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Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by:

Arkansas State Athletic Commission

Title 17. Professions, Occupations, and Businesses

Chapter XL. State Athletic Commission, Department of Labor and Licensing

Subchapter A. Generally

Part 225. Rules ~~and Regulations~~ for Combative Sports

Subpart 9. Wrestling

17 CAR §225-901. Applicability.

All rules in this subpart and Subpart 1 of this part apply to the sport of wrestling, provided, however, in the event of a conflict between this subpart, and Subpart 1 of this part, the rules in this subpart prevail.

17 CAR §225-902. Professional and professional-style wrestling exemptions.

Professional wrestling, amateur professional-style wrestling, and all other similar wrestling events which are scripted, staged, and ~~has a pre-arranged~~ have a prearranged winner with the participants being at least eighteen (18) years of age, not engaging in strikes, throws, or techniques necessarily designed to actually injure the opponent shall be exempt from ~~these rules~~ this part except those with one-thousand five hundred (1,500) or more spectators, pursuant to Arkansas Code §17-22-204(a)(3).

17 CAR §225-903. Compliance.

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(a) All professional wrestling events are subject to the State Athletic Commission spot checks to ensure compliance with state law and these rules this part.

(b) Spot checks shall include, but not be limited to, attendance count and ticket manifests.

17 CAR §225-904. Props.

All props used in a professional wrestling event are subject to approval by the State Athletic Commission.

17 CAR §225-905. Licensure.

(a)(1) Everyone serving inside the ring area is a participant including, but not limited to:

- (A) Wrestlers;
- (B) Announcers;
- (C) Managers;
- (D) Referees;
- (E) Timekeepers;
- (F) Valets;
- (G) Trainers;
- (H) Seconds; and
- (I) Judges.

(2) Every participant and promoter, unless exempted by these rules this part, is required to apply for and receive a license from the State Athletic Commission before participating in or engaging in an activity related in any way to an event or other licensed activity.

(b) Each applicant shall complete and submit to the commission:

- (1) An application via the electronic licensing portal;
- (2) An annual physical completed by a licensed physician; and
- (3) The twenty-five-dollar ~~(\$25.00)~~ license fee.

(c) Each applicant shall provide to the commission:

(1) His or her legal name, as maintained by the Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service ~~of the United of America~~ or such similar governmental agency for the country of the applicant's residence;

(2) At least one (1) form of government issued identification bearing the applicant's legal name, photograph, and age, which shall in no event be under the age of eighteen (18); and

(3) His or her physical address and immediately notify the commission of any change of address.

(d) Each applicant shall be familiar with ~~the Arkansas Combative Sports law Code § 17-22-101 et seq. and these rules~~ this part governing wrestling and professional wrestling.

(e)(1) ~~Each~~ Except as provided in subdivision (e)(2) of this section, each applicant and person licensed under ~~these rules~~ this part shall use the same name, which shall be his or her legal name, in connection with each event; ~~provided however,~~

(2) ~~participants~~ Participants shall not be prohibited from also using a "ring name" or "alias" in promotional materials and when being announced prior to a bout or event.

(f) Before issuing or denying a license, the commission may examine the applicant or other witnesses and request all information the commission deems relevant to the applicant.

(g)(1) The commission may deny, revoke, or suspend any license for good cause.

(2) The commission may reject applications submitted without the required fee and all required information.

(h) No license issued under ~~these rules~~ this part is transferable to another person.

(i)(1) Each applicant and person licensed by the commission shall, at any time requested by the commission, ~~a designated employee~~ (s), an inspector, or a doctor, submit to a test of breath, body fluids, or both for the presence of:

(A) ~~alcohol~~ Alcohol;

(B) ~~drugs~~ Drugs;

(C) Hepatitis A, B, or C; ~~or~~

(D) HIV.

(2)(A) The Except as provided in subdivision (i)(2)(B) of this section, the commission shall pay for all costs associated with a test required under subsection subdivision (i)(1) of this section; provided however,

(B) the The applicant or licensee shall:

(i) pay Pay all costs associated with tests required for initial licensure or renewal of a license; and

(ii) shall reimburse Reimburse the commission for all positive tests and tests indicating a violation of the commission's laws or rules or laws of this state.

