

## USFL COACHES and COMPETITORS



### HANDBOOK

Welcome to the United States Fight League (USFL), the oldest and most prestigious Youth Pankration/ Youth MMA organization in the nation. Our mission is to help young athletes develop into productive citizens through rigorous Martial Arts training and competition. Many successful amateur and professional fighters have started their Martial Arts careers with Youth Pankration but even more have stood out as leaders in their community by forging habits of discipline, integrity, self-control and hard work.

It takes a lot of dedication under a good coach to develop the skills needed to be a Pankration athlete and those same traits carry over into other areas in life. USFL Youth Pankration fighters are not only expected to lead their peers in combative skills but also in academics, fitness and citizenship.

Pankration athletes are highly skilled in dangerous Mixed Martial Arts techniques but compete under rules and regulations that make Youth Pankration an extremely safe activity. The ability to consistently train and compete without injury is of utmost importance in all youth athletics. This is why the unique rules and scoring system, designed to maximize technique and minimize brutality, must be followed. Proper training under a certified coach is paramount to becoming a champion as well as ensuring the long term success of the sport. Thus far, it has proven to be a successful path to the development of some of the top Youth Pankration fighters on the planet.

Please take a few moments to carefully read through this guidebook. It details important information that will prove helpful in moving this sport forward.

*Disclaimer:*

*Some of the material contained in this handbook is for general information purposes only. You should not rely upon the material or information in this manual as a basis for making any personal decision or decisions for others.*

## **Structure**

The United States Fight League (USFL) is a non-profit organization with a volunteer president and board of directors. Parental, referee and promoter advisory committees made up of licensees, represent each group's interest. Together, our goal is to create top Youth Pankration and MMA competitors while simultaneously building the character of our kids.

## **Competition and Ranking**

Competition at the youth level must be geared towards learning rather than collecting medals or building an impressive profile. A close loss to a skilled competitor is far more valuable than a perfect record of competing against lesser opponents. USFL rules ensure injuries and physical punishment are not synonymous with losing a match. Some tournaments are open to all athletes while others are designed for the beginner or lesser skilled competitor. The title of State, Regional or National Champion is awarded to the top athlete in that division rather than broken down into belt rankings of beginner, intermediate or advanced. Dual Meet competitions contain pre-determined match ups of equally skilled athletes. Rankings are based on win record and/or tournament placement. The USFL maintains an open database of detailed competition records for each athlete in order to assist in appropriate matchmaking and ranking.

## **Code of Conduct**

### PARENTS' /GUARDIANS' CODE OF CONDUCT

#### **General**

All parents and guardians shall pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for their child participating in the activities of the USFL by:

#### **Specific Principles**

All parents and guardians shall conduct themselves with dignity as a member of the USFL by:

1. Encouraging good sportsmanship through demonstration of positive support for all competitors, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sport event.
2. Placing the emotional and physical well-being of their child and other athletes ahead of a personal desire to win.
3. Supporting efforts to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.
4. Supporting coaches and officials working with their child in order to promote a positive and enjoyable experience.
5. Giving your best effort to make youth sports fun; remembering that it is a sport for youth.

6. Encouraging their child to treat other competitors, coaches, spectators, officials and other people with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
7. Promising to help their child enjoy the youth sport experience in whatever way possible.

## COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

### **General**

The primary function of a coach is to facilitate the youth sports environment, and educate athletes through participation and competition. Each athlete shall be treated as though he/she is the coaches' own child, and his/her welfare shall be of the utmost consideration at all times. All coaches shall be aware that they have a tremendous influence on the well-being of athletes, never placing the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

### **Specific Principles**

All Coaches shall therefore resolve to conduct themselves with dignity as a member of the USFL by:

1. Upholding the honor and dignity of the profession.
2. Setting an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct in personal contact with athletes, sports officials, parents/guardians, spectators and the public.
3. Taking an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.
4. Avoiding the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with athletes.
5. Mastering the contest rules and teaching them to his or her team members.
6. Not seeking an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
7. Exerting an influence to eliminate un-sportsmanlike conduct by spectators or others, or to indulge in conduct which would incite competitors or spectators against the officials.
8. Respecting and supporting decisions by officials.
9. Meeting and exchanging cordial greetings with the opposing coach; setting the appropriate tone for the event before and after competition.
10. Encouraging safe and practical competition practices, including but not limited to, reasonable weight management and discouragement of unnecessary weight cutting.

