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Sequence Number: 01-20-24  
Notice ID(s): 3786-3789  
File Date: 1/30/2024

# Notice of Rulemaking Hearing

*Hearings will be conducted in the manner prescribed by the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, T.C.A. § 4-5-204. For questions and copies of the notice, contact the person listed below.*

<b>Agency/Board/Commission:</b>	Tennessee Athletic Commission
<b>Division:</b>	Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Jesse Gentry
<b>Address:</b>	500 James Robertson Parkway
<b>Zip:</b>	37243
<b>Phone:</b>	(629) 259-0795

*Any Individuals with disabilities who wish to participate in these proceedings (to review these filings) and may require aid to facilitate such participation should contact the following at least 10 days prior to the hearing:*

<b>ADA Contact:</b>	Don Coleman
<b>Address:</b>	500 James Robertson Parkway, Davy Crockett Tower, Nashville, Tenn. 37243
<b>Phone:</b>	615-741-6500
<b>Email:</b>	Don.Coleman@TN.gov

**Hearing Location(s)** (for additional locations, copy and paste table)

Address 1:	500 James Robertson Parkway			
Address 2:	Room 1B			
City:	Nashville			
Zip:	37243			
Hearing Date:	06/10/2024			
Hearing Time:	2:00 P.M.	X	CST/CDT	EST/EDT

**Additional Hearing Information:**

N/A

**Revision Type (check all that apply):**

   X Amendment  
   X New  
   Repeal

**Rule(s)** (ALL chapters and rules contained in filing must be listed. If needed, copy and paste additional tables to accommodate more than one chapter. Please enter only **ONE** Rule Number/Rule Title per row.)

Chapter Number	Chapter Title
0145-01	General Provisions
Rule Number	Rule Title
0145-01-.02	Definitions

<b>Chapter Number</b>	<b>Chapter Title</b>
0145-02	Professional Boxing
<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Rule Title</b>
0145-02-.01	Applicability
0145-02-.14	Technical Knockout
0145-02-.17	Time Limitations

<b>Chapter Number</b>	<b>Chapter Title</b>
0145-03	Kickboxing and Mixed Martial Arts
<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Rule Title</b>
0145-03-.09	Repealed
0145-03-.12	Weight Classifications

<b>Chapter Number</b>	<b>Chapter Title</b>
0145-06	Bare-Knuckle Boxing
<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Rule Title</b>
0145-06-.01	Applicability
0145-06-.02	Fighting Area
0145-06-.03	Hand Wraps
0145-06-.04	Protective Equipment and Apparel
0145-06-.05	Petroleum Jelly
0145-06-.06	Weight Classifications
0145-06-.07	Rounds
0145-06-.08	Seconds
0145-06-.09	Amateur Events
0145-06-.10	Duties and Responsibilities of the Referee
0145-06-.11	Scoring
0145-06-.12	Knockouts, Knockdowns, and Decisions
0145-06-.13	Fouls and Foul-Related Injuries
0145-06-.14	Bare-Knuckle Boxing Physicians

Place substance of rules and other info here. Statutory authority must be given for each rule change. For information on formatting rules go to <https://sos.tn.gov/products/division-publications/rulemaking-guidelines>.

AMENDMENTS  
RULES  
OF  
TENNESSEE ATHLETIC COMMISSION  
0145-01  
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 0145-01-.02 is amended by adding the following new paragraph as (5), renumbering the rest of the paragraphs as necessary, and amending the language of the current paragraph (5), so that paragraphs (5) and (6) of this rule shall read:

0145-01-.02 DEFINITIONS

(5) "Bare-knuckle boxing" means boxing where unarmed combatants do not wear gloves or any form of padding on their hands.

(6) "Boxing" means unarmed combat to compete with the fists. Boxing may include bare-knuckle boxing, unless the application to bare-knuckle boxing would result in conflict with the requirements for bare-knuckle boxing in Chapter 0145-06 of these rules.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. §§ 68-115-201 and 68-115-404.

0145-02  
PROFESSIONAL BOXING

Rule 0145-02-.01 is amended by making the following deletions and substitutions so that in its entirety, the rule shall read:

0145-02-.01 APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all professional boxing contests held or scheduled to be held in the state of Tennessee and shall take precedent over any other rules, including but not limited to rules of any sanctioning organization, that are in any way directly or indirectly in conflict with any provision set forth in this chapter, unless the Commission modifies or waives such provision. The provisions of this chapter shall also apply to bare-knuckle boxing bouts, unless they conflict with the rules specifically applicable to bare-knuckle boxing.

The Commission may modify or waive any provision hereunder:

- (1) In cases of undue hardship, demonstrable impracticality, or necessity; or
- (2) For the purpose of allowing a bout to be sanctioned by a recognized boxing association, council, or organization.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201.

Rule 0145-02-.14 is amended by adding paragraph (e) to the end of this rule and updating the listing so that in its entirety, the rule shall read:

0145-02-.14 TECHNICAL KNOCKOUT

- (1) The referee shall promptly terminate a bout and declare a "technical knockout" if:
  - (a) He is advised to do so by the ringside physician;

- (b) In his opinion, the bout is too one sided;
- (c) In his opinion, a contestant is in such condition that continuation of the bout might subject him to serious injury;
- (d) A contestant fails to answer the bell for a round; or
- (e) A combatant loses control of bodily functions and urinates, defecates, or regurgitates during the bout.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. §§ 68-115-201 and 68-115-404.

