

Ohio Athletic Commission
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State of Ohio
OHIO ATHLETIC COMMISSION

My name is Bernie Profato, I am the Executive Director for the Ohio Athletic Commission and have held this position since September 2004. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Ohio Athletic Commission, Chairman Mr. Robert Schuerger and commission members: Mr. John Patton, Mr. Jon Stainbrook, Dr. James Armile and Mr. Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini.

Mission/Purpose

The Ohio Athletic Commission is responsible to oversee the regulation of unarmed combat sports in the State of Ohio. These sports include professional boxing, mixed martial arts, karate, kickboxing, tough person contests, other new developing forms of martial arts and to a limited degree professional wrestling.

The primary mission of the commission is to ensure that whenever athletes compete in Ohio, their safety and well-being is the number one priority, to minimize any risk of serious injury or death.

All unarmed combat sports are regulated to ensure that all rules and regulations are followed. All officials are trained and updated when any new changes may occur. These officials include all inspectors, referees and judges and to some extent all the ringside physicians. Updated information received from the American Ringside Physicians Association, is passed onto the physicians assigned by the commission to work these events.

Licensing

- All Contestants must first be issued a Federal ID (Boxing) that is required under Federal Law (Muhammed Ali Act) and a National ID for Mixed Martial Arts contestants. These expire in Four (4) years
- All Contestants must be issued an Ohio License. ALL licenses must be recorded in a local and national database. The actual license is then transferred onto a hard license card and then the licenses are mailed to the licensees within a limited time span. All licenses all National ID's for mixed martial arts contestants and Federal ID's for all professional boxing contestants are usually sent out within five to seven days.

SERVICES

- The commission assigns all officials to these events, these include inspectors, physicians, referees, judges and timekeepers. This requires a phone call confirmation for each official assigned to work for each event.
- Reviewing all scheduled bout for all boxing and mixed martial arts events to determine if the contestants are evenly and matched, according to skill level, experience and weight class to produce a fair and sportsmanlike contest.
- Make sure that all required pre-fight medicals are turned in 5 days prior to the bout. If they're not, the bout is cancelled for safety reasons.
- No bout will start until an ambulance is on site and a ringside Physician is posted at ringside (boxing) or cage side (MMA). All Contestants (win or lose) must be examined by the attending ringside physician prior to go to the dressing. If there is any follow-up medical requirements by the physician, such as Neurological, Ophthalmology, Orthopedic, etc., recommended by the Physician that contestant is suspended nationally until all medical requirements are met.
- Major Mixed Martial Arts and Boxing promoters who have promoted events in Ohio, consider Ohio one of the best regulated and best run Athletic Commissions in the United States. As stated by Dr. John Benjamin: "fighters who are being slated to compete in New Jersey, Ohio and Nevada have the fortune of competing in one of the best state Athletic Commissions from a fighter-safety perspective, in the US. No disrespect intended to any other state Athletic Commissions, but this is how the best of the best protect athletes."

I have also added a letter from a concerned parent about the importance of the commission in reference to their son.

Thank you for your time and consideration and all that the Legislators have done to make Ohio one of the most respected Athletic Commissions in the country.

I will address any questions you may have at this time.

Bernie Profato
Executive Director