



# USFL JUDGES TRAINING MANUAL

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The purpose of this manual is to act as a training tool for judges with emphasis on procedures, duties, responsibilities, and expectations in Pankration events regulated by the United States Fight League (USFL). The primary goals are to preserve the integrity of the sport by fair and transparent judging practices.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Judges and their duties:**

All Judges are independent contractors licensed by the USFL and assigned to work with promoters at shows to score bouts. USFL Certified Referees are also qualified to Judge.

### **B. Qualifications:**

**A Judge is required to maintain the highest levels of integrity and therefore must meet the following criteria:**

Understand and apply the USFL scoring during a bout consistent with USFL Rules and Regulations.

Be knowledgeable in the protocols of scoring a bout.

Know legal and illegal USFL techniques for submission grappling, wrestling and striking techniques.

Be able to remain impartial when interacting with a promoter, athlete or coach.

Complete a written exam based on this manual.

### **C. Ethics**

#### **Code of Conduct**

Do not seek or accept any money, gift, service, favor, employment, or other economic opportunity, which would tend to influence or give the appearance of influencing a reasonable person on his/her position to depart from the neutral and impartial discharge of his/her duties.

Judges must not consume or be under the influence of any drugs or alcohol during while rendering services as an Inspector.

Never get into an argument with athletes, coaches, parents or spectators while maintaining the highest degree of professionalism towards athletes, promoters, coaches, spectators, the media and other staff members.

### **D. Conflicts of Interest - Socializing with fighters**

Understanding that perception may not be reality; the integrity of the sport is at risk when anyone (participants, coaches, spectators, media, etc.) perceive a conflict of interest.

Judges should protect themselves by avoiding assignments or supervision involving friends, family, gym partners, etc.

Judges should not celebrate with coaches or parents or show signs of enthusiasm if their athlete wins the bout. Any act of congratulations in a low key manner (such as a handshake) is acceptable. If ever in doubt, contact a head official.

### **E. Handling Media Issues**

All media requests must be approved by the USFL.

Do not publicly criticize or demean the performance of another referee or staff member.

Report the spreading of rumors or untrue information to a head official immediately.

Abstain from giving any personal opinions or views.

If placed in a position to deal with the media, make clear that you do not speak for nor represent the views of the USFL.

### **F. Judges Appearance:**

**All Judges shall wear the following attire during an event:**

Clean Shaven or Groomed appearance

Black pants or slacks

Black socks

Black sneakers or shoes

Belt

Black Polo Shirt

Red and Blue Wrist Bands

## **2. PRE-EVENT DUTIES**

### **A. Entering the venue**

Each judge should arrive at the venue at the indicated report time. If you feel you will not be able to meet this timeframe, notify the USFL head official as soon as possible. An official arriving late can cause a catastrophic chain reaction severely impacting the promotion.

Most venues will have a service or staff entrance that is separate from the general admission entrance. It is important to carry proper identification should a security checkpoint require you to prove your identity prior for clearance into the venue.

### **B. Pre event activities**

1. The head official will conduct rules review and go over any additional information relevant to the event.
2. The head official will provide a copy of the bout card to Judges. All Judges should review the bout card prior to start of event and inquire if any discrepancies.
3. Judges should meet and do a scoring criteria and protocol review before each event.

## **3. OPERATION OF BOUTS**

## **A. Judging Configurations: Cage, Ring or Open Mat:**

### **1. Open View Scoring – Score is visible as match progress**

**a. Center Referee** – Starts and stops that match; gives warnings and penalties; scores the grappling portion of the match as it progresses and protects fighters from injury to include obstacles and other unforeseen events. The Center referee may also be used to score ground striking points. The center referee will use the color wristband to identify which competitor receives the point(s).

**b. Side Referee/ Judge** – Scores standing striking points and protects fighters from obstacles or unforeseen events if on open mat. Striking points may be scored by 2 to 3 side referees or judges and added to the scoreboard under the guidance of the scorekeeper. Side referees may also use colored flags to signal striking points.

**c. Scorekeeper** - The scorekeeper will mark points as announced by the referee. Flip charts or electronic score boards may be used to display score.

One referee, judge or official may be assigned to physically check competitor's nails, ensure no unauthorized substance is applied on the body and check gloves, clothing and other safety equipment prior to entry of competition area. This check will be additional to inspections conducted by inspectors or regulatory staff.

### **2. Closed Scoring – Score is announced after bout**

**a. Center Referee** – Starts and stops that match; gives warnings and penalties and protects fighters from injury to include obstacles and other unforeseen events. The center referee will use the hand with color wristband to identify which competitor is charged with a foul or passivity.

