

2009 -- S 0622 SUBSTITUTE A

LC01089/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2009

A N A C T

RELATING TO SPORTS RACING AND ATHLETICS – MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Ciccone, McBurney, Doyle, and Tassoni

Date Introduced: February 25, 2009

Referred To: Senate Constitutional & Regulatory Issues

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 41 of the General Laws entitled "SPORTS, RACING, AND  
2 ATHLETICS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 5.2

4 MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

5 **41-5.2-1. Definitions.** – Terms used in this chapter shall be construed as follows:

6 (1) "Choke holds" means any hold that impairs the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain.

7 There are many chokes including the rear naked choke, the guillotine, and the triangle choke;

8 (2) "Cut man" means the person who helps stop the flow of blood from a fighter's cuts by  
9 applying coagulants;

10 (3) "Eye gouge" means digging the fingers in and around the opponent's eye;

11 (4) "Fishhook" means hooking the fingers into an opponent's mouth, nostrils, or ears and  
12 pulling at them;

13 (5) "Foot stomps" means stomping on the opponent's feet trying to damage the instep and  
14 fragile foot bones;

15 (6) "Gi" is the Japanese term for martial arts uniform;

16 (7) "Guard position" means the position where a fighter is on his back with his opponent  
17 between his legs. While this is primarily a defensive position, many submission holds are  
18 possible;

19 (8) "Head-butt" means using the head to strike the opponent;

1           (9) "Joint-lock" means and includes all locks, bars, and holds, that cause enough pain to  
2 cause an opponent to submit. Many of these holds can result in serious injury if the opponent does  
3 not tap out in time. A few popular submission holds are arm bars, ankle locks, knee bars, and  
4 neck cranks;

5           (10) "KO" means knock out. A fighter is knocked down and unconscious;

6           (11) "Mixed martial arts" means an event that describes the convergence of techniques  
7 from a variety of combative sports disciplines including boxing, wrestling, judo, jujitsu,  
8 kickboxing, and others;

9           (12) "Mount position" means a dominant position where a fighter straddles his opponent  
10 on the ground;

11           (13) "Mouse" means a dark swollen bruise around the eye;

12           (14) "Neck crank" means any hold that impairs the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain.  
13 There are many chokes including the rear naked choke, the guillotine, and the triangle choke;

14           (15) "NHB" is a term also referred to as "no holds barred" which refers to fighting  
15 contests with few rules;

16           (16) "Reversal" means switching from being in a disadvantageous position to a superior  
17 one;

18           (17) "Submission" means when a fighter signals surrender due to a submission hold,  
19 choke, or from strikes. The fighter can tap the mat three (3) times or submit verbally;

20           (18) "Submission holds" means and includes all locks, bars, and holds that cause enough  
21 pain to cause an opponent to submit. Many of these holds can result in serious injury if the  
22 opponent does not tap out in time;

23           (19) "Takedown" means and usually occurs when a grappler takes his opponent to the  
24 ground;

25           (20) "Weigh in" means and is used to determine a fighter's official weight for the bout  
26 and is held up to twenty-four (24) hours prior to the event.

27           **41-5.2-2. License required for mixed martial arts exhibitions.** – (a) No mixed martial  
28 arts match or exhibition for a prize or a purse, or at which an admission fee is charged, either  
29 directly or indirectly, in the form of dues or otherwise, shall take place or be conducted in this  
30 state unless licensed by the division of racing and athletics in accordance with this chapter.

31           **41-5.2-3. Application for license.** – (a) The division of racing and athletics, at the  
32 discretion of its chairperson or other officer charged with the enforcement of this chapter, may  
33 require any person applying for a license to furnish such information and references as it may  
34 desire. Applications for the license shall be accompanied by a fee of not less than ten dollars

1 (\$10.00) nor more than eight hundred dollars (\$800), as the division shall fix. Voluntary or  
2 unincorporated associations shall not be entitled to receive a license, and applications in their  
3 behalf shall be made in the name of one or more officers thereof.

4 (b) The division of racing and athletics is further authorized to request additional  
5 information and references as the division may require.

6 **41-5.2-4. Insurance required.** – No license issued by the division of racing and athletics  
7 under section 41-5.2-2 shall be valid unless the license holder shall:

8 (1) Within thirty-six (36) hours of the starting time for the first event in the licensed  
9 boxing or sparring match or exhibition have in force such contracts or policies of public liability  
10 insurance and such other contracts or policies of insurance in such amounts as the division shall  
11 reasonably require in connection with the conduct of the match or exhibition; and

12 (2) Within twenty-four (24) hours of the starting time furnish to the division satisfactory  
13 proof that the insurance is in force.