(j)(1) A positive test for the presence of alcohol, drugs, or infectious diseases or the refusal of a licensee to immediately submit to a test shall result in an immediate suspension of the licensee's license, with suspension continuing until a hearing before the commission for reinstatement.

(2) In addition to suspension or revocation of the license, a positive test for alcohol, drugs, or infectious diseases or the refusal of the licensee to submit to testing may result in the imposition of a monetary fine.

(3) Prior to reinstatement following a violation of this subsection, the licensee shall submit to a test for the presence of alcohol, drugs, and infectious diseases, the results of which shall be negative.

(4) The World Anti-Doping Agency list of banned substances for combative sports will be the same list used by the commission.

(k) All licenses issued by the commission expire on June 30th of each year.

(l) Applications shall be submitted via the electronic licensing portal and will be subject to credit card, debit card, or other processing fees in addition to the licensing fees.

17 CAR §225-906. Event license.

(a) Promoters of any event subject to the laws of this state and rules of the State Athletic Commission including, without limitation, any amateur event not exempted

from these rules this part shall submit an application for and receive an event license prior to each event as follows:

(1) Each application shall be submitted through the electronic licensing portal;

(2) Each application shall be submitted with a ~~non-refundable~~ nonrefundable application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each event permit fee;

(3) Each application shall be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to the proposed event.;

(4) Each application may apply for only one (1) event license.;

(5)(A)(i) Each application shall be ~~simultaneously~~ simultaneously submitted with.;

(A)(i) ~~Proof~~ proof of financial responsibility by submitting a surety bond of at least five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for an amateur event and at least twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for a professional event written by a bonding company or other commission-approved corporate surety authorized to do business in the State of Arkansas guaranteeing payment of all obligations, including without limitation ~~gross receipt taxes~~ commission fees and expenses, arising out of the event, with such bond or bonds being of such type that a claim may be made thereupon, if such a claim is filed with the commission no later than ninety (90) days after the event.

(ii) Bonds may be issued for as long as one (1) year, but in no case valid for less than ~~ninety (90)~~ one hundred eighty (180) days.

(iii) ~~Provided, however, that the~~ The amount of the bond required hereunder may be increased by the commission or a designated employee ~~or employees~~ on an event-by-event basis when seating capacity of the venue exceeds one thousand five hundred (1,500) seats.

(B)(i) In lieu of the required surety bonds, cash, certificates of deposit, irrevocable letters of credit, or other security acceptable to the commission ~~may be submitted~~, which alternate security shall be retained by the commission for a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days after the event for which the commission issued the event license.

(ii) If no claim, written or verbal, is submitted to the commission before the one hundred eightieth day following the event for which the commission issued the event license, then the commission shall return the alternate security to the promoter or other person posting the alternate security.

(iii) The commission shall not return the alternate security until any and all claims filed before the one hundred eightieth day are resolved by the commission.;

(6)(A) ~~An~~ Except as provided in subdivision (a)(6)(B) of this section, an application shall be rejected if the granting of such application would result in the promoter having more than six (6) events simultaneously approved by the commission.

(B)(i) ~~The exception that a~~ A licensed, bonded promoter may ~~have up to two~~ be approved for no more than two (2) additional annual ~~shows permitted in addition~~ events.

(C)(ii) If a promoter has more than two (2) annual ~~show~~ events and wishes to have them licensed simultaneously, then all events ~~over the~~ exceeding two (2) of the annual ~~show~~ events shall be included in the total of six (6) ~~maximum events listed above~~; and

(7) An application shall be rejected if, within twelve (12) months ~~proceeding~~ preceding the application date, the promoter has without good cause (insufficient ticket sales shall never be considered good cause) cancelled two (2) or more approved events.

(b) Unless otherwise permitted under this part, events shall not take place over more than one (1) day.