**b. Side Referee/ Judge** – A team of two or three Judges recording the striking and grappling points as per the USFL Scoring system. If one athlete has executed an excessive amount of legal strikes or is perceived to be stalling/ passivity, the side referee may stand with the appropriate colored wristband or flag to signal the center referee. In the event of technical superiority the side referee may also stand holding both fists or flags in an “x” position. Two referees/ Judges must agree on stalling and technical superiority. Side referees may record points on paper, clickers or approved electronic scoring system. Side referee also protects fighters from obstacles or unforeseen events if on open mat.

One referee, judge or official will be assigned to physically check competitor's nails, ensure no unauthorized substance is applied on the body and check gloves, clothing and other safety equipment prior to entry of competition area. This check will be additional to inspections conducted by inspectors or regulatory staff.

**c. Scorekeeper** - The scorekeeper will add the total sum of side referee points to determine victor. If an electronic system is utilized, the scorekeeper will tend to the viewing monitor and ensure its in good working order.

Scoring Methods (Closed Scoring)

Total Points from all judges are added and divided by number of judges to determine winner.

(Recommended for events with two Judges.)

Two out of three Judges determine winner based on tally of points

### **3. Other Open mat option: Two Referee system, mostly used in a tournament setting**

**a. Center Referee** – Starts and stops that match; gives warnings and penalties; scores the grappling portion of the match as it progresses and protects fighters from injury to include obstacles and other unforeseen events. The center referee may also score stand up strikes that are missed or not in view of the Backup Referee. The center referee will also physically check one competitor's nails, ensure no unauthorized substance is applied on the body and check gloves, clothing and other

safety equipment. This check will be in addition to inspections conducted after weigh in or dressing room.

**b. Backup Referee / striking judge** – The Backup referee is positioned on the mat and at an opposing angle from the Center Referee. The primary function is to score all striking points and confirm the scorekeeper records the proper point value as scored by the center referee. The backup referee also protects fighters from obstacles or unforeseen events on the open mat. The Backup referee will also physically check one competitor's nails, ensure no unauthorized substance is applied on the body and check gloves, clothing and other safety equipment. This check will be in addition to inspections conducted after weigh in or dressing room. Class C referee may function as a center referee if under direct supervision of a class A official acting as a backup referee.

**Scorekeeper** - The scorekeeper will mark points as announced by the referee. Flip charts or electronic score boards may be used to display score.

### **B . Use of Scoring Devices-**

A. Clickers – Judges may use red and blue hand clickers to track points during a closed scoring bout. The total sum of points for each fighter should be recorded on a scorecard after each round but added as a total score upon completion of the match. Once match is completed the scorecards are handed to the referee or inspector who tally's the score.

B. Flags – Red and blue scoring flags may be used to score points during a open scoring bout. When awarding points, referees should not take eyes off of the fighters.

They will hold the color flag that corresponds with both fighters in their hands.

Raising the flag horizontally at head level signifies one point. Extending the flag straight overhead signifies two points.

The flag should be held for a minimum of a two count for each scoring occurrence.

## **4. FOULS AND PENALTIES**

### **A. Technical Penalties:**

Examples include: Failure to follow rules of the match, brutality/ punishment or disrespectful conduct by competitor or coach. Yellow and red cards should be displayed. A yellow card also results in one (1) technical penalty point for the opposing fighter.

1<sup>st</sup> offense will result in a point for the opponent. Yellow

2<sup>nd</sup> offense will result in a 2<sup>nd</sup> point for opponent. Yellow

3<sup>rd</sup> offense will result in disqualification. Red

### **B. Stalling:**

Stalling is a technical penalty and cannot be used for disqualification. This rule is used to promote technique and excitement in matches. Competitors must constantly attempt to improve their position and earn points by positional control, strikes and/or submission attempt.

The burden of action is applied to the competitor who initiated the position causing inactivity.

A closed fist raised overhand by the referee signals a passivity warning.

The Judges may also signal passivity or stalling by raising a closed fist with the appropriate color wristband of the offending fighter, however the referee will make the final determination and physically and verbally announce the passivity or stalling penalty.

### **Some examples of Stalling or passivity:**

- Refusing to ground grapple after executing a takedown. If a grappler executes a takedown he/she is responsible to engage their opponent and advance the match with either submission attempts, striking points or positional control points.
- Avoiding takedown by “butt scooting”. If a grappler “pulls guard” he/she is responsibly to engage their opponent and advance the match with either reversal or submission attempt.
- Continuously backing up.
- Holding a mount, side control or back control position without attempting to advance the match (score points) by strike, change of positional control or submission attempt. Holding a closed guard with no serious attempt to score with submission or reversal attempts.
- 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. The referee will give a verbal warning followed by a closed fist to indicate passivity. Referees will award the opponent 1 point for each occurrence of passivity.