Rule 0145-02-.17 is amended by deleting paragraph (3) and replacing it with the following so that paragraph (3) shall read:

#### 0145-02-.17 TIME LIMITATIONS

(3) A boxer who suffers a knockout (KO), technical knockout (TKO) or retires from a fight for any reason shall not be permitted to engage in any further competitive boxing or sparring for a period of at least thirty (30) days. If a boxer loses two (2) bouts by KO or TKO within a period of ninety (90) days, he or she shall not be permitted to engage in any further boxing or sparring for a period of at least one-hundred eighty (180) days. This rule includes any KO or TKO suffered in an out of state bout. Both the boxer and the boxer's manager shall be responsible for assuring compliance with this paragraph.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201.

#### 0145-03 KICKBOXING AND MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Rule 0145-03-.09 is deleted in its entirety.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201.

Rule 0145-03-.12 is amended by deleting the rule in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

#### 0145-03-.12 WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS.

- (1) Allowances within Division: there are no allowance restrictions if both combatants weigh-in within the same contracted division/weight class.
- (2) Weight Miss Catch Weight: If a combatant misses the contracted weight and the two combatants are in different weight classes, the heavier combatant shall not exceed five (5) lbs. of the lower weighing combatant.
- (3) Contracted Catch Weight(s): there is no weight spread allowance between contracted catch weight combatants, so long as both combatants are below the contracted weight. The Commission may deny any catch weight fight if the weight differential is a large enough disparity to cause a real or perceived threat to the safety of either of the combatants.
- (4) The following weight classes and weights will be used for all contests under this chapter:

- |                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) Atomweight    | Up to and including 105 lbs. |
| (b) Strawweight   | 105.1 - 115 lbs.             |
| (c) Flyweight     | 115.1 lbs. - 125 lbs.        |
| (d) Bantamweight  | 125.1 lbs. - 135 lbs.        |
| (e) Featherweight | 135.1 lbs. - 145 lbs.        |

(f) Lightweight	145.1 lbs. - 155 lbs.
(g) Super Lightweight	155.1 lbs. - 165 lbs.
(h) Welterweight	165.1 lbs. - 170 lbs.
(i) Super Welterweight	170.1 lbs. - 175 lbs.
(j) Middleweight	175.1 lbs. - 185 lbs.
(k) Super Middleweight	185.1 lbs. - 195 lbs.
(l) Light Heavyweight	195.1 lbs. - 205 lbs.
(m) Cruiserweight	205.1 lbs. - 225 lbs.
(n) Heavyweight	225.1 lbs. - 265 lbs.
(o) Super Heavyweight	Over 265.1 lbs.

(5) A promoter may establish its own weight requirements for championship or title fights.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

#### NEW RULES

#### 0145-06 BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING

A new chapter to 0145 Athletic Commission's rules shall be created and listed as 0145-06. This new chapter shall be titled BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING. The following rules shall be created and listed in a table of contents as listed in this rulemaking.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.01 is created and titled as APPLICABILITY This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

##### 0145-06-.01 APPLICABILITY

(1) The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all bare-knuckle boxing contests held or scheduled to be held in the State of Tennessee and shall take precedent over any other rules, including but not limited to any rules of any sanctioning organization, that are in any way directly or indirectly in conflict with any other provision set forth in this chapter, unless the Commission modifies or waives such provision. The Commission may modify or waive any provision in cases of undue hardship, demonstratable impracticability, or necessity.

(2) These rules shall be supplemental to those in Chapter 0145-02 for Professional Boxing to the extent that those rules do not conflict with any provision in this chapter. Any requirements, provisions, obligations, responsibilities, or duties in Chapter 0145-02 shall apply to bare-knuckle boxing bouts unless these rules state otherwise.

(3) Any combatant, referee, promoter, second, announcer, matchmaker, judge, or timekeeper who participates in a bare-knuckle boxing bout must comply with the licensing requirements of the Commission in Chapter 0145-01 of these rules.

(4) Any combatant, referee, promoter, second, announcer, matchmaker, judge, or timekeeper who participates in a bare-knuckle boxing bout must comply with all licensing applications, fees, and other requirements related to licensing for professional boxing.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.02 is created and titled as FIGHTING AREA This rule shall read in

its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.02 FIGHTING AREA

(1) Bare-knuckle fighting bouts shall only occur in a ring or cage approved by the Commission and that promotes contestant, official, and spectator safety. The cage or ring must be approved prior to the bout and comply with the provisions of Rule 0145-02-.02 or Rule 0145-03-.03.

(2) A bell or other device capable of producing a tone easily audible to the contestants shall be fastened securely at or below the floor level of the fighting area.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.03 is created and titled as HAND WRAPS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.03 HAND WRAPS

(1) Hand wraps shall include the wrist and are restricted to twelve (12) yards of soft gauze bandage per hand and not more than two (2) inches in width, held in place by not more than ten (10) yards of surgical tape, no more than one (1) inch (25.4 mm) width. The surgical tape shall not be applied within one (1) inch of the knuckles.