### **Suspension**

- Athletes or coaches who flagrantly violate rules of safety and/or sportsmanship may be placed on suspension by the USFL promoter, referee or parental advisory committee.
- Athletes injured during training or competition may be placed on a medical suspension by the examining medical official.

- Athletes and coaches placed on conduct related suspensions have 10 days in which to appeal to one of the USFL committees.

It's extremely important and responsible that coaches protect their athletes injured in training by self administering rest periods in a similar fashion as if injured in competition.

## **Coaching Tips**

Good coaching is the single most important factor in determining the success of our youth athletes. We leave technical and strategic aspects of competition to the individual coach. Innovation and game plans are forged through competition. The success of a coach is measured through their students. This handbook is designed to ensure that coaches are familiar with competition rules and scoring, but more importantly, it serves as a guide addressing scientific information on health, nutrition and the mental development of elite youth athletes. Coaches should strive to set an example of living a healthy lifestyle and promoting good conduct both on and off of the mat. With great power comes great responsibility. Coaches can mold future super-heroes or super-villains.

## **Health and Hygiene**

### **Contagious Skin Conditions**

Skin infections have been identified as a concern in wrestling but are often ignored in other grappling arts containing identical risks.

This information is designed to help educate coaches and competitors on some common and more serious skin infections. Dermatologists are specialists in skin conditions and are therefore best suited to address and treat any concerns.

### **Minimizing the Risk of Skin Infections**

1. Do not allow athletes to grapple with a communicable skin condition.
2. Make sure kids shower after practice and competitions. Allow soap and shampoo to remain on the skin for several minutes. Dandruff shampoo often helps in counteracting ringworm.
3. Kids shall wear clean clothing to practice and competitions and wash their workout gear regularly.
4. Mats must be kept clean by using soap/solutions designed specifically to clean mats. Do not mix bleach and soap/mat cleaner as they counteract one another.
5. Use clean materials every time you wash the mats. Utilizing clean dry towels is best. If you use a mop, make sure that it dries completely between uses, preferably in the sun as sunlight helps to kill microorganisms.
6. Use an electric leaf blower to clean the mat of hair and dirt prior to mopping. A broom can do this but is not as efficient.

7. Keep mats in good repair. Cuts and holes can allow bacteria to grow.
8. Prohibit shoes or allow only clean/disinfected shoes on the mat.
9. Keep your room well ventilated. Humidity and moisture foster the growth of bacteria.
10. Alcohol free hand and body cleansers can be used as a “waterless shower” at a tournament, but a regular shower with proper soap immediately after training or competition is the best protection.

#### Examples of Common Skin Infections:

Ringworm is a fungal infection similar to athlete’s foot. It appears as a round or circular lesion. It tends to be raised around the edges and can be itchy. This is the most common skin condition affecting grapplers and is usually passed through direct skin-to-skin contact. Ringworm is treated with anti-fungal medications such as Lamisil.

Impetigo is a bacterial infection characterized by honey colored, crusty sores. It is extremely contagious although not as common as ringworm. Impetigo is treated with oral and topical antibiotics.

MRSA - Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus is a type of staph infection that is resistant to many common antibiotics and therefore difficult to treat. Recently, this issue is making headlines due to MRSA having some serious and sometimes deadly ramifications if not treated immediately.

Though it is common for athletes to have pimples and abrasions on their skin, coaches must be aware of the signs and symptoms in the event that their athlete may have developed MRSA. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unusual or increasing pain and/or warmth in the affected area.
- The presence of puss or a pustule.
- Induration (hardness).
- Increasing swelling, size or redness of a wound.
- Red streaks surrounding a wound.
- Fever and/or chills (flu-like symptoms).

