



USFL REFEREE TRAINING MANUAL

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this manual is to act as a training tool for referees to perform referee tasks with emphasis on procedures, duties, responsibilities, and expectations in Class B Pankration bouts regulated by the United States Fight League (USFL). The primary goals are to ensure the health and safety of the participants and to preserve the integrity of the sport. An additional Association of Boxing Commissioners (ABC) approved Mixed Martial Arts referee course is recommended for all referees and required to officiate Class A (Full Contact) bouts.

A. Referees and their duties:

All referees are independent contractors licensed by the USFL and assigned to work with promoters at their events to enforce USFL rules and regulations. USFL Pankration referees are classified into three levels based on experience. Referees are also certified to act as a judge for all levels of Pankration bouts.

B. Referee Configurations: (May be used as outlined below or in combination as approved)

Cage, Ring or Open Mat:

Open View Scoring – Score is visible as match progress (Rarely used)

- Center Referee – Starts and stops that match; gives warnings and penalties. May be used to score the grappling portion of the bout. 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).
- 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.
- 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 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.

Closed Scoring – Score is announced after bout

- 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. The center referee may also signal grappling/ ground striking points but the judge is the ultimate recorder of points at their discretion.
- Side Referee/ Judge – A team of two or three Judges (3 is always recommended) 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 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.
- 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) Bout is scored from total tally of points not per round.

1. Two Judges – (Not Recommended) Total Points from all judges are added and divided by number of judges to determine winner.
2. Three Judges (Recommended) - Two out of three Judges determine winner based on tally of points

Other Open mat option: Two Referee system, mostly used in a tournament setting

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

C. Qualifications:

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

- Be knowledgeable of the rules governing the stoppage of bout by the Referee or medical official.
- Be knowledgeable in the protocols and scoring for officiating a bout.
- Be fit enough to move around the competition area and assume numerous positions necessary to view bouts from all angles, standing and on ground.
- Know and understand legal and illegal techniques for submission grappling, wrestling and striking techniques.
- Be knowledgeable of the rules governing hand wraps, gloves, approved substances, and approved/required equipment allowable in a match.
- Be able to remain impartial when interacting with a promoter, athlete or coach.

- Be able to exhibit a demeanor of control of the dressing / warm up area and the activities of the coaches and participants at mat, ring or cage side.
- Be knowledgeable of the rules governing the conduct of coaches in the dressing rooms and in the corner at mat, ring or cage side.
- Complete a criminal background check, Concussion awareness training and any other training deemed necessary.

D. 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.
- Referees 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.

Conflicts of Interest - Socializing with fighters, and/or coaches.

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.

- Referees should protect themselves by avoiding assignments or supervision involving friends, family, gym partners, etc.
- Referees 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.
- Advise the lead official if any ties or conflicts with an individual you may be assigned to officiate.

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.

E. Referee Appearance:

All Referees shall wear the following attire during an event:

Groomed appearance

Black pants or slacks

Black socks

Black sneakers or shoes without a heel

Belt

USFL Polo Shirt

Red and Blue Wrist Bands

Yellow and Red Cards

The attire must allow the referee to move freely about in and out of the cage, ring or mat.

2. PRE-EVENT DUTIES

A. Entering the venue

Each referee 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

The head official will conduct rules review and go over any additional information relevant to the event.

The head official will obtain a copy of the Bout Card, make referee assignments, disclose dressing room/ warm up area locations, establish where the participants will enter and exit the mat, ring or cage, establish where Medical staff will be positioned. Ensure the Venue and competition area is inspected and all required documentation reviewed.

C. Ring, Mat or Cage Inspection

Ring:

- The ring floor shall extend beyond the ropes not less than 18 inches. The fighting area mat or canvas shall be padded and padding must extend beyond the ring ropes and over the edge of the platform.
- The ring platform shall not be more than four feet above the floor of the building, and shall be provided with suitable steps for use of contestants.
- Ring ropes shall be at least five in number, not less than one inch in diameter; the lower rope 6 inches above the ring floor. The referee must periodically check the ropes during the course of the event to ensure they have not become loosened.
- An adult safety person must post on each side of the ring if platform is elevated 3 feet or over. Smaller athletes may be at risk of falling through the ropes even if five are used.