(2) No tape or gauze will extend past the combatant's knuckle when a clenched fist is made.

(3) No tape or gauze is allowed between or on the combatant's fingers, with the exception of the thumb. The thumb of a combatant may include a single wrap of tape when the wrist is being wrapped.

(4) Wrapping of the wrist shall not extend more than three (3) inches past the wrist juncture.

(5) No other gloves, wrappings, taping, or other items shall be applied to the hands of a combatant.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.04 is created and titled as PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND APPAREL. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.04 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND APPAREL

(1) All combatants must wear such protective gear or equipment as deemed necessary by the Commission.

(2) Each combatant shall wear appropriate shorts and wrestling or boxing shoes. Shoes shall be of soft material, and shall not be fitted with spikes, cleats, hard soles, or hard heels.

(3) Each combatant shall wear a custom-made, individually fabricated mouth guard. A round cannot begin without the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece is dislodged during the round, the Referee will call "time" when there is a lull in the bout and have the mouthpiece replaced at the first opportune moment without interfering with the immediate action. The Referee may deduct points if he or she feels the mouthpiece is being purposefully spit out.

(4) Male combatants shall be equipped with, and use throughout the bout equipment which will preclude any claim of incapacity due to low blows.

(5) Female combatants shall wear attire to prevent the showing of cleavage as much as possible and are approved to wear an above the elbow or sleeveless form-fitting rash guard and/or sports bra(s). No loose-fitting tops and/or breast protectors shall be allowed.

(6) When deemed necessary by the referee, a combatant shall have his or her hair secured in a manner that does not interfere with the vision and safety of either combatant. No object can be worn to secure the combatants hair which may cause injury to either combatant. Inspectors shall ensure that the fingernails are clipped at a length so as not to cause injury to the opponent.

(7) The wearing of jewelry is strictly prohibited during all contests.

(8) A combatant may wear soft neoprene-type sleeves to cover only the knee(s) or elbow(s). Approved sleeves may not have padding, Velcro, plastic, metal, ties, or any other material considered unsafe or that may create an unfair advantage. There will be no other taping, covering, or protective gear of any kind on the upper body of a combatant, notwithstanding the wrapping and taping for a combatant's hands allowed by this Chapter.

(9) Each referee and all seconds (including a manager acting as a second) shall be equipped with surgical gloves which shall be worn throughout the bout.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.05 is created and titled as PETROLEUM JELLY. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.05 PETROLEUM JELLY

Combatants shall not be permitted to have excessive petroleum jelly or another similar substance on any part of their body, as determined by the sole discretion of the referee. Petroleum jelly or another similar substance shall be applied to the face prior to the bout by an approved cut-man or licensed cornerman. The reapplication of petroleum jelly or another similar substance to the face may be allowed between rounds and shall only be applied by an approved cut-man or licensed cornerman.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.06 is created and titled as WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.06 WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS

The following shall constitute the applicable weight classes for all contests in bare-knuckle boxing bouts. The allowable weight differential (in pounds) between contestants within major classifications shall be as permitted by the Commission at its discretion. A promoter may establish its own weight requirements for championship or title fights.

- |    |                      |                       |
|----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Straw-Weight         | Through 107.9 lbs.    |
| b. | Fly -Weight          | 108 lbs. – 116.9 lbs. |
| c. | Bantam- Weight       | 117 lbs. – 125.9 lbs. |
| d. | Feather-Weight       | 126 lbs. -135.9 lbs.  |
| e. | Light- Weight        | 136 lbs. – 145.9 lbs. |
| f. | Welter-Weight        | 146 lbs. – 155.9 lbs. |
| g. | Middle- Weight       | 156 lbs. – 165.9 lbs. |
| h. | Super Middle-Weight  | 166 lbs. – 175.9 lbs. |
| i. | Light Heavy-Weight   | 176 lbs. – 185.9 lbs. |
| j. | Middle Heavy- Weight | 186 lbs. – 205.9 lbs. |
| k. | Cruiser-Weight       | 206 lbs. – 225.9 lbs. |
| l. | Heavy-Weight         | 226 lbs. – 265.9 lbs. |

- m. Super Heavy-Weight 266 lbs. and above.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.07 is created and titled as ROUNDS This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.07 ROUNDS

- (1) Bare-knuckle fighting bouts shall not extend past a total of six rounds and a total of eighteen (18) minutes of fighting with one (1) minute rest period between rounds. The one-minute rest period does not count as part of the 18 minutes of fighting.
- (2) Promoters are authorized to mix bout cards and schedule bouts for two or three-minute rounds. The Commission will consider the following information when approving bouts:
  - (a) Combatants record, including the record in other combative sports;
  - (b) Combative sports experience by the combatants;
  - (c) Skill level of the combatants;
  - (d) Physical condition of the combatants; and
  - (e) Any other relevant information before the Commission.
- (3) Rounds may be approved for two (2) or three (3) minutes in length. Bouts with two-minute rounds shall not exceed six (6) rounds for a total of twelve (12) minutes of fighting.
- (4) Bare-knuckle fighting combatants who are making a professional debut in a bare-knuckle bout shall be restricted to competing in a bout with no more than four (4) rounds that are in two (2) minutes per round, unless the combatant has previous professional experience in boxing, mixed martial arts, or other combat sports.
- (5) Bare-knuckle fighting combatants shall not make a professional debut in bare-knuckle fighting bouts without sufficient prior experience in combative sports reviewed by the Commission.
- (6) Female participants shall be restricted to participate in bouts with rounds that are two (2) minutes in duration.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.08 is created and titled as SECONDS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.08 SECONDS