**If you experience any of these signs or symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.**

Additional information on MRSA is available on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) web site: [www.cdc.gov/mrsa/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/index.html)

#### Concussions

Concussions can have serious and deadly consequences as well as long-term effects if not recognized and treated properly. Professional medical attention and prevention

of secondary a concussion is extremely important. If an athlete receives any form of head trauma the following symptoms may indicate a concussion:

Lethargy/fatigue

Loss of concentration

Headache

Dizziness

Imbalance of gait

Poor/slowed coordination

Slurred speech

Confusion

Blurred vision

Wanting to go to sleep

All coaches are required to complete an approved annual period of instruction on concussion risks and treatment as part of their licensing requirements.

### **Helpful Hints for Coaching Youth Athletes**

*By Ethan Bregman Ph.D.*

*Adapted from Coaching Effectiveness Training; Smith, R and Smoll, F.*

*"The only successful youth sports program is one with the coach who will accept the losing along with the winning, last place in the league with the first place, and still be able to congratulate his team for their efforts."*

Roger Staubach, Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback

Often coaches underestimate the impact they have on the youths who play for them. A coach's actions and attitudes can help to shape their young athletes view of the world and of themselves. The following gives some helpful hints and suggestions for setting youth athletes up for athletic success and a positive experience.

The #1 character trait of an effective coach is the ability to be supportive of your athletes, especially when there are performance challenges. When a child knows that he will be valued and accepted by his/her coach no matter how he/she performs, their energy can then be channeled into rising to the challenge. When an athlete experiences a poor practice or rough competition he/she requires emotional support and encouragement from you so that they don't leave the experience feeling bad about how they played.

Getting your youth athletes to perform at their best comes from the principle of what gets rewarded gets done. Encourage your athletes to work hard and execute skills well and they will try to continue to do so. Look for positive behaviors and skill improvement being sure to recognize them for these accomplishments. Remember, it is just as important to reinforce effort as it is to reinforce successful outcomes. Gear your expectations to individual levels and abilities.

Conversely, punishment is futile and decreases motivation. Punishing athletes can create a fear of failure which is generally known to be a poor motivator. It may stop certain unwanted behaviors and conduct in the moment, but will rarely lead to positive changes. When kids are punished or yelled at, their emotional energy often gets used up from being angry, feeling sorry for themselves, or trying to come up with reasons why the coach is wrong. Keep in mind, if criticism or punishment needs to be used, use it sparingly and be clear that you dislike the behavior not the person.

Guidelines to reacting to mistakes:

1. Give encouragement immediately after a mistake.
2. If the athlete knows how to correct a mistake, encouragement alone is enough.
3. When necessary or appropriate, give corrective instruction after a mistake in an encouraging and positive way.
4. When giving feedback, utilize the "Positive Sandwich": Start with a compliment, give instructions, end with a compliment.

The real meaning of winning:

1. Winning isn't everything nor is it the only thing. Kids should leave your program feeling good about themselves, having improved their skills and looking forward to participating in the future.
2. Failure is not the same as losing. Athletes should not view losing as a sign of failure or a threat to their personal worth. Valuable lessons can come from losing such as the ability to persist in the face of obstacles.
3. Success is not equivalent to winning. Neither success nor failure should depend on the outcome of a contest or a win/loss record.
4. Success is found in striving for victory. Success is related to effort which is the only thing athletes have complete control over.

## **Weight Management and Nutrition for Youth Athletes**

*By Amanda Brown, MS, RD, CSCS*

*References:*

1. *Oppliger, R. A., Case, H. S., Horswill, C. A., Landry, G. L., Shelter, A. C. (1996). ACSM Position Stand: Weight loss in Wrestlers. Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise: 28 (10), pp. 135-138.*
2. *Rosenbloom, C. A., Coleman, E. J. (2012). Sports Nutrition: A Practice Manual for Professionals. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.*

Healthy weight management methods in combat sport athletes are of the utmost importance to ensure the athletes' optimal safety, health and performance. It is widely known that many combat sport athletes will engage in rapid weight loss techniques to be able to compete in a weight division that is below their normal, healthy body weight. Behaviors such as wearing plastic suits, using saunas, steam rooms, laxatives, diuretics, and severe food and fluid restriction are commonly seen in these athletes. Not only do these methods reduce water within the athlete's body, but they can also reduce their levels of electrolytes (sodium, calcium, potassium, chloride, magnesium), glycogen (stored energy for muscles and the brain), and possibly muscle mass. Athletes often believe that these losses may be quickly replenished in the short time in between weigh-ins and competition, however, this

is not true. It may take anywhere from 24-48 hours to replenish water, up to 72 hours to replenish glycogen, and weeks to rebuild muscle mass.

