

OFFICIAL COMPETITION SUMMARY

IMMAF Sports Department

Adult MMA Competition Rules and Procedures

Coach and Athlete Summary Version

Status of this summary

This is a non-controlling summary of the core IMMAF Adult Rules and Procedures for Senior/Adult competition. If it conflicts with the full rules or an authorized procedure, the full rules or authorized procedure prevail.

What this summary covers

- Eligibility, age bands, technical standard, bout format and weight classes
- Medical readiness, athlete equipment, appearance and Field of Play requirements
- Corner, Cut Team, White Towel and Blood Stoppage Protocol
- Fouls, prohibited techniques, foul classifications, recovery and penalties
- Submissions and stoppages
- VAR, Red Light/Whistle, Fourth Judge, appeals, Yellow/Red Cards
- Scoring, results, and coach and athlete responsibilities

1. Main Safety Principle

- No result is more important than athlete safety.
- The referee is the sole in-cage arbiter and may stop the bout when an athlete cannot intelligently defend.
- The ringside physician controls medical fitness; the referee should not override medical advice.
- A legal position becomes illegal when the finishing action applies prohibited pressure to the neck, spine or knee.
- Coaches and athletes must comply immediately with referee, medical and Commission instructions.

Plain meaning for coaches

Medical and referee decisions are final in the cage. Do not coach athletes to finish positions that load the neck, spine or knee, and do not use medical time for tactical instruction. Use the White Towel when withdrawal is needed to protect the athlete.

2. Eligibility and Bout Format

Division	Age	Bout Format	Key Requirement
Senior/Adult	18+ (no upper age limit)	3 rounds x 3 minutes; 1-minute rest	Senior athletes require minimum Blue Belt technical standard recorded in the official IMMAF system before the draw

- The 3 x 3 format applies unless an approved competition formula states otherwise.
- Weigh-ins take place on every competition day. Athletes must stay within the registered division limit each day they advance.
- At least two athletes are required in a category.

3. Weight Classes

Female		Male	
Weight class	Maximum weight	Weight class	Maximum weight
Atomweight	-47.6 kg / 105 lb	Strawweight	-52.2 kg / 115 lb
Strawweight	-52.2 kg / 115 lb	Flyweight	-56.7 kg / 125 lb
Flyweight	-56.7 kg / 125 lb	Bantamweight	-61.2 kg / 135 lb
Bantamweight	-61.2 kg / 135 lb	Featherweight	-65.8 kg / 145 lb
Featherweight	-65.8 kg / 145 lb	Lightweight	-70.3 kg / 155 lb
Lightweight	-70.3 kg / 155 lb	Super Lightweight	-74.8 kg / 165 lb
Super Lightweight	-74.8 kg / 165 lb	Super Welterweight	-79.4 kg / 175 lb
Super Welterweight	-79.4 kg / 175 lb	Middleweight	-83.9 kg / 185 lb
		Super Middleweight	-88.4 kg / 195 lb
		Light Heavyweight	-93 kg / 205 lb
		Heavyweight	-97 kg / 215 lb
		Super Heavyweight	+97 kg / +215 lb

4. Medical, Equipment and Athlete Appearance

Medical readiness

- No bout may start unless the required ambulances, licensed doctors, emergency equipment and a clear evacuation route are in place.

- Every athlete must complete the required pre-competition medical examinations and the post-contest medical examination.

Mandatory equipment

- Approved gloves, shin guards, rash guard, shorts, hand wraps and a properly fitted mouthguard.
- Male athletes must wear a groin protector; female athletes may choose to wear one.
- Gloves, shin guards, rash guards and shorts must match the assigned red or blue corner. Approved gold kit may be used where the full rules permit.
- A red mouthguard is not permitted.
- A dislodged mouthguard is replaced at the first safe opportunity that does not interfere with immediate action.
- Braces require the protective mouthguard; a double mouthguard is mandatory when braces are fitted to both upper and lower teeth.
- Neoprene sleeves may cover only the knee or ankle and must meet the material and approval requirements of the full rules.

Prohibited items and appearance

- No shoes, contact lenses, jewellery, piercings, false eyelashes, artificial nails or unauthorized equipment.
- Hair must be securely controlled with elastic bands only; braids must not extend below the neckline.
- Cultural and religious clothing accommodations require prior written notification to the Commission or host regulatory authority.

5. Field of Play, Corner and Cut Team

- The Field of Play is inspected before competition and on every subsequent competition day.
- Only water in a clear plastic bottle is permitted in the corner.
- Hand wrapping is mandatory and must be inspected and approved before gloves are fitted.
- Only authorized cut-team materials and medications may be used.
- Between rounds, only one coach may enter the competition area; treatment must stay within the authorized 50 seconds.
- A coach may throw the **White Towel** to withdraw the athlete. No red- or blue-towel protocol applies.

