CHAPTER 444

REGULATION OF UNARMED COMBAT SPORTS

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Cross–reference: See definitions in s. 440.01.
Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192 Wis. adm. code.

444.01 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Amateur boxing contest" means a boxing contest or exhibition in which none of the boxers are compensated for participating in the contest or exhibition.

(1g) "Amateur unarmed combat sports contest" means a contest or exhibition of unarmed combat sports in which none of the contestants are compensated for participating in the contest or exhibition.

(1h) "Boxing" means the act of attack and defense with the fists, using padded gloves, that is practiced as a sport under the rules described under s. 444.05, or other, comparable rules.

(1j) "Mixed martial arts fighting" means fighting that involves the use of a combination of techniques from different disciplines of martial arts, including grappling, kicking, and striking.

(1m) "Physician" means a person licensed to practice medicine and surgery under s. 448.04 (1) (a).

(2) "Professional boxing contest" means a boxing contest or exhibition in which one or more of the boxers is compensated for participating in the contest or exhibition.

(3) "Professional contest" means a professional boxing contest or a professional unarmed combat sports contest.

(4) "Professional unarmed combat sports contest" means a contest or exhibition of unarmed combat sports in which one or more of the contestants is compensated for participating in the contest or exhibition.

(5) "Unarmed combat sports" means any form of fighting in which the objective is for a contestant to injure, disable, or incapacitate one's opponent, but does not include any fighting in a contest for which the rules prohibit a contestant from striking an opponent's head.

History: 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2011 a. 260 s. 80; 2015 a. 277.

444.02 Licenses and permits. (1) The department shall have the sole direction, management, and control of, and jurisdiction over, all professional contests and all amateur unarmed combat sports contests conducted within the state by any promoter or club. No club or promoter may conduct professional contests or amateur unarmed combat sports contests within the state except under authority granted by the department and in accordance with this chapter and the rules of the department.

(2) The department may issue, and for cause limit, suspend, or revoke, a license to conduct professional contests or amateur unarmed combat sports contests to any promoter or incorporated club formed as provided in this chapter. Every license shall be subject to the department's rules and regulations. The department may limit the number of professional contests and amateur unarmed combat sports contests given by any promoter or club in any city, village, or town and may reprimand a promoter or club for violating this chapter or any rule of the department.

(3) No professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest may be conducted by any licensed club without a permit from the department. An application for a permit shall be accompanied by a nonrefundable $300 processing fee. Every permit shall be conditioned on payment by the promoter or club to the department, within 2 business days after the event for which the permit was issued, of the following fees:

(a) If the number of tickets sold for the event is less than 2,000, an event fee of $450.

(b) If the number of tickets sold for the event is less than 5,000 but more than 1,999, an event fee of $2,200 plus a gate fee equal to the lesser of 5 percent of the total amount collected by the club or promoter in gross ticket sales or $4,000.

(c) If the number of tickets sold for the event is 5,000 or more, an event fee of $4,700 plus a gate fee equal to the lesser of 5 percent of the total amount collected by the club or promoter in gross ticket sales or $12,500.

History: 1977 c. 418, 447; 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1979 c. 355; 1993 a. 246; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.
Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192 Wis. adm. code.

444.03 Application for license; fee. No professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest may be conducted by any promoter or club except by license granted to it by the department. An application for a license shall be in writing, addressed to the department, and verified by the promoter or by an officer of the club. An application shall be accompanied by an annual fee of $500. The application must show that the promoter or club has entered into a valid agreement for the use of the building, amphitheater, or stadium in which contests are to be held.

History: 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1981 c. 20; 1987 a. 399; 1991 a. 189; 1993 a. 246; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.
Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192 Wis. adm. code.

444.035 Bond. The department shall by rule require a promoter or club conducting a professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest to post a bond or other surety in a reasonable amount determined by the department to ensure payment of the promoter's or club's expenses in conducting the contest, including payments to contestants and to the department.

History: 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.
Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192 Wis. adm. code.