## **5. SCORING**

### **A. Scoring of Grappling techniques:**

#### **1. Takedowns (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). The top grappler must settle in a weighted and controlled top position for 3 seconds to receive the takedown point(s). A takedown that results in a controlled back mount position may also be considered a take down even if the controlling grappler is not on top.

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

#### **2. Push out (1 Point) Open Mat only**

- One point is awarded to a grappler if their opponent steps or is forced out of bounds while in the standing neutral position. The grappler must have both feet clearly outside the competition area.
- The match should be halted after one exits the competition area and restarted in the center of the mat.
- Additional push out points cannot be earned until both competitors return to center mat.
- A push out point is not awarded if takedown points are also awarded or if the grappler has 2 or more supporting points touching the mat while going out of bounds.
- This rule is waived if match is conducted inside a cage or ring.

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

- One point is awarded to the grappler who makes a valid submission attempt and puts his/her opponent in danger of submission for a controlled count of 3 seconds.
- The referee will allow time to finish the submission in the event of a tech, sudden death or overtime.
- Only high percentage submission attempts will receive points and only when the referee or Judge perceives the opponent in danger of being submitted. Submission points are not awarded in pressure point attacks.

- Consecutive submission points can only be earned after each submission attempt is fully released or escaped with the grappler out of danger before the next submission attempt is applied.

#### **4. 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 a full guard, reversal or neutral standing position.

- Side Control (2 points): Awarded when a grappler gains top control by passing opponents Guard/ leg and hip defenses while keeping most of (45 degrees or greater) of opponents back to the mat for the control count of 3 seconds.
- Full Mount (3 points): Awarded when a grappler gains top control by passing opponents Guard/ leg and hip defenses and obtaining a mounted position with legs or knees straddled around opponent's torso for a controlled count of 3 seconds.
- Back Mount (4 points): Awarded when a grappler gains control of opponents back and "Grapevines" opponents legs or "Leg Triangles" the waist for the controlled count of 3 seconds. One hook/ grapevine can be considered back mount if both the hip and shoulders are controlled.

#### **B. Scoring of Striking Techniques:**

##### **1. Stand-up striking techniques:**

Visible contact with shock or displacement of the body must be observed to award body striking points. Strikes must be executed in good form with torque, distance and follow through and be unanswered.

##### 2 points

- A kick that clearly lands on a legal striking target of the body with proper torque, distance and follow through.
- A combination of punches where two or more unanswered strikes clearly land on a legal striking target with proper torque, distance and follow through.

##### 1 point

- A punch, hammer fist, knee delivered with proper torque, distance and follow through to a legal target area of the body.
- Kicks to the outer and inner thigh area with proper torque, distance and follow through. A maximum of 3 consecutive leg kicks may be scored before alternating to another scoring attack.
- A maximum of three strikes from a single clinched position to a legal striking target area of the body may be scored. Clinch position must be changed to earn additional striking points.

##### 0 points

- Any strike not witnessed by the Referee or Judge.
- Any strike which is partially blocked before landing to 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.
- Knees to legal areas of the legs.
- Strikes in excess of 3 from a clinched position.
- Leg kicks in excess of 3 without an alternating attack.

##### **2. Ground control striking techniques**

- 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.
- The striker must be in the top position, postured upright with elbow cocked shoulder level to earn ground striking points.

- A striker standing over a downed opponent must have control of a limb to receive striking points.
- Ground control strikes must be executed in full range of motion with proper torque, distance and follow through to receive points.

1 point

- A punch, knee strike delivered with proper torque, distance and follow through to any legal striking area.
- A Knee strike to the frontal ribs of a grounded opponent in accordance with legal striking targets. One knee must be on the ground to execute knee strikes on a downed opponent.

3 points

- Three or more "1 point strikes" which land on a downed opponent from the same positions of control.
- To earn additional points the striker must change/ adjust positions of control after every three (3) ground striking points are earned. Positions of control include "Side Mount", "Reverse Side Mount", "Scarf hold", "North/South", "Knee on Belly" and Back Mount. Side control variations and switching of sides may be considered positional adjustments and allow additional striking points.
- All forms of the "Guard" are considered neutral and the same position of ground control for striking points. A maximum of 3 striking points may be earned within any Guard position or combination of Guard positions.

0 points

- Excess of 3 strikes to a downed opponent from the same position of control.
- Striking without position of control.
- Striking from a bottom position.
- Punches or forearms in a "Clinched" or non-upright posture while on the ground.
- Striking legal areas of the legs.
- 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.



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