**COMBAT SPORTS NZ 2025  
GUIDELINES & COMPETITION RULES**  
**1. KICKBOXING LIGHT SPARRING RULES**   
  
Competitors will be grouped into competitive divisions based on age, gender, experience level etc. and the pyramid system of elimination will be used to determine a winner.   
Younger children with less experience may compete under adjusted rules, for example without head contact at the discretion of the tournament organiser.   
  
Competition in kick light should be executed as its name implies, with well-controlled techniques. In Kick light competitors fight continuously until Central referee command STOP or BREAK. They use general kickboxing techniques, but these techniques must be well controlled when they land on legal targets. It is carried out with running time. The Central referee doesn't judge the kickboxers, but only makes sure they respect the rules. Three judges make the complete scoring decisions using an electronic scoring system or by clickers  
  
Duration: 2 x 2minute rounds for adults, with a 30 second rest between rounds. 2 x 90 second rounds for juniors, with a 30 second rest between rounds.   
(Competition organisers may adjust exact duration depending on numbers in each division)  
  
Personal equipment   
• Head guard   
• Mouth guard   
• Breast protection (for female kickboxers only)   
• Kickboxing gloves   
• Hand wraps   
• Groin protection (mandatory for male)   
• Shin guards / Foot protection  
• Sleeveless T-shirt or club t-shirt   
• Kickboxing shorts

The following parts of the body may be attacked using the authorised fighting techniques:   
• Head - Front, forehead, and side   
• Torso - Front and side   
• Legs - Thigh (inside, outside and back). If a kick is blocked / checked, there will be no point. Sweeping is legal: "boot to boot". The target area is from ankle to mid-calf. To score with a foot sweep the attacker must remain on his feet at all times. If in the execution of a foot sweep the attacker touches the floor with any part of his body other than his feet, no score will be given.  
  
Authorised techniques:  
Hand techniques (Standard punches as per boxing)   
• Straight punches (Jab and cross)   
• Uppercut & Body rip  
• Hook & Overhand

Foot techniques (kicks)   
• Front kick  
• Sidekick  
• Roundhouse kick  
• Hook kick (sole of the foot only)  
• Crescent kick  
• Axe kick (sole of the foot only)  
• Jump kicks  
• Spinning kicks   
Note: it must be emphasised that the attacking kickboxer extend his foot in such a manner that the sole (bottom) of the foot is used as the striking area rather than the heel when executing the following kicks: axe, hook and spinning hook kick etc.  
  
Illegal target areas / prohibited techniques and behaviour:

• Attacking with the knee, elbow, knife-hand, head or shoulder   
• Wrestling or ducking below opponent’s waist   
• Throwing   
• Grabbing – holding on to the opponent in any way.   
• Attacks with malicious or excessive contact   
• Continuing after the command "stop" or the end of the round has been sounded   
• Leaving the fighting area (Exits)   
• On the command BREAK, not to step back at least one step   
• Top of the head   
• Falling or dropping to the floor without due cause   
• Attack back of the torso (kidneys and spine)   
• Attack top of the shoulders   
• Neck: front, sides, back   
• Turn one's back to the opponent   
• Avoid fighting (running away)   
• All blind, uncontrolled techniques in general   
• Back of the head   
• Groin   
• To perform kicks to the knee and under the knee

• Attacking an opponent who is falling to the floor or is already on the floor, that is, as soon as one hand or knee touches the floor

• Oil on the face or the body.

• For a kickboxer to spit out his mouth-guard voluntarily

• Ground Attacks

• A kickboxer cannot attack an opponent on the ground. The Central referee is responsible for stopping the fight immediately when one of the two kickboxers touches the floor with any part of the body apart from his feet. Stomps to the head or body of a downed kickboxer can lead to minus points or disqualification (judges decide by majority decision).

• Unsportsmanlike-like conduct. A kickboxer shall have only one warning, then the normal procedure for penalty and disqualification shall follow. However, in the case of gross unsportsmanlike like-like conduct, the kickboxer may be disqualified or deducted one point on the first offence, depending on the severity of the infringement.

Awarding points & declaring a winner  
• A judge’s job is to award points for all legal techniques (Punches, Kicks or Sweeps), clearly landed on legal targets.   
• The judge will push the button of his device; - one time - for a hand and leg - technique to body, and hand technique to head - two times - for a jump kick to body or head kick - three times - for a jump kick to head   
• Points, starting from first round, will continuously be added by the judges and will be monitored by the table officials. Points given will be visible for the coaches and public through screens available to them. There should not be screens visible to the judges (judging should be independent).   
• At the end of the fight, the winner is the competitor who scored more points (which will appear on the screen).   
• Warnings: If the Central referee inflicts a foul or a warning, he will indicate so in front of the judges and the chief referee, and the time- keeper has to put it in the electronic scoring system. It will then be shown on the screen to the public.   
• Minus point: If the Central referee inflicts a minus point, he will indicate so in front of the judges and the Chief referee and the timekeeper have to put it in the electronic system. It will then be shown on the screens, reducing 3 points from the total score from each judge.   
• The electronic system shows a running time score. In every moment of the fight everybody knows the situation of points.