Cage:

- The fighting area mat or canvas shall be padded in a manner as approved by USFL, with foam padding.
- The fighting area canvas area shall be enclosed by a fence made of such material as will not allow a fighter to fall out or break through it onto the floor or spectators, including, but not limited to, vinyl

coated chain link fencing. All metal parts shall be covered and padded in a manner approved by USFL and shall not be abrasive to the contestants.

- The fence shall have two separate entries onto the fighting area canvas.
- The referee should thoroughly inspect the enclosure making sure that the cage door opens and closes and is able to be secured. The enclosure should be put together correctly providing a smooth and stable surface free from defect.

Open Mat:

- Must be a Judo, Jiujitsu or wrestling style mat padded in a manner as approved by USFL with a minimum of 20' competition area.
- Padding shall extend a minimum of 3 feet beyond the fighting/ competition area.
- The mats should be affixed or taped together without space, clean and in good condition.
- Elevated mats shall not be more than 3 feet above the floor of the building, have suitable steps or ramp for participants and have a minimum of 5 feet beyond the fighting area.

E. Rules Meeting

All athletes and coaches must attend a mandatory rules meeting from the head referee prior to the event. The rules briefing will occur either just before or after weigh in for shows and at start of event if a tournament. The rules briefing should cover at a minimum.

- Code of conduct for athletes and coaches to include discussion of yellow red cards.
- Illegal techniques and fouls. Recommended that this portion is read from a script that can be referenced later if a coach or athlete disputes instructions after the bout.
- The general operation of event from dressing/ staging area requirements, gear inspections and pre and post bout medical procedures.
- Events with beginners should also cover scoring criteria.
- Athletes should be advised of policy prohibiting lubricants or gels on body or hair, offensive odors, and that their finger and toe nails are to be trim.
- Coaches should be advised of the challenge procedures.
- Time for a question and answer period should be allotted after the rules meeting.

3. GEAR INSPECTIONS

- A primary gear inspection should occur during weigh in to ensure athletes have the required competition safety gear. This may be done by the inspector or referee.
- A final gear check will be conducted by a referee before contestants enter cage, mat or ring.
- A comprehensive gear inspection will occur at the dressing room or warm up area to ensure none of the safety gear has been modified. The comprehensive inspection includes:

A. Taping of Hands : *All Athletes must have some form of taping*

Referees are often asked to help inspectors during locker room inspections.

- 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.

- A protective wrap is an option for the smallest athletes but and used to support the wrist and thumb and not cover the knuckles. One inch Surgeons tape must be used with 4 wraps around the wrist and twice around the thumb.

Additionally, no wrapping of any part of the body may occur unless the area has been reviewed by a member of the medical staff, to include knees, elbows, thighs, etc, to ensure contagious skin conditions are not masked. If any participant arrives pre wrapped for the medical inspection, the wrap in question **MUST** be removed for inspection, no exceptions.

B. Gloves

- Condition: look for any scuffing, scratches, scarring.
- Cleanliness: look to see if the gloves are soiled in any way.
- Padding: make sure padding is evenly distributed particularly in the knuckle area, not “pinched,” nor with padding broken.
- If gloves are used more than once at single event make sure water absorption is not present (all leather breathes, therefore, a pair of gloves used in the first bout of a night may have taken on water due to sweat inside the glove or excessive water being used in the corner during the bout).
- Inspect and make sure the gloves are not skinned or manipulated in any way.
- Tape will be placed around wrist area of the glove with referees initial after inspection has been completed.