14 **41-5.2-5. Drug and H.I.V. testing.** – All contestants in a professional mixed martial arts  
15 match shall submit to drug and H.I.V. testing under such rules and regulations and for such drugs  
16 as the division of racing and athletics shall prescribe. The costs of the drug testing shall be paid  
17 by the contestant and/or promoter for the mixed martial arts match.

18 **41-5.2-6. Health insurance.** – All contestants in a mixed martial arts match shall carry  
19 such health insurance as the division of racing and athletics shall prescribe, and shall furnish  
20 satisfactory proof of insurance to the division prior to participating in any mixed martial arts  
21 match.

22 **41-5.2-7. Minimum age of contestants.** – No contestant under eighteen (18) years of  
23 age shall be permitted to engage in any mixed martial arts match or exhibition.

24 **41-5.2-8. Mixed martial arts uniform rules -- Weightclasses.** – (a) Mixed martial  
25 artists shall be divided into the following classes:

- 26 (1) Flyweight under 125.9 pounds;
- 27 (2) Bantamweight 126 lbs. – 134.9 pounds;
- 28 (3) Featherweight 135 lbs – 145 pounds;
- 29 (4) Lightweight over 145 lbs to 155 pounds;
- 30 (5) Welterweight over 155 lbs to 170 pounds;
- 31 (6) Middleweight over 170 lbs to 185 pounds;
- 32 (7) Light heavyweight over 185 lbs to 205 pounds;
- 33 (8) Heavyweight over 205 lbs to 265 pounds; and
- 34 (9) Super heavyweight over 265 pounds.

1           **41-5.2-9. Uniform rules -- Fighting area.** – (a) The fighting area canvas shall be no  
2 smaller than eighteen feet (18') by eighteen feet (18') and no larger than thirty-two feet (32') by  
3 thirty-two feet (32'). The fighting area canvas shall be padded in a manner as approved by the  
4 commissioner, with at least one inch layer of foam padding. Padding shall extend beyond the  
5 fighting area and over the edge of the platform. No vinyl or other plastic rubberized covering  
6 shall be permitted.

7           (b) The fighting area canvas shall not be more than four feet (4') above the floor of the  
8 building and shall have suitable steps or ramp for use by the participants. Posts shall be made of  
9 metal not more than six inches (6") in diameter, extending from the floor of the building to a  
10 minimum height of fifty-eight inches (58") above the fighting area canvas and shall be properly  
11 padded in a manner approved by the commissioner.

12           (c) The fighting area canvas area shall be enclosed by a fence made of such material as  
13 will not allow a fighter to fall out or break through it onto the floor or spectators, including, but  
14 not limited to, vinyl coated chain link fencing. All metal parts shall be covered and padded in a  
15 manner approved by the commission and shall not be abrasive to the contestants.

16           (d) The fence shall provide two (2) separate entries onto the fighting area canvas.

17           (e) A ring stool of a type approved by the commissioner shall be available for each  
18 contestant.

19           (f) An appropriate number of stools or chairs, of a type approved by the commissioner,  
20 shall be available to each contestant's seconds. Such stools or chairs shall be located near each  
21 contestant's corner.

22           (g) All stools and chairs used must be thoroughly cleaned or replaced after the conclusion  
23 of each bout.

24           (h) For each bout, the promoter shall provide a clean water bucket and a clean plastic  
25 water bottle in each corner.

26           **41-5.2-10. Uniform rules -- Hand bandage specifications.** – (a) In all weight classes,  
27 the bandages on each contestant's hand shall be restricted to soft gauze cloth not more than  
28 thirteen (13) yards in length and two inches (2") in width, held in place by not more than ten feet  
29 (10') of surgeon's tape, one inch in width, for each hand.

30           (b) Surgeon's adhesive tape shall be placed directly on each hand for protection near the  
31 wrist. The tape may cross the back of the hand twice and extend to cover and protect the knuckles  
32 when the hand is clenched to make a fist.

33           (c) The bandages shall be evenly distributed across the hand.

34           (d) Bandages and tape shall be placed on the contestant's hands in the dressing room in

1 the presence of the inspector and in the presence of the manager or chief second of his or her  
2 opponent.

3 (e) Under no circumstances are gloves to be placed on the hands of a contestant until the  
4 approval of the inspector is received.