Blood Stoppage Protocol

Any visible bleeding requires immediate stoppage and referral to the ringside doctor. An athlete must not continue with active bleeding. A maximum of **three minutes** of medical-treatment time may be used across the bout, over **no more than two** treatment interventions.

The bout resumes only when bleeding is controlled, athlete, equipment and surface are cleaned where needed, any dressing is secure, and the doctor approves. During the stoppage the corner gives only essential treatment directed by the doctor — no coaching.

Situation	Outcome principle
Bleeding cannot be controlled	Bout stops; result decided under the rules for legal techniques, intentional fouls, unintentional fouls or accidental causes.
Bleeding repeatedly reopens	Bout stops; same result principles apply.
Unacceptable blood-exposure risk	Bout stops; same result principles apply.
Doctor considers continuation unsafe	Bout stops; the referee does not override medical advice.

6. Fouls and Prohibited Techniques

- Only the referee may assess an in-bout foul. Judges do not assess fouls independently.
- Every deduction must be communicated to the scorekeeper and recorded by all three judges.

- Warnings may be issued for fence grabbing, holding an opponent's equipment, or extending open fingers toward the face.

Fouls

No.	Foul	No.	Foul
1	Butting with the head	15	Small-joint manipulation of fingers or toes
2	Eye gouging of any kind	16	Throwing an opponent out of the competition area
3	Biting or spitting at an opponent	17	Placing a finger into an orifice, cut or laceration
4	Fish hooking	18	Clawing, pinching or twisting the flesh
5	Hair pulling	19	Timidity, avoiding contact, repeatedly dropping the mouthpiece or faking injury
6	Spiking an opponent onto the head or neck	20	Abusive language in the competition area
7	Strikes to the spine or back of the head, incl. the tailbone	21	Flagrant disregard of referee instructions
8	Directed throat strikes or grabbing the trachea	22	Unsportsmanlike conduct causing injury
9	Outstretched fingers toward the face or eyes	23	Attacking after the bell
10	Groin attacks	24	Attacking during a break
11	Kneeing or kicking the head of a grounded opponent	25	Attacking an opponent under referee care
12	Stomping a grounded opponent	26	Interference by a corner or second
13	Holding gloves, shorts, shin guards or rash guard	27	Applying a foreign substance to gain advantage
14	Holding or grabbing the fence with fingers or toes		

Prohibited techniques

Technique / action	Status
Elbows and forearm strikes	Prohibited in any form.
Heel hooks	Prohibited.
Twisters, neck cranks, slicers, can openers, sit-through crucifix applications	Prohibited, as is any submission applying pressure to the neck or spine.
Knees to the head	Prohibited.
Linear or front kicks directly targeting the knee	Prohibited.

7. Foul Classifications, Recovery and Penalties

Classification	Meaning
Intentional	A deliberate illegal act, including an action deliberately attempted despite a clear and foreseeable risk of an illegal result.
Unintentional	An illegal result produced without intent by movement, timing or another unintended circumstance.
Accidental	Incidental illegal contact arising from a legal technique because of an unpredictable circumstance, without intent or a foreseeable prohibited action.

There is no fourth classification. Every high-risk deliberate action with a foreseeable illegal outcome is administered as an intentional foul.

Penalty principles

Situation	Outcome
Intentional foul causing severe injury and immediate stoppage	Disqualification and tournament elimination of the offending athlete.
Intentional foul causing injury, no immediate DQ	Mandatory two-point deduction and the applicable stoppage procedure.
Unintentional foul without injury	Warning; repetition requires a deduction and may lead to disqualification.
Accidental foul causing no injury	Not penalized. If it ends the bout, timing and scorecard rules decide Technical Decision or No Contest.
Athlete injured while attempting a foul	No benefit; the injury is treated as though caused by a legal action.
Injured athlete declared winner	Advancement remains subject to medical clearance and the tournament-placement procedure.

Recovery and medical assessment

- A fouled athlete may receive up to five minutes to recover where the rule permits. Five minutes is not automatic for every foul.
- For an eye poke, the referee calls time immediately, provides the authorized recovery opportunity and involves the physician when required.
- Coaches and corners may not give strategic advice during a medical evaluation.
- A designated cut person may treat only the foul-related laceration during the authorized recovery period.

8. Submissions and Stoppages

- The referee may stop a submission before a tap when the athlete has no intelligent defence or safe means of escape.
- If an athlete loses consciousness from a choke, the bout stops immediately and the athlete is released without delay.
- The referee may stop a flashdown or visible impairment before a knockout occurs.
- An athlete who loses by a head-impact knockout may not compete again during the same competition.

