WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §29-5A-3A

§29-5A-3a. Power to regulate mixed martial arts.

(a) The commission has sole power, direction, management, and control over all professional and amateur mixed martial arts contests, matches, and exhibitions, or any form thereof, to be promoted, conducted, held, or given within the state.

(b) As used in this article, the term "mixed martial arts" means a combative sporting contest, the rules of which allow two competitors to attempt to achieve dominance over one another by utilizing a variety of techniques including, but not limited to, striking, grappling, and the application of submission holds.

(c) A mixed martial arts contest, match, or exhibition promoted, conducted, held, or given within the state shall be under the commission's authority and be in accordance with the provision of this section. The provisions of this article that apply to boxing shall also apply to mixed martial arts as appropriate.

(d) In exercising its jurisdiction over professional and amateur mixed martial arts contests, matches, and exhibitions, the commission shall follow the current unified rules of mixed martial arts as adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions to enable the proper equipment, fighting area and weight classes to ensure the safety of contestants and ensure the licensing of all participants, referees, and judges, and the approval of contests, matches, or exhibitions conducted under the provisions of this section.

(e) The commission may issue and revoke a license to promote, conduct, hold, or give mixed martial arts contests, matches, or exhibitions and may issue and revoke a license to be a contestant. Each license is subject to the provisions of this section and this article and the rules of the commission.

(f) The commission shall propose rules for legislative approval, in accordance with the provisions of §29A-3-1 et seq. of this code to implement the provisions of this section, including:

(1) Procedures and requirements for the issuance and renewal of licenses: Provided, That the procedures and requirements may not:

(A) Limit or prohibit mixed martial arts contests, matches or exhibitions; nor

(B) Include a provision that a licensee be a West Virginia resident;

(2) Exemptions from licensure;

(3) Procedures for fining, suspending, or revoking the license of any holder of a license issued under this article;

WV Legislature

(4) Adopting the unified rules of mixed martial arts;

(5) A schedule of licensing fees;

(6) Limitations or restrictions necessary to guarantee the safety of the participants;

(7) The requirements for fair and honest conducting of the contests, matches or exhibitions; and

(8) Any other rules necessary to effectuate the provisions of this section.

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of this code to the contrary, a municipality may not impose a municipal license tax under §8-13-4 of this code on mixed martial arts clubs. The granting of a license to a club by the commission, or the holding of a license by a club, individual, corporation, or association, does not prevent the commission from revoking the license to conduct an event as provided in this section: Provided, That nothing in this subsection limits the authority of a municipality to impose any other taxes or fees on mixed martial arts contests, matches, or exhibitions pursuant to §8-13-1 et seq. of this code.

WV Legislature