Bare-knuckle fighting bouts shall follow the requirements in Chapter 0145-02 as it relates to the number and licensing of seconds and managers.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.09 is created and titled as AMATUER EVENTS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.09 AMATUER EVENTS

Amateur bare-knuckle boxing bouts are prohibited in the State of Tennessee. Combatants who participate in bare-knuckle boxing bouts must be licensed by the Commission as professional bare-knuckle boxing fighters.



The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.10 is created and titled as DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REFEREE. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

**0145-06-.10 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REFEREE**

- (1) Each bout shall be officiated by a referee who is licensed in accordance with Rule 0145-01-.03.
- (2) The referee in a bare-knuckle bout shall have the same duties, responsibilities, and authority as a referee under Chapter 0145-02.
- (3) In addition to the fouls listed in Rule 0145-02.10, a referee may consider the following acts as fouls in a bare-knuckle bout:
  - (a) Putting a finger into any orifice of the opponent or into any cut or laceration on an opponent, including fish hooking;
  - (b) Pulling the opponent's hair;
  - (c) Manipulating the opponent's fingers;
  - (d) Striking an opponent who is helpless as the result of blows but is supported by the ropes and does not fall;
  - (e) Butting the opponent with the head, shoulder, knee, or elbow;
  - (f) Hitting the opponent with the elbow or forearm;
  - (g) Hitting the opponent on the back of the head or neck;
  - (h) Gouging the opponent's eye in any manner;
  - (i) Using the ropes or cage to gain an advantage over the opponent;
  - (j) Pushing the opponent around the fighting area or into the ropes/cage;
  - (k) Timidity, excessive clenching, including intentionally spitting out the mouthpiece, running from an opponent, or other similar behavior;
  - (l) Biting the opponent;
  - (m) Headlocks;
  - (n) Throat punches or strikes directly toward the throat of an opponent;
  - (o) Fingers outstretched toward an opponent's face or eyes;
  - (p) Throws or takedowns;
  - (q) Engaging in any other action not described in this subsection that is deemed an intentional foul by the Referee on the basis that the action poses a danger to the safety of either fighter, impedes fair and competitive play, or is unsportsmanlike;
  - (r) Spinning back fists;
  - (s) Hammer-fists.
- (4) The referee is authorized to use any procedures to determine if a foul occurred, penalize a combatant, and/or to end the bout pursuant to Chapter 0145-02.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.11 is created and titled as SCORING. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.11 SCORING

Scoring in bare-knuckle bouts shall follow the requirements of Professional Boxing contests listed in Rule 0145-02-.12.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.12 is created and titled as KNOCKOUTS, KNOCKDOWNS, AND DECISIONS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.12 KNOCKOUTS, KNOCKDOWNS, AND DECISIONS

The referee shall have the sole authority to determine when a knockdown has occurred. The procedures for determining knockdowns, knockouts, technical knockouts, disqualification, technical decisions, draws, no contest, or any other decision to end a bout for a bare-knuckle contest shall be contest with the rules of Chapter 0145-06.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.13 is created and titled as FOULS AND FOUL-RELATED INJURIES. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.13 FOULS AND FOUL-RELATED INJURIES

The referee shall have the sole authority to determine when a foul has occurred. A referee may consider acts listed in this chapter or Chapter 0145-06 as fouls. The referee may follow the procedures listed in Chapter 0145-06 regarding the use of instant replay and the determination of how fouls are handled regarding point deductions, ending a bout, or any other determination related to unintentional or intentional fouls.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.14 is created and titled as BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING PHYSICIANS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.14 BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING PHYSICIANS

In addition to any considerations for approving ring-side physicians for professional boxing contests, a ring-side physician for a bare-knuckle boxing bouts shall have experience with laceration repair.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

I certify that the information included in this filing is an accurate and complete representation of the intent and scope of rulemaking proposed by the agency.

Date: January 30, 2024

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Jesse L. Gentry*

Name of Officer: Jesse Gentry

Title of Officer: Chief Counsel

**Department of State Use Only**

Filed with the Department of State on: 1/30/2024

*Tre Hargett*

Tre Hargett  
Secretary of State

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<b>Division:</b>	Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Jesse Gentry
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<b>ADA Contact:</b>	Don Coleman
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0145-03	Kickboxing and Mixed Martial Arts
Rule Number	Rule Title
0145-03-.09	<del>Standing Eight Count — Kickboxing</del> <a href="#">Repealed</a>
0145-03-.12	Weight Classifications

Chapter Number	Chapter Title
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<a href="#">0145-06-.12</a>	<a href="#">Knockouts, Knockdowns, and Decisions</a>
<a href="#">0145-06-.13</a>	<a href="#">Fouls and Foul-Related Injuries</a>
<a href="#">0145-06-.14</a>	<a href="#">Bare-Knuckle Boxing Physicians</a>

Place substance of rules and other info here. Statutory authority must be given for each rule change. For information on formatting rules go to <https://sos.tn.gov/products/division-publications/rulemaking-guidelines>.

