

Cooper, Kathy

2958

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IRRC

**From:** Mike Lewis [cras.mikelew@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 06, 2013 11:07 PM  
**To:** Schalles, Scott R.  
**Subject:** IRCC Rules Change

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Dear IRRC

I am writing to you, to ask your accept the rules change regarding Mixed Martial Arts in Pennsylvania. While I am not a fighter, I am a longtime fan and I'm currently training in MMA. With the hopes of fighting at one point.

While I think that the current rules regarding "ground and pound" were put in with good intentions, in the long run they seem to be counteractive. Because of the current rules, those pursuing a career in competitive MMA are forced to fight out of state. usually in Ohio for those like me living in Western Pennsylvania. People who truly love this sport will go to whatever lengths necessary to compete. Those further out in places like central Pennsylvania, who aren't lucky enough to live on the PA/OH border will be forced to make a long trek to compete. This not only presents risks because of the regular dangers of traffic and weather; but also the factors that can influence how a fighter performs on fight day. Those who have to make daylong trips or longer will be at a disadvantage come competition time compared to those living near where the fight promotion is. This is not only harmful to ones career as a fighter but more importantly to a fighter's health; the very thing these rules were set in to place to protect.

While the idea of strikes to the head is scary to some, in many cases it can be less dangerous than other sports. Fighters are trained not only to be offensive but also defensive. Time is spent just as much on offensive techniques as it is on techniques to keep yourself safe. The dangers of head injuries in a sport like MMA are not as scary when compared to a sport like hockey or football; where a player can be hit from behind with no idea it's coming. When a concussion or head injury in MMA does occur in or is suspected, the fighter is sent to the hospital. In MMA a referee is there and his full attention is on the fight and keeping both competitors safe. While it would be nice to have one referee for to watch every player on a football field it's impossible, which is why injuries can go unnoticed. Most competing in MMA may only fight a 3-4 times a year in comparison to 12-15 game football season. This is because each fighter wants to be able to perform his best, and stay safe doing so. With the longer recovery time it's clear to see that ground and pound is not as dangerous as it seems.

When I began learning mixed martial arts I was told by my coach that to continue a fight, a fighter must be able to intelligently defend himself as determined by a referee. If one could hold down an opponent in an advantageous position and so much as tap on their face, it will be enough for the ref to stop the fight. The referees are trained to make sure the fighters are able to defend themselves and the very second they aren't the fight is stopped.

As well as those problems with the current rules also comes the problem of the revenue created by MMA promotions being sent to Ohio instead of being used here in Pennsylvania where it is equally needed. Those in Western PA and further out must go to Ohio while those in the east mostly go to places like New Jersey to fight. That is money our state should and could use! I hope you will see the rule change as a positive event for the state and for MMA practitioners in the area.

Give PA fighters a chance to make their hometowns proud!

Thank you

Michael Lewis