In addition to the stated nutrient losses, there are several health and performance related consequences to these rapid weight loss techniques. Calcium loss through cutting weight may reduce bone mineralization and therefore lead to an increased risk of stress fractures. Loss of other electrolytes may also lead to reduced functioning of the heart, kidneys, and respiratory system. Sub-optimal levels of glycogen can lead to impaired performance due to reductions in muscle strength, muscle endurance, concentration, memory, and mental processing speeds. Extreme nutrient imbalances and abnormal tissue metabolism may even lead to death, as has been seen in several collegiate wrestlers attempting to cut excessive amounts of weight.

There are several practices that coaches can implement to eliminate severe weight cutting in athletes:

- Coaches should always place athletes in a weight class that is at or very close to their normal weight.
- Coaches should require athletes to weigh themselves immediately before and after practice to monitor fluid losses. Fluids should be consumed during and after practice to replenish any fluids lost.
- Coaches should be aware of the signs of dehydration. They include increased thirst, dry or sticky mouth, dizziness, headaches, impaired mental focus, and dry skin. By the time an athlete is thirsty, they are most likely already dehydrated. Urine output and color are also good indicators of hydration. Light colored urine indicates adequate hydration, while dark yellow or orange urine indicates dehydration.
- Coaches should encourage athletes to eat a healthful diet year round in order to maintain an optimal performance weight.
- Coaches should strongly discourage the use of rapid weight loss techniques such as plastic suits, steam rooms, saunas, laxatives, diuretics, and severe fluid and food restriction.

The following are specific fluid and food recommendations to ensure adequate hydration and nutrition for healthy weight management.

Fluid recommendations for athletes:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Urine color should be light yellow.
- 2 hours before exercise, drink 2 (16 oz) cups of water.
- 15 minutes before exercise, drink 1-2 (8-16 oz) cups of water.
- During practice, athletes should consume fluids every 15-20 minutes. For practices lasting less than 1 hour, water is sufficient. Sports drink containing carbohydrates and electrolytes may be consumed during practices lasting more than 1 hour.



- Weigh in immediately before and after practice. Drink 3 cups (24 oz) of fluids for every pound lost at practice.

Food recommendations for athletes:

- Meals should be centered on eating whole, minimally processed foods such as lean proteins, naturally complex and simple carbohydrates, healthy fats, and plenty of vegetables. See the table below for healthy sources of each.

### **Whole Food Sources of Carbohydrates, Protein, and Fat**

Complex Carbohydrates	Grains (rice, oatmeal, quinoa, barley), starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash), and legumes (beans, lentils)
Simple Carbohydrates	Most fruits
Protein	Fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds
Fat	Olive oil, coconut oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, fatty fish

- Limit intake of processed foods high in fat and sugar such as chips, candy, sugary cereals, soda, energy drinks, sugary coffee drinks, and pastries.

In conclusion, coaches play an important role in upholding the USFL’s goal of eliminating weight cutting in these young athletes. It is recommended that athletes compete at their normal, healthy body weight and remain well nourished and hydrated year round.

### **USFL Weigh-In Procedures**

- Weigh-in is recommended to commence 3 hours prior to the start of competition. Athletes may not cut weight at the venue and may only weigh-in once. It is extremely important for the success of the event that athletes arrive on time to the weigh-ins. (Some larger tournaments may conduct weigh-ins the day before.)
- Weight cutting **is not permitted** for Youth Pankration athletes. Therefore, there will be no check scale and no second chance to weigh-in.
- A universal weight allowance of ½ pound is granted to each athlete to compensate for undergarments or shorts which are required to be worn at the weigh-in.
- All athletes shall receive a medical screening at the time of weigh-ins. This examination will include a check for nail length and contagious skin conditions.
- A rules briefing and safety equipment check will also be conducted at the weigh-ins.