17 CAR §225-907. Event procedures.

The following shall be applicable to every event:

(1) ~~Audits, and fees and taxes.~~ The provisions of ~~the Act~~ Arkansas Code § 17-22-101 et seq. and this part shall be followed with respect to remittance of fees ~~and taxes~~ to the State Athletic Commission and ~~such~~ shall be subject to audit by the commission at any time.;

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(2) Participants.

(A)(i) If any action that involves bodily contact is to take place outside the ring, such action must be on ensolite padding or other similar closed-cell foam padding of at least one-inch thickness around the ring, inside the technical zone.

(ii) Any contact taking place other than within the ring or as described in subpart subdivision (2)(A)(i) above of this section shall be subject to reprimand, civil penalties, or both.

(B)(i) Participants who have physical contact with other participants of simulated violence must be properly trained and in good physical condition.

(ii) If it is deemed by a doctor, medical personnel, or promoter that a participant is not physically fit to perform;

(a) an official shall be notified; and

(b) the participant shall not be allowed to perform.

(C) Participants shall not have physical contact with any spectator involving simulated violence unless the spectator is a planted, licensed participant imitating a spectator.

(D) Participants must be clothed in attire that would be appropriate for a parental tvTV rating of TV-PG.

(E) No Eventevent shall have, nor shall a participant commit, an act that creates intentional bleeding without the prior approval of the commission and submission of the requisite bloodwork.

(F)(i) No foreign objects shall be allowed without the prior approval of the commission.

(ii) No foreign objects will be allowed to pierce the skin or shatter with the possibility of spectators being injured.

(iii) Objects containing glass are strictly prohibited.

(G) Only properly trained participants shall be allowed to use foreign objects.

(H)(i) All matches or bouts at an event shall be between humans.

(ii) No ~~non-humans~~nonhumans or machines will be allowed to be participants.

(I)(i) No matches or bouts at an event shall be between a male and female.

(ii) A male participant is a person of the heterogametic sex born with XY chromosomes.

(iii) A female participant is a person of the heterogametic sex born with XX chromosomes; and

(3) Credentials and tickets.

(A)(i) No person, excluding participants, seconds, and officials, shall be admitted to any event without a ticket or credential issued and documented by the promoter.

(ii) No credential may be sold, exchanged, or bartered and a manifest for all credentials, including the name of the person to whom the credential was issued and the reason, must be maintained and produced for the commission at each event upon request by the commission made at a reasonable time the day of the event.

(B) All credentials shall be clearly designated by the promoter as required by this part and the commission.

(C) Promoters are prohibited from accepting cash or other remuneration or consideration for admission to an event without issuance of a ticket reflecting the price paid ~~thereof~~for admission.

(D) All tickets shall reflect the price thereof and event date.

(E) All tickets shall be consecutively numbered, individually bar coded, or otherwise numbered in a manner easily grouped, counted, and identifiable by the commission.

(F) All tickets shall have a stub indicating the price and row or seat number, which shall be detached and retained for later auditing and accounting by the commission, or bar code scanned, and records thereof maintained in a commission-approved manner, and a ticket manifest or similar record shall be produced upon request.

(G) All tickets shall have a coupon or portion thereof which may be retained by the purchaser thereof.

(H)(i) All ticket stubs, except electronically redeemed tickets, must be deposited into a locked container at the event entrance or entrances.

(ii) Each ticket container must remain in the possession of the ticket-taker until after the close of the event and only be surrendered by the said ticket-taker in the presence of the promoter or inspector.

(iii) The inspector may, at his or her discretion, require the ticket box be opened only in his or her presence.

(iv) If the inspector deems necessary, all admission ticket stubs shall, immediately after the ticket box is opened, be sorted by price and counted by the commission, the inspector, or by a person authorized by the inspector.

(I) Unless otherwise designated by the promoter to have a higher value and for purposes of calculating ~~the gross receipts tax~~ [commission fees](#), complimentary, give away, or promotional event tickets representing five percent (5%) or less of the event tickets sold shall be exempted from the ~~gross receipts tax~~ [commission fee computation](#).

