

Rules applicable to all professional boxing and combat sports contests conducted in Victoria

The purpose of the *Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985* ('the Act') is to control professional boxing and combat sports in Victoria, to promote contestant safety and protect industry integrity and reduce malpractice. All professional boxing and combat sports contests conducted in Victoria are governed by the Act, regardless of whether they are title fights or sanctioned by a particular association or body.

The Act is administered by the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board. The Act gives the Board the power to impose conditions on promotion permits and to make rules for the proper conduct of professional contests. In exercising those powers, the Board is guided by the purpose of the Act as set out above.

It is a standard condition of all promotion permits that:

The Board's Rules for the applicable discipline(s) must be followed unless there has been written Board approval at least 14 days prior to the date to the promotion.

A critical set of rules, common across all the Board's rules, centre around the attending medical practitioner's power to stop a contest. The rules are to the following effect:

1. The medical practitioner has the authority to stop a contest at any time if, in the view of the medical practitioner:
 - (a) there is a serious impairment of a contestant's ability to defend him or herself;
 - (b) there is a likelihood of serious injury to a contestant's health if the contest were to continue; or
 - (c) it is desirable to do so in the interests of the safety or welfare of a contestant.
2. The medical practitioner may examine a contestant at any time during the contest in order to determine whether any of the above conditions exist.
3. The medical practitioner will stop a contest by communicating to the referee using a predetermined agreed method (e.g. air horn, flashing lights).
4. The referee must stop a contest if so instructed or directed by the medical practitioner or the Board.

The importance of this power was recently highlighted by the New South Wales Coroner's findings in the death of boxer David Browne in 2015. In her report, the Coroner was highly critical of the rules applying to the contest which did not give the medical practitioner the power to stop the contest. A copy of the Coroner's report is can be found at the [NSW Coroner's Court](http://www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au) website <www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au>.

After the release of the report, the Board revised its rules to unambiguously state the power (and responsibility) of the medical practitioner to stop a fight. Practically, this is achieved by the referee waving off the fight at the direction of the medial practitioner.

These rules are immutable, meaning that they apply at all times to all professional contests conducted in Victoria even when the Board has agreed to the application of alternative rules.

A copy of the Victorian rules can be found on the Board's website [Boxing and combat sports](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/our-work/boxing-and-combat-sports) <<http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/our-work/boxing-and-combat-sports>>.

Rules for world title fights

The Board will consider the application of alternative rules only when the contest is for a recognised world title fight.

The promoter must obtain written approval from the Board for alternative rules at least 14 days before the promotion.

The Board may accept the rules in part or in totality. This will be decided by the Board on a case by case basis.

A copy of the Board's policy on the rules applicable to professional contests in Victoria is **attached** below.

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback about the above information, please do not hesitate to contact the Combat Sports Unit on 03 9096 9852.

Rules policy

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the Board's position about:

1. the rules that apply to all professional boxing and combat sports contests conducted in Victoria; and
2. the immutability of the power of the attending medical practitioner to examine contestants and to stop a contest.

Background

Section 23 of the *Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985* provides that the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board ('the Board') may make rules for the proper conduct of professional contests.

The Board has made rules for the proper conduct of the following professional boxing and combat sports contests:

- Boxing
- Mixed Martial Arts
- Kickboxing
- K1
- Muay Thai

The Board's rules can be found at [Boxing and combat sports http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/our-work/boxing-and-combat-sports](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/our-work/boxing-and-combat-sports).

It is a condition of all promotion permits that the Board's rules apply to the promotion unless otherwise approved by the Board in writing.

Scope

This policy applies to all professional boxing and combat sports contests conducted in Victoria.

Requirements

The Board's rules for the applicable discipline(s) must be followed unless there has been written Board approval, **at least 14 days prior to a promotion**, permitting the use of alternative rules.

The Board will only consider the application of alternative rules when the contest is a recognised world title fight and may approve the application of those rules in part or in whole.

Medical practitioner to retain power to stop a contest regardless of applicable rules

For the avoidance of doubt, the Board may approve alternative rules for world title fights but the following rules are immutable and will apply to all professional contests conducted in Victoria regardless of whether they are title fights or sanctioned by a particular body or association:

1. The medical practitioner has the authority to stop a contest at any time if, in the view of the medical practitioner:
 - (a) there is a serious impairment of a contestant's ability to defend him or herself;

- (b) there is a likelihood of serious injury to a contestant's health if the contest were to continue; or
 - (c) it is desirable to do so in the interests of the safety or welfare of a contestant.
2. The medical practitioner may examine a contestant at any time during the contest in order to determine whether any of the above conditions exist.
 3. The medical practitioner will stop a contest by communicating to the referee using a predetermined agreed method (e.g. air horn, flashing lights).
 4. The referee **must** stop a contest if so instructed or directed by the medical practitioner or the Board.

To receive this form in an accessible format [email the Combat Sports Unit](mailto:combat.sports@sport.vic.gov.au) <combat.sports@sport.vic.gov.au>

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