

I Thought It Was About Self Defense!

By Dr. Gregory Lawton

I was curious regarding the rules used by the mixed martial arts fighting organizations such as the UFC, IFL, WCL, and the WEC. Although some of the rules vary from organization to organization, depending upon their bias towards striking or grappling, often it is the state athletic commissions that really determine the rules of engagement. After all these “reality” based fighters are the new supermen and are reputed to be the “baddest” thing in the fight game.

This is what the Nevada State Athletic Commission currently lists as fouls:

- Butting with the head.
- Eye gouging of any kind.
- Biting.
- Hair pulling.
- Fish hooking.
- Groin attacks of any kind.
- Putting a finger into any orifice or into any cut or laceration on an opponent. (Gouging)
- Small joint manipulation.
- Striking to the spine or the back of the head. (Rabbit punch)
- Striking downward using the point of the elbow. (Elbow (strike))
- Throat strikes of any kind, including, without limitation, grabbing the trachea.
- Clawing, pinching or twisting the flesh.
- Grabbing the clavicle.
- Kicking the head of a grounded opponent.
- Kneeing the head of a grounded opponent.
- Stomping a grounded opponent.
- Kicking to the kidney with the heel.
- Spiking an opponent to the canvas on his head or neck. (Piledriver)
- Throwing an opponent out of the ring or fenced area.
- Holding the shorts or gloves of an opponent.
- Spitting at an opponent.

As I read over these “fouls”, I found a list of my favorite fighting techniques! In Kosho Ryu Kenpo Jujitsu we simply call the above list of perfectly acceptable techniques - “self defense.”

In addition to eliminating most of my favorite techniques from competition the “spoilers” also do not allow:

1. Engaging in unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to an opponent.
2. Holding the ropes or the fence.
3. Using abusive language in the ring or fenced area.
4. Attacking an opponent on or during the break.
5. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee.

6. Attacking an opponent after the bell (horn) has sounded the end of a round.
7. Flagrantly disregarding the instructions of the referee.
8. Timidity, including, without limitation, avoiding contact with an opponent, intentionally or consistently dropping the mouthpiece or faking an injury.
9. Interference by the corner.
10. Throwing in the towel during competition.
11. Using a Foreign object in the ring to your advantage.

I mean lets take the above so called “fouls” by the numbers, for example number one, I thought that the point was to cause injury to an opponent by any means including insulting his/her mother’s honor? How about “holding the ropes or the fence”, I was taught to use the environment around me including parking meters, the bumpers of moving semi trucks, and or the corner of a brick building to punctuate my fights. Abusive language – all I can say is “sticks and stones” if using abusive language helps you whip your opponent into a blind mindless frenzy, then whisper the “sweet nothings” in their ear. “Attacking an opponent on or during the break?” Give me a break! If the “opponent can’t defend him/herself at all times they should go home and watch fights on TV. “Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee”, heck if the referee is helping the jerk take the referee out too! If you can get an extra punch or kick in at the bell more power to you, in fact why is there a bell at all, there “ain’t” no bell in the street. If there is a bell throw your opponent through the damn thing! How about disobeying the referee? Shame on you! (I am going to tell your father when he gets home.) Timidity, avoiding contact, faking an injury? Haven’t they ever heard of outright trickery, fighting tactics or monkey style kung fu? But let’s looks at “avoiding injury” again. That was the reason that I began studying the martial arts to begin with, to avoid being hit! I have no desire to stumble around in my old age punchy from too many head shots. The only rule that I agree with is number nine. Don’t even think about interfering with my fight, I am perfectly capable of handling it myself. On second thought - if I do get in trouble then by all means pile on and have at it. Rules ten and eleven to me are the same thing. Use a towel, a “Foreign” object or anything that you can get your hands on to protect yourself. After all it is called self defense!

I am sorry about my bad attitude and maybe I have missed the entire point to the billion dollar “reality” fighting game but I was taught to end the fight, end it fast, and go home and eat ice cream and sweet chocolate candies.

My father was my first martial arts instructor. He taught me to box, to love fighting, and to win. While his teaching “style” was tough he also taught me by moral example and I particularly remember one lesson that I learned from him regarding the “no rules” approach to self defense in the street.

My father was at one time a floor manager for the now defunct company Montgomery Ward and he managed the appliance department in a Ward’s store in Dubuque, Iowa. One of his employees was a young star Loyola college basketball player with a history of mental imbalance and institutionalization. In other words this guy was a six foot nine two hundred and seventy pound athlete who was looney tunes.

On the particular day in question this “raging bull” went totally bananas over how to move a refrigerator and picked up the refrigerator and threw it into a warehouse wall and then proceeded in the direction of my father with a maniacal look on his face. My father stood his ground and as the guy came into range calmly knocked him to the floor unconscious with a really vicious blow to the head, aided by the two-by-four he was holding in both hands. (batter up!) I still remember the sickening sound of the two-by-four connecting with the guys head. Fight over, lesson learned.

So all you corporate/celebrity acronyms... fouls? They are just self defense techniques to me.

Like most martial arts instructors I have taught students who have been the victims of severe incidents of assault or abuse self defense. While the reader may think that my methods are extreme and that this approach is too violent I am reminded of the young woman that I trained who was raped in her home by two men, at knife point, and in front of her eleven year old daughter and husband. I believe that she would disagree with you.

I guess that this is where I am supposed to apologize and say that I am just joking. Am I?