5 **41-5.2-11. Uniform rules -- Mouth pieces.** – (a) All contestants are required to wear a  
6 mouthpiece during competition. The mouthpiece shall be subject to examination and approval by  
7 the attending physician.

8 (b) The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece in place.

9 (c) If the mouthpiece is involuntarily dislodged during competition, the referee shall call  
10 time, clean the mouthpiece and reinsert the mouthpiece at the first opportune moment, without  
11 interfering with the immediate action.

12 **41-5.2-12. Uniform rules -- Protective equipment.** – (a) Male mixed martial artists  
13 shall wear a groin protector of their own selection, of a type approved by the commissioner.

14 (b) Female mixed martial artists are prohibited from wearing groin protectors.

15 (c) Female mixed martial artists shall wear a chest protector during competition. The  
16 chest protector shall be subject to the approval of the commissioner.

17 **41-5.2-13. Uniform rules -- Gloves.** – (a) The gloves shall be new for all main events  
18 and in good condition or they must be replaced.

19 (b) All contestants shall wear either four (4), five (5), or six (6) ounce gloves, supplied by  
20 the promoter and approved by the commission. No contestant shall supply their own gloves for  
21 participation.

22 **41-5.2-14. Uniform rules -- Apparel.** – (a) Each contestant shall wear mixed martial arts  
23 shorts, biking shorts, or kick-boxing shorts.

24 (b) Gi's or shirts are prohibited during competition.

25 (c) Shoes are prohibited during competition.

26 **41-5.2-15. Uniform rules -- Appearance.** – (a) All contestants shall be cleanly shaven  
27 immediately prior to competition, except that a contestant may wear a closely cropped mustache.

28 (b) Hair shall be trimmed or tied back in such a manner as not to interfere with the vision  
29 of either contestant or cover any part of a contestant's face.

30 (c) Jewelry or piercing accessories are prohibited during competition.

31 **41-5.2-16. Uniform rules -- Round length.** – (a) Each non-championship mixed martial  
32 arts contest shall be three (3) rounds of five (5) minutes duration, with one minute rest period  
33 between each round.

34 (b) Each championship mixed martial arts contest shall be give (5) rounds of five (5)

1 minutes duration, with a one minute rest period between each round.

2 **41-5.2-17. Uniform rules - Stopping a contest.** – The referee and ringside physician are  
3 the sole arbiters of a bout and are the only individuals authorized to enter the fighting area at any  
4 time during competition and authorized to stop a contest.

5 **41-5.2-18. Uniform rules -- Judging.** – (a) All bouts will be evaluated and scored by  
6 three (3) judges.

7 (b) The ten (10) point must system will be the standard system of scoring a bout. Under  
8 the ten (10) point must scoring system, ten (10) points must be awarded to the winner of the  
9 round and nine (9) points or less must be awarded to the loser, except for a rare even round,  
10 which is scored (10-10).

11 (c) Judges shall evaluate mixed martial arts techniques, such as effective striking,  
12 effective grappling, control of the fighting area, effective aggressiveness and defense.

13 (d) Evaluations shall be made in the order in which the techniques appear in (c) above,  
14 giving the most weight in scoring to effective striking, effective grappling, control of the fighting  
15 area and effective aggressiveness and defense.

16 (e) Effective striking is judged by determining the total number of legal heavy strikes  
17 landed by a contestant.

18 (f) Effective grappling is judged by considering the amount of successful executions of a  
19 legal takedown or reversals. Examples of factors to consider are takedowns from standing  
20 position to mount position, passing the guard to mount position, and bottom position fighters  
21 using an active, threatening guard.

22 (g) Fighting area control is judged by determining who is dictating the pace, location and  
23 position of the fight. Examples of factors to consider are countering a grappler's attempt at  
24 takedown by remaining standing and legally striking; taking down an opponent to force a ground  
25 fight; creating threatening submission attempts and passing the guard to achieve mount, and  
26 creating striking opportunities.

27 (h) Effective aggressiveness means moving forward and landing a legal strike.

28 (i) Effective defense means avoiding being struck, taken down or reversed while  
29 countering with offensive attacks.

