

Acknowledging the fact that mixed martial arts is an ever increasing popular sport, and that there existed a critical need for the formal training of Judges and Referee, TCB Mixed Martial Arts Competitions promoter Sifu Zaya in conjunction with the Australian Government have conducted an MMA Judges/Referee training course.

The 2nd of MMA Judges and Referee course took place on August 15th 2009, with a variety of participants ranging from experienced fighters such as Tama Tehuna of Elite Fight Gym to instructors, Troy Proctor of Signature Fight Systems, Scott Alison of NX-Generation Martial Arts Academy / World Ju Jitsu Federation, Rony Rahme of Contender Gym, to stunt man, kung fu and kickboxing expert Goran Jokovski whom appeared in the latest X-men and Superman movie and beginners alike who are keen to learn and grasp the concept of judging and refereeing.



The Australian Federation of Pankration Athlima Vice President Mr Kelly Seif with the MMA Judge and Referee Course Co-ordinators: Sifu Zaya (TCB & AFPA), Master Kon Papaioannou (AFPA) and Master Sid Antaki (TKD & KB).

Also in attendance we had the honour of the Australian Vice President of Pankration Mr Kelly Seif, travelling all the way from Melbourne and also an International Federation of Pankration Representative and National Referee from Nepal, Mr Prabin Shahi of Nepal Association of Pankration Athlima.

In accordance with the highest standards and guidelines as established by TCB Martial Arts and the Australian Federation of Pankration Athlima and in compliance and with the approval from the NSW Department of Sports and Recreation, the course covered some of the main concerns of MMA combat sports of today. These include and are not limited to

some of the following topics:

- Why is the safety of the fighters a primary concern.
- What is the responsibility of the referee and the judges.
- Who can stop the fight.
- What is the blood rule.
- How long should an athlete who's been KO'd rest for.
- What can cause a disqualification.
- Where is the referee when the action is standing or grounded.
- What are the 30 common fouls.
- How is the contest won.
- What is an MMA contest.

From the early days of mixed martial arts where fights were considered very violent and brutal, where fights would go on "with no holds barred" until literally one man couldn't take anymore, rules are put in place to protect the fighters, and since the sport of mixed martial arts as a whole is still very much evolving unlike some established sports, this course aims to educate our judges and referee.

Referees and judges in mixed martial arts have not had the years of watching and learning their trade like the judges and referee in some major sports such as Kickboxing or Wrestling, which is the reason why they should further educate themselves with this course.

A referee or judge in an MMA contest should know both sides of the game, from a standing position to a ground fighting position, and react accordingly, especially the referee, who has the clear cut responsibility to keep the action legal and within the rules and most importantly to ensure the safety of the fighters at all times.

MMA contest involves the athletes being allowed to use all or any of the martial arts combat skills learnt which could include a combination of kickboxing, karate, wrestling and judo.

It is of vital importance for referees to know when to stop a fight. An example would be instantly recognizing the danger of a submission such as an armbar being secured on the opponent. The fighters themselves at the time of contesting might not realize the extent of

the injury that may be sustained if the contest were to continue.

Therefore it is necessary that the judges and referee be an accredited MMA Judges and Referee. A non-accredited MMA judge and referee might not have enough understanding or knowledge and may not be aware of the potential danger that can take place, especially when the fight ends up on the ground.

A kickboxer engaging in an MMA contest might not do too well when they are taken to the ground and can be severely hurt from ground and pound or from a submission. The referee will need to be aware of the risk that can take place, and will need to be prompt to jump in and stop the fight for the safety of the fighters, and avoid any serious injuries.

From the athlete's point of view, his martial arts background may not really matter, but as for the judges and referee it is paramount.

A judge and referee with martial arts experience in Kung Fu, Karate, Kickboxing may judge and referee in Muay Thai or Boxing contest, but no, when it comes to an MMA contest, as they may not have enough knowledge of the ground fighting game and can hence jeopardize the safety of the fighters.

Likewise for a judge and referee with a Judo, Ju-Jitsu martial arts background can judge and referee a Grappling or Wrestling contest, but no, it is not wise for them to judge or referee an MMA contest, as they may know the ground game, but in this instance they may not grasp the standup fighting side of MMA, and again may risk the safety of the fighters.

However, a judge and referee with a combination of martial arts experience in Kung Fu, Judo or Boxing and Wrestling can judge an MMA contest.

The same applies to a judge and referee with martial arts experience in Pankration.

A Judge and referee with Pankration background can judge an MMA contest, and basically all other contests, because Pankration is the origin of modern day martial arts which is a combination of both standup fighting and ground fighting, which includes a combination of kickboxing, karate, wrestling, judo and more.

In conclusion, the aim of the MMA Judges and Referee course conducted by TCB Martial Arts together with the Australian Federation of Pankration Athlima and NSW Department of Sports and Recreation is to educate and provide an understanding of the mixed martial arts combat sport and the importance of safety in such a sport, where further education and continued training is encouraged.



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