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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION**

**STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

CHAPTER 20

Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 40‑81‑70(A)(6)

20‑3.8. Use of Drugs and Stimulants.

20‑3.14. Refreshment Containers.

20‑3.17. Boxer’s Record; Suspension.

20‑4.8. Permit Application and Fee.

20‑5.2. Age.

20‑5.18. Facial Hair and Jewelry.

20‑7.2. Number Limitation.

20‑8.13. Stopping a Bout.

20‑23.9. Permit Applications and Fees.

20‑24.4. When No Regulations Exist.

20‑27.03. Requirements for mixed martial arts contestants.

20‑27.04. Weigh in procedures.

20‑27.09. Appearance, Attire and Protective Equipment.

20‑27.14. Types of bout results.

20‑27.18. Seconds’ and Managers’ duties when working in a corner.

20‑27.19. Disciplinary action.

**Synopsis:**

The South Carolina State Athletic Commission proposes to amend regulations in Chapter 20 of the Code of Regulations following its five‑year regulatory review conducted pursuant to S.C. Code Section 1‑23‑120.

The Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* on May 24, 2024.

**Instructions:**

Print the regulation as shown below. All other items remain unchanged.

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

**Text:**

20‑3.8. Use of Drugs and Stimulants.

The Commission has the authority to require any participant to submit to tests for the presence of unauthorized substances, as listed, including but not limited to, the most recent prohibited list maintained by the World Anti‑Doping Agency. The use of any drugs, alcohol or stimulants, or injections in any part of the body, either before or during a match, by or in behalf of any boxer is adequate grounds for revoking his/her license, as well as the license of the person administering the same.

Classification of substances shall be as follows:

(A) Class A: Cannabinoids (marijuana) or any pharmacological substance not addressed that is not currently approved by any governmental regulatory health authority for human therapeutic use (i.e. illegal recreational drugs).

(B) Class B: Tested positive for or used or injected stimulants, narcotics, erythropoietin, human growth hormones, anabolic agents, peptide hormones, glucorticosteriods, Beta‑2 agonists, hormone and metabolic modulators, diuretics and other masking agents, anti‑estrogenic agents, or other drugs identified on the WADA Anti‑Doping Code Prohibited List.

Disciplinary action against licensees shall be as follows:

1. First offense: Administrative suspension of 90 days and a fine of one thousand ($1,000) dollars.

2. Second offense: Administrative suspension of 180 days and a fine of three thousand ($3,000) dollars.

3. Third offense: Administrative suspension of 365 days and a fine of five thousand ($5,000) dollars.

4. Fourth offense: Indefinite administrative suspension with permanent sanctions issued by the Commission, up to and including revocation.

20‑3.14. Refreshment Containers.

~~No r~~Refreshments, drinks ~~or~~and food may be sold at any regulated event ~~except in paper or plastic containers~~. It is at the discretion and mutual understanding between the promoter and the venue owner to regulate the distribution of such refreshments.

20‑3.17. Boxer’s Record; Suspension.

1. A boxer who sustains a succession of six (6) defeats or a series of knockouts or technical knockouts in any state or jurisdiction may be subject to licensure denial or suspension.

2. If a boxer is medically suspended in any other state, such suspension shall be in effect in this state.

3. The promoter shall be responsible for providing the Commission with full details of the boxer’s record.

20‑4.8. Permit Application and Fee.

1. Every promoter must have a current license to conduct, hold or give boxing matches and must apply to the Commission for a permit. The application for such permit must be in the Commission office at least fourteen (14) days before the scheduled date of the event. If the promoter does not meet ~~such~~ the deadline, the Commission will not issue a permit until the promoter pays the mandatory fine ~~required by law~~of twenty‑five ($25) dollars each day exceeded.

2. No permit may be issued unless the application includes:

a. The names of all participants.

b. Evidence that a policy of medical and hospital insurance satisfactory to the Commission covers every boxer.

c. Proof acceptable to the Commission Representative of a surety bond in an amount not less than five‑thousand dollars or certified funds sufficient to cover the total purse or fee for each scheduled contestant and official.

d. Pays the required permit fee, which shall be nonrefundable.