C. Shin Guards

- Condition: look for any tears, scuffing, scratches, scarring.
- Cleanliness: look to see if the shin guards are soiled in any way.
- Padding: make sure padding is evenly distributed not “pinched,” nor with padding broken.
- Inspect and make sure the shin guards are not skinned or manipulated in any way.

C. Headgear

- Condition: look for any tears, scuffing, scratches, scarring.

- Cleanliness: look to see if the headgear is soiled in any way. If headgear is used multiple times during an event it must be cleaned each time prior to use.
- Padding: make sure padding is evenly distributed not “pinched,” nor with padding broken.
- Inspect and make sure the headgear is not skinned or manipulated in any way.
- Inspect and make sure no sharp edges or exposed buckles or any other condition that may pose a threat to the participant.

4. APPEARING TO THE RING/CAGE/ MAT

Prior to entering competition area the referee shall conduct a final safety equipment check.

Referees should not begin inspection until all non-competition clothing and gear is removed. A two minute grace period is permitted for athletes who are not properly equipped. Referees may issue up to a two point penalty to any athlete reporting without all required gear.

A top to bottom search is ideal to ensure nothing is missed.

- Headgear should be checked for tight fit.
- Hair clips may not be worn (Soft bands may be used to tie hair)
- Hair, ears, face, neck, arms and legs should be checked for lubricants or gels.
- Referees shall inspect mouthpieces while in the contestant’s mouth to ensure proper fit.
- Referee should squeeze and pull gloves to ensure no unauthorized fillers or objects are inside and that gloves fit snug.
- Fingernails and toenails should be checked for sharpness and length.
- Groin protectors shall be checked by having the male athlete knock on his cup.
- Optional chest protectors are allowable for female athletes.
- Athletes should not have make up, body or piercing jewelry.
- Shin guards should be squeezed to ensure no unauthorized fillers or objects are inside.
- Blue or Red tape is affixed properly to identify corner and not pose a safety risk.
- Ankle Bands: (Used in multiple participant tournaments whene tape is not used)

Once called to the competition area, competitors will put on their designated color ankle band.

Bands may be worn on arm if shin guards get in the way.

Colored rash guard, fight shorts, Gloves or protective gear may be used in lieu of bands.

A. Tournaments:

Only authorized persons are allowed to enter the ring, Mat or cage.

- Athletes should be called to the staging area with a minimum of two bouts before them. Tardy athletes will receive a five minute grace period to appear before being disqualified. Their name and gym should be announced on several occasions during this grace period.
- The staging official will give the athletes a bout sheet and assign them a mat to report to.
- Both competitors will report to their assigned mat, hand over the bout sheet to the mat official and remain in the vicinity of the mat until called to compete.
- Prior to the match referees will double check that competitors have appropriate protective gear and gloves.
- Athletes must be afforded a minimum of 15 minute rest period between bouts.

B. Shows/ Dual Meets:

Only authorized persons are allowed to enter the ring, Mat or cage.

- Athletes should remain in the dressing room/ warm up area until called to compete.
- A Referee or staging official will retain a posted order of bouts and ensure on deck athletes are ready to go with all their equipment.
- Once called to compete, competitors will be escorted to the ring, cage or mat by a staging official or referee.
- No coach/support staff may enter between rounds without having cleaned the soles of their feet on a disinfectant towel placed at the entrance of the ring/cage to ensure hygienic competition areas. Shows with heels that may damage the competition surface are not permitted in the ring, cage or mat.

