

Participate in amateur combative sports in Ontario

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Many amateur athletes compete in what is categorized as 'combative sports' in Ontario. However, you can't just throw a competition together without following rules.

All combative sports are inherently dangerous, and there is a possibility of injury, so the rules are there to keep participants as safe as possible.

In 2017, the Ontario government clarified the legal status of amateur combative sports in the province.

This means that contests are legal in 11 amateur combative sports if they are held with the permission of a government-recognized Provincial Sport Organization (PSO). Contests in sports that are not sanctioned by a provincially recognized PSO are deemed illegal.

The province has designated 11 combative sports that are recognized as being legitimate.

These include boxing, grappling, Jiu-Jitsu, judo, karate, kickboxing, Muay Thai, Pankration, Taekwondo, wrestling, and Wushu. These sports all have provincial governing bodies that oversee the sport in Ontario.

The government has authorized 10 PSOs as the recognized sports bodies to sanction contests.

When PSO sanctions a contest, they must meet the provincial definition of a 'contest,' and meet requirements as detailed in the Sport Recognition Policy.

There is a special note for wrestling. For wrestling, amateur contests may also be held by a school or university with the permission of the school or university athletic association or its affiliate. It must adhere to the full competition requirements mandated under the Ontario Amateur Wrestling Association.

If you plan on competing in a combative sport, you should make sure you are informed about the health and safety practices at the training facility or tournament venues.

This includes obtaining information about first aid response and insurance policies that disclose how injuries are handled and the responsibilities of tournament or practice facility owners.

In the event that an illegal combative sports contest takes place, enforcement of the Canadian Criminal Code is handled by provincial or municipal police services.