In case of a draw   
• If the fight ends, by one or more judges, in a draw (equal points after 3 rounds), to determine a winner, the electronic scoring system will automatically assign the win to the kickboxer with the highest points in the last round.   
• If there is a draw, and last round is equal, the judge must select the kickboxer with order of next criteria: 'more active', 'more kicks', 'better defence' and 'better style and techniques. The judges push the correct button indicating the winner when the chief referee indicates.  
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**MMA RULES (Controlled contact)**

**Sport MMA is mixed martial arts sparring competition.  It may best be viewed as a light contact version of MMA. Sport MMA provides competitors with an opportunity to use many of the same techniques associated with MMA, including; strikes, throws, shooting, grappling and submissions applied safely with light-contact. This will be strictly enforced (no damaging strikes or slams).  The format for Sport MMA competition is additionally designed to allow each and every competitor the opportunity to gain as much experience as possible. In order to achieve this, we have instituted a “best of three, tap out” rule (explained below).**

**Each match begins with two competitors starting from the stand-up position. Light contact strikes combined with good foot-work may be used to control the action, score, or close the gap and shoot for a takedown. If the match goes to the ground, grappling, submissions and light contact striking to legal targets come into play. The goal is to either outscore your opponent with legal, light contact strikes and/or to obtain submissions over your opponent.**

**EXPLAINING THE BEST OF THREE, SUBMISSION RULE**

* **If FIGHTER A obtains a submission over FIGHTER B, it is recorded on the score sheet and the match gets restarted from the stand-up position.**
* **FIGHTER B** must now obtain a submission over **FIGHTER** **A** in order to have a chance at winning the match. Regardless of how effective **FIGHTER B** is for the rest of the match, if he/she does not score a submission over **FIGHTER A**, then he/she will lose even if he/she is the superior technical competitor, gains more points for striking or outclasses **FIGHTER A** for the duration of the bout.
* **If FIGHTER B can score a submission over FIGHTER A (draw even in submissions), the match will again be restarted from the stand-up position. If time elapses and neither fighter has an advantage in the number of submissions, then the match will be evaluated based on the relative merit of the clean, controlled striking, effective grappling technique and ring control.**
* **Two submissions over any fighter in a match ends the bout immediately.**

**So, the final outcome of each match is determined by:**

1. **If a fighter scores two submissions over their opponent, he/she automatically wins.**
2. **If either fighter has an advantage in submissions (1-0) at the end of the match, he/she wins.**
3. **I**f there is no advantage in submissions (0-0 or 1-1), the bout is decided by a poll of the judges who will evaluate the action according to the criteria listed above.

**REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:**

* **Approved combined shin and instep protectors.**
* **Approved MMA sparring gloves (no pro style MMA gloves)**
* **Mouth Guard**
* **Groin Protector (males)**
* **Shorts**
* **Rash guards**

**LEGAL STRIKES – HANDS:**

* **All hand strikes that occur with the padded part of the glove executed in a controlled fashion (light or touch-contact only. The strike cannot penetrate or distort the target). This also applies to punches from a grounded position which are legal but must be executed in a controlled fashion.**
* **No elbow strikes are allowed at any time to any part of the body or face.**
* **Striking to the kidney area, behind the head or neck is not permitted.**

**LEGAL STRIKES – LEGS, KNEES & FEET:**

* **All kicking techniques are allowed with light-contact to the front and side of the body above the belt, and light contact roundhouse kicks are to the head and legs. NO linear kicks (oblique kicks) are allowed directed to the legs.**
* **Light/touch contact knee strikes are allowed to the body and legs in adult divisions only while standing.**
* **All low kicks must be minimum 6 inches above the knee and all other kicks, above the waist.**
* **No kicking or kneeing to opponents is allowed once the match goes to ground by either of the competitors (including up-kicks).**

**SHOOTS, CLINCHES & TAKE DOWNS:**

* **No “spearing” or dive tackling is permitted.**
* **No scissor takedowns are permitted, unless a hand is first placed on the mat.**
* **No jumping to pull guard is permitted**
* **You may not execute any takedown in a way that damages your opponent either in the way the takedown was executed or by intentionally landing on top of them in a manner to use your body weight to do injury.**
* **Hip throws are permitted.**
* **All prevention necessary must be taken to not allow your opponent to fall on his or her/head or attempt to drop the opponent on the back of their neck or head as the fall to the ground.**