444.04 Promoter and club reports. Within 2 business days after a promoter or club holds a professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest, the club shall furnish to the department a written report, verified by the promoter or by one of the club's officers under penalty of perjury, showing the number of tickets sold for the contest, the amount of gross proceeds, and all other information the department requires by rule to be included in the report. The department may limit, suspend, revoke, or assess a forfeiture to the promoter or club for failure to comply with this section or failure to provide accurate information to the department. Any forfeiture collected under this section

shall be deposited in the appropriation account under s. 20.165 (1) (jm).

History: 1973 c. 28; 1977 c. 29; 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1987 a. 399; 1991 a. 183; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

444.05 Amateur boxing contests. A person may conduct an amateur boxing contest in this state only if the contest is sanctioned by and conducted under the rules of the national governing body for amateur boxing that is recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee under 36 USC 220521.

History: 1979 c. 162; 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 2003 a. 285.

444.06 Inspectors. The department shall appoint official inspectors, each of whom shall receive a card authorizing the inspector to act wherever the department designates. The department may be, and at least one inspector shall be present at all professional contests and all amateur unarmed combat sports contests and see that the rules are strictly observed. Inspectors shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The department may require a promoter or club to pay the cost of designating additional inspectors, who may include a referee or judge performing the duties of an inspector, for an event. The department may require a promoter or club to pay the department an amount not to exceed $250 for each additional inspector designated by the department.

History: 1971 c. 40; 1975 c. 39, 199; 1977 c. 29; 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1979 c. 355; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192 Wis. adm. code.

444.09 Conduct of boxing contests regulated. (1) No professional boxing contest shall be for more than 12 rounds, and no round shall last more than 3 minutes.

(2) There shall be one minute intermission between rounds of professional boxing contests.

(3) Gloves weighing not less than 8 ounces shall be worn by contestants who are in professional boxing contests and who weigh under 140 pounds, and not less than 10 ounces by other contestants in boxing contests.

(4) No person under the age of 18 years shall participate in any professional boxing contest.

(5) No betting at any professional boxing contest shall be permitted before, after, or during any such contest, in the building where the contest is held.

(6) Contestants in professional boxing contests shall break clean, and must not hold and hit. Butting with head or shoulders, wrestling, or illegal use of elbows shall not be allowed by contestants in professional boxing contests. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the contestants. This includes the use of abusive or insulting language.

(7) The department may allow or provide for decisions upon professional boxing contests held under this chapter to be made by the referee or by the referee and 2 judges appointed by the department under regulations prescribed by the department.

(9) Except as otherwise specified in this chapter, boxing contests shall be conducted under the Association of Boxing Commissions' uniform boxing rules.

History: 1979 c. 162 s. 38 (1); 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1987 a. 399; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111.

444.095 Conduct of unarmed combat sports contests regulated. (1) No individual may be a contestant in an amateur unarmed combat sports contest unless the individual can provide evidence that he or she is covered by adequate health insurance.

(2) No promoter or club may conduct an unarmed combat sports contest unless all of the following apply:

(a) There is present at least one referee who is licensed by the department and at least 3 judges who are licensed by the department.

(b) A physician examines each contestant immediately before and after each match in which the contestant participates.

(c) At least one physician, or more at the discretion of the department, is present during each match to provide emergency care in the event of an injury.

(d) An ambulance and emergency medical services personnel with oxygen are present on the premises and equipped to transport an injured contestant.

(3) The department shall promulgate rules that establish all of the following with respect to unarmed combat sports contests:

(a) Qualifications and fees for licensure of referees and judges for unarmed combat sports contests.

(b) Requirements for regular health examinations of unarmed combat sports contestants, including all of the following:

1. Annual physical examinations by physicians and annual eye examinations by physicians who are board–certified ophthalmologists.

2. Annual screening for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

3. For female contestants, pregnancy tests before contests.

(c) Policies prohibiting contestants from using drugs, including anabolic steroids, and mandating drug testing of contestants.

(4) Except as otherwise specified in this chapter, mixed martial arts fighting contests shall be conducted under the Association of Boxing Commissions' uniform rules of mixed martial arts.

History: 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192, Wis. adm. code.

444.10 Physician to examine professional boxing contestants. Prior to entering the ring, each contestant in a professional boxing contest must be examined by a physician who has been licensed to practice in Wisconsin not less than 5 years and who is appointed by the department and certifies in writing, over his or her signature, as to the contestant's physical and mental fitness to engage in such contest.