3. Additionally, upon the request of the Commission or Commission Representative, each promoter shall provide the Commission with copies of every contract between boxers, managers and with the promoter covering all contestants in the match for which permit is made.

4. Promoters must pay to the Commission the higher amount of either five percent (5%) of the total gross admissions received at the event or a twenty‑five ($25.00) dollar minimum gate fee within thirty (30) days after the event. Failure to pay the required gate fee within the time specified herein will result in the promoter being assessed a two hundred fifty ($250.00) dollar administrative fine, and an additional two hundred fifty ($250.00) dollar fine every thirty (30) days thereafter up to a maximum amount of one thousand ($1,000.00) dollars. An event permit shall not be issued to a promoter with an outstanding unpaid gate fee or fine. Promoters will be subject to disciplinary action by the Commission for any attempt to circumvent payment of the gate fee.

5. Promoters must pay to the Commission a sanctioning fee as determined by the Commission to cover the cost of inspections in the enforcement of compliance with this chapter and South Carolina Code of Laws Title 40 Chapter 81.

20‑5.2. Age.

1. The minimum and maximum ages for professional boxing in South Carolina are eighteen to ~~forty~~thirty‑five (18‑~~40~~35) years old, unless otherwise set by statute. The maximum age may be waived by the Commission designee for a specific contestant. A professional boxer petitioning for an age waiver must submit a complete application along with all medical records, official fight records and any other documentation required by the Commission to the Administrator at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled bout. A waiver to participate as an over‑age contestant shall be valid for the duration of the current licensure period.

20‑5.18. Facial Hair and Jewelry; contact lenses prohibited.

All boxers must be clean and neat when they participate in ring contests. Facial hair shall be at the discretion of the Commission. All jewelry and/or piercing accessories are prohibited during competition. Boxers must not have corrective/contact lenses when they participate in competition.

20‑7.2. Number Limitation.

Two (2) seconds and no more than three (3) shall work in any boxer’s corner, of which, only two (2) may be in the ring at any one time. Four (4) corners may be allowed in the corner for title fights, while only two (2) may enter the ring.

20‑8.13. Stopping a Bout.

1. The referee may, in his/her discretion, stop a bout to protect a badly beaten boxer. The referee may stop a contest if he/she considers it too one‑sided. In cases where a boxer sustains a cut eye or any other injury which the referee feels may incapacitate the boxer, the referee may, at any time, call the physician into the ring for examination of the boxer. In such cases the referee shall be guided by the physician’s advice.

2. If a boxer loses his/her mouth piece, the referee shall stop the fight and replace it. There shall be no penalty for the first such loss. If the referee determines that subsequent losses of the mouth piece are intentional, he/she may penalize the boxer one (1) point for each such occurrence.

3. If an accidental head‑butt disables a boxer ~~in the first or second round~~before the completion of half of the scheduled rounds, the referee shall declare the bout “no contest”. If such head‑butt occurs ~~after the second round~~after completion of half of the scheduled rounds, the referee will award the decision to the boxer with the most points at the end of the preceding round.

20‑23.9. Permit Applications and Fees.

1. Every promoter must have a current license to conduct, hold or give wrestling matches or exhibitions and must ~~secure a permit from the~~apply to the Commission for a permit before conducting any match or exhibition.

