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BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE - BPC

DIVISION 8. SPECIAL BUSINESS REGULATIONS [18400 - 22949.92.2] (Division 8 added by Stats. 1941, Ch. 44.)

CHAPTER 2. Boxing, Wrestling, and Martial Arts [18600 - 18888.12] (Heading of Chapter 2 renumbered from Chapter 8 by Stats. 1988, Ch. 160, Sec. 6.)

ARTICLE 7. Regulation of Contests [18700 - 18748] (Article 7 added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18700. All buildings or structures used or intended to be used to conduct, hold, give a contest or match, or exhibition shall be safe and shall conform to the laws, ordinances, and regulations pertaining to the buildings in the jurisdiction where the building or structure is situated.

(Amended by Stats. 1989, Ch. 757, Sec. 9.)

18701. There shall be posted in public view at every place that a contest is held a notice in English and Spanish which states that it is unlawful to throw any object in the direction of the ring.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18702. (a) No person under 18 years of age shall participate as a contestant in any professional contest or match or exhibition.

(b) Any person, irrespective of age, may participate as a contestant in an amateur contest, match, or exhibition with the approval of the commission subject to Section 18642.

(c) Consistent with Section 18640, the commission shall have jurisdiction over all forms and combinations of forms of full contact martial arts contests involving participants 18 years of age or younger.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 506, Sec. 4. (AB 1186) Effective October 3, 2013.)

18703. All admission tickets to any contest or exhibition shall have printed clearly upon the face thereof the purchase price of the ticket, and no ticket shall be sold for more than that price. The tickets shall have the number of the ticket printed clearly on both ends of the ticket.

(Amended by Stats. 1989, Ch. 757, Sec. 11.)

18704. (a) Subject to subdivision (b), a professional fighter licensed under this chapter shall be entitled to a minimum purse of two hundred dollars (\$200) per round fought.

(b) The commission may raise the minimum purse amount by regulation.

(Added by Stats. 2024, Ch. 486, Sec. 5. (SB 1456) Effective January 1, 2025.)

18705. Every promoter shall have at its own expense in attendance at every contest, a licensed physician approved by the commission who has had not less than three years experience in the practice of medicine since licensure, who shall perform the physical examination of the contestants and observe the physical condition of the contestants during the contest or match.

The services of the physician shall be paid according to a schedule of fees adopted by the commission. The fees shall be paid by the club to the commission, and it shall remit the payment to the physician.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18705.5. The commission shall adopt regulations detailing the criteria for approval of a licensed physician pursuant to Section 18705.

(Added by Stats. 1989, Ch. 471, Sec. 1.)

18706. (a) Not later than at the weigh-in time, which shall be not more than 30 hours prior to the beginning of the first event, the physician provided for in Section 18705 shall conduct a physical examination of the contestant and certify in writing as to the contestant's physical condition to engage in the contest or match.

(1) The commission shall make the contestants' medical records available to the physician and the physician shall review the contestant's medical records as part of the certification of the contestant's physical condition.

(2) The physician shall determine whether the contestant may have any knowledge, manifestations, symptoms, or prior history of a physical condition that may affect the contestant's ability to perform or present a potential threat to the contestant's health as a result of competing in the contest or match. The contestant shall complete a questionnaire developed by the commission. The contestant shall be asked to disclose on the questionnaire any conditions of which the contestant is aware, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(A) Significant weight gain or loss and any change in weight in the seven days prior to the contest.

(B) Neuromuscular condition, including peripheral nerves, muscle problems, and brain problems.

(C) Pregnancy.

(D) Bone fractures and all forms of arthritis.

(E) Any condition related to vision or changes in hearing function.

(F) Heart condition or other cardiovascular condition.

(G) Pulmonary or respiratory condition.

(H) Renal or urological condition.

(I) Hematological condition, including manifestations of any unusual bleeding or bruising.

If any condition is disclosed under this paragraph, the physician shall not allow the contestant to compete unless the physician or, at the contestant's discretion, the contestant's personal physician, who is licensed to practice medicine in the United States, has conducted a physical examination and determined that the specific condition does not affect the contestant's ability to perform or present a potential threat to the contestant's health as a result of competing in the contest or match.

