Official Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts

As Approved April 2001. Amended 2010, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023, 2024, 2025.
Educational reference prepared by DOJO. This document summarizes the officially adopted Unified Rules of MMA in clear, structured language for fighters, fans, and officials.

Rounds and Bout Duration

Professional bouts consist of five-minute rounds with one-minute rest periods. No bout may exceed five rounds or twenty-five minutes. Fighters may not compete in more than twenty-five minutes of fighting within a twenty-four hour period.

Referee Authority and Instant Replay

The referee is the sole arbiter of the contest and is the only individual authorized to stop a bout. Instant replay may be used only to review a fight-ending sequence and once used, the fight cannot resume.

Required Equipment and Attire

All fighters must wear approved gloves and a mouthpiece at all times. Approved hand wraps, trunks, rash guards for female athletes, and protective equipment are regulated by commission standards. Jewelry, shoes, body cosmetics, and unsafe attire are prohibited.

Fouls and Illegal Techniques

- Headbutting in any form
- Eye gouging
- Biting or spitting
- Fish hooking
- Hair pulling
- Pile-driving or spiking onto the head or neck
- Strikes to the spine or back of the head
- Throat strikes or grabbing the trachea
- Fingers outstretched toward the eyes
- Groin attacks
- Kneeing or kicking a grounded opponent in the head
- Stomping a grounded opponent
- Holding gloves or shorts
- Grabbing the fence or ropes
- Small joint manipulation
- Throwing an opponent out of the ring or cage
- Placing fingers into orifices or open cuts
- Clawing, pinching, or twisting flesh
- Timidity or avoiding contact
- Use of abusive language
- Disregarding referee instructions
- Unsportsmanlike conduct causing injury
- Attacking after the bell
- Attacking during a break
- Attacking an opponent under referee care
- Corner interference

Judging Criteria

All bouts are scored using the 10-Point Must System. Judges evaluate effective striking and grappling first, followed by effective aggressiveness and control of the fighting area. Rounds may be scored 10-10, 10-9, 10-8, or 10-7 based on damage, dominance, and duration.

Methods of Victory

Bouts may end by knockout, technical knockout, submission, technical submission, decision, disqualification, no contest, or draw. Medical stoppages and referee discretion apply under commission oversight.

Weight Classes

Recognized weight classes range from Atomweight (105 lbs) through Super Heavyweight (over 265 lbs). Catchweight bouts and allowances are subject to commission approval and safety considerations.

This document is intended as an educational reference. Only rules officially adopted by athletic commissions may be designated as the Unified Rules of MMA.