2. Permits for Single Events

a. Application for single wrestling event permits must be in the Commission office at least fourteen (14) days before the event. If the promoter does not meet ~~such~~the deadline, the Commission will not issue a permit until the promoter pays the mandatory fine of twenty‑five ($25) dollars each day exceeded ~~required by law~~. No permit will be issued unless the applicant:

(1) Provides the names and addresses of all anticipated participants and of the event location;

(2) Pays the required permit fee.

b. Promoters must pay to the Commission the higher amount of either five percent (5%) of the total admissions to the event or a twenty five ($25.00) dollar minimum within thirty (30) days after the event. Failure to pay the required gate fees within the time specified herein will result in the promoter being assessed a two hundred fifty ($250.00) dollar administrative fine, and an additional two hundred fifty ($250.00) dollar fine every thirty (30) days thereafter up to a maximum amount of one thousand ($1,000.00) dollars. An event permit shall not be issued to a promoter with an outstanding unpaid gate fee or fine. Promoters will be subject to disciplinary action by the Commission for any attempt to circumvent payment of the gate fee.

c. Additionally, the Commission may require:

(1) Evidence that a policy of medical and hospital insurance satisfactory to the Commission covers every wrestler;

(2) The Commission may issue special permits to promoters holding multiple events during a given calendar year, upon the promoter’s satisfaction of special permit requirements and fee terms set by the Commission.

20‑24.4. When No Regulations Exist.

When an application for a permit is received and no regulations exist for that type of event, the Commission may:

1. Deny the permit;

2. Designate that the regulation for a related combative art be used; or

3. Designate ~~that~~the acceptance of ~~the~~ rules or regulations ~~of a licensed school be used~~ as established by the Association of Boxing Commissions’ Unified Rules or other promotional rules approved by the Commission, unless they conflict with the State’s laws and regulations.

20‑27.03. Requirements for mixed martial arts contestants.

(A) Amateur contestants:

(1) The minimum and maximum ages for amateur contestants in South Carolina are eighteen (18) to ~~forty~~thirty‑five (~~40~~35) years old, unless otherwise set by statute. The maximum age may be waived by the Commission designee for a specific contestant. A contestant petitioning for an age waiver must submit a complete application along with all medical records, official fight records and any other documentation required by the Commission to the Administrator at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled bout. A waiver to participate as an over‑age contestant shall be valid for the duration of the current licensure period.

(2) Must submit a completed state approved application with the appropriate fee.

(3) Must submit an annual blood test for the detection of Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis ~~and~~ C antibody, and HIV.

(B) Professional contestants:

(1) The minimum and maximum ages for professional MMA contestants in South Carolina are eighteen (18) to ~~forty~~thirty‑five (~~40~~35) years old, unless otherwise set by statute. The maximum age may be waived by the Commission designee for a specific contestant. A contestant petitioning for an age waiver must submit a complete application along with all medical records, official fight records and any other documentation required by the Commission to the Administrator at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled bout. A waiver to participate as an over‑age contestant shall be valid for the duration of the current licensure period.

(2) Must submit a completed state approved application with the appropriate fee.

(3) Must submit an annual blood test for the detection of Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis ~~and~~ C antibody, and HIV.

(C) Amateur contestants who want to turn professional:

(1) Must be between the ages of eighteen (18) and ~~forty~~thirty‑five (~~40~~35) years old, unless otherwise set by statute. The maximum age may be waived by the Commission designee for a specific contestant. An Amateur contestant petitioning for an age waiver to turn professional must submit a complete application along with all medical records, official fight records and any other documentation required by the Commission to the Administrator at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled bout. A waiver to participate as an over‑age contestant shall be valid for the duration of the current licensure period.

(2) Must submit a completed state approved application with the appropriate fee.

(3) Must have updated within one (1) year of the date of contest blood work for the detection of Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis ~~and~~ C antibody, and HIV.

(4) Must have fought in at least ~~six~~five (~~6~~5) sanctioned amateur fights and have won a majority of his/her sanctioned fights.

(5) Once a “Pro” designation has been obtained, the contestant may only fight in a “pro” designated event, and is not eligible to fight in any amateur sanctioned events.

(D) Over‑age MMA contestants petitioning for an age waiver:

(1) At the discretion of the Commission designee, shall provide a recent video record of his/her last fight, or training bout and copies of his/her clear and precise amateur and professional record.

(2) Must provide an updated EKG or ECG report and a letter from the attending physician clearing them to fight. This does not preclude any other medical test that the Commission may deem important for the safety of the fighter.