17 CAR §225-908. Rings, mats, and contest areas.

The ring shall:

(1) Not be less than sixteen feet (16') square;

(2)(A) Have an apron or floor area outside the ropes which extends at least two feet (2') beyond the ropes on all sides.

(B) Variances can be granted;

(3) Have a floor area, both inside and outside the ropes, padded with ensolite or other similar closed-cell foam of at least one-inch thickness and approved by the State Athletic Commission;

(4) Have a top covering made of canvas or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the ring platform;

(5) Not have a floor covering consisting of a material which tends to gather in lumps or ridges;

(6) Not be more than five feet (5') above the ground, unless previously approved by the commission;

(7) Have at least two (2) sets of steps for use by participants and officials;

(8) Have posts made of metal not less than three inches (3") in diameter and at least eighteen inches (18") away from the ropes;

(9) Have turnbuckles and corners protected with a urethane pad covered with a material similar to:

(A) The ring floor covering;

(B) Plasticized rubber; or

(C) Vinyl;

(10)(A) Have at least three (3) ropes, not less than one inch (1") in diameter and evenly spaced, with the lower rope being eighteen inches (18") above the ring floor, unless five (5) ropes are used in which case the lowest rope shall be six inches (6") above the floor, and all ropes wrapped in soft plasticized rubber, vinyl, or cloth material, and be consistent with:

(B) See specifications under different formats of combative competition; and

(11)(A) haveHave sufficient strength and safety in both the floor and support structure to safely hold the actively moving weight of all participants, officials, seconds, and other persons and equipment which may be simultaneously inside the ring.

(B) Liability for structure failure shall fall upon promoter for commission evaluation.

17 CAR §225-909. Technical zone.

(a) The technical zone shall be:

(1)(A) Under the exclusive control of the State Athletic Commission, designated employee or employees, and inspectors at each event.

~~(2)(B)~~ The commission ~~can~~may require, following a prior problem with the same issue, that the area be separated from the spectator areas on all sides using a barrier approved in advance by the commission;

~~(3)(2)~~ ClearFree of all alcoholic beverages, paid spectator seats, and nonessential persons; and

~~(4)(3)~~ Protected by promoter's security or staff personnel from access by anyone other than persons permitted by the commission, designated employee or employees, or inspector assigned to the event, which admitted persons shall be properly credentialed prior to entry; ~~and~~.

~~(5)(b)~~ A seating and arrangement diagram ~~can~~may be required in advance by the commission.

17 CAR §225-910. Participants.

Participants shall sign all necessary forms and releases and otherwise authorize the State Athletic Commission and any of its representatives, agents, or inspectors to inquire, receive, and discuss participant's medical history, medical conditions, and test results with any ~~health care~~healthcare provider.

17 CAR §225-911. Inspectors.

(a) The State Athletic Commission may be represented in person by commission member or members and duly appointed inspector or inspectors at any event for the purpose of supervising, enforcing, and ensuring compliance with the law and this part.

(b) Inspectors shall not have any direct or indirect financial interest in or familial connection with any participant participating in any event to which they have been assigned.

(c) Appointment of inspectors shall be at the discretion of the commission or designated employee or employees.

(d) The inspector shall perform any duties assigned from time to time by the commission or designated employee or employees.

(e) Before and during an event to which the inspector has been assigned, the inspector shall:

(1) Check all persons in attendance and participating in the event for the appropriate credentials and commission licenses;

(2) Be present, if required by the commission or designated employee or employees, at the weigh-ins to supervise the same and ensure completion of the required forms and compliance with this part;

(3) Ensure compliance with the law and this part by inspecting all participants, participants' hand wraps, participants' equipment, and seconds' equipment and materials prior to the beginning of the contest;

(4) Ensure compliance with the law and this part by observing the conduct of participants or any other licensed person or persons subject to regulation under the law and this part; and

(5) Complete all forms, reports, and tests required by the commission.