(3) The questionnaire shall be developed by the commission through promulgated regulations in consultation with qualified medical professionals.

(4) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to require a contestant to submit to a pregnancy test.

(b) On the day of the event, and no later than one hour before the contestants enter the ring, the physician provided for in Section 18705 shall conduct a brief reexamination and certify in writing as to the contestant's physical condition to engage in the contest or match. This reexamination shall include an evaluation of any significant changes since the physical examination provided under subdivision (a).

(c) A report of the medical examinations shall be filed with the commission not later than 24 hours after the termination of the contest or match. The physician's report of the examination shall include specific mention as to the condition of the contestant's heart, nerves and brain.

(Amended by Stats. 2006, Ch. 465, Sec. 8. Effective January 1, 2007.)

18707. A physician in attendance at any contest or match pursuant to Section 18705 shall have the authority to stop any contest or match that is conferred upon the referee. The physician's authority shall be limited to a medically related injury and the physical condition of a contestant.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18708. If a professional or amateur fighter licensed under this chapter or subject to the requirements of this chapter requires immediate medical care as ordered by a ringside physician, the onsite ambulance assigned to the contest, match, or exhibition shall transport the fighter to a trauma center without delay.

18710. In its discretion, the commission may order a special medical examination to be undertaken by any licensee, the report of which shall be made to the commission. The cost of the examination shall be shared equally by the commission and the licensee.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18711. (a) (1) (A) The commission shall require, as a condition of licensure and as a part of the application process, the examination by a licensed physician and surgeon who specializes in neurology and neurosurgery of each applicant for a license as a professional athlete or contestant licensed under this chapter or, if for the renewal of a license, this examination every year, in addition to any other medical examinations.

(i) Upon initial licensure, the examination shall include tests and examinations designed to detect physical conditions that could place the athlete or contestant at risk for serious injury or permanent or temporary impairment of any bodily function. These tests or examinations shall include, but not be limited to, a neurological examination or a neuro-psychological examination, a brain imaging scan, and an electrocardiogram (EKG). The physician may recommend any additional tests or evaluations he or she deems necessary.

(ii) For renewal of a license, the physician shall determine the tests or evaluations necessary, if any.

(iii) The commission may require an athlete or contestant licensed under this chapter to undergo additional neurological tests where, based on the totality of the athlete's or contestant's records, it appears the athlete or contestant may be at risk of cognitive impairment.

(iv) On the basis of a physical examination under this subdivision, and any additional tests that are conducted, the physician may recommend to the commission whether the applicant may be permitted to be licensed in California or not. The executive officer shall review these recommendations and report any denials of licensure. If, as a result of these recommendations, the executive officer refuses to grant the applicant a license or to renew a license, the applicant shall not compete in California until the denial has been overruled by the commission as provided in this chapter.

(v) The commission may waive the requirement for a brain imaging scan or an EKG if a brain imaging scan or EKG was completed as part of the licensing requirements in another state, the commission determines that this brain imaging scan or EKG creates a reliable baseline for the athlete or contestant, and the commission has been provided with a copy of the brain imaging scan or EKG reports.

(vi) This subparagraph shall become inoperative on the date the regulations adopted by the commission pursuant to subparagraph (B) become operative.

(B) On and after January 1, 2008, all professional athletes licensed under this chapter shall be required by the commission to complete a medical examination process, which shall include the completion of specific medical examinations, to be determined by the commission through regulations, as a condition of initial licensure and license renewal. This medical examination process may include examinations required under current law and any additional medical examinations determined to be medically necessary. In adopting the medical examination process, the commission shall consider the health and safety of contestants, the medical necessity of any examinations required, and the financial aspects of requiring those medical examinations.

(2) In the absence of any pertinent untoward medical event, the commission may, in its discretion, on forms prescribed by the commission, accept tests or evaluations that are equivalent to those described in paragraph (1) and that have been completed within one year of licensure to meet the requirements of this subdivision.

