

Proposal for the Creation of Youth Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and Kickboxing Regulations in Manitoba, under the authority of the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission (MCSC).

Introduction:

This proposal advocates for the creation of Youth Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and Kickboxing regulations in Manitoba, under the authority of the **Manitoba Combative Sports Commission (MCSC)**, with a strict rule that eliminates all head strikes in youth competitions. By doing so, Manitoba would not only offer a safer alternative to current youth combat sports, but also establish itself as a leader in innovative and responsible long term athlete development for combat sports in Canada.

This proposal also outlines the significant benefits of creating Youth MMA and Kickboxing competitions in Manitoba. These competitions would prioritize safety and sportsmanship, offering a unique and superior alternative to current youth combat sports like amateur Boxing, Karate, and Taekwondo, which all allow striking to the head. Manitoba has the opportunity to create a new model for combat sport safety and development.

Safety First: Preventing Head Injuries

Safety for youth participation in combat sports has become a point of concern, particularly due to the risk of head injuries such as concussions. Boxing, Karate, and Taekwondo competitions all allow head strikes, which significantly increase the risk of head injury.

- **Amateur Boxing:** (Under Sport Manitoba) Focuses on punches to the head, and has been linked to a high incidence of concussions even with protective headgear. Kids can compete in amateur boxing bouts as young as 8 years old.
- **Taekwondo and Karate:** (Under Sport Manitoba) Involves kicks and punches to the head, putting competitors at risk of head injury, despite the use of protective headgear. Kids can compete as young as 5 years old. No medical requirements are needed to participate in these types of tournaments.
- **Youth MMA and Kickboxing:** By eliminating head strikes, this initiative prioritizes athlete safety while promoting skill development in various areas such as striking to the body, clinch work, wrestling and submission grappling.

Grassroots Development and Community Impact

The benefits of developing youth MMA and Kickboxing competitions in Manitoba are not just for the athletes themselves, but for the broader community as well.

- **Building a Strong Local Talent Pipeline:** Manitoba's youth MMA and Kickboxing competitions will serve as a talent pipeline, identifying and nurturing future champions who may eventually compete at the national and international levels. By fostering a local talent base, Manitoba can enhance its reputation in the world of combat sports.
- **Community Engagement:** Offering safe, structured opportunities for youths to compete in MMA and Kickboxing will strengthen local communities, promote physical fitness and mental discipline while encouraging positive values and teamwork.
- **Economic Impact:** Youth MMA and Kickboxing competitions have the potential to bring tourism to Manitoba and benefit the local economy.

Comparison to other Jurisdictions in Canada

- Only Ontario has regulations in place for youth MMA competitions, starting at age 12, through the Ontario Combative Sports Advisory Council.
- Ontario and British Columbia both have a PSO under Muay Thai Canada that allows for youth Muay Thai competitions starting at the age of 8.
- The BC Athletic Commission sanctions Kickboxing and Muay Thai fights at age 16.

Conclusion:

By creating youth MMA and Kickboxing regulations that prohibit head strikes, Manitoba has the opportunity to set a new standard and lead the way in Canada for combat sport innovation, safety and development. This will offer young athletes a unique and safe platform to develop their skills. Our province could serve as a model for other provinces to follow, and Manitoba's leadership in this space may influence combat sport development across Canada.

MMA embodies a true representation of combat sports by allowing athletes to be proficient in multiple disciplines including striking, wrestling and submissions, making it the most versatile and comprehensive form of combat sports.

To truly grow the combat sport of MMA, there must be long term athlete development and safe competition opportunities for youths, providing a transition into adult amateur MMA and establishing a clear path to the professional ranks.

Think of the sport of Hockey, how can someone make it all the way to the NHL without first playing Pee Wee, Bantam or Midget hockey as a child?

We respectfully request the Manitoba Government start meaningful conversations on the future of youth combat sports, with the intent of establishing youth MMA and Kickboxing regulations under the authority of the **MCSC**, ensuring that Manitoba remains at the forefront of combat sport safety and development in Canada.

Sincerely,

Giuseppe DeNatale

Canadian Fighting Center

Canadian Fighting Championship

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