17 CAR §225-212. Promoters.

A promoter shall as a condition of licensure or continued licensure:

(1)(A) At all times comply with [the Act Arkansas Code § 17-22-101 et seq.](#), this part, and the instructions and directives of the State Athletic Commission, ~~committee~~, designated employee or employees, and inspector or inspectors assigned to the event.

(B) Simultaneously with submission of the promoter's license application, submit to the commission proof of having reached [the age of](#) twenty-one (21) years of [age](#) or in the case of a legal entity, be owned, operated, and controlled by an individual no less than twenty-one (21) years of age, and said entity shall sign an affidavit stating that entity has read [the Act Arkansas Code § 17-22-101 et seq.](#) and this part and understands them, prior to issuance of a promoter's license.;

(2) At least ten (10) days prior to an event, provide the following to the commission at promoter's sole expense:

(A)(i) The name and contact information for the entity with whom the promoter has contracted to provide:

~~(ii)(i)~~ An ambulance or authorized emergency vehicle for medical support;

~~(iii)(ii)~~ At least two (2) emergency medical technicians or paramedics;
and

~~(iv)(iii)~~ Appropriate medical equipment all to be on site for the duration of the event; and

(B) The proposed list of participants including, without limitation, ~~the~~each participant's properly spelled, full legal name and date of birth;

(3) Ensure all participants are licensed;

(4) Ensure all participants are physically fit and properly trained to participate;

(5) Ensure the safety of all participants, officials, media, and fans by complying with the safety standards required by the commission;

(6) Ensure event or arena security measures are adequate and sufficient to maintain order;

(7) Ensure that ~~state-certified-state-certified~~ emergency ~~medial~~medical technician or technicians be present during the entirety of the event;

(8) Ensure that any pyrotechnics have prior approval of the State Fire Marshal or pyrotechnics will not be allowed;

(9) Ensure the promoter or promoter's representative is readily accessible and available to the officials and the commission during the entirety of the event, which promoter or promoter's representative should be identified to the commission and officials prior to the start of the event; and

(10) Not violate any contract or breach any agreement relating to an event.

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

Act 947 of the Regular Session

Act 947 of the Regular Session

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1952

5 By: Representative Hawk
6 By: Senator J. Dismang
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO ASSIST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE
10 ATHLETIC COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE STATE
11 ATHLETIC COMMISSION TO CONTINUE ITS MISSION TO
12 PROMOTE A ROBUST, HEALTHY, AND SAFE COMBATIVE SPORTS
13 INDUSTRY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
14

Subtitle

15
16
17 TO ASSIST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
18 STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE
19 FUNDING TO THE STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION
20 TO CONTINUE ITS MISSION TO PROMOTE A
21 ROBUST, HEALTHY, AND SAFE COMBATIVE
22 SPORTS INDUSTRY.
23

24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
25

26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 17-22-101(3), concerning definitions
27 pertaining to combative sporting events, is amended to read as follows:

28 (3)(A) "Combative sports" means boxing, kick boxing, wrestling,
29 professional wrestling, martial arts, Muay Thai, or any combination thereof,
30 or any form of hand-to-hand, elbow-and-foot, or foot-and-leg competition in
31 which:

32 (i) A blow is struck which may reasonably be expected
33 to inflict injury; or

34 (ii) A surface for fighting is used that may reasonably
35 be expected to inflict injury.

36 (B) "Combative sports" does not include student training or



1 an exhibition of a student's skill when:

2 (i) Conducted by a martial arts school or an
3 association of martial arts schools;

4 (ii) The student's participation is for health and
5 recreational purposes rather than competition;

6 (iii) The intent is to use only partial contact; and

7 (iv) The scoring technique is based only on points;

8 ~~(C) "Combative sports" does not include professional~~
9 ~~wrestling;~~

10
11 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 17-22-204(a), concerning the authority of
12 the State Athletic Commission, is amended to read as follows:

13 (a)(1)(A) The State Athletic Commission shall have the sole
14 discretion, management, control, and jurisdiction over all combative sports
15 matches and exhibitions in this state.

16 ~~(B)(i)~~ The commission shall adopt uniform policies, fees,
17 and forms to ensure fair regulation of the combative sports industry.