- Most tournaments will utilize the Madison System of pooled age and weight groups based on actual weigh in.
- Fixed weight events allow for an additional penalized weight allowance of 2 penalty points per pound overweight. This allowance is only granted if the excessive weight is within the allowable weight spread parameters.

#### **Allowable Weight Spreads:**

- Under 50 lbs: 5 lbs. maximum differential
- 50 to 90 lbs: 7 lbs. maximum differential
- 90 to 140 lbs: 10 lbs. maximum differential
- 140 to 170 lbs: 15 lbs. maximum differential
- 170 to 220 lbs: 20 lbs. maximum differential
- Weight groups have an allowable age spread of 2 years.
- Certain waivers to increase parameters in age by 3 years may be considered, specifically for older high school age groups.
- Athletes under age 10 yrs have a maximum 5 lb weight differential.

## **General Rules of Class B Pankration**

- Takedowns, Ground Control, Submissions and Strikes. **Body Strikes above the collarbone and other vital points are prohibited.**
- Techniques must be executed with no ill intent and matches cannot be won by knockout, brutality or with deliberate intent to cause injury.
- Potentially dangerous strikes, takedowns and submissions are prohibited.
- Submissions must be executed with applied pressure, allowing time for the competitor to tap/submit before injury incurs.
- Strikes must be focused and delivered in a controlled manner ensuring proper placement.
- Matches are ultimately won by score or by a properly applied submission technique.

#### **Protective Gear**

- All competitors must compete with a mouthpiece. A quality double mouthpiece is highly recommended. Having a second mouthpiece in case of a loss or damage is also strongly recommended.
- Male competitors must wear a cup.
- Female competitors may wear a chest guard.
- Approved gloves, shin guards and headgear are required. The USFL has a listing of all approved gloves, shin guards and headgear. Vendors, users and manufactures of gear not included on the USFL list of approved gear may submit a sample to the USFL for approval.
- Gloves and other safety gear will be inspected prior to entering the competition area.

- Other protective gear such as knee pads, elbow pads, forearm guards are optional and subject to approval by officials.

### **Hand Wrapping for Pankration Competitors**

The use of hand wraps is mandatory for all Youth Pankration competitors. The rules for wrapping/taping hands are as follows:

- Use only soft surgical gauze and trainers/surgeons adhesive tape. The gauze shall be no more than 2 inches wide and shall not exceed 20 yards in length. The tape shall be no more than 1 1/2 inch wide and shall not exceed 10 yards in length. Due to the small size of MMA gloves and the small size of a youth's hands, use gauze and tape sparingly. These parameters are maximum amounts. Less can always be used.
- Tape must be at least 1 inch behind the knuckles when the hand is clenched in a fist.
- The only thing that may go on the knuckles is a pad that is made from the allotted length of gauze. When creating the pad be mindful of the size of the glove so that the hand can still fit without compromising circulation.
- Strips of tape may be placed between the fingers and must lay between the knuckles but not extending onto the actual knuckle bone.
- Tape may **never** be placed over the knuckles.
- The use of any water or other liquid on any part of the hand wrap is prohibited.
- It is prohibited to stack gauze and tape. (i.e., you may not layer gauze then tape then gauze then tape , etc.)
- **Nothing** may be placed underneath the gauze.

**\*Youth under age 16 have the option to use bag wraps rather than gauze and tape. Bag wraps are used alone and not covered with tape. Be aware that if the youth has small developing hands, the wrap does not have to go between the fingers.** The rest of the above rules apply.

### **Attire**

- Competitors may compete in board shorts, fight shorts, rash guards or a tight fitting t-shirt. Competitors are encouraged to wear traditional rash guards and grappling style shorts.
- Clothing with gripping material is not allowed.
- "Sliders" or padding is permitted under shorts.

- All clothing must be clean and in good repair. Buttons, zippers, metal or sharp objects are not allowed on clothing. Shorts may have pockets as long as they are velcro.
- It is strongly recommended that athletes have and use both a red and a blue rash guard or competition t-shirt.

