



Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Mixed Martial Arts Rules and Regulations Committee

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MMA BOUT SCORING - Judging Criteria Clarification

All bouts will be scored by a minimum of three (3) judges, evaluating each round individually, scoring in favor of the more effective MMA fighter.

FIGHTER EFFECTIVENESS CONCEPTS

Judges will evaluate the relative effectiveness of each fighter (in each round) using the following three prioritized and interrelated constructs.

- **DAMAGE:** defined as: Legal fighting techniques, the results of which lessen an opponent's capacity and/or will to compete.

This includes:

- Knockdowns - forcing the opponent to the canvas as the result of legal, detrimental strikes
- Heavy and/or Concussive Legal Strikes to vital targets
- Legal Strikes that force the opponent to retreat/readjust or default to defense exclusively
- Striking and or Grappling that lead to visual injury (Swelling, Hematomas, Lacerations, or Bruising)
- Grappling or submission attempts that hyperextend joints or cause rotational damage
- Chokes that cause visible distress

Damage is the most highly valued component in judging a round because it is not an action but rather a direct RESULT of EFFECTIVE fighting. Damage IS a measure of EFFECT on the opponent; the results of which lessen an opponent's capacity and/or will to compete and has immediate or cumulative impact towards ending the match with priority given to immediate damage over cumulative damage within a round.



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- **DOMINANCE:** defined as supremacy of positioning, action, and/or volume by one fighter over another for a sustained period of time. It reflects an imposition or mastery of fighting skills and effectiveness of one fighter over another leading to successful tactics and or strategic advantages intended to result in DAMAGE

This includes

- Forcing the opponent to continually defend, with no counters or reaction taken even when openings present themselves.
- Staking a dominant grappling position and continuously forcing the opponent to defend potentially fight ending submissions or attacks. (Note that merely holding a dominant position(s) shall not be considered demonstrating dominance in a round.
- Maintaining an overwhelming offensive pace with any combination of legal techniques that continuously forces the opposing fighter to consistently be in a defensive or reactive mode.

- **DURATION:** defined as a measure of the time or percentage of the round spent by one fighter successfully imposing effective technique thereby establishing DOMINANCE and/or administering DAMAGE.

The Judging Criteria: EFFECTIVE FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

Judges will evaluate the relative effectiveness of each fighter's Mixed Martial Arts techniques, such as:

- ❖ **SUCCESSFUL STRIKING:** defined as legal strikes that result in damage.
- ❖ **SUCCESSFUL GRAPPLING:** defined as the execution of grappling skills proven productive by the damage resulting from takedown(s), reversal(s), submission attempt(s), and achieving an advantageous position(s).

The effectiveness of each fighter's Successful Striking and Grappling, as defined above, will be the determining factor in the scoring of the vast majority of rounds. However, if a judge absolutely cannot determine even a marginal advantage in either, the judge will defer to either Aggressiveness or Fighting Area Control, whichever impacted the round in a more significant manner.

- **AGGRESSIVENESS:** defined as consistent offensive effort
- **FIGHTING AREA CONTROL:** defined as dictating the pace, place and position that the bout is contested.

NOTE: Successful Striking and Successful Grappling are equal, as both are measured as a RESULT of effective fighting.

NOTE: There is no scoring by the judges for defense. Defense allows the fighter to continue in the fight. Only offensive actions are scored by the judges.



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NUMERICAL SCORING SYSTEM

The 10 Point Must System will be the standard system used for scoring a bout.

Under the 10-Point Must Scoring System, 10 points must be awarded to the winner of the round and nine points or less must be awarded to the loser, except for a rare even round, which is scored (10-10).

- A round will be scored **10-10** when both contestants have competed for whatever duration of time in the round and neither fighter has established an advantage. This score is generally reserved for use in partial rounds. Scoring completed rounds 10-10 is seen as a failure to adjudicate a score.
- A round will be scored **10-9** when a contestant earns the round by offensive actions greater in degree and effectiveness than their opponent. In the rare circumstance when the judge is unable to discern an advantage, only then can they utilize an advantage in aggressiveness or fighting area control.
- A round will be scored **10-8** when a contestant earns the round by offensive actions that may include dominance with duration, but that must include significant damage resulting from effort or attempts that by their implicit nature, could finish the fight.
 - Cumulative damage can be a form of significant damage based upon the fighter losing energy, confidence, stamina or spirit.
 - Significant damage is enough by itself to award a 10-8
 - Significant domination along with some damage and little to no offensive actions from the losing fighter may be enough to award a 10-8
 - Significant domination such as positional control without damage is not enough to award a 10-8
- A round will be scored **10-7** when a contestant earns the round by overwhelming in both damage and domination throughout the duration of the round.

Penalties assessed by the referee will be deducted from the judge's score cards. If the majority of rounds are completed, and the fight becomes a technical decision, incomplete rounds must be scored by the judges. If the referee penalizes either contestant, then the appropriate points will be deducted from the judge's scorecard in that round.