18 ~~(ii) The commission shall have no authority over~~
19 ~~professional wrestling events.~~

20 (2) A combative sports match or exhibition declared to be amateur
21 and self-regulated shall be governed by the commission unless sanctioned by:

22 (A) A federally recognized sanctioning body approved in
23 writing by the commission; and

24 (B) A national oversight body with 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3)
25 status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 operating in at least six (6)
26 states approved in writing by the commission.

27 (3) A professional wrestling event with one thousand five
28 hundred (1,500) or more attendees shall be governed by the commission.

29
30 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 17-22-302(f), concerning the training and
31 certification of referees and judges for professional combative sports
32 events, is amended to read as follows:

33 (f)(1) A referee or judge for professional events shall attend
34 training courses given by and obtain certification from the Association of
35 Boxing Commissions or other sanctioned organization approved by the State
36 Athletic Commission for the referee or judge's discipline.

1 (2) A referee or judge may take the courses provided by the
2 Association of Boxing Commissions or other sanctioned organization approved
3 by the State Athletic Commission anywhere in the United States if
4 documentation of training and certification is provided upon application for
5 a license.

6
7 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 17-22-306(a), concerning fees for combative
8 sports events, is amended to read as follows:

9 (a)(1) Within five (5) business days after a combative sports match or
10 exhibition, the licensed manager, promoter, or person responsible for the
11 match or exhibition shall furnish to the State Athletic Commission a written
12 report under the penalty of perjury on a form that shall be provided by the
13 commission showing the number of tickets or subscriptions for physical
14 admission that were issued or sold and the gross receipts therefor without
15 any deductions whatsoever.

16 (2)(A) The person shall also pay to the commission at the same
17 time a five-percent fee of the total gross receipts received from admission
18 charges for each match or exhibition held under the authority of this
19 chapter.

20 (B) The five percent (5%) shall be computed using gross gate
21 receipts, unless the venue collects and remits sales tax for the promoter.

22 (C) If the venue collects and remits sales tax for the
23 promoter, the five percent (5%) shall be computed on the net gate receipts
24 after sales tax.

25 (D)(i) If a promoter allows admission to a match or
26 exhibition in return for a payment other than the cash purchase of tickets,
27 the commission shall:

28 (a) Determine the method to be used to calculate
29 the five-percent value of the gate receipts; or

30 (b) Set a reasonable price per person to be paid
31 by the promoter to the commission.

32 (ii) If the promoter requests a decision from the
33 commission regarding the payment under this section before the match or
34 exhibition, the commission shall make the determination and notify the
35 promoter of the determination before the match or exhibition.

36 (3)(A) The promoter shall pay:

1 (i) Pay all costs of the cost of an event inspector
2 or investigator present at the event; and

3 (ii) Reimburse all costs of the commission for the
4 event, including without limitation:

5 (a) The cost of each event inspector or
6 investigator not to exceed one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) per day for
7 each inspector or investigator;

8 (b) Per diem, expenses, and travel
9 reimbursements authorized under § 17-22-204 and § 25-16-901 et seq.;

10 (c) The event permit processing fee of fifty
11 dollars (\$50.00) authorized under § 17-22-302; and

12 (d) The national and federal fighter database
13 fees charged to the commission under § 17-22-206.

14 (B) ~~The Except as provided under subdivision (a)(3)(D) of~~
15 ~~this section,~~ the cost of the event inspector or investigator shall not
16 exceed one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) per day for each inspector or
17 investigator.

18 (C) The commission shall:

19 (i) Determine if there is a need to appoint an
20 inspector or investigator at an event;

21 (ii) Determine the number of inspectors or
22 investigators to be appointed for the event; and

23 (iii) Notify the promoter in writing before the event
24 of:

25 (a) The number of inspectors or investigators to
26 be appointed;

27 (b) The cost of the inspectors or investigators;
28 and

29 (c) The reasons for the appointment.

30 (D) [Repealed.]

31
32
33 **APPROVED: 4/21/25**