



## COMBATIVE SPORTS AT A GLANCE

**Statutes:** Chapter 2052, Occupations Code

**Rules:** Title 16 T.A.C. Chapter 61

**Practice Act?** Yes

**Title Act?** No

**Inspections?** Yes

**Facilities?** No

**Equipment?** Yes

**Individuals?** Yes

**Number of Inspections Performed:** 182

**Combative Sports Overall Population:** 1,267 (FY 25)

**Contestant:** 1,001

**Manager:** 27

**Promoter:** 64

**Judge:** 86

**Referee:** 71

**Amateur Combative Sports Association:** 16

**Webpage:** [www.tdlr.texas.gov/sports](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov/sports)



### Overview:

The TDLR Texas Combative Sports Program regulates professional Boxing, Kick Boxing, Mixed Martial Arts, Muay Thai, Slap Fighting, Bare-Knuckle Boxing, and amateur MMA, Muay Thai, and Kick Boxing events in Texas.

"Combative sports" means sports, including boxing, kickboxing, martial arts, and mixed martial arts, in which participants voluntarily engage in full contact to score points, to cause an opponent to submit, or to disable an opponent in a contest, match, or exhibition. The term does not include student training or exhibitions of students' skills conducted by martial arts schools, or associations of schools, where the students participate for health and recreational purposes rather than competition and where the intent is to use only partial contact.

Professional combative sports contestants, promoters, referees, judges, and managers who officiate or participate in a regulated professional event must be licensed. Referees who officiate at regulated amateur events also must be licensed or registered by the TDLR executive director.

### Contestants

A Contestant applying for a license must provide proof of passing both a comprehensive medical examination and ophthalmologic medical examination within 6 months of the application. Medical testing must show that the applicant has been tested for, and is free of, Hepatitis C and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Additionally, medical testing results must show the contestant does not suffer from acute or chronic infections due to the Hepatitis B virus. All testing must be done through a medically acceptable procedure by examining physicians, optometrists, and ophthalmologists that are licensed by a state, district, or territory of the United States of America. Any positive result or indication of infectivity will result in disqualification.

TDLR will not issue a contestant license to anyone under the age of 17. Minors age 17 but not yet 18 may be issued a contestant's license with notarized written consent from a parent or guardian. A person age 36 or older applying for a contestant's license must submit a report of favorable physical testing conducted within the previous twelve months including but not limited to an EEG (electroencephalography) and an EKG (electrocardiogram). The applicant may request an administrative hearing if the executive director determines the physical testing results are not favorable in any way and fails to issue a license for that reason.

### Promoters

Anyone wanting to act as an event promoter must put up two surety bonds of \$15,000 each. Promoters must make sure that all contestants scheduled to participate are licensed before the event; provide that an ambulance and an emergency medical technician are present; provide for at least two physicians to be present during the event; provide for a physical examination of each contestant that complies with TDLR rules; and comply with all commission rules.

Type of Events	APPROVED	CANCELED	DENIED	TOTAL
Amateur MMA	39	9	9	57
Amateur Muay Thai	3	2	0	5
Amateur Combo	5	1	0	6
PRO MMA	29	17	3	49
PRO Muay Thai	1	4	1	6
BOXING	86	41	13	140
Bare Knuckle	1	0	0	1
Slap	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>283</b>

### Medical Disqualifications

After a bout, a ringside physician examines each contestant. Based on the post-contest examination, contestants will automatically receive rest periods, medical suspensions, or medical disqualifications for the following:

- Medical condition: any medical suspension will be based on the physician’s recommendation;
- Technical knockout: 30-day minimum medical suspension;
- Knockout:
  - First knockout: 60-day minimum medical suspension;
  - Two knockouts within twelve months: 120 days minimum medical suspension;
  - Three knockouts within twelve months or three consecutive knockouts: medical disqualification from further competition; and
- Mandatory rest: all contestants shall receive a mandatory rest period of three days of rest for each round fought, with at least a seven-day mandatory minimum rest period.

Medical disqualification of a contestant is for their own safety and may be made at the recommendation of the examining physician or TDLR. A contestant who disagrees with a medical disqualification, medical suspension or rest period set at the discretion of a ringside physician or a disqualification or suspension set by the department may request a hearing to show proof of fitness.

Senate Bill 842 (89th Legislature, Regular Session) gave ringside physicians immunity from civil liability arising from their work at combative sports events.

License	Fees
Promoter’s License	\$900 + 2 surety bonds (\$15,000 each)
Manager	\$100
Contestant	\$20

### Program History

In 1925, the Texas Penal Code outlawed “pugilistic encounters” between two men, or a fight between a man and a bull, or any other animal, for money or other thing of value. The Penal Code also outlawed moving picture films, bioscopes, vitascopes, magic lanterns or other device depicting prize fights.

In 1933, the Texas Legislature changed the law to allow combative sports, which were to be licensed by the Texas Commissioner of Labor Statistics (the forerunner of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation).

That year, the Texas Legislature made lawful “the promoting, conducting, or maintaining of fistic combat or wrestling matches, boxing or sparring contests or exhibitions for money remuneration, purses or prize equivalent to be received by the participants or contestants, or where an admission fee thereto or therefore is charged or received.”

TDLR does not license professional wrestling, which is considered to be entertainment and not a combative sport.

Texas has five of the highest attendance records for boxing in the USA:

- Canelo Alvarez vs. Billy Ray Saunders on May 8, 2021:
  - AT&T Stadium in Arlington
  - Attendance: 73,126 (all-time largest attendance for an indoor boxing event in U.S.)
- Mike Tyson vs. Jake Paul on Nov. 15, 2024:
  - AT&T Stadium in Arlington
  - Attendance: 66,103
- Julio Cesar Chaves vs. Pernell Whitaker on Sept. 10, 1993
  - Alamodome in San Antonio
  - Attendance: 63,000 (was the all-time largest attendance for indoor boxing in Texas until Alvarez/Saunders in 2021)
- Canelo Alvarez vs. Liam Smith on September 17, 2016:
  - AT&T Stadium in Arlington
  - Attendance: 51,420
- Manny Pacquiao vs Joshua Clottey on March 13, 2010
  - AT&T Stadium in Arlington
  - Attendance: 51,000 (was the first fight held at AT&T Stadium)

The **Combative Sports Advisory Board** has nine members serving staggered, six-year terms, which includes:

- four physicians;
- one representative of a boxing promoter;
- one representative of a mixed martial arts promoter;
- one combative sports referee or judge licensed at least three years;
- one former combative sports contestant; and
- one public member.