

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMATEUR (OLYMPIC) and PROFESSIONAL BOXING

Up-dated

The main differences are in the Rules as well as in the Objectives of the two sports, with different safety standards and records. Because of this distinction, unlike in other sports, athletes as well as referees and judges of professional boxing are not permitted to participate in amateur and Olympic boxing events. The following are a few examples of the differences between amateur and professional boxing. It is recognized that while the rules for amateur boxing are the same all over the world, rules for professional boxing can vary significantly, and in a few countries or states may have now equalled or even exceeded safety standards of amateur boxing in some instances. The purpose of this web page is to provide factual information in the light of much confusion and misconception. No bias against or preference for a particular sport is expressed, implied, or intended.

Aspect	Amateur	Professional	Safety
Rules	Are geared to protect the health and safety of the athlete. Uniform in all 190 AIBA affiliated countries.	Rules vary from country to country, sometimes even within one country.	Uniform rules mean uniform safety standards.
Rounds	4 rounds (3 rounds for females) of 2 minutes each. Shorter rounds for novices and boxers under 17.	From 4 rounds of 3 minutes up to 12 rounds of 3 minutes each. Two- minute rounds for females.	Longer bouts are said to increase the risk of injury. For that reason, professional boxing no longer has 15 round fights.
Gloves	10 oz. for competitions, specially designed to cushion the impact. White area denotes striking surface. Must have AIBA approved label.	6, 8, and 10 oz. gloves, depending on jurisdiction.	Not only the weight, but also the design and material of gloves are factors.
Headguards	Compulsory for all competitions since 1971 in Canada, since 1984 world-wide.	Prohibited.	Headguards reduce cuts by 90 %, ear lobe injury by 100 %.
Singlets (Tops)	Mandatory for males and females.	Prohibited for males.	Tops prevent rope burns, keep gloves cleaner.
Vaseline, Grease	Prohibited.	Allowed.	Possible eye / vision irritant. Said to prevent "leather-burn."

Standing Eight-Count	Given to a boxer in difficulty. After 3 eight-counts in a round or 4 in total, the bout is stopped.	Usually does not exist.	Purpose is to protect the boxer before getting hurt.
Duties of Referee	First priority is to protect the boxers, and to enforce the rules in the ring. The referee does not keep score.	To enforce the prevailing rules. In some jurisdictions, the referee keeps score. In recent years, actions of referees to stop the fight when a boxer is injured or helpless have been exemplary.	The role and actions of the referee are important in preventing serious injuries.
Injuries	The bout is stopped when there is much bleeding, or cuts, swelling around the eye.	The bout is not stopped unless the injured boxer is unable to continue (TKO).	Blood and swelling around the eyes impair vision and make it hard to defend against blows.
RSC - Outclassed	If a boxer is overmatched, and has difficulty defending against a far superior opponent, the referee stops the contest.	No such rule.	Mismatches can be a cause of injuries, and while rare, can happen in both sports, in spite of rules and all efforts to prevent or end them.
Novice Class	Boxers who have competed in 10 events or less are in the Novice class, and can compete only against other Novices.	No such rule.	This rule seeks to prevent mismatches and to make bouts more even and fair.
Fouls	There are 21 fouls (forbidden, unfair or dangerous tactics) which lead to warnings and point penalties if committed. Disqualification after 3 warnings.	Some tactics considered fouls in amateur boxing are permitted in professional boxing.	Clean boxing without fouls makes the sport safer.
Objectives	To win on points by landing more correct scoring blows on the opponent's target area. Knock-downs do not result in extra points. Knock-outs are accidental, and not an objective.	For point decisions, aggressiveness, knock-downs, injuring ("marking") the opponent, can also count. KO's are an objective, as a high knock-out record can lead to higher earnings.	Acute knock-outs are concussions. Less than 1 % of amateur bouts end in knock-outs. Over 25 % of pro fights end in KO's, over 50 % in KO's or TKO's.
Terms	Coach Boxer Bout	Trainer Fighter Fight	