### **Injury Protocol and Utilization of Medical Staff:**

- No coach or parent shall be allowed into the ring/cage/on the mat in an attempt to render aid to an athlete who has been injured during the course of a match prior to examination by a medical official. The referee shall stay with and protect the injured athlete until the medical official arrives. Coaches will be allowed into the ring/cage/on the mat once the medical official deems it is safe.
- Injury Time – Rules permit an athlete injured to have up to 2 minutes of injury recovery time under the supervision of medical official. An athlete may also take up to 5 minutes of recovery time if injured by a foul or an illegal technique. The medical official will clear the athlete to resume competition subsequent to the request for injury time.

### **Stoppage Due to Injury or Cut:**

- If the bout ending injury was due to a foul, the fouled fighter will be declared the victor. Unintentional fouls are still considered a foul. Intentional fouls may be grounds for immediate disqualification regardless of injury.
- If the bout ending injury was caused by no fault of the opponent the bout will be declared a draw.
- Blood Time – Athletes who are cut are afforded 2 minutes for medical support staff to stop bleeding. Excessive bleeding is grounds for fight stoppage as determined by the medical official. This time is also used to fix or retrieve missing or malfunctioning safety equipment.
- The medical official shall make the final determination as to whether an athlete is too injured to return to competition. Their decision is final, and not subject to appeal. Appeals by coaches/parents may be subject to a yellow/red card at the discretion of the referee.
- Medical consultation time shall not be charged against the athletes “injury time”.

### **Warnings vs Fouls:**

- Referees will halt the match, identify the offense and issue a penalty every time a foul is committed. Some fouls result in point deductions while others may result in disqualification.
- Warnings may be issued verbally and without stopping the action of the bout. The key difference between a warning and foul is that a warning is issued when the referee believes a foul is about to be committed.

### **Conduct of Coaches/Corner Persons:**

- A maximum of three coaches may be seated in their athlete's corner. Coaches must be licensed by the USFL to corner an athlete in competition.
- The inspector will advise the coach if unauthorized persons are mat side and summon security personnel if any further action is required.
- Coaches must remain seated during the bout.
- Coaches cannot speak to the referees during a bout.
- If a coach becomes irate or interferes with the bout, the referee shall stop the bout and issue him/her a yellow card warning. The next occurrence will result in a red card and removal from the corner.
- Coaches shall stay outside the ring or cage between rounds.
- The following items are allowed in the corner:
  - Ice bags
  - Clean sponges
  - Clean towels
  - Water in a clear plastic container
  - Bucket
  - Surgical tape
  - Extra Mouthpiece

### **Challenges:**

- Judgment calls by the referee cannot be overturned. Coaches may only challenge technical scoring errors such as wrong point values or if the wrong athlete received points.
- Video replays are not accepted unless both parties agree.
- Unjustified or excessive challenges may result in point deductions or banishment and may prevent additional challenges during the bout.
- Challenges that occur after the bout must be done via written petition to the USFL referee, promoter or parental advisory committee. This challenge must be due to an official's negligence that may have affected the outcome of the match.
- Petition for a change of rules must be submitted via written petition to the coaches, parents or promoters committee.

## **Fouls for all Levels of Pankration**

### **A. Striking Related Fouls**

1. Strikes to the face, head, back and spine.
2. Any strike to the knee joint; front, rear or side.
3. Kicks or strikes directed to the shins.
4. Elbow or forearm strikes of any kind.
5. All Strikes with the non-gloved portion of the hand.
6. Butting with the head.
7. Heel kicks to the Kidney or any other part of the body from the bottom.
8. Kicking the body of a downed opponent.
9. Stomping of a grounded fighter and up kicks from the grounded fighter.
10. Grounded knees are permitted only when executed with one knee touching the ground and one hand on opponent.
11. All striking techniques must be controlled and focused.

#### **B. Grappling Related Fouls**

1. Takedowns and throws designed or intended to cause injury.
2. Intentional slamming when performing a takedown or defending a submission.
3. Spiking the opponent to the floor onto the head or neck.
4. Flying Scissors style takedowns.
5. Back Splashing to escape a submission.
6. Small joint Manipulation.
7. Clawing, Pinching, Twisting the flesh or grabbing the clavicle, neck or trachea.
8. Neck Cranks.
9. All Twisting leg submissions.
10. Spine locks or twisters.
11. Bicep and Calf Slicers.