30 (j) The following objective scoring criteria shall be utilized by the judges when scoring a  
31 round:

32 (1) A round is to be scored as a 10-10 round when both contestants appear to be fighting  
33 evenly and neither contestant shows clear dominance in a round;

34 (2) A round is to be scored as a 10-9 round when a contestant wins by a close margin,

- 1 landing the greater number of effective legal strikes, grappling and other maneuvers;
- 2 (3) A round is to be scored as a 10-8 round when a contestant overwhelmingly dominates  
3 by striking or grappling in a round;
- 4 (4) A round is to be scored as a 10-7 round when a contestant totally dominates by  
5 striking or grappling in the round.
- 6 (k) Judges shall use a sliding scale and recognize the length of time the fighters are either  
7 standing or on the ground, as follows:
- 8 (1) If the mixed martial artists spent a majority of a round on the canvas, then:
- 9 (i) Effective grappling is weighed first; and  
10 (ii) Effective striking is then weighed.
- 11 (2) If the mixed martial artists spent a majority of a round standing, then:
- 12 (i) Effective striking is weighed first; and  
13 (ii) Effective grappling is then weighed.
- 14 (3) If a round ends with a relatively even amount of standing and canvas fighting, striking  
15 and grappling are weighed equally.
- 16 **41-5.2-19. Warnings.** – (a) The referee shall issue a single warning for the following  
17 infractions. After the initial warning, if the prohibited conduct persists, a penalty will be issued.  
18 The penalty may result in a deduction of points or disqualification.
- 19 (1) Holding or grabbing the fence;  
20 (2) Holding opponent's shorts or gloves; or  
21 (3) The presence of more than one second on the fighting area perimeter.
- 22 **41-5.2-20. Fouls.** – (a) The following are fouls and will result in penalties if committed:
- 23 (1) Butting with the head;  
24 (2) Eye gouging of any kind;  
25 (3) Biting or spitting at an opponent;  
26 (4) Hair pulling;  
27 (5) Fish hooking;  
28 (6) Groin attacks of any kind;  
29 (7) Intentionally placing a finger in any opponent's orifices;  
30 (8) Downward pointing of elbow strikes;  
31 (9) Small joint manipulation;  
32 (10) Strikes to the spine or back of the head;  
33 (11) Heel kicks to the kidney;  
34 (12) Throat strikes of any kind;

- 1           (13) Clawing, pinching, twisting the flesh or grabbing the clavicle;
- 2           (14) Kicking the head of a grounded fighter;
- 3           (15) Kneeing the head of a grounded fighter;
- 4           (16) Stomping of a grounded fighter;
- 5           (17) The use of abusive language in the fighting area;
- 6           (18) Any unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to opponent;
- 7           (19) Attacking an opponent on or during the break;
- 8           (20) Attacking an opponent who is under the referee's care at the time;
- 9           (21) Timidity (avoiding contact, or consistent dropping of mouthpiece, or faking an  
10 injury);
- 11           (22) Interference from a mixed martial artist's seconds;
- 12           (23) Throwing an opponent out of the fighting area;
- 13           (24) Flagrant disregard of the referee's instructions;
- 14           (25) Spiking an opponent to the canvas on his or her head or neck.
- 15           (b) Disqualification occurs after any combination of three (3) of the fouls listed in  
16 subdivision (a) above or after a referee determines that a foul was intentional and flagrant.
- 17           (c) Fouls will result in a point being deducted by the official scorekeeper from the  
18 offending mixed martial artist's score.
- 19           (d) Only a referee can assess a foul. If the referee does not call the foul, judges shall not  
20 make that assessment on their own and cannot factor such into their scoring calculations.
- 21           (e) A fouled fighter has up to five (5) minutes to recuperate.
- 22           (f) If a foul is committed, the referee shall:
- 23           (1) Call time;
- 24           (2) Check the fouled mixed martial artist's condition and safety; and
- 25           (3) Assess the foul to the offending contestant, deduct points, and notify each corner's  
26 seconds, judges and official scorekeeper.
- 27           (g) If a bottom contestant commits a foul, unless the top contestant is injured, the fight  
28 shall continue, so as not to jeopardize the top contestant's superior positioning at the time.
- 29           (1) The referee shall verbally notify the bottom contestant of the foul.
- 30           (2) When the round is over, the referee shall assess the foul and notify both corners'  
31 seconds, the judges and the official scorekeeper.
- 32           (3) The referee may terminate a bout based on the severity of a foul. For such a flagrant  
33 foul, a contestant shall lose by disqualification.
- 34           **41-5.2-21. Injuries sustained during competition. – (a) If an injury sustained during**



1 competition as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a bout, the injured  
2 contestant loses by technical knockout.

3 (b) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul is severe  
4 enough to terminate the bout, the contestant causing the injury loses by disqualification.