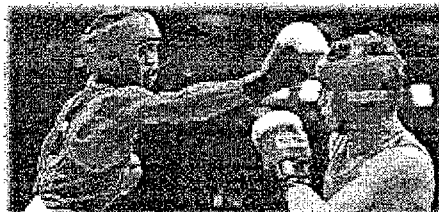




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Boxing



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General Rules

Olympic-style boxing features 12 weight classes. To compete internationally, a boxer must be at least 17 years old and not more than 32 years old. In domestic competitions, an athlete must be at least eight years old to compete. The Junior Olympic program is for athletes eight to 16; the junior program is for boxers 17-18; and the open program is for boxers 17-32 years of age. A master's division has been established for the local level only and it is designed for boxers 33 and older. Beginning October 1993, USA Boxing allowed female competitors to box against other females in sanctioned competition. Rules governing female competition are the same as those for male competition, except women are required to wear breast protectors.

The following rules are for the open class. The rules and weight categories for Junior Olympics are different, featuring shorter rounds, four age groups and more than 17 weight classes.

The Bout

Starting in 1997 all bouts will consist of five, two-minute rounds, with a one-minute interval between rounds.

The Referee

Referees are the sole authority in the ring, and they must maintain control of the match from start to finish, placing the foremost importance on the boxers' safety. Before the match begins, the referee checks each boxer's gloves and attire for suitability. The referee makes sure the bout is clean and fair; that the boxers are physically able to continue; and most importantly, that the match is not one-sided.

Referees are all-powerful in the ring. Yet, to maintain control, they need speak only three words: "stop" (boxing),

"box" (begin again) and "break" (step back -- used to break up clinches). Any boxer who does not obey immediately may be disqualified.

Using their best judgment, referees may stop a match any time they think it is too one-sided, the boxers are not in earnest or one of the boxers seems unable to continue due to injury. At any point during the match, the referee may consult the ringside physician for advice -- the physician's recommendation is binding.

Referees may disqualify a boxer, with or without warning, whenever a boxer acts aggressively toward them or delays in obeying a command.

Common Fouls

The following are some of the common fouls for which boxers will be cautioned: hitting below the belt; holding, kicking or striking the opponent with anything other than the gloved knuckles; lying against the ropes or using them unfairly; using offensive language; not breaking on command; and behaving aggressively towards the referee. Even no defense (passive defense) is unfair and a foul.

When a boxer commits a foul, the referee usually cautions the boxer and indicates the foul through hand motions. After three cautions for the same foul, the referee will warn the boxer, which results in the boxer losing a point. Upon the third warning for the same foul, the boxer is disqualified.

When issuing a warning, the referee is making a recommendation to the judges to penalize the offending boxer by deducting a point. The judges decide whether or not they agree with the referee and make that notation on the score card. Judges may award a "J" to a boxer they think has fouled excessively, but the referee has not warned the boxer to their satisfaction.

Judging the Bout

Traditional scoring: Five judges are required and placed on different sides of the ring. In some international and domestic competitions, three judges may be used.

Each judge works alone. The judge assesses the scoring value of each blow as it occurs and mentally awards points to each boxer. The judge's yardstick is "three blows to a point," but not any one blow will count. A scoring blow must be clean, fair, unguarded and have the proper weight. Essentially, the white part of the glove, covering the knuckles, must make contact to be a scoring blow. All legal blows are scored equally, regardless if they result in a knockdown or not.

When one boxer takes a definite point lead, a judge may use that score for tallying -- adding points as the boxer earns them and subtracting from the total as the opponent scores.

During each round, judges will add up the scoring blows

delivered by each boxer, always awarding 20 points to the round's winner and somewhat less than 20 to the loser. For example, boxer "A" scored 12 legitimate scoring blows and boxer "B" landed nine. Using the guideline of three blows per point, this round would be scored 20-19.

Judges award points after each round. When the bout is over, the scores are added to determine the overall winner.

Tie scores, while quite rare, do occur. In this case, the boxer who showed more aggressiveness and better style wins. If it is still tied, the boxer with the better defense is awarded the decision.

Electronic scoring: For the first time in Olympic boxing competition, an electronic scoring system was used at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. Under electronic scoring, five working judges are positioned at ringside with a desk-mounted keypad at each judge's position.

The keypads, each of which are linked to the mainframe computer at the jury table, feature four buttons -- red and blue scoring and red and blue warning buttons.