12. Straight Guillotines

13. All submissions must be executed with applied pressure not “cranked”, to allow reasonable time to submit prior to injury.

### **C. Other Fouls**

1. Holding opponent’s shorts or gloves.
2. The use of abusive language or unsportsmanlike conduct in the fighting arena.
3. Biting or spitting at an opponent.
4. Hair pulling.
5. Fish-Hooking.
6. Groin attacks of any kind.
7. Intentional placing finger or toe into any orifice or into any cut or laceration of your opponent.
8. Eye gouging.
9. Attacking an opponent after the round has ended or when referee halts the match.
10. Maliciously causing injury to an opponent or exploiting an injury.
11. Attacking an opponent on or during the break.
12. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee.
13. Throwing an opponent out of the fighting area.
14. Executing excessive non-scoring techniques.
15. Any Unreasonable conduct of any kind that may causes an injury to opponent or any officials.
16. Interference from a corner.
17. Flagrant disregard of the referee’s instructions.
18. Timidity.
19. Holding or grabbing the fence or ropes.

20. Weight cutting is not permitted.

21. Athletes may subject to testing for banned performance enhancing drugs.

**Section 2: Common names of Illegal techniques in Pankration**

*\* Additional techniques not listed below may also be illegal, view Section 1 for a detailed listing of illegal maneuvers.*

<b>SUBMISSION</b>	<b>STRIKING WEAPONS</b>	<b>TAKEDOWNS</b>
Heel Hook	Elbow Strike	Suplex to head
Toe Hold inside & outside	Forearm Strike	Salto to head
Hard reaping of knee	Head Butt	Pile driver
Crucifix	Open hand Slap	Spiking to head
Peruvian Neck Tie	Spear hand	Bull dogging
Can opener	Ridge hand	Head lock (without arm)
Twister	Palm Heel	Flying Scissors
Straight Guillotine	Knife hand	Body Slam
Ezekiel w/ bent neck	Hammer fist	Wrist lock throw
Mount Guillotine w/ arch	Stomp	Elbow lock throw
Bicep Slicer	Up Kick	Shot to knee
Calf Slicer	Haymaker	Football Tackle

**AGE MATRIX CONTAINING ADDITIONAL ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Length of round</b>	<b>Added legal techniques base on age</b>
Junior: ages 16 to 17	2 or 4 minute period	Knee Strikes & Leg Submissions
Cadet: ages: 14 & 15	2 or 4 minute period	Standing or Jumping Submissions
Schoolboy: ages 12 & 13	2 or 3 minute period	Arm in Guillotine, Anaconda, & D’arce Choke
Novice: ages: 10 & 11	2 or 3 minute period	Ground Striking
Rookie: age 8 & 9	2 or 3 minute period	

*Multi round bouts have 2 minute rounds*

*Catch age bouts defer to younger age group rules of prohibited techniques*

**Scoring**

USFL scoring is designed to facilitate and reward techniques that are advantageous in a combat scenario. As a developmental sport, our goal is to have athletes execute as many technical combinations as possible rather than delivering damage to their opponent. This makes USFL Pankration matches known for their extreme safety as well as their action and aggressiveness.

**Takedown (2 points):**

A Takedown occurs when a grappler has at least 3 supporting points on the mat.

Supporting points are:



- Feet/Foot
- Knee(s)
- Hands
- Forearm(s)
- Head
- Buttocks
- Lower back
- Upper back/Shoulder(s)
- A controlled back mount position can also be considered a takedown regardless of who is on top.

The top grappler must settle in a weighted and controlled top position for 3 seconds to receive the takedown point(s).

Additional takedown points cannot be scored unless one grappler reestablishes the neutral standing position for 3 seconds or if the match is restarted in the neutral standing position.

### **Push out (1 Point)**

This rule is waived if match is conducted inside a cage or ring.

### **Attempted Submission (2 points)**

Must be a high percentage submission placing opponent in danger of being submitted to earn a point. Additional points can only be earned once opponent has clearly escaped the previous submission.