5 (c) If an injury is sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul and the  
6 bout is allowed to continue, the referee shall notify the scorekeeper to automatically deduct two  
7 (2) points from the contestant who committed the foul.

8 (d) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul causes the  
9 injured contestant to be unable to continue at a subsequent point in the contest, the injured  
10 contestant shall win by technical decision, if he or she is ahead on the score cards. If the injured  
11 contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage, the outcome of the bout  
12 shall be declared a technical draw.

13 (e) If a contestant injures himself or herself while attempting to foul his or her opponent,  
14 the referee shall take any action in his or her favor, and the injury shall be treated in the same  
15 manner as an injury produced by a fair blow.

16 (f) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul is severe  
17 enough for the referee to stop the bout immediately, the bout shall result in a no contest if stopped  
18 before two (2) rounds have been completed in a three (3) round bout or if stopped before three (3)  
19 rounds have been completed in a five (5) round bout.

20 (g) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul is severe  
21 enough for the referee to stop the bout immediately, the bout shall result in a technical decision  
22 awarded to the contestant who is ahead on the score cards at the time the bout is stopped only  
23 when the bout is stopped after two (2) rounds of the three (3) round bout, or three (3) rounds of a  
24 five (5) round bout have been completed.

25 (h) There will be no scoring of an incomplete round. However, if the referee penalizes  
26 either contestant, then the appropriate points shall be deducted when the scorekeeper calculates  
27 the final score.

28 **41-5.2-22. Types of bout results.** – (a) The following are the types of bout results:

29 (1) Submission by:

30 (i) Tap out: When a contestant physically uses his/her hand to indicate that he or she no  
31 longer wishes to continue; or

32 (ii) Verbal tap out: When a contestant verbally announces to the referee that he or she  
33 does not wish to continue;

34 (2) Technical knockout by:

- 1           (i) Referee stops bout;  
2           (ii) Ringside physician stops bout; or  
3           (iii) When an injury as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a bout;  
4           (3) Knockout by failure to rise from the canvas;  
5           (4) Decision via score cards:  
6           (i) Unanimous: When all three (3) judges score the bout for the same contestant;  
7           (ii) Split decision: When two (2) judges score the bout for one contestant and one judge  
8 scores for the opponent; or  
9           (iii) Majority decision: When two (2) judges score the bout for the same contestant and  
10 one judge scores a draw.  
11           (5) Draws:  
12           (i) Unanimous – When all three (3) judges score the bout a draw;  
13           (ii) Majority – When two (2) judges score the bout a draw; or  
14           (iii) Split – When all three (3) judges score differently and the score total results in a  
15 draw.  
16           (6) Disqualification: When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an  
17 intentional foul is severe enough to terminate the contest.  
18           (7) Forfeit: When a contestant fails to begin competition or prematurely ends the contest  
19 for reasons other than injury or by indicating a tap out.  
20           (8) Technical draw: When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an  
21 intentional foul causes an injured contestant to be unable to continue and the injured contestant is  
22 even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage.  
23           (9) Technical decision. When the bout is prematurely stopped due to injury and a  
24 contestant is leading on the score cards; and  
25           (10) No contest: When a contest is prematurely stopped due to accidental injury and a  
26 sufficient number of rounds have not been completed to render a decision via the score cards.  
27           **41-5.2-23. Bond procedure.** – All mixed martial arts events shall be subject to the bond  
28 requirements determined by the division of racing and athletics.  
29           **41-5.2-24. Inspectors.** – All mixed martial arts events shall be subject to the presence,  
30 duties and compensation of inspectors as required by the division of racing and athletics.  
31           **41-5.2-25. Rules and regulations.** – The division of racing and athletics may make such  
32 rules and regulations for the administration and enforcement of this chapter as it may deem  
33 necessary. The rules and regulations may provide for and regulate the granting of a special  
34 permit for exhibitions where no decision is to be rendered and where skilled mixed martial artists

1 merely demonstrate the science of boxing.

2 **41-5.2-26. Penalty for unlicensed match.** – Any person holding, conducting, or  
3 participating in any mixed martial arts match or exhibition held without a license, unless  
4 exempted as provided herein, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars  
5 (\$100) or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three (3) months, or by both a fine and  
6 imprisonment.

7 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO SPORTS RACING AND ATHLETICS – MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

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1           This act would permit mixed martial arts matches in Rhode Island and provides the rules,  
2 regulations and guidelines for such matches.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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