(3) Must submit the appropriate application and fee.

(4) Must submit a completed annual physical signed by a medical doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) along with blood work for the detection of Hepatitis ~~A and~~ B surface antigen, Hepatitis C antibody, and HIV, and an ophthalmic eye exam report performed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist.

20‑27.04. Weigh in procedures.

(A) The weigh‑ins must be conducted by a Commission Representative at a place and time designated by the Commission.

(B) All contestants must weigh in. Contestants are limited to shorts, shirt or sports bra and socks.

(C) The scale used for the official weigh‑in ~~shall~~must be provided or approved by the South Carolina Athletic Commission representative.

(D) Allowance in weight class is the weight difference permitted between contestants in two (2) different weight classes.

(1) There shall not be a difference of more than three (3) pounds between weight classes from lightweight up to, but not including, the welterweight class.

(2) There shall not be a difference of more than five (5) pounds between weight classes from welterweight up to~~, but not including,~~ the ~~super~~ heavyweight class.

(3) Example: a fighter weighing one hundred thirty four (134) pounds in the bantamweight class shall not compete against an opponent who weighs more than one hundred thirty‑seven (137) pounds in the featherweight class.

(4) Example: a fighter weighing one hundred eighty‑four (184) pounds in the middle weight class shall not compete against an opponent who weighs more than one hundred eighty‑nine (189) pounds in the light heavyweight class.

(5) Weight classifications, weight allowance between weight classes and glove sizes‑

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Weight class | Weights |
|  | Flyweight | 116 to 125 lbs |
|  | Bantamweight | 126 to 135 lbs |
|  | Featherweight | 136 to 145 lbs |
|  | Lightweight | 146 to 155 lbs |
|  | Welterweight | 156 to 170 lbs |
|  | Middleweight | 171 to 185 lbs |
|  | Light Heavyweight | 186 to 205 lbs |
|  | Heavyweight | over 206 ~~to 265~~ lbs |
|  | ~~Super Heavyweight~~ | ~~over 265 lbs~~ |

20‑27.09. Appearance, Attire and Protective Equipment.

(A) Groin protectors.

(1) Male fighters must wear a professionally manufactured and Commission approved groin protector, which will protect them against injury from a foul blow. No homemade or non‑professionally manufactured protective gear will be approved by the Commission.

(B) Female fighters must submit to a Commission administered pregnancy test reviewed by the ringside physician on the day of the scheduled fight for a mandatory negative result.

(C) Each contestant shall wear mixed martial arts shorts, biking shorts, or kick boxing shorts. Shorts must be approved by the Commission or Commission representative. Swimming suits/trunks are not allowed.

(D) No GI’s or shirts permitted. Female fighters must wear a sports bra.

(E) No shoes or protective padding for the feet or other areas of the body are permitted.

(F) No grappling shin guards.

(G) Absolutely “no” body grease, gels, balms or lotions may be applied. Vaseline may be applied to the facial area at cage side or ringside in the presence of an inspector, referee, or a person designated by the Commission. Any contestant applying anything prior to this could be penalized a point or disqualified.

(H) Taping of hands and wrists ~~and ankle~~ is permitted.

(I) Neoprene joint supports only. No metal supports or hardened plastic or hardened synthetic device or equipment of any kind can ever be worn anywhere on the body during competition. Supports cannot have Velcro, straps, clips, or zippers.

(J) Finger and toe nails must be trimmed.

(K) The Commission or Commission representative shall determine whether head or facial hair presents any hazard to the safety of the contestant or their opponent or will interfere with the supervision and conduct of the event.

(L) May not wear any equipment that does not pass the Commissions’ or Commission Representatives’ approval.

(M) No jewelry or body piercings may be worn during an event.

(N) No contacts or corrective lenses may be worn during an event.

20‑27.14. Types of bout results.

(A) A mixed martial arts contest may end under the following results:

(1) Submission:

(a) Tap out: when a contestant physically uses his/her hand(s) to indicate that he/she no longer wishes to continue.