### **Ground Control (2, 3 or 4 points)**

Each Ground Control Position may be scored only once adding up to a maximum of 9 points unless the controlled grappler reestablishes a neutral position with the full guard, reversal or neutral standing position.

- Side Control (2 points)
- Full Mount (3 points)
- Back Mount (4 points)

### **Re-Start Positions**

Both grapplers must be fully outside the marked boundaries to be considered out of bounds

- Neutral Position: Standing
- Guard Restart Position: Start in similar position
- Mount Position Restart: Start in similar position
- Side Control Restart Position: Start in similar position
- Back Control Restart Position: Both grapplers sit upright, top grappler has both hooks and an underarm seatbelt.

- Attempted Submission Restart: Matches will not be re started in a submission if the grapplers go out of bounds due to a natural progression during a submission attempt.

### **Stand-up Striking Techniques:**

Visible contact with shock or displacement of the body must be observed to receive body striking points. Strikes must be executed with correct form, torque, distance and follow through. Strike must also be unanswered meaning a clash of strikes by both athletes will not score points.

#### **2 points**

- Body Kick or Combination of punches

#### **1 point**

- Punch, Knee or Leg Kick

#### **0 points**

- Any strike not witnessed by the Referee.
- Any strike which is partially blocked before landing on a target area.
- Any body strike lacking clear contact and/or displacement to the opponent's body.
- Any striking technique in which the striker falls to the mat.
- A clash of strikes when there is no clear advantage to either competitor.
- Strikes in excess of 3 from a clinched position. (May be grounds for a stalling call at the discretion of the referee.)
- Leg kicks in excess of 3 without an alternating attack. (May be grounds for a stalling call at the discretion of the referee.)

### **Ground Control Striking Techniques:**

- The striker must be in top position: Side Mount, Reverse Side Mount, Scarf Hold, North/South, Knee on Belly, Back Mount or inside any Guard position to earn ground striking points.

#### **1 point:**

- A punch or knee strike
- A maximum of 3 striking points may be earned within any Guard position or combination of Guard positions. Side control variations may be considered different positions of control for ground striking purposes.

#### **0 points** (May be grounds for a stalling call at the discretion of the referee.)

- Excess of 3 strikes to a downed opponent from the same position of control.
- Striking without a position of control.
- Punches from a "Clinched" or non-upright posture while on the ground.
- Legs kicks to a downed opponent with control of a limb are allowed only as a set up for an actual scoring technique and score no points.

### **Stalling/Passivity (awards 1 point to the non-stalling/passive competitor)**

Stalling/Passivity is a technical penalty but cannot be used for disqualification or a technical submission. Competitors must constantly attempt to improve their position and earn points by positional control, strikes and submission attempts. The burden of action is applied to the competitor who initiated the position causing inactivity.

**Some examples of passivity:**

- Refusing to ground grapple after executing a takedown.
- Avoiding a takedown by “butt scooting”.
- Continuously backing up without any offensive techniques.
- Holding a mount, side control or back control position without attempting to advance the match (score points).
- Holding a Closed Guard with no serious attempt to score with submission or a reversal attempt.
- Laying or remaining static inside the Guard with no serious attempt to pass, submit or score striking points.
- Executing excessive non-scoring strikes on the ground without change of position.
- Executing excessive non-scoring strikes in a stand up clinch.
- Executing excessive non-scoring leg kicks.
- Defending a submission or scoring attempt **is not** considered passivity.
- In general 15 seconds of inaction (after a warning) is considered passivity before the point is awarded.
- Referees will award the opponent 1 point for each occurrence of passivity and restart to the neutral position unless the passive fighter was in a disadvantaged controlled position.

## **CONCLUSION**

We are a very small community so without you, others cannot compete. Participation by our entire community is essential to ensure success of the sport. Be sure to “empty your cup,” embrace this process and learn through your victories and defeats. You only lose when you refuse to learn. We hope that you forge life long bonds with your athletes and fellow coaches through this great journey. Keep in mind that we are shaping the future leaders of our country and we need everyone to be the best they can be. Always remember - Iron sharpens iron!

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