5. THE ROLE OF THE REFEREE DURING THE CONTEST

A. Dealing with Injuries and using medical staff

- No coach or parent shall be allowed into the ring/cage/ mat to attempt to render aid to an athlete who has been injured, during the course of a match before the Medical Official has examined the athlete. Referees should stay with and protect the injured athlete until the medical official arrives. The mouthpiece should be removed if unconscious. Coaches will be allowed into the ring/cage/ mat once the physician deems it is safe.
- Injuries – The bout may be halted for a medical consultation at any point the referee believes an athlete is injured. The athlete has up 5 minutes of recovery time if injured by a foul or illegal technique. The referee may halt the bout at anytime when he/she believes the athlete is hurt or in distress to make a determination if the bout should be ended. This can be used to examine a crying or ill athlete or if requested by the athlete themselves. Always try to utilize the medical official to determine if injury warrants stoppage of bout.
- Stoppage due to injury or Cut:
 - (a) If the injury was due to a foul (that ends the bout) the fouled fighter will be declared the victor.
 - (b) Blood Time – Athletes cut are afforded 2 minutes time for medical support staff to stop bleeding. Excessive bleeding is grounds for fight stoppage as determined by the medical official.
 - (c) Referee may halt the match at any time to evaluate if an injured athlete can continue. Referees must prevent situations where an injured athlete can be “finished off” while injured.
 - (d) Medical consultation time shall not be charged to athletes injury time.
 - The medical official shall make the final determination if an athlete is too injured to compete. 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.

B. Handling the Coaches/ Corner persons

- A maximum of three coaches may be seated in their athlete’s corner.
- Coaches must remain seated during the bout.
- Coaches cannot speak to referees during a bout.

- In open scoring bouts, Coaches may challenge a technical mistake by the referee, scorekeeper or timekeeper, such as the wrong competitor receiving a point. A challenge is only done by throwing the provided challenge block into the competition area and/or waiting for the center referee to halt the bout at the appropriate time.
- If a coach becomes irate or interferes with the bout the referee shall stop the bout and issue him/her a yellow card warning that the next occurrence will result in a red card and removal from the corner.
- The following are allowed in the corner:
 - Ice bags
 - Clean sponges
 - Clean towels
 - Water in a clear plastic container
 - Bucket
 - Surgical tape
 - Extra mouthpiece

C. In Between Rounds

- Referees should ensure the cage door is locked and all officials are ready and in place before starting a round.
- Any Ice or water is spilled onto the competition area is cleaned up promptly and before the start of the next round. All surfaces shall be as dry as when corners entered, when they exit. Any ice used must be in a bag.
- Coaches are not permitted to enter the competition area between rounds. Referees should ensure no lubricants, gels or unauthorized substances are applied or given to fighters.
- The timekeepers 10 second warning between rounds signals the end of coach's instructions and preparation period for athletes.
- Prior to the start of the bout and after the winner is announced the referee shall require both athletes to shake hands. All other non-competitive contact should be discouraged unless specifically requested by a referee. Touching gloves or slapping hands will not be penalized nor would the fighters attempt at exploiting this gesture to score.
- Non authorized or non licensed coaches may not enter the cage or ring between rounds.

D. Crowd control

- The promoter must assign security personal to keep spectators away from the competition area and enforce the flash photography limitation. The referee may call time and stop the action to warn offenders if this occurs during a match.
- No one is permitted to use flash photography near the ring, cage or mat during a contest because it can temporarily blind the athletes and the referee.
- Referee may halt the match and wait for security to respond if any actions outside the cage become a distraction to either athletes or officials.

D. Equipment malfunction

- **Contact Lens:**

The fighter may call for injury time during a period of non-scoring or non-scramble for positional advantage to advise the referee. If the referee detects the lens falling out, he/she should call for time and stop the action at an appropriate time as not to interfere with a scoring opportunity or positional advantage. The referee should give the fighter's corner an opportunity to wash the contact lens before placing it to the fighter's eye. The fighter has the option to compete without the lens and/or remove his/her other lens. Up to five minutes of injury time may be used.

- **Glove or Safety gear malfunction:**

It is the athletes and coach's responsibility to ensure gloves and safety gear are properly fitted and functioning. In the event of a glove or safety gear malfunction, the referee should wait until appropriate time as not to interfere with a scoring opportunity or positional advantage unless the malfunctioning equipment poses a safety risk to one of the fighters. Example, a dislodged glove or shin guard would pose a risk during a striking exchange but not during a scramble for position or submission. When the referee halts the action, he/she should call for time and allot up to five minutes of injury time to fix the equipment. If the equipment cannot be fixed within the remaining injury time, the fighter shall be disqualified.

