
MEMORANDUM

TO: JOHN FRIERSON, CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION
FROM: PANKRATION SUBCOMMITTEE
SUBJECT: YOUTH PANKRATION REPORT
DATE: JUNE 4, 2014
CC: ANDY FOSTER, E.O. AND SPENCER WALKER, ESQ.

1. [Should there be mixed gender competition and if so, at what age should it end and why;](#)

We conclude there is no legally justifiable basis for prohibiting mixed gender bouts up to the age of puberty. This is because the physical differences between males and females before puberty are not great enough to provide a justifiable rationale to preclude competing with each other. The average age of the onset of puberty is 12 years old. Accordingly, we conclude that mixed-gender competition can occur, but not including, age 12. People with experience in Pankration, including parents of female competitors, state their observations that young males and females can compete with relative physical parity until the age of 12 or 14. We recognize that not allowing mixed-gender bouts for pre-pubescent youth would have the negative effect of possibly not allowing these youth, especially females, to compete at all because it would limit the pool of possible competitors without a legally or factually rationale basis. Statistics confirm the social benefits of athletics are especially important for young girls.

In addition, we recognize generally that female youth should not be precluded from competing with males unless there is a valid reason to preclude such a competition.

2. [What is the current state of research and conclusions on sports related head trauma/injuries in relation to children, adolescents and teenagers, in particular as it relates to combative sports;](#)

Participation in sports for children can improve educational, self-discipline,

teamwork, coordination and other social values to their development. However, overemphasis on sports and over training can cause injuries and long term health problems.

It should be noted that each year, an average of only 3.5 children under the age of 14 seek medical treatment for sports injuries.¹ Moreover, in 2012, 1,353,750 children between the ages of 14 and 19 were seen in emergency rooms in the United States for sports related injuries.² Of those, 163,670 were concussions; 451,480 were sprains and strains; 249,500 were fractures; 210,640 were contusions and abrasions; with the remainder falling under the categories of lacerations, cuts, dislocations and "other/not stated."³

A recent study conducted by Safe Kids Worldwide reported 9 in 10 parents underestimated the length of time kids should take off from playing anyone sport during the year, and 4 in 10 underestimate the amount of fluids a typical young athlete needs per hour of play.⁴

Even with all the research and media attention on traumatic brain injuries and concussions, the study found that half of all coaches surveyed believe there is an acceptable amount of head contact (i.e., getting their bell rung, seeing stars) young athletes can receive without potentially causing a serious brain injury.⁵

Therefore, adjustments must be made where the sport, such as Youth Pankration includes strikes (that involves more force), grappling and particularly submissions (that involves more twists and cranks).

Education for parents and coaches became mandated by legislation in 48 states in the last few years. The legislation mirrors California's safety gear and standards: pre-bout, post bout medical examinations and medical suspension requirements already mandated for professional and amateur adult and youth combative sports.

¹Safe Kids Worldwide; Coaching Our Kids to Fewer Injuries: A Report On Youth Sport Safety, April 2012.

²U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), 2012

³ Safe Kids Worldwide; Game Changers: Stats, Stories and What Communities Are Doing to Protect Young Athletes, August 2013

⁴ Safe Kids Worldwide; Coaching Our Kids to Fewer Injuries: A Report On Youth Sport Safety, April 2012.

⁵ Safe Kids Worldwide; Coaching Our Kids to Fewer Injuries: A Report On Youth Sport Safety, April 2012.

3. Should there be a minimum age limit to competitors and if so, what is that age limit;

We conclude there should be a minimum age for competitors and that the minimum age for competitors should be 8 years old. This conclusion is based, in part, on the consideration that the committee would require rules for young competitors (likely defined as from 8 years-old to 11 years-old) to be much more protective than for older competitors. Specifically, there would be limitations on what techniques are allowed in this younger age group. This 8 year-old minimum age requirement is also consistent with the age allowed in competitive amateur boxing and kick boxing.

4. Should there be a specific headgear requirement and if so, what should it be;

Yes. CA regulation 18766 is clear: Every contestant in an amateur kickboxing or martial arts contest under the age of 18 years shall wear protective headgear approved by the Commission.

Injury prevention begins with proper equipment, although there are no concussion-proof headgear or mouthpieces.