AMENDMENTS  
RULES  
OF  
TENNESSEE ATHLETIC COMMISSION  
0145-01  
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 0145-01-.02 is amended by adding the following new paragraph as (5), renumbering the rest of the paragraphs as necessary, and amending the language of the current paragraph (5), so that paragraphs (5) and (6) of this rule shall read:

0145-01-.02 DEFINITIONS

(5) "Bare-knuckle boxing" means boxing where unarmed combatants do not wear gloves or any form of padding on their hands.

(5) "Boxing" means unarmed combat to compete with the fists. Boxing may include bare-knuckle boxing, unless the application to bare-knuckle boxing would result in conflict with the requirements for bare-knuckle boxing in Chapter 0145-06 of these rules.

Authority: [Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016](#) ~~Chapter 1149 of the Public Acts of 2008, § 2~~ and T.C.A. §§ 68-115-201 and 68-115-404.

0145-02  
PROFESSIONAL BOXING

Rule 0145-02-.01 is amended by making the following deletions and substitutions so that in its entirety, the rule shall read:

0145-02-.01 APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all professional boxing contests held or scheduled to be held in the state of Tennessee and shall take precedent over any other rules, including but not limited to rules of any sanctioning organization, that are in any way directly or indirectly in conflict with any provision set forth in this chapter, unless the Commission modifies or waives such provision. The provisions of this chapter shall also apply to bare-knuckle boxing bouts, unless they conflict with the rules specifically applicable to bare-knuckle boxing.

The Commission may modify or waive any provision hereunder:

- (1) In cases of undue hardship, demonstrable impracticality, or necessity; or
- (2) For the purpose of allowing a bout to be sanctioned by a recognized boxing association, council, or organization.

Authority: ~~Chapter 1149 of the Public Acts of 2008, § 2~~ [Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016](#) and T.C.A. § 68-115-201.

Rule 0145-02-.14 is amended by adding paragraph (e) to the end of this rule and updating the listing so that in its entirety, the rule shall read:

0145-02-.14 TECHNICAL KNOCKOUT

- (1) The referee shall promptly terminate a bout and declare a "technical knockout" if:
  - (a) He is advised to do so by the ringside physician;

(b) In his opinion, the bout is too one sided;

(c) In his opinion, a contestant is in such condition that continuation of the bout might subject him to serious injury; ~~or~~

(d) A contestant fails to answer the bell for a round-; or

(e) A combatant loses control of bodily functions and urinates, defecates, or regurgitates during the bout.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 ~~Chapter 1149 of the Public Acts of 2008, § 2~~ and T.C.A. §§ 68-115-201 and 68-115-404.

Rule 0145-02-.17 is amended by deleting subsection (3) and replacing it with the following so that subsection (3) shall read:

#### 0145-02-.17 TIME LIMITATIONS

(3) A boxer who suffers a knockout (KO), technical knockout (TKO) or retires from a fight for any reason shall not be permitted to engage in any further competitive boxing or sparring for a period of at least thirty (30) days. If a boxer loses two (2) bouts by KO or TKO within a period of ~~three (3) months~~ ninety (90) days, he or she shall not be permitted to engage in any further boxing or sparring for a period of at least ~~six (6) months~~ one-hundred eighty (180) days. This rule includes any KO or TKO suffered in an out of state bout. Both the boxer and the boxer's manager shall be responsible for assuring compliance with this paragraph.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 ~~Chapter 1149 of the Public Acts of 2008, § 2~~ and T.C.A. § 68-115-201.

#### 0145-03 KICKBOXING AND MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Rule 0145-03-.09 is deleted in its entirety.

#### ~~0145-03-.09 STANDING EIGHT COUNT - KICKBOXING~~

~~The referee may, at his discretion, administer an eight count to a contestant in a kickboxing contest who is in trouble but who is still standing. He shall direct the opponent to a neutral corner, then begin counting from one (1) to eight (8), examining the contestant in trouble as he counts. If, after completing the standing eight count, the referee determines that the contestant is not able to continue, he shall stop the contest and declare the opponent the winner by technical knockout.~~

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201.