9. Scoring and Results

The 10-Point Must System is used round by round.

Priority	Scoring Criterion	When it applies
1	Effective Striking and Grappling	Primary criterion.
2	Effective Proactivity	Used only when the primary criterion is even.
3	Effective Bout-Area Control	Used only when the first two criteria remain even.

- 10-10 and 10-7 rounds are exceptional and require clear justification.
- A partial round may be scored only when the referee instructs the judges to do so.
- Possible results: Submission, Technical Knockout, Knockout, Disqualification, Forfeit, Technical Decision, No Contest, Doctor Stoppage, Decision or Draw, subject to the full rules.
- Open Scorecards may be used when suitable equipment and personnel are available. Judge identities remain protected.

10. VAR, Red Light/Whistle, 4th Judge and Appeals

Procedure	Key point for coaches and athletes
VAR / Instant Replay	Activated by the Chief Referee and/or Sports Director. Factual review only: bout-ending sequences, specified fouls, missed taps, timing, cut causation, out-of-bounds action, medical communication and restart position. Does not re-score a round. Only approved, unedited official footage; mobile phones and unofficial devices are prohibited.
Red Light/Whistle	Activated by the Chief Referee or Field of Play Commissioner. The referee calls time and assesses. Used for an incorrect result before announcement, an unseen serious foul, a missed tap, an equipment safety issue, a misleading claim, or when approved replay equipment is unavailable.
4th Judge	Scores independently and continuously; card stays sealed. Activated only by the Cage Leader or Chief Referee after an arithmetic error, internal inconsistency or defined procedural irregularity. Replaces only the faulty card and cannot override a legitimate judging opinion.
Appeals	After a reviewed result is announced, an appeal is permitted only for an alleged breach of a mandatory Fair Play procedure. Disagreement with scoring, technique effectiveness, referee judgment or the reviewed conclusion is not a valid ground. The Commission reviews authorized evidence, records its determination and applies any permitted remedy.

11. Yellow and Red Card Protocol

Card	When Used	Authority / Effect
Yellow Card	Serious misconduct in and around the competition requiring a formal warning.	Referee obtains Cage Leader approval, issues and records the warning. Repetition or aggravation may lead to a Red Card.
Red Card	Repeated or aggravated misconduct after a Yellow Card, or severe misconduct.	Referee refers to the Chief Referee or Sports Director for approval. Leads to DQ, event removal and possible loss of podium/medal eligibility.

Covered conduct includes: verbal or physical disrespect, conflict between teams or nations, disrespect toward an anthem or flag, discriminatory or derogatory conduct, inflammatory media statements, and unjustified refusal to attend a medal ceremony. The protocol must be applied consistently and without discrimination.

12. Responsibilities

Role	Must do
Coach / Corner	Attend the rules meeting and make sure the athlete understands rules, signals and prohibited techniques. Check weight, medical clearance, kit, mouthguard, hand wraps and appearance before reporting to the Field of Play. Use only approved equipment, treatments and personnel. Do not coach during medical evaluation or interfere with officials. Use the White Towel immediately when needed. Respect opponents, teams, officials, flags, anthems and medal procedures.
Athlete	Make weight on every required day and complete every medical check. Wear approved equipment and report damage, stains, loose equipment or a dislodged mouthguard. Obey the commands FIGHT, STOP and TIME . Do not attack after STOP or the bell; do not attempt prohibited techniques. Report injury honestly and cooperate with the doctor, Cut Team and Commission. Accept the final result and use only the authorized appeal procedure.

13. One-Page Competition Reminder

- Arrive medically cleared, on weight and in approved kit; check mouthguard, gloves, shin guards, rash guard, shorts and hand wraps.
- No elbows, forearms, heel hooks, neck cranks, spinal manipulation, knees to the head or linear kicks to the knee.
- Any pressure to the neck or spine makes a submission illegal.

- Three foul classifications only: intentional, unintentional, accidental.
- Active bleeding stops the bout: max 3 minutes, max 2 interventions; no coaching during medical time.
- Respect STOP, TIME, the bell, the opponent and every official instruction.
- White Towel only. Red Light/Whistle is an emergency procedural intervention.
- VAR is factual review; the 4th Judge is not an appeal tool for close rounds.
- Yellow/Red Card misconduct can lead to DQ, event removal and loss of medal eligibility.
- After announcement, appeals are limited to an alleged mandatory Fair Play procedural breach.

**Prepared by IMMAF Referees and Judges Commission
2026**