(3) (A) Any medical records obtained, reviewed, or created under this chapter shall be utilized only for purposes of administering this chapter. The commission and any physician may not disclose the athlete's medical records without a signed authorization from the athlete, except that the commission may disclose those records to other state licensing boards and commissions to which the athlete has applied for licensure or has an enforcement action pending, or upon court order in a criminal or civil action.

(B) After the adoption of regulations to establish a process for participating in medical research studies, the commission may use medical information for purposes of participating in medical research studies of the effects on the human body of contests and exhibitions regulated under this chapter. However, medical information shall not include any personal identifying information on any contestant, including, but not limited to, the contestant's name, address, telephone number, social security number, license number, federal identification number, or any other information identifying the contestant. The medical

information shall only be provided if the licensed athlete has consented in writing to participate in the research study. The regulations adopted by the commission shall include a process to ensure that no conflicts of interest arise regarding which medical examinations are required to be completed by contestants.

(b) If an applicant for licensure as a professional athlete under this chapter undergoes a neurological examination for purposes of licensure within the 120-day period immediately preceding the normal expiration of that license, the applicant shall not be required to undergo an additional neurological examination within the following 12 consecutive month license period unless the commission, for cause, orders that the examination be taken. The commission shall notify all commission-approved physicians and referees that the commission has the authority to order any professional athlete to undergo a neurological examination.

(c) The cost of the examinations required by this section shall be paid from assessments on any one or more of the following: promoters of professional matches, managers, and professional athletes or other contestants licensed under this chapter. The rate and manner of assessment shall be set by the commission, and may cover all costs associated with the requirements of this section. This assessment shall be imposed on all contests approved by the commission under this chapter. As of July 1, 1994, all moneys received by the commission pursuant to this section shall be deposited in and credited to the State Athletic Commission Neurological Examination Account which is hereby created in the General Fund. The administrative costs associated with managing and distributing the State Athletic Commission Neurological Examination Account shall be limited to no more than 20 percent of the prior year's contributions.

(d) The commission may use no more than 30 percent of moneys from the State Athletic Commission Neurological Examination Account, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to fund special neurological examinations and new diagnostic imaging and testing to be used in relation to the examinations required by this section.

(e) Whenever a reference is made to the Boxers' Neurological Examination Account, it is to be construed as referring to the State Athletic Commission Neurological Examination Account.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 370, Sec. 11. (SB 309) Effective January 1, 2014.)

18712. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person applying for a license or the renewal of a license as a professional boxer or as a professional martial arts fighter shall present documentary evidence satisfactory to the commission that the applicant has been administered a test, by a laboratory in the United States that possesses a certificate under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 263a), to detect the presence of antibodies both to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and to hepatitis C virus (HCV) and to detect the presence of the antigen of hepatitis B virus (HBV) within 30 days prior to the date of the application and that the results of all three tests are negative. A negative report for all three tests shall also be required of a professional boxer or professional martial arts fighter prior to competing in a match that will occur 180 days or more after the date of the tests submitted for the issuance or renewal of his or her license.

(b) Information received under this section and any other medical information about an applicant or licensee shall be confidential and not subject to discovery or subpoena. If the commission denies a license or the renewal of a license or suspends or revokes a license because of a licensee's HIV or HCV antibody status or HBV antigen status, it shall state only that the action was taken for medical reasons. An applicant or licensee may appeal the commission's denial, suspension, or revocation of a license under this section. The commission shall notify each person in writing of his or her right to a closed hearing for that appeal. An applicant or licensee must make a request for a hearing to the commission within 30 days of receiving notification from the commission of the applicant's or licensee's right to a hearing.

(Amended by Stats. 2002, Ch. 680, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2003.)

18714. For the purpose of studying and recommending medical and safety standards for the conduct of boxing and martial arts, the commission may call meetings of those licensed physicians and surgeons as it deems necessary at such times and places it deems appropriate. The commission is authorized to pay the necessary traveling expenses and per diem, as provided in Section 103, to the committee members in attendance at these meetings.

(Amended by Stats. 1989, Ch. 757, Sec. 12.)

18720. (a) No boxing contest or match shall be more than 12 rounds of not more than three minutes each in length, except that championship contests may, if the written approval of the commission is first obtained, be 15 rounds of not more than three minutes each in length. The commission may limit the number of rounds in a contest within the maximum.