- **Replacing the mouthpiece**

If a fighter's mouthpiece falls out during the bout, the referee should call for time and stop the action at an appropriate time as not to interfere with a scoring opportunity or positional advantage. The referee should give the fighter's corner an opportunity to wash the mouthpiece before placing it to the fighter's mouth. Repeated episodes can be treated as passivity and penalized.

- **Technical emergencies such as lighting failures, cage door malfunction, etc**

If a technical malfunction occurs that poses a risk to the safety or integrity of the bout the referee should immediately halt the bout, call for time and consult with the head official to ensure the problem is resolved.

- **How to handle a fighter who falls out of the ring or off mat.**

If a fighter falls out of the ring or cage, time should be called and the medical official should be called to examine the fighter for injury. If the fighter is too injured to continue the bout will be declared a draw unless a foul caused the fighter to fall out of the ring or cage.

G. Stopping the contest

- **Injury**

The referee has the responsibility to halt the match at anytime he or she believes a fighter is injured. If this occurs, the referee shall call time and summon the medical official to conduct an evaluation or just end the bout.

- **Superiority**

If one fighter earns a 20 point advantage during any single period, the referee has the discretion to end the match by Technical Superiority. Technical penalty points do not apply towards the 20 points advantage for stoppage purposes.

- **Punishment**

If one athlete is using his/her superiority to punish their opponent and not score points the referee shall call time and warn the fighter. If the conduct continues, the referee may call time and issue a one point penalty. The 3rd offense of punishment will mandate disqualification.

- **How to handle a fighter in a submission hold who isn't tapping**

The referee has full discretion and responsibility to end a match once a submission hold is properly applied regardless if the fighter taps or not. A submission that is called by the referee is a judgment call for safety and not appealable.

6. OPERATION OF BOUTS

Each fighter is allotted up to three coaches. It is also a coach's responsibility to ensure their fighter receives the correct points for scoring techniques (as granted by the referee) by monitoring the scoreboard for errors.

A. Challenges – (Open scoring only) Each corner will be supplied with challenge block, made of towel or other soft item that can be thrown into the competition area when a challenge occurs. (For open scoring bouts)

- Judgmental calls by the referee cannot be overturned. Coaches may only challenge technical errors such as misidentified fouls or awarding the wrong point value.
- Coaches must state any other challenge before their competitor exits the mat/ competition area if in a tournament.
- Unjustified, excessive or needless challenges may result in a yellow or red card.
- Challenges that occur after the bout must be done via written petition to the USFL Referee, promoters or parental advisory Committee. The challenge must be due to an official's negligence and affect the outcome of the match.

B. Restarts

The bout may be restarted in the standing neutral position in the event of a stalemate or when both competitors are on the ground for an excess of 15 seconds with no additional advantage imminent. Points may be awarded in conjunction with the rules of passivity. Center referee may look to side referees for conformation of stalling.

Re-Start Positions

- **Neutral Position:** Neutral position occurs at the beginning of the match, when one or both Grapplers go out of bounds before a takedown is established or upon a stale mate. Both grapplers stand opposite one other in the center of the mat with both feet inside the inner circle. When in neutral position, neither wrestler has control.
- **Guard Restart Position:** The Guard Restart is ordered when both Grapplers go out of bounds in any Guard position. Both Grapplers assume the same top and bottom role at the center of the mat when the action is restarted. The Referee will re-start the match in the "Closed Guard", "Half Guard" or "Butterfly Guard" closely resembling the last position prior to going out of bounds. Arm positions should also closely resemble that of the previous position. When in the Guard position, neither Grappler has "Ground Control".
- **Mount Position Restart:** The Mount position restart is ordered when a Grappler has been awarded points for the mount position and the action goes out of bounds while maintaining control over the opponent. Both Grapplers assume the same top and bottom role at the center of the mat when the action is restarted. The Referee will start the match in the Mount position with the top Grapplers

knees straddling the torso of the bottom Grappler. Arm positions should closely resemble that of the previously controlled position.

