allows the commissioner to establish a payment schedule for referees, judges and knockdown judges, timekeepers, and ringside physicians.

Event Approval

Sets forth requirements a promoter must satisfy before the commissioner may approve a combative sport contest including: at least six weeks before the event, information about the time, date and location of the contest; at least 72 hours before the event: a copy of the bout agreement between the combatant and the promoter; a copy of the combatant medical and accidental death insurance policy; proof that the promoter will provide at least one uniformed security guard or uniformed off-duty member of law enforcement to provide event security; requires proper licensure of the promoter and clarifies that the commissioner has discretion in deciding whether to approve a combative sports event.

Ambulance

Requires promoters to ensure, at the cost of the promoter, that an ambulance and two emergency medical technicians are on the premises during a combative sport event.

Challenging the Outcome of a Combative Sport Contest

Establishes statutory procedures for challenging the outcome of a combative sport contest. Limits the reasons a combatant may challenge the outcome of a contest to:

- the referee made an incorrect call or missed a rule violation that directly affected the outcome of the contest;
- there was collusion amongst officials to affect the outcome of the contest; or
- scores were miscalculated.

Requires a challenge to be submitted within ten (10) days from the conclusion of the bout. Details the process for an opponent to respond to the challenge. Outlines the process for a licensed official to review the challenge. Sets a timeframe for the commissioner to issue an order on the challenge: sixty (60) days after receiving the opposing combatant's response or seventy-five (75) days after receiving the initial challenge if the opposing combatant does not submit a response. Outlines the process for nonacceptance of a challenge. Indicates a combatant has thirty (30) days after service of the initial ruling to request a hearing before an administrative law judge.

Effective Jan. 1, 2024

Definitions

Refines the definition of combatant, combative sports, and combative sports contest to professional boxer, professional or amateur tough person, professional or amateur kickboxer, or professional or amateur mixed martial artist; adds a definition of kickboxing.

Rules

Incorporates by reference the most recent version of the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts, Boxing, Kickboxing, and Muay Thai as promulgated by the Association of Boxing Commissions.

Commissioner Duties

Adds approving regulatory bodies to oversee martial arts and amateur boxing events, events not under OCS's authority, to the commissioner's duties.

Regulatory Authority; Mixed Martial Arts Events

Strikes language exempting high school amateur events regulated by the Minnesota State High School League or martial arts studios from the requirements of chapter 341 and moves it to its own subdivision. Leaves existing language subjecting all professional and amateur mixed martial arts contests to OCS regulatory authority and all officials must be licensed by the department.

Regulatory Authority; Kickboxing Events

Clarifies professional and amateur kickboxing events are subject to OCS regulatory authority and all officials must be licensed by the department.

Regulatory Authority; Martial Arts and Amateur Boxing

Exempts martial arts and amateur boxing from the requirements of Chapter 341 and officials at these events are not required to be licensed by the department. Requires all martial arts and amateur boxing contests to be regulated by commissioner approved third-party organizations and requires these organizations submit to the Department of Labor and Industry bout results and a list of suspensions, if any, within 72 hours of an event.

Regulatory Authority; Certain Students

Exempts high school amateur contests regulated by the Minnesota State High School League or similar organizations that govern interscholastic athletics from the requirements of chapter 341 and officials at these events are not required to be licensed by the department.

Event Fees

Streamlines language requiring promoters of OCS regulated events to pay, per event, a combative sports event fee of \$1,500 or four percent of gross ticket sales, whichever is greater. Requires that the value of all complimentary tickets distributed for an event, to the extent they exceed five (5) percent of total event attendance, count toward gross tickets sales for the purposes of determining a combative sports event fee. The lowest advertised ticket price shall be used to calculate the value of complimentary tickets. **Effective for combative sports events scheduled to occur on or after Jan. 1, 2024.**

Prohibited Performance Enhancing Substances

Prohibits combatants from using certain World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) performance enhancing substances, permits the commissioner to administer drug testing, and permits disciplinary action against combatants who test positive for any prohibited substance or who fail to provide a sample for drug testing if a request is made after a bout. A combatant who is disciplined and was the winner of the bout shall be disqualified and the decision changed to no contest.

Civil Penalties

Authorizes the commissioner to impose civil penalties against persons involved in martial arts and amateur boxing contests that are not regulated by an appropriate organization approved by the commissioner. Authorizes the commissioner to impose civil penalties against an organization that oversees a martial arts or amateur boxing event if that organization does not submit certain information to the Department of Labor and Industry with 72 hours of an event.