**GRAPPLING – SUBMISSIONS & LOCKS:**

**It is VERY important that all competitors understand how to “Tap Out” when caught in a submission technique. Tapping out can be done either verbally or through a physical tap. Competitors can tap with their hands, feet, or even a nod of the head. This “Tapping” is a conscious admission of surrender to an opponent.**

* **GROUND ACTIVITY RULE:** Once the contest goes to the ground both fighters must show continuous effort to significantly advance their positions or take advantage of their position by either scoring with legal strikes or trying to secure a submission. Failure to significantly advance or take advantage of their position will result in having the match “stood up” and re-started.
* **ALL SUBMISSION TECHNIQUES** are legal for adults with the **following exception**; No twisting neck cranks, heel hooks (angled leg/foot/ankle locks) or small joint manipulation (Fingers and toes).
* **OTHER FOULS:** Fighters are not allowed to grab and use their opponents’ clothing. Attacks to the front of the windpipe (i.e. finger in throat), eyes (elbows, palms, fingers, etc.) or groin. No pushing the palm or elbow directly into the nose. No dropping or slamming an opponent on his head. No slamming from the Guard position. eye gouging, fish hooking, biting, hair pulling, pinching, twisting of skin, sticking a finger into an opponent’s cut, small joint manipulation (finger or toe locks), and putting a finger into any orifice are all FOULS and grounds for disqualification. No interference by a corner with any official or fighter. No throwing an opponent off the mat. No unsportsmanlike conduct. Any intentional use of an illegal technique or act of poor sportsmanship will result in the immediate ejection of those competitors/spectators.
* **The referee reserves the right to stop any attempt at any submission or lock, listed and un listed at any time of the match should he deem any such technique to be considered dangerous in any way but not restricted to the effect it has on an opponent. In other words while the attempt is being made to secure any technique which could be deemed as unsafe.**
* **The referee may “declare a submission” if he believes that it is necessary in order to protect a fighter’s safety or if he believes that a downed fighter is in a compromised position that he cannot or chooses not to try to escape from. (example: if the bottom fighter in a full mount position does not try to escape the referee may declare a submission)**

**LENGTH OF MATCH:**

**ADULT: 2 x 3minute rounds (with a 1 minute second rest).**

**During the match, if there is stalling on the ground, the referee has the right to restart the match standing. If the competitors go off the mat, the match can be stopped by the referee, and the competitors will be moved to the middle of the ring/mat in the same position, if that position can be determined by the referee. The referee has the right to stop time and check the condition of the fighters.**

**LEGAL TARGET AREAS: Ribs, chest, abdomen & legs (above knees).**

**ILLEGAL TARGET AREAS: spine, back of neck/Head, throat, kidneys, groin, knees and back.**

**NON-TARGET AREAS: Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet.**

**LEGAL TECHNIQUES: As described above. Legal techniques are all “controlled” martial arts techniques, except those listed as illegal.**

**ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES: Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees (to the head), eye attacks of any kind, stomps, kicks to a downed competitor, slapping, uncontrolled blind techniques, any uncontrolled throws, takedowns or sweeps with the intention of slamming the opponent to the ground or landing with excessive force on top of opponent and any other uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe in Sport Martial Arts.**

**GRABBING: Is allowed but no pulling on any part of the shorts/pants, shirt or gloves worn by any competitor.**

**SWEEPS, TAKEDOWNS, GRABS AND GROUND SPARRING: Sweeps to take down an opponent, to obstruct the balance so as to follow up with a technique is allowed. A sweep must be deemed a proper and safe sweep to be legal. Controlled sweeps that are meant to take down an opponent are allowed only on a declared approved padded surface.**

**WARNINGS AND PENALTIES: The referee will at his discretion issue cautions, warnings, penalties and or disqualification for rules infractions.  An official penalty will have the same effect on the bout as a submission.**

**If, in the opinion of the referee and/or the medical personnel, a competitor cannot continue because of an injury caused by an illegal penalized attack executed by his/her competitor, the offending competitor shall be automatically disqualified.**

**Other Cause for Penalization: Attacking illegal and non-target areas, using illegal techniques, running out of the ring to avoid competing, preventing your opponent from initiating combat, continuing after being ordered to stop, excessive stalling, blind, negligent or reckless attacks, uncontrolled techniques, showing unsportsmanlike behaviour by the competitor, his/her coaches, friends, etc., excessive contact, and delay of time are examples of possible penalization.**

**Non-Competing Penalty: If, in the majority opinion of the officials, it is considered that the competitors are not making an obvious attempt to compete in the true spirit of competition, both competitors will be warned and if it continues, will be disqualified.**