(b) Verbal tap out: when a contestant verbally announces to the referee that he/she does not wish to continue.

(2) Knockout “(KO)”: failure to rise from the canvas as a result of a strike to the body or head.

(3) Technical knockout “(TKO)”:

(a) Referee stops bout because a contestant can no longer defend himself/herself; or

(b) Ringside physician advises referee to stop bout; or

(c) When an injury as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate the bout.

(4) Decision via scorecards:

(a) Unanimous: when all three (3) judges score the bout for the same contestant.

(b) Split decision: when two (2) judges score the bout for the same contestant and one (1) judge scores for the opponent.

(c) Majority decision: when two (2) judges score the bout for the same contestant and one (1) judge scores the bout a draw.

(5) Draws:

(a) Unanimous: when all three (3) judges score the bout a draw;

(b) Majority: when two (2) judges score the bout a draw;

(c) Split when all three (3) judges score it differently and the score total results in a draw.

(6) Disqualification: when an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul that is severe enough to terminate the contest.

(7) Forfeit: when a contestant fails to begin competition or prematurely ends the contest for reasons other than injury or indicating a tap out.

(8) Technical draw:

(a) When an injury sustained during competition, as a result of an intentional foul, causes the injured contestant to be unable to continue and the injured contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of the stoppage.

(b) When an injury sustained during competition, as a result of an unintentional foul, causes the injured contestant to be unable to continue and the sufficient number of rounds have been completed with the results of the scorecards being a draw.

(9) Technical decision: when the bout is prematurely stopped due to an injury and a contestant is leading on the scorecards.

(10) No contest: when a contestant is prematurely stopped due to accidental injury and a sufficient number of rounds have not been completed to render a decision via the scorecards.

20‑27.18. Seconds’ and Managers’ duties when working in a corner.

(A) Except for title fights, ~~T~~there may be no more than three (3) licensed seconds positioned in a designated area by the ring or cage or positioned in each corner of the ring. Four (4) corners may be allowed in the corner for title fights.

(B) No person other than the contestants and referee shall enter the ring or cage during a bout.

(C) The referee may, in his/her discretion, stop a contest if an unauthorized person enters the ring or cage during a round.

(D) Only two (2) seconds may enter the cage to tend to a fighter between rounds. In case of an open cut, a medical person, or cut person may also enter the cage.

(E) There shall not be any loud yelling or profanity from anyone working the corner.

(F) Seconds, trainers and managers must not attempt to heckle, hinder, disrupt or otherwise annoy his/her fighter’s opponent, officials, Commission Representatives, or other seconds during an event.

(G) If a manager or second leaves the designated area the fighter will be disqualified at the discretion of the Commission.

(H) A fighter getting knocked out of a ring and onto the floor must get back into the ring within twenty (20) seconds without assistance from anyone working his/her corner.

(I) Any person violating any rule working the corner will be disqualified for the remainder of the event and suspended for a minimum of sixty (60) days. An appeal must be submitted in writing to the Athletic Commission office within ten (10) days from the date of said violation.

(J) Any second may terminate the performance of his/her fighter he/she is serving either between rounds or during the progress of any round in which such fighter is a contestant.

(K) No seconds or managers shall attempt to render aid to a disabled fighter before the ringside physician has had an opportunity to examine the fighter.

20‑27.19. Disciplinary action.

(A) All contestants and participants may be disciplined for any violation of the South Carolina athletic laws, rules and regulations.

(B) The administrator, inspector or a Commission Representative shall suspend a contestant for any violation to include but not be limited to failing any drug test, as established in Regulation 20‑3.8.

(C) A contestant will be suspended for a period of not less than one (1) year for participating in any mixed martial arts events in the state of South Carolina not sanctioned and approved by the South Carolina Athletic Commission.

(D) If a licensed professional mixed martial arts contestant competes against an amateur he/she will be suspended for a period of not less than one (1) year or a maximum of two (2) years.