Rule 0145-03-.12 is amended by deleting the rule in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

#### 0145-03-.12 WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS.

~~The following shall constitute the applicable weight classes for all contests. The allowable weight differential (in pounds) between contestants within major classifications shall be as permitted by the Commission at its discretion. If a contestant misses the contracted weight and the two (2) competitors are in different weight classes, the heavier opponent shall not exceed five (5) lbs. of the lower weight fighter. A promoter may establish its own weight requirements for championship or title fights.~~

~~(a) Strawweight \_\_\_\_\_ Through 115 lbs.~~

~~(b) Flyweight \_\_\_\_\_ 115.1 lbs. - 125 lbs.~~

~~(c) Bantamweight \_\_\_\_\_ 125.1 lbs. - 135 lbs.~~

- ~~(d) Featherweight ————— 135.1 lbs. - 145 lbs.~~
- ~~(e) Lightweight ————— 145.1 lbs. - 155 lbs.~~
- ~~(f) Super Lightweight ————— 155.1 lbs. - 165 lbs.~~
- ~~(g) Welterweight ————— 165.1 lbs. - 170 lbs.~~
- ~~(h) Super Welterweight ————— 170.1 lbs. - 175 lbs.~~
- ~~(i) Middleweight ————— 175.1 lbs. - 185 lbs.~~
- ~~(j) Super Middleweight ————— 185.1 lbs. - 195 lbs.~~
- ~~(k) Light Heavyweight ————— 195.1 lbs. - 205 lbs.~~
- ~~(l) Cruiserweight ————— 205.1 lbs. - 225 lbs.~~
- ~~(m) Heavyweight ————— 225.1 lbs. - 265 lbs.~~
- ~~(n) Super Heavyweight ————— Over 265.1 lbs.~~

(1) Allowances within Division: there are no allowance restrictions if both combatants weigh-in within the same contracted division/weight class.

(2) Weight Miss Catch Weight: If a combatant misses the contracted weight and the two combatants are in different weight classes, the heavier combatant shall not exceed five (5) lbs. of the lower weighing combatant.

(3) Contracted Catch Weight(s): there is no weight spread allowance between contracted catch weight combatants, so long as both combatants are below the contracted weight. The Commission may deny any catch weight fight if the weight differential is a large enough disparity to cause a real or perceived threat to the safety of either of the combatants.

(4) The following weight classes and weights will be used for all contests under this chapter:

- (a) Atomweight ————— Up to and including 105 lbs.
- (b) Strawweight ————— 105.1 - 115 lbs.
- (c) Flyweight ————— 115.1 lbs. - 125 lbs.
- (d) Bantamweight ————— 125.1 lbs. - 135 lbs.
- (e) Featherweight ————— 135.1 lbs. - 145 lbs.
- (f) Lightweight ————— 145.1 lbs. - 155 lbs.
- (g) Super Lightweight ————— 155.1 lbs. - 165 lbs.
- (h) Welterweight ————— 165.1 lbs. - 170 lbs.
- (i) Super Welterweight ————— 170.1 lbs. - 175 lbs.
- (j) Middleweight ————— 175.1 lbs. - 185 lbs.
- (k) Super Middleweight ————— 185.1 lbs. - 195 lbs.
- (l) Light Heavyweight ————— 195.1 lbs. - 205 lbs.
- (m) Cruiserweight ————— 205.1 lbs. - 225 lbs.



(n) Heavyweight 225.1 lbs. - 265 lbs.

(o) Super Heavyweight Over 265.1 lbs.

(5) A promoter may establish its own weight requirements for championship or title fights.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

## NEW RULES

### 0145-06 BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING

A new chapter to 0145 Athletic Commission's rules shall be created and listed as 0145-06. This new chapter shall be titled BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING. The following rules shall be created and listed in a table of contents as listed in this rulemaking.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.01 is created and titled as APPLICABILITY This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.01 APPLICABILITY

(1) The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all bare-knuckle boxing contests held or scheduled to be held in the State of Tennessee and shall take precedent over any other rules, including but not limited to any rules of any sanctioning organization, that are in any way directly or indirectly in conflict with any other provision set forth in this chapter, unless the Commission modifies or waives such provision. The Commission may modify or waive any provision in cases of undue hardship, demonstratable impracticability, or necessity.

(2) These rules shall be supplemental to those in Chapter 0145-02 for Professional Boxing to the extent that those rules do not conflict with any provision in this chapter. Any requirements, provisions, obligations, responsibilities, or duties in Chapter 0145-02 shall apply to bare-knuckle boxing bouts unless these rules state otherwise.

(3) Any combatant, referee, promoter, second, announcer, matchmaker, judge, or timekeeper who participates in a bare-knuckle boxing bout must comply with the licensing requirements of the Commission in Chapter 0145-01 of these rules.

(4) Any combatant, referee, promoter, second, announcer, matchmaker, judge, or timekeeper who participates in a bare-knuckle boxing bout must comply with all licensing applications, fees, and other requirements related to licensing for professional boxing.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.02 is created and titled as FIGHTING AREA This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.02 FIGHTING AREA

(1) Bare-knuckle fighting bouts shall only occur in a ring or cage approved by the Commission and that promotes contestant, official, and spectator safety. The cage or ring must be approved prior to the bout and comply with the provisions of Rule 0145-02-.02 or Rule 0145-03-.03.

(2) A bell or other device capable of producing a tone easily audible to the contestants shall be fastened securely at or below the floor level of the fighting area.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.03 is created and titled as HAND WRAPS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.03 HAND WRAPS

(1) Hand wraps shall include the wrist and are restricted to twelve (12) yards of soft gauze bandage per hand and not more than two (2) inches in width, held in place by not more than ten (10) yards of surgical tape, no more than one (1) inch (25.4 mm) width. The surgical tape shall not be applied within one (1) inch of the knuckles.