- **Side Control Restart Position:** The Side Control restart position is ordered when a Grappler has been awarded points for a side control position and the action goes out of bounds while maintaining control over the opponent. Both Grapplers assume the same top and bottom role at the center of the mat when the action is restarted. The Referee will re-start the match in either “Side Mount”, “Reverse Side Mount”, “Scarf Hold”, “North/South” or “Knee on Belly” closely resembling the last position prior to going out of bounds. Arm positions should also closely resemble that of the previously controlled position.
- **Back Control Restart Position:** The Back Control Restart position is ordered when a Grappler has been awarded points for the Back Mount and the action goes out of bounds while maintaining control over their opponent. Back Control Restart occurs at the center of the mat with the down wrestler sitting up with legs extended and bent. The top Grappler is centered on the back either with the “Grapevine” or “Triangle” leg position as before the match was halted. The top Grappler will have the Seat Belt Lock under opponent’s arm upon re-start.
- **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 an attempted submission attempt. Officials may allow the match to progress out of bounds as long as it is safe to do so. The match must be halted and restarted center mat if the Grapplers are in danger of coming off the mat or entering another competition area. The grappler who had the advantage will have the choice of re-start in the last dominant position, neutral standing or guard position. Note: If a grappler executes an illegal slam or forces the action out of bounds in an attempt to escape a submission, he/she will be called for a “catch” and lose the match. Referee may break the hold if any fighter using the guard or attempted submission is fully elevated above opponents hips to prevent slamming.

C. Time keeping:

- Time starts when the referee starts the match and halts each time the match is stopped.
- The timekeeper will give an audible and physical signal when time expires.
- The referee is the only one who may call a time out during a bout.
- In multi round events the timekeeper shall give a 10 second warning prior to the end of the round and rest period.

D. Scorekeeper:

- Flip charts or electronic score boards may be used to display score.
- The scorekeeper will mark points and track penalties and warnings as announced by the referees.
- A back up scorekeeper using pen and paper is strongly recommended in the event of a scoreboard malfunction.

E. Determining winner of the bout:

The winner of the match will be determined by one of the following:

- Competitor with the most recorded points at the conclusion of the match wins.
- Competitor who causes opponent to submit by tapping or by verbal announcement.
- Disqualification.
- Referee stops bout for safety of participant or properly applied submission. Note: ANY sounds coming from opponent in a submission may be grounds for calling a match. This is a judgment call by the referee and not subject to appeal.
- 20 Point advantage is considered a technical submission and can end the match at referee’s discretion. (20 points per round if multiple periods) Technical penalty points do not count.

- A two or less point advantage can be considered a tie and send the match into overtime. (In single round matches ONLY) Following the overtime period, the highest scoring athlete will be declared the winner.
- Overtime - The overtime period score will be added to the actual end of regulation score to determine winner of the match (True tie if multi round bout or 2 or less point deficit if one round bout. One additional overtime period will be conducted if the score is a true tie after the 1st overtime period. A sudden death period will follow if the score remains a true tie.

7. POST BOUT PROCEEDURES

Tournament:

- Upon the conclusion of the match the victor will sign the bout sheet verifying ensure they are recorded as the winner on the bout sheet. Both competitors will promptly return to the staging area with the bout sheet listing the name of the victor and method of win (Score, Submission, DQ etc..)
- Both athletes will be screened for injury. If an injury is encountered, the injured athlete will be sent for a further evaluation which shall be recorded on the bout sheet or other applicable recording document.

Show/ Dual Meet:

- Upon conclusion of the match, both competitors will be screened for injury, and if an injury is noted that athlete will be sent for a further evaluation which shall be recorded on the injury log.