(E) After signing a contestant/promoter contract form, a contestant shall not enter into another contracted bout that is scheduled thirty (30) days prior to the previously signed contract. If the contestant participates in a bout within this thirty (30) day time period and as a result of participating in said event is not able to participate in the originally contracted event, said contestant shall be suspended for up to six (6) months and be assessed a fine of not more than five hundred ($500.00) dollars at the discretion of the South Carolina Athletic Commission unless all parties agree to a release from the contract. A contestant wishing to appeal a notice of suspension must do so via registered mail to the Commission within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of the notice of suspension.

(F) When the contestant fails to appear in a contest in which he/she signed a bout agreement to appear, he/she shall be suspended for not more than six (6) months. The contestant must produce a valid certificate from a physician and approved by the administrator or Commission representative in the case of any physical disability. Any contestant who files a certificate from a physician stating he/she is unable to fulfill a bout agreement because of physical disability, shall be immediately given a medical suspension for a period of sixty (60) days and must submit a medical clearance or fulfill his/her bout agreement with the same opponent or a suitable substitute within the sixty (60) day suspension period. The administrator or Commission representative may remove any suspension if the contestant is released from the bout agreement by mutual agreement between the contestant and promoter.

(G) A contestant who fails to make the required weight listed on the contestant/promoter contract form, which results in the bout being cancelled, the contestant will be suspended for up to six (6) months and assessed a fine to be determined by the South Carolina Athletic Commission. A contestant wishing to appeal a notice of suspension must do so via registered mail to the Commission within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of the notice of suspension.

(H) If after the weigh‑in a contestant fails to honor the contestant/promoter bout contract by not appearing for the bout, or refuses to compete, the contestant shall be suspended for up to twelve (12) months and assessed a fine to be determined by the South Carolina Athletic Commission. A contestant wishing to appeal a notice of suspension must do so via registered mail to the Commission within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of the notice of suspension.

(I) A contestant or promoter will be suspended indefinitely, until payment is made in full of any judgment awarded by a court of law that is presented to the South Carolina Athletic Commission for any violations.

(J) A contestant, manager, trainer, or any representative of the contestant, shall not verbally harass any official representing the South Carolina Athletic Commission, before, during, or after any event regulated by the South Carolina Athletic Commission. This includes, but is not limited, to an inspector, referee, judge, timekeeper, physician, Commission member, or anyone assigned by, or representing the South Carolina Athletic Commission. Any contestant or person representing the contestant violating this rule will cause them or the contestant to be suspended for a period no longer than one (1) year. The suspension must be appealed within thirty (30) days after receiving notice from the Commission; otherwise, the contestant forfeits his/her right to appeal after said thirty (30) day period.

(K) A contestant, manager, trainer, or any representative of the contestant, shall not verbally or physically abuse any official representing the South Carolina Athletic Commission, before, during or after any event regulated by the South Carolina Athletic Commission. This includes, but is not limited to, an inspector, referee, judge, timekeeper, physician, Commission member, or anyone assigned by, or representing the South Carolina Athletic Commission. Any contestant or person representing the contestant violating this rule will cause them or the contestant to be suspended indefinitely. The suspension must be appealed within thirty (30) days after receiving notice from the Commission; otherwise, the contestant forfeits his/her right to appeal after said thirty (30) day period.

**Fiscal Impact Statement:**

There will be no cost incurred by the State or any of its political subdivisions for these regulations.

**Statement of Rationale:**

The updated regulations will detail unauthorized substances and establish disciplinary actions up to four offenses for drug tests detecting the presence of these substances. They will loosen requirements for refreshments at events, clarify that suspension rules relate to boxers who are medically suspended, establish the fine for failing to timely apply for a permit to hold a boxing match or wrestling event, conform maximum age limitations to statute, establish that contacts or corrective lenses are prohibited in boxing, clarify blood testing requirements, and provide certain guidance regarding rules for the events themselves, including weight classes. The regulations will also clarify the regulation of events that are not described in the Code.