(2) No tape or gauze will extend past the combatant's knuckle when a clenched fist is made.

(3) No tape or gauze is allowed between or on the combatant's fingers, with the exception of the thumb. The thumb of a combatant may include a single wrap of tape when the wrist is being wrapped.

(4) Wrapping of the wrist shall not extend more than three (3) inches past the wrist juncture.

(5) No other gloves, wrappings, taping, or other items shall be applied to the hands of a combatant.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.04 is created and titled as PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND APPAREL. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.04 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND APPAREL

(1) All combatants must wear such protective gear or equipment as deemed necessary by the Commission.

(2) Each combatant shall wear appropriate shorts and wrestling or boxing shoes. Shoes shall be of soft material, and shall not be fitted with spikes, cleats, hard soles, or hard heels.

(3) Each combatant shall wear a custom-made, individually fabricated mouth guard. A round cannot begin without the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece is dislodged during the round, the Referee will call "time" when there is a lull in the bout and have the mouthpiece replaced at the first opportune moment without interfering with the immediate action. The Referee may deduct points if he or she feels the mouthpiece is being purposefully spit out.

(4) Male combatants shall be equipped with, and use throughout the bout equipment which will preclude any claim of incapacity due to low blows.

(5) Female combatants shall wear attire to prevent the showing of cleavage as much as possible and are approved to wear an above the elbow or sleeveless form-fitting rash guard and/or sports bra(s). No loose-fitting tops and/or breast protectors shall be allowed.

(6) When deemed necessary by the referee, a combatant shall have his or her hair secured in a manner that does not interfere with the vision and safety of either combatant. No object can be worn to secure the combatants hair which may cause injury to either combatant. Inspectors shall ensure that the fingernails are clipped at a length so as not to cause injury to the opponent.

(7) The wearing of jewelry is strictly prohibited during all contests.

(8) A combatant may wear soft neoprene-type sleeves to cover only the knee(s) or elbow(s). Approved sleeves may not have padding, Velcro, plastic, metal, ties, or any other material considered unsafe or that may create an unfair advantage. There will be no other taping, covering, or protective gear of any kind on the upper body of a combatant, notwithstanding the wrapping and taping for a combatant's hands allowed by this Chapter.

(9) Each referee and all seconds (including a manager acting as a second) shall be equipped with surgical gloves which shall be worn throughout the bout.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.05 is created and titled as PETROLEUM JELLY. This rule shall

read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.05 PETROLEUM JELLY

Combatants shall not be permitted to have excessive petroleum jelly or another similar substance on any part of their body, as determined by the sole discretion of the referee. Petroleum jelly or another similar substance shall be applied to the face prior to the bout by an approved cut-man or licensed cornerman. The reapplication of petroleum jelly or another similar substance to the face may be allowed between rounds and shall only be applied by an approved cut-man or licensed cornerman.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.06 is created and titled as WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.06 WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS

The following shall constitute the applicable weight classes for all contests in bare-knuckle boxing bouts. The allowable weight differential (in pounds) between contestants within major classifications shall be as permitted by the Commission at its discretion. A promoter may establish its own weight requirements for championship or title fights.

- |    |                             |                              |
|----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. | <u>Straw-Weight</u>         | <u>Through 107.9 lbs.</u>    |
| b. | <u>Fly -Weight</u>          | <u>108 lbs. – 116.9 lbs.</u> |
| c. | <u>Bantam- Weight</u>       | <u>117 lbs. – 125.9 lbs.</u> |
| d. | <u>Feather-Weight</u>       | <u>126 lbs. -135.9 lbs.</u>  |
| e. | <u>Light- Weight</u>        | <u>136 lbs. – 145.9 lbs.</u> |
| f. | <u>Welter-Weight</u>        | <u>146 lbs. – 155.9 lbs.</u> |
| g. | <u>Middle- Weight</u>       | <u>156 lbs. – 165.9 lbs.</u> |
| h. | <u>Super Middle-Weight</u>  | <u>166 lbs. – 175.9 lbs.</u> |
| i. | <u>Light Heavy-Weight</u>   | <u>176 lbs. – 185.9 lbs.</u> |
| j. | <u>Middle Heavy- Weight</u> | <u>186 lbs. – 205.9 lbs.</u> |
| k. | <u>Cruiser-Weight</u>       | <u>206 lbs. – 225.9 lbs.</u> |
| l. | <u>Heavy-Weight</u>         | <u>226 lbs. – 265.9 lbs.</u> |
| m. | <u>Super Heavy-Weight</u>   | <u>266 lbs. and above.</u>   |

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.07 is created and titled as ROUNDS This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.07 ROUNDS

(1) Bare-knuckle fighting bouts shall not extend past a total of six rounds and a total of eighteen (18) minutes of fighting with one (1) minute rest period between rounds. The one-minute rest period does not count as part of the 18 minutes of fighting.

(2) Promoters are authorized to mix bout cards and schedule bouts for two or three-minute rounds. The Commission will consider the following information when approving bouts:

(a) Combatants record, including the record in other combative sports;

(b) Combative sports experience by the combatants;

(c) Skill level of the combatants;

(d) Physical condition of the combatants; and

(e) Any other relevant information before the Commission.