History: 1979 c. 162 s. 38 (1); 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1991 a. 316; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111.

444.11 Licenses to matchmakers, referees, contestants, etc. The department may grant licenses upon application and the payment of the prescribed fees to matchmakers, managers, referees, boxers, unarmed combat sports contestants, seconds, and timekeepers in professional contests and amateur unarmed combat sports contests. The fees to be paid per year shall be: Matchmakers and managers, $10; referees and judges, $15; examining physicians, $10; boxers and unarmed combat sports contestants, $40; seconds, $40; and timekeepers, $10. The department may limit, suspend, or revoke any license granted under this section or reprimand the licensee upon such cause as it deems sufficient.

History: 1977 c. 418; 1979 c. 110 s. 60 (13); 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2011 a. 258; 2015 a. 277.

Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192, Wis. adm. code.

444.12 Referee to stop contest. The referee shall stop a professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest when either of the contestants shows a marked superiority or is apparently outclassed. The referee shall be the sole arbiter of the contest and may consult a physician identified in s. 444.095 (2) (c) during the contest.

History: 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

Cross–reference: See also ch. SPS 192 Wis. adm. code.

444.13 Sham contests, license revoked. Any promoter or club that conducts, holds, gives, or participates in any sham or fake professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest shall forfeit its license. That license shall be revoked by the department, and the promoter or club shall not be entitled to another license.

History: 1979 c. 162 s. 38 (1); 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

444.14 Sham contests; contestants penalized; forfeitures; hearing. The department shall ban a contestant who participates in any sham or fake professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest or violates any rule promulgated

by the department, and may require the contestant, the contestant's manager, or the promoter of the contest to forfeit an amount determined by the department, but not more than $500. Fifty percent of all forfeitures collected under this section shall be deposited in the appropriation account under s. 20.165 (1) (im).

History: 1977 c. 418; 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

444.15 Reports; examination of books and officers. Whenever any promoter or club fails to make a report of any professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest at the time prescribed or whenever a report is unsatisfactory to the department, the secretary may examine the books and records of the promoter or club, may subpoena and examine, under oath, the promoter or the club's officers and other witnesses to determine the total amount of its gross receipts for any contest, and may hire an independent auditor to assist in making the determination. The secretary may require the promoter or club to pay the expenses of conducting the examination or the independent auditor's fee. If a promoter or club fails to pay the amount of expenses determined by the secretary to be due within 20 days after receiving notice of the amount, the promoter or club shall forfeit its license, be disqualified from receiving any license under this chapter, and forfeit to the state the sum of $1,000, which may be recovered by the department of justice in the name of the state.

History: 1979 c. 162 s. 38 (4); 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45); 1987 a. 399; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

444.16 Violation, when a misdemeanor. (1) A violation of any provision of this chapter, for which a penalty is not herein expressly prescribed, is a misdemeanor.

(2) In addition to any other remedies, the several district attorneys or the attorney general are authorized to bring action in the name of the state to enjoin violations of this chapter or the rules of the department.

History: 1973 c. 28; 1979 c. 221 s. 2200 (45).

444.18 Insurance on certain contestants. Any licensee authorized to conduct professional contests or amateur unarmed combat sports contests shall insure each contestant participating for hospital, nursing, and medication expenses and physician's and surgeon's services according to an equitable fee schedule, not to exceed in the aggregate $25,000, to be paid to, or for the use of, any contestant to compensate for injuries sustained in any such contest; and shall insure each contestant for not less than $25,000 to be paid to the contestant's estate in the event of the contestant's death as the result of participation in such professional contest or amateur unarmed combat sports contest.

History: 1991 a. 316; 2003 a. 285; 2009 a. 111; 2015 a. 277.

444.19 Fee adjustments by rule. Notwithstanding ss. 444.02 (3), 444.03, 444.06, and 444.11, the department may by rule adjust the fees under this chapter to account for changes in the department's costs in administering and enforcing this chapter.

History: 2009 a. 111.

444.22 Rules. The department may promulgate any rules necessary to implement and enforce this chapter.

History: 2015 a. 277.