A. Post injury screening:

After an initial medical screening, athletes who may have suffered damaging blows to the head, cuts, or excessive dehydration will be escorted to the dressing room or medical area by a referee, Inspector or medical official. The three 'W's' should be used as a final screening- Wait, Watch, and Water.

- Wait - It is the officials responsibility to ensure the athlete "waits" until cleared to leave by the medical official.
- Watch - Referee or medical officials should take the time to talk with the athletes that have returned to the dressing room or medical area after the bout. It is also a good idea to talk to the coach, and ask, "How's your guy or gal doing?" In particular, you should look for any signs of a concussion or dehydration such as stated below.
- Water - Encourage the athlete to hydrate slowly. Do not allow them to consume too much water quickly.
- Any signs of concussion or dehydration should be brought to the attention of a medical official promptly.

B. Concussion Symptoms:

Lethargy/fatigue

Loss of concentration

Headache

Dizziness

Imbalance of gait

Poor/slowed coordination
Slurred speech
Confusion
Blurred vision
Wanting to go to sleep

E. Dehydration Symptoms:

Lack of sweat after bout
Decreased coordination
Fatigue
Impaired judgment
Loss of elasticity in the skin (To test this, pinch the skin. It should spring back to normal immediately. If the skin stays in the pinch form and slowly returns to normal, this is a sign of dehydration.)

8. SUSPENSIONS

A. Medical

- Athletes injured in training and/or competition may be placed on a medical suspension by the examining medical official.
- An athlete choked unconscious shall be placed on 30 days medical suspension.
- An athlete who receives a joint or bone injury shall be placed on 60 day medical suspension. Must obtain a written doctors clearance before resuming competition prior.
- An athlete who receives a concussion shall be placed on 90 day medical suspension. Must obtain a written doctors clearance before resuming competition.
- An athlete who receives two concussions within a 6 month period shall be placed on 6 month medical suspension. Must obtain a doctors letter of clearance to resume competitions.
- An athlete who receives three concussions within a 1 year period shall be placed on 1 year medical suspension. Must obtain a doctors letter of clearance to resume competitions.
- Medical Official is the final authority on suspensions and length of suspensions.

B. Conduct

- Athletes or coaches who flagrantly violate rules of safety or sportsmanship may be placed on suspension by the USFL coaches committee.
- The offending athlete and/or coach will have 10 days to challenge the allegation resulting in suspension.

9. REFEREE PROTOCOLS FOR OPEN SCORING:

Referees will be uniform in the execution of official decisions. The following section defines the appropriate protocol for a referee during a match:

A. Verbal:

During the course of refereeing a match, there are several reasons why the referee must communicate with the fighters, coaches, and/or crowd. For uniformity of command, the following list was created:

- Awarding a Point- State the NUMBER of points, then the COLOR of the fighter whose points are being awarded, then state the REASON why the points are being awarded (i.e.,- "Two, Blue, Side Control" -or- "Three, Red, Takedown with Elevation").
- Awarding Multiple Points- Referees cannot combine points (i.e., two takedown points and two side control points simultaneously are NOT four total points. They are two points and two points). To announce the points, call them individually "Two, Blue, Takedown...(Pause)...Two, Blue, Side Mount!"
- Warning for stalling- When warning for stalling, referees will call "Action" followed by the color of the fighter being warned. If both fighters are at risk for stalling, call "Action Fighters".
- When pausing a match- If a referee decides to pause the match because fighters are going off the mat, out of the ring, a foul has occurred, time has been called, etc. the command for the fighters is "Break".
- To stop the clock, the referee must call "Time".