(3) Rounds may be approved for two (2) or three (3) minutes in length. Bouts with two-minute rounds shall not exceed six (6) rounds for a total of twelve (12) minutes of fighting.

(4) Bare-knuckle fighting combatants who are making a professional debut in a bare-knuckle bout shall be restricted to competing in a bout with no more than four (4) rounds that are in two (2) minutes per round, unless the combatant has previous professional experience in boxing, mixed martial arts, or other combat sports.

(5) Bare-knuckle fighting combatants shall not make a professional debut in bare-knuckle fighting bouts without sufficient prior experience in combative sports reviewed by the Commission.

(6) Female participants shall be restricted to participate in bouts with rounds that are two (2) minutes in duration.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.08 is created and titled as SECONDS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.08 SECONDS

Bare-knuckle fighting bouts shall follow the requirements in Chapter 0145-02 as it relates to the number and licensing of seconds and managers.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.09 is created and titled as AMATUER EVENTS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.09 AMATUER EVENTS

Amateur bare-knuckle boxing bouts are prohibited in the State of Tennessee. Combatants who participate in bare-knuckle boxing bouts must be licensed by the Commission as professional bare-knuckle boxing fighters.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.10 is created and titled as DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REFEREE. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.10 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REFEREE

(1) Each bout shall be officiated by a referee who is licensed in accordance with Rule 0145-01-.03.

(2) The referee in a bare-knuckle bout shall have the same duties, responsibilities, and authority as a referee under Chapter 0145-02.

(3) In addition to the fouls listed in Rule 0145-02.10, a referee may consider the following acts as fouls in a bare-knuckle bout:

- (a) Putting a finger into any orifice of the opponent or into any cut or laceration on an opponent, including fish hooking;
- (b) Pulling the opponent's hair;
- (c) Manipulating the opponent's fingers;
- (d) Striking an opponent who is helpless as the result of blows but is supported by the ropes and does not fall;
- (e) Butting the opponent with the head, shoulder, knee, or elbow;
- (f) Hitting the opponent with the elbow or forearm;
- (g) Hitting the opponent on the back of the head or neck;
- (h) Gouging the opponent's eye in any manner;
- (i) Using the ropes or cage to gain an advantage over the opponent;
- (j) Pushing the opponent around the fighting area or into the ropes/cage;
- (k) Timidity, excessive clenching, including intentionally spitting out the mouthpiece, running from an opponent, or other similar behavior;
- (l) Biting the opponent;
- (m) Headlocks;
- (n) Throat punches or strikes directly toward the throat of an opponent;
- (o) Fingers outstretched toward an opponent's face or eyes;
- (p) Throws or takedowns;
- (q) Engaging in any other action not described in this subsection that is deemed an intentional foul by the Referee on the basis that the action poses a danger to the safety of either fighter, impedes fair and competitive play, or is unsportsmanlike;
- (r) Spinning back fists;
- (s) Hammer-fists.

(4) The referee is authorized to use any procedures to determine if a foul occurred, penalize a combatant, and/or to end the bout pursuant to Chapter 0145-02.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.11 is created and titled as SCORING. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.11 SCORING

Scoring in bare-knuckle bouts shall follow the requirements of Professional Boxing contests listed in Rule 0145-02-.12.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.12 is created and titled as KNOCKOUTS, KNOCKDOWNS, AND DECISIONS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.12 KNOCKOUTS, KNOCKDOWNS, AND DECISIONS

The referee shall have the sole authority to determine when a knockdown has occurred. The procedures for determining knockdowns, knockouts, technical knockouts, disqualification, technical decisions, draws, no contest, or any other decision to end a bout for a bare-knuckle contest shall be contest with the rules of Chapter 0145-06.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.13 is created and titled as FOULS AND FOUL-RELATED INJURIES. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.13 FOULS AND FOUL-RELATED INJURIES

The referee shall have the sole authority to determine when a foul has occurred. A referee may consider acts listed in this chapter or Chapter 0145-06 as fouls. The referee may follow the procedures listed in Chapter 0145-06 regarding the use of instant replay and the determination of how fouls are handled regarding point deductions, ending a bout, or any other determination related to unintentional or intentional fouls.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

The following rule, numbered as Rule 0145-06-.14 is created and titled as BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING PHYSICIANS. This rule shall read in its entirety as follows:

#### 0145-06-.14 BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING PHYSICIANS

In addition to any considerations for approving ring-side physicians for professional boxing contests, a ring-side physician for a bare-knuckle boxing bouts shall have experience with laceration repair.

Authority: Tennessee Athletic Commission Act of 2016 and T.C.A. § 68-115-201 and T.C.A. § 68-115-203.

I certify that the information included in this filing is an accurate and complete representation of the intent and scope of rulemaking proposed by the agency.

Date: January 30, 2024

Signature:

*Jesse L. Gentry*

Name of Officer: Jesse Gentry

Title of Officer: Chief Counsel

**Department of State Use Only**

Filed with the Department of State on:

Tre Hargett  
Secretary of State