A. Headgear:

Athletes will be required to wear mixed martial arts style headgear with protective padding at the forehead, top of the head, the back of the head and the face, as approved by the delegation and athletic commission. The headgear specifications shall be free from metal or other harmful objects.

B. Mouthpieces:

Fitted mouthpieces shall be required.

C. Shin guards:

All contestants shall wear shin guards approved by the commission

D. Gloves:

All contestants shall wear USFL approved gloves weighing a minimum of approximately 6-8 ounces that are approved by the commission.

5. Should there be a hand wrap/glove/glove weight requirement and if so, what should it be;

Yes. Fractures of the hand can occur in either the small bones of the fingers (phalanges) or the long bones (metacarpals). They can result from a twisting injury, a fall, a crush injury, or direct contact in sports. For example, a depressed knuckle is often seen in a "boxer's fracture." This is a fracture of the fifth metacarpal, the long bone below the little finger. A forceful blow can also damage the extensor tendon that straightens the finger. The force of the blow may even pull away a piece of bone along with the tendon. The finger or thumb is then not able to be straightened. This condition is also known as baseball finger.

To protect the hand in sports, athletes will be required to wear hand wraps and gloves of at least 6-8 ounces. The younger athletes will wear training or gym wraps and graduates to full wraps as approved by the commission.

6. Should there be age/weight class competition requirements and if so, what should they be;

Yes. The CAMO and ISCF (IKF) amateur combat CSAC delegated organizations as well as any organization that would administer Youth Pankration areshall be required to publish and enforce age/weight categories for competition. The Youth Pankration Subcommittee reviewed the requirements maintained by CAMO and ISCF and did request the single applicant for Pankration delegation, USFL, to provide age / weight categories. Please see the attached documents and other pertinent information provided by the USFL, CAMO and ISCF:

ISCF attached age / weight requirements.

USFL attached age and weight classes and age-based technique limitations matrix.

CAMO age / weigh-in requirements for Pankration attached and CAMO MMA weight classes below:

§ 622. Weights and Classes.

The weight classes for amateur MMA shall be as follows:

1. Flyweight over 115 to 125 pounds
2. Bantamweight over 125 to 135 pounds
3. Featherweight over 135 to 145 pounds
4. Lightweight over 145 to 155 pounds
5. Welterweight over 155 to 170 pounds
6. Middleweight over 170 to 185 pounds

7. Light Heavyweight over 185 to 205 pounds
8. Cruiserweight over 206 to 230 pounds
9. Heavyweight over 230 pounds not to exceed 265 pounds
10. Super-Heavyweight over 265 pounds

Any proposed bout which does not have both contestants in the same weight class, or is a bout above or below the standard weight classes must have prior approval from CAMO and the contestants must be within ten (10) pounds of each other, or if both contestants are 200 pounds or heavier, then they must be within twenty (20) pounds of each other.

Summary and Conclusion: USFL's proposed age / weight and weight spread/ prohibited moves by age (ATTACHED) are within the generally accepted / industry standards including consistency with the CAMO and ISCF youth /amateur rules. We conclude that the USFL has made the prerequisite analyses and demonstrates their understanding of age / weight requirements and categories.

7. Should there be weigh-in requirements and hydration testing requirements and if so, what should they be;

Yes. Regarding age and weight class competition requirements; USFL is proposing fixed weight and age groups for competitions and also recommends the option of pooled weight groups also known as the Madison System for tournaments. This type of grouping takes the first set of lightest competitors to bracket and continues to the heaviest groups. This removes all motivation to cut weight and helps suspensions. No athlete is forced or allowed to sweat off last minute pounds.

As far as Hydration testing: USFL states that it is very cost prohibitive and probably not possible in a tournament setting. Consequently, our recommendation is that there should be no weight-cutting permitted period.

8. What further regulatory requirements should be imposed upon a delegation, if any, were Pankration to be permitted, such as technique limitations for ages;

As requested by the Pankration Subcommittee, the USFL did submit a technique

limitations matrix that are or will be incorporated as part of their rules. We believe their matrix, included the attachment from USFL appropriately addresses permitted moves and techniques by age.