B. Visual:

During the course of a match, there are several hand signals that must be given to direct coaches, other referees, and audience toward the guidance being provided. For uniformity of command, the following list was created:

- Awarding Points- When awarding points, referees should not take eyes off of the fighters. They will hold up the hand that has the color of the fighter being awarded the points, and display thumb only for one point, thumb and index for two points, thumb, index, and middle for three points, or tuck the thumb in a traditional "four" for four points.
- Awarding Multiple Points- Referees cannot combine points (i.e., two takedown points and two side control points simultaneously are NOT four total points. They are two points and two points). Appropriate hand signals for points will be awarded separately.
- Hand positions should be held for a minimum of a two count for each scoring occurrence.
- Warning for stalling- Referees will hold the fouling fighter's colored hand in the air, fingers curled into a fist.
- When pausing a match- Referees will disengage both fighters by placing a hand on each fighter to pause the action and separate them to their corners (if applicable), or on their feet in the center (if applicable).
- Referees shall use a low sweeping hand motion to concur with a count. (Example: Three sweeps signify 3 seconds of control and 15 sweeps signify 15 seconds of inactivity or stalling.)

C. Use of Flags with side Referees - Side Referees/ Judges may employ flags when scoring striking points.

- 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.

10. FOULS AND PENALTIES

Inevitably, referees are placed into a position of dealing with fouls when one fighter breaks the rules. It is left to the referee's discretion as to whether to label the foul "intentional" or "unintentional". IF A FOUL IS LABELLED "INTENTIONAL" OR "MALICIOUS" BY THE CENTER REFEREE, THE OFFENDING FIGHTER WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED! For "unintentional" fouls, which have the tendency to occur more often than intentional fouls, there are two methods of handling the foul: Verbal and Halting the Action.

- A referee may advise one or both fighters at any time when they are at risk of fouling the other fighter. These warnings must be issued verbally, with no break in the contact.
- Once the Referee interjects, or TOUCHES either fighter in ANY way, the match must be stopped, the fighters sent to neutral corners, the offending fighter warned, the fouled fighter examined, and a foul point awarded.
- When a foul occurs:
Referees will pause the match. Then:
 1. Separate the fighters
 2. Send fighters to neutral corners
 3. Check on the fouled fighter
 4. When able to continue, bring fighters to center
 5. Award points to the fouled fighter
 6. Reset match
 7. If fighter is injured the referee shall stay with the injured athlete until medical support takes over care.

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.

1st offense will result in a point for the opponent. Yellow
2nd offense will result in a 2nd point for opponent. Yellow
3rd 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.

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

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

- **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.

C. Penalties from Fouls

If a technique injures a competitor the following will determine the referee action:

1. Was the illegal technique delivered with ill intent or accidental?
2. Was the illegal technique no fault to either competitor or a due of a fighter's negligence to protect him/herself?

A warning can only be issued for a foul that is about to happen. All fouls shall be penalized by one point after occurrence. The referee will break the action to clearly address the fouls and issue the penalty point.

- 1st accidental foul/violation will result in 1 point for the fouled competitor.
- 2nd accidental violations will result in a 1 additional point for the fouled competitor.
- 3rd accidental violation will disqualify.
- Injuries caused the "fouled" fighter's negligence will not be charged to the executer. If the injury ends the bout, the "fouled" fighter will lose by injury default.
- If a bout ending injury is due to a foul, either unintentional or intentional, the fouled fighter will be declared the victor.
- If the bout ending injury was caused by no fault of either fighter, the uninjured athlete will be declared the winner. A "No fault" injury is defined as an injury that does not involve the contest itself or an injury where both athletes are equally at fault.

• Listing of Fouls:

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 aside from hammerfist.
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.

Common names of Illegal techniques in Pankration

SUBMISSION	STRIKING WEAPONS	TAKEDOWNS
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 w/o Arm	Spear hand	Bull dogging
Can opener	Ridge hand	Head lock (without arm)
Twister	Palm Heel	Flying Scissors W/O Connect
Straight Guillotine	Knife hand	Body Slam
Ezekiel w/ bent neck	Finger poke	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

Age Group	Length of round	Added legal techniques based on age
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, & Darce 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

** See Article VIII for additional information on age groups and length of bouts*

11. 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 3 seconds 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.

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.
- Punches or knees to legal areas of the legs.
- Strikes in excess of 3 from a clinched position.

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.

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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