During the course of the bout, judges record scoring blows for each competitor on their keypad. In order for a blow to be recorded by the computer as part of the official (or combined/accepted score), three of five judges must press the same colored button within a one-second interval. The one-second interval begins when the first judge records a blow.

Scores are reported in terms of number of blows recognized by a majority of judges over the course of the three rounds combined.

For example, a 32-27 win for the Red Corner indicates that over the course of the three rounds Red was credited with 32 blows by a majority of the judges while Blue was credited with 27 blows.

If a boxer receives a warning for a foul, the referee will stop action, mimic the foul and look to each judge to recommend a point deduction. If the judges agree with the warning, they will press the warning button corresponding to the fouling boxer's corner color. If the warning is recognized by a majority of the judges, the warning will result in the addition of two points ("blows") to the opponent's score.

It is important to note that electronic scoring is merely a different method of scoring a bout and the definitions of a scoring blow have remained unchanged. A scoring blow still must be clean, fair, unguarded and have the proper weight of the body or shoulder behind it. All legal blows are scored equally, regardless if they result in a knockdown.

Winning the Bout

Winning on points: This is the most common type of win and is decided simply by consulting the judges' scores for each

boxer. Again, if a judge has the boxers scored evenly, the judge must select a winner based on aggressiveness, better defense and best style (except under electronic scoring).
Winning by retirement: A boxer (or coach) who voluntarily "throws in the towel" or one who is unfit to continue forfeits the match.

Winning when the referee stops the contest (RSC): If the referee thinks a boxer is totally outclassed, the bout will be stopped and the superior opponent wins. The bout also will be stopped if one of the boxers is injured or is unable to continue or if one of the boxers receives an eight-count three times in one round or four times in a bout.

Boxers are "down" if they touch the floor with anything other than their feet. They also are "down" if they are dangling on the ropes or are wholly or partially outside the ropes from a blow.

A boxer can be considered "down" while standing up. This state usually occurs after the boxer has received a blow or blows to the head and may be dazed.

"Out on the feet," a boxer is given a mandatory eight-count by the referee. The referee uses this time to evaluate the status of the boxer to determine if the bout can continue.

Even if boxers are able to box sooner, they must wait until the eight seconds are counted to continue. If they are not able to box by the count of eight, they lose the match.

If a bout is stopped, it may also be called an RSC.H. The "H" is used when the match was stopped due to head blows.

The ringside physician has the option to stop a match, at his or her discretion, at any point. The physician will examine the boxer and signal the match to continue or stop at that point. The physician's decision is always binding.

The "technical knockout" (TKO) *does not* exist in Olympic-style boxing.

Winning by disqualification: If the referee disqualifies a boxer, the opponent wins the bout. If both boxers are disqualified, neither wins, and this result is announced.

No contest: Sometimes, for reasons beyond anyone's control, a match must be called off. If the lights should fail or if the ring is damaged, the match's final determination is "no contest" and will go into the record books as such.

Safety

The main objective of Olympic-style boxing's rules and the actions and decisions of the referee is the safety and protection of boxers.

As safety measures, boxers are required to wear a form-fitted

mouthpiece, a foul-proof cup and a headguard. The headguard was made mandatory for all international events and major tournaments in 1984.

Internationally, gloves for the six lighter classes (106-139 pounds) are 8 ounces, while 10-ounce gloves are used for the heavier categories (147--over 201 pounds).

Pre- and post-bout medical examinations are required for all competitions.

Additional safety measures to limit athletes' and officials' exposure to bodily fluids include provisions that a referee may stop a bout when both boxers are bleeding.

Ringside physicians may stop a match at their discretion at any point during the bout.

The standing eight-count and medical advice concerning potential injuries are two additional ways the athlete is protected.

Referees may administer the standing eight whenever they think boxers are unable to defend themselves, are dazed, or have received too many blows. The referee uses this time to evaluate the boxer's condition and ability to continue.

If a boxer has received a cut or other injury, the referee may consult the ringside physician, who has the option to stop the bout or let it continue. A physician is required at ringside during all contests.