9. What organization should receive the delegation and why.

Delegation options:

1. CAMO Oversight:

The fact is that after approximately one year of public meetings and numerous stakeholder discussions, only one organization applied for a potential Youth Pankration delegation from CSAC. That organization, USFL, while very cooperative and determined, is an untested organization from a regulatory standpoint and also carries the appearance (real or perceived) of a potential promoter/ regulator conflict.

Considering that both CAMO and ISCF, the CSAC's delegated amateur combat organizations, have a great deal of experience with youth / amateur regulation, an option to consider, that has been raised and discussed at length, is to ask that CAMO accept the Youth Pankration delegation for a finite term and that CAMO provide oversight and guidance for the USFL for a period of say 6 months or for at least say two competitions. The idea is that CAMO could provide the experience and oversight that USFL lacks and CSAC staff does not have the resources to commit.

2. Provisional Delegation to USFL

The other obvious option is to provide a provisional delegation to USFL---the sole interested applicant. Provisional could mean a specific limited defined term that could include a limited number of events. The terms of a provisional delegation should be worked out by our Executive Officer and CSAC staff as they will be conducting the oversight,

Finally, pursuant to comments and input from Andy Foster, we are prepared to recommend to the Commission that USFL be granted, on a provisional basis and pursuant to reporting requirements, our delegation to administer Youth Pankration activities in CA. We further believe that authorizing a regulated environment for Youth Pankration activities administered by an experienced and very cooperative organization, USFL, will go a long way in reducing the number of unsafe, unregulated youth combat activities in CA. Furthermore, we believe

that this delegated activity will ratify and enhance the CSAC mission of safety--- particularly among children and young adults.

10. Ambulances;

California law requires the presence of at least one ambulance staffed by a paramedic at every event and after the event, to be release by the physician. The California State Athletic Commission has two ambulances present at every event staffed by at least one paramedic in each ambulance, in the event one ambulance must transport an athlete, there is another ambulance still present at the event should another athlete require transport. The presence of the ambulance and paramedic is statutorily mandated:

**CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONSTITLE 4.BUSINESS
REGULATIONSDIVISION 2. STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION
CHAPTER 1. PROFESSIONAL BOXING RULES
ARTICLE 6. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND SAFETY**

§ 294. Emergency Equipment Required.

The club shall ensure that an ambulance staffed by at least one paramedic is available at the site during a show and after a show until released by a ringside physician. The club shall also ensure that there is adequate access, as determined by a commission representative and a ringside physician on a case-by-case basis, for a medical evacuation should that become necessary.

11. Other Rules and Regulations

§ 294 is made applicable toprofessionalmixed martial arts by § 502 which states in pertinent part:

§ 502. Certain Boxing Rules Not Applicable.

(a) Unless otherwise specified in this chapter, all of the professional boxing rules apply to martial arts contests or matches except the following: Sections 242, 298, 298, 306, 309 through 313, 322, 337, 338, 339, 349 through 351, 357, and 400 through 416...

§ 502 and its progeny are made applicable to amateur mixed martial arts through § 702, which states:

§ 702. Professional Full-Contact Martial Arts And Kickboxing Rules Apply.

The Professional Full-Contact Martial Arts and Kickboxing Rules (Chapter 2 of this division.) shall apply to amateur full-contact martial arts and kickboxing, unless a club or organization obtains a waiver of the applicable laws and rules under Section 18646 of the code or unless they are clearly inconsistent with the rules contained in this chapter.

The Athletic Commission seeks to delegate its regulatory authority over Youth Pankration to the United States Fight League under authority granted to it by Business and Professions Code, §18646:

§18646. (a) This chapter applies to all amateur boxing, wrestling, and full contact martial arts contests.

(b) The commission may, however, authorize one or more nonprofit boxing, wrestling, or martial arts clubs, organizations, or sanctioning bodies, upon approval of its bylaws, to administer its rules for amateur boxing, wrestling, and full contact martial arts contests, and may, therefore, waive direct commission application of laws and rules, including licensure, subject to the commission's affirmative finding that the standards and enforcement of similar rules by a club or organization meet or exceed the safety and fairness standards of the commission. The commission shall review the performance of any such club, organization, or sanctioning body annually.

[12. Should there be any regulatory change for youth Pankration?](#)

No recommendations at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

USFL
CAMO
ISCF