(b) There shall be one minute rest between consecutive rounds.

(Amended by Stats. 2006, Ch. 538, Sec. 27. Effective January 1, 2007.)

18721. The commission may by rule specify the frequency with which boxers may participate in a contest.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18723. All gloves used by contestants in professional and amateur boxing contests or matches shall be approved by the commission and constructed so that:

- (a) The thumb is not detached from the glove in such a manner that injury could result.
- (b) The soft padding between the outside coverings shall be evenly distributed over the back of the gloves, and cover the knuckles and back of the hands.
- (c) All paddings shall be consistent with the best available material and technology in order to reduce the cumulative effects of repetitive impacts.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18724. All professional and amateur boxing contests or matches shall be performed on a ring floor and padding which meet at least the following specifications:

- (a) The ring floor shall be constructed of 1¹/₄ inch plywood.
- (b) The ring floor padding shall be of 1³/₄ inch thickness consisting of closed cellular foam in combination with high density polyvinylchloride (PVC) bonded together in solid sections, or equivalent covering.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18725. In addition to the requirements of this act, the commission may establish glove weights, equipment standards, safety standards, and the length of rounds in order to protect the health and safety of contestants.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18728. The commission shall establish by rule the weight spreads and classes of contestants.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18730. A referee shall be in attendance and direct and control at every boxing contest. Referees shall enforce the rules of the commission at every boxing contest.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18731. (a) In addition to the other requirements of this chapter and regulations adopted thereunder, no referee or physician and surgeon shall be assigned to a boxing contest if he or she has not completed a clinic offered by a provider approved by the commission.

(b) A referee or physician and surgeon shall complete a clinic within the preceding six months of a boxing contest.

(c) The commission shall approve a clinic provider if the clinic includes, at a minimum, but is not limited to, the following topics related to a boxing contest: the subjects of the rules of the commission, the recognition and diagnosis of serious or life-threatening, boxing-related and neurological injuries and disorders, and refereeing a bout.

(d) The clinic provider may charge a referee or physician and surgeon participating in a clinic a fee in an amount not to exceed the reasonable cost of the clinic.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the commission from offering a clinic subject to the requirements of this section.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 2013, Ch. 370, Sec. 13. (SB 309) Effective January 1, 2014.)

18732. Before starting a contest, the referee shall ascertain from each contestant, the name of his or her chief second, and shall hold such chief second responsible for the conduct of assistants during the contest.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18733. The referee shall stop a contest when a contestant shows a marked superiority, or is apparently outclassed.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18734. (a) The commission shall designate the scoring officials for each contest.

(b) The referee may render a decision at the end of a boxing contest if authorized by a representative of the commission.

(c) The commission may require that judges be used in conjunction with the referee at any boxing contest.

(Amended by Stats. 1986, Ch. 1095, Sec. 8.)

18735. Referees and other boxing officials appointed by the commission while performing duties required under this chapter by the commission shall be entitled to the same rights and immunities granted to public employees by the provisions of Article 3 (commencing with Section 820), Chapter 1, Part 2, Division 3.6, Title 1 of the Government Code. The provisions of this section shall not be construed to affect, create, or destroy any rights or obligations of any public or private employer of a referee or other boxing official.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18738. (a) A boxer who intentionally hits a contestant with a rabbit punch or with a punch on that part of the body over the kidneys shall be penalized by the loss of a point for each such punch.

(b) Determination that a boxer has violated this section shall be made at the end of the round in which the violation occurred and prior to the next round by the referee or, if judges are used in conjunction with the referee, by any two officials. Upon such a determination, each such official shall penalize the boxer pursuant to subdivision (a).

(c) Upon a determination that this section has been violated, the referee shall inform both boxers and their managers at the end of the round in which the violation occurred and prior to the next round, and inform the audience of the penalty thus assessed. In any such case, the rest period may be extended by the referee.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)

18748. Recognizing the need for uniformity in championship contests, the commission may exempt championship contests from any provision of this chapter and authorize alternate provisions as long as the safety and welfare of the boxers and the public are not jeopardized.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 1092, Sec. 2.)