If a boxer's match is stopped because of head blows, the boxer is restricted from sparring or competition for a specified period. Before resuming after a restriction period, the boxer must be cleared by a physician.

To compete, boxers must have an athlete's passbook, which is a record of their matches to date. This is to ensure their eligibility and record to box.

Differences Between Amateur And Professional Boxing

1. Organization

Amateur: All amateur boxing comes under the jurisdiction of a single, unified National Governing Body (NGB). As an NGB, USA Boxing has jurisdiction over the administration and rules of competition for amateur boxing in the U.S.

Professional: Many state-controlled commissions have different sets of rules. Therefore, no such single, unified body exists, nor is there one singular set of standards, rules and guidelines.

2. International

Amateur: Amateur boxing uses the same set of rules worldwide. While USA Boxing's rules conform completely with the international rules, USA Boxing has more stringent rules in some areas for safety.

Professional: Has different sets of rules -- WBO, IBF, etc. and those set by state commissions.

3. Philosophy

Amateur: The main objective is to score points. In amateur boxing, the force of a blow or its effect on the opponent does not count. Therefore, the knockout is a by-product in amateur boxing. A blow that knocks a boxer to the mat receives no more credit than a regular blow. A knockdown is scored as a single blow and does not necessarily make the boxer a winner of that round.

Professional: Added weight is given to a blow based on its impact and effect on one's opponent. Therefore, the knockdown and/or knockout is an objective in the pros. In rare cases, a boxer who scores a knockdown may lose the round.

4. Safety

Amateur: Form-fitted mouthpieces are required and must be worn at all times; if it falls out, it is replaced immediately.

Professional: The rule applies to pro contests in certain states but is not uniform.

Amateur: Headguards are mandatory in the U.S. and in major international competitions.

Professional: Headguards prohibited.

Amateur: Boxers receive standing eight-counts. This is a safety precaution that gives the referee eight seconds to evaluate the condition of the boxer. Based on his/her decision, the bout may continue or be stopped.

Professional: Certain pro world bodies have recently adopted the standing eight-count rule.

Amateur: Injury -- referee stops the action and takes the boxer to the corner for the doctor to examine the injury and get an opinion. Based on the physician's opinion, the bout will continue or be stopped. The physician may suspend the

action, at his/her discretion, at any point during the match to examine a boxer. The physician may also examine a boxer between rounds. The physician's decision to stop or continue a match is binding.

Professional: Under some rules, it is the same.

Amateur: More control is exercised by the referee in the ring. Referees caution boxers to let them know that they are violating fundamentals and rules.

Professional: Boxer is only warned for a harm foul, blow-type infraction -- not for technique.

Amateur: Referee will stop the bout if a boxer is out-classed.

Professional: Referee is authorized to stop the bout but rarely does due to financial and TV arrangements.

Amateur: If a bout is stopped because of blows to the head, the boxer is not allowed to compete or workout in the gym for a specified period of time.

Professional: Is done, but not in all cases. Depends on the state.

Amateur: All amateurs are registered with USA Boxing.

Professional: No single system exists; is controlled by local groups.

Amateur: The criteria for stopping bouts due to injury are stricter -- i.e. lacerations or swelling which block vision will cause the bout to be stopped.

Professional: Rules are less strict on injuries that stop a bout -- i.e. a boxer will continue to box if his eye is swollen shut or if a cut around the eye, nose or mouth is badly bleeding.

Amateur: The use of the head (butting) is strictly regulated -- boxers are cautioned but then may be warned or lose points if they continue.

Professional: Laxly controlled.

Amateur: A blow counts for scoring only if the knuckle surface is used; slapping, etc., is not allowed nor does it count for points. Therefore, the striking area is limited to the knuckle of the fist and must hit the front and side of the body and head and above the waist.

Professional: Not as much attention is given to the placement of scoring blows.

Amateur: The bell cannot save a boxer from a stopped contest. The count continues to completion, regardless of when the bell rings (except in finals of a tournament, such as the Olympics, Pan Am Games or U.S. Championships).

Professional: A boxer can be saved from a knockout by the ringing of the bell, depending on state rules.

Amateur: Three counts in one round or four in a match automatically stops a bout.

Professional: Is waived in some circumstances.

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