



**Conduct Policy of the  
International Federation of Muaythai  
Amateur (IFMA)**

Revised 2013

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This policy defines a code of conduct for Member associations of the International Federation of Muaythai Amateur (“IFMA”) and such individual associations’ members, including athletes sponsored by the Member, officials, officers and other affiliated parties (“Constituents”). It details all the bodies that manage any matters related to conduct, and it describes the procedures for addressing instances of improper or inappropriate conduct. The primary mechanism for dealing with disputes is direct discussion between the persons or parties involved. This policy takes effect in the event the latter is unsuccessful and/or in matters of import wherein formal redress is required.

### **A. Basis in the Bylaws**

The basis for this policy is based upon the IFMA Bylaws which state:

#### **ARTICLE X - DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

The Executive Committee shall have the authority to establish policies, subject to approval of the Congress, to adjudicate disputes among Members or between Members and itself. Such disputes may include, but shall not be limited to, disputes regarding eligibility for membership, eligibility for individual participants in Sanctioned Events, rulings with regard to world records, rulings involving anti-doping violations, and rulings with regard to disciplinary issues concerning events or events sanctioned by IFMA. The Executive Committee, with the approval of the Congress, shall establish conduct policies for the on-site adjudication of disputes at events sanctioned by IFMA and for the off-site decision-making procedures for dispute resolution. In addition, such policies shall provide for a fair and appropriate appeal process within IFMA. In no circumstance whatsoever shall differences between the disputing parties be taken to a court of law, and as a condition of membership IFMA shall require Members to renounce the right to take a dispute before a court of justice. IFMA shall only recognize and accept the decisions of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne (Switzerland) should the necessity of an appeal against an IFMA decision arise.

### **B. Scope of the IFMA Conduct Policy**

When it comes to conduct policy and potential disciplinary action, IFMA has jurisdiction and the right to adjudicate issues relating to IFMA Sanctioned Events or issues arising between or amongst two or more Members and/or their Constituents. IFMA does not take responsibility or have the right to adjudicate issues between or amongst the Constituents of one Member that do not involve an IFMA Sanctioned Event or other Members and their Constituents but may accept such jurisdiction when all parties to the issue are willing to submit to its jurisdiction. This jurisdiction is wholly discretionary and is based on the consent of the Executive Board.

Above and apart from its own rules, IFMA expects all Members and their Constituents to respect and abide by the laws, regulations and statutes of the legal jurisdiction in which they participate in for any event or activity, whether at an IFMA-sanctioned events or not. IFMA, its officers, directors, agents, and affiliates shall extend its full co-operation with the relevant authorities to ensure compliance with such laws, regulations and statutes, and it is expected that all Members and their Constituents shall do the same. In the event the Members and their Constituents breach and/or contravene any of the laws, regulations and statute of the legal jurisdiction in which they had

participated in any event or activities, IFMA can also initiate its own disciplinary proceedings for such Members and Constituents.

### **C. Good Conduct**

Although much of this document deals with inappropriate conduct and potential disciplinary procedures required addressing such conduct, it is to note that good conduct is encouraged and commended by IFMA through several awards recognizing individuals and teams which uphold and demonstrate the tenets, precepts and spirit of Muaythai through fundamental sporting principles of fair play and respect.

## **II. ACTING DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITIES AND THE CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

IFMA employs a dual system, independent and operating in parallel, to ensure proper conduct in all Muaythai-related activities over which it has jurisdiction. One system is overseen by the on-site administration during a Sanctioned Event and the other by the Executive Committee or its designated Conduct Committee for any and all matters.

### **A. Acting Disciplinary Authorities**

IFMA shall and must enforce its conduct policy and be able to institute real-time resolutions, decisions, and penalties if there are conduct infractions in the midst of a specific Sanctioned Event or program. These resolutions, decisions, and penalties are to be administered by an Acting Disciplinary Authority, which may be an Event Director, designees of the Event Director such as an Event Rules Group (TRG), an officer or Executive Committee of IFMA, or some other IFMA-appointed individual or group. An Acting Disciplinary Authority may, as necessary, impose sanctions or penalties for violations of the Code of Conduct described herein, in order to ensure expedient administration of its duty. However, the potential sanctions or penalties are limited to participation at the specific Sanctioned Event or program in progress, and could include limited redress such as censure for inappropriate behavior, to sitting out one bout or event in a multi-tier event, to not being allowed to participate in the balance of the Sanctioned Event or program, to entire event disqualification for the individual or entire team if the infraction is very serious.

#### **(i) Event Rules Committee**

An Event Rules Committee (ERC) shall be established at each IFMA Sanctioned Event before the event begins. The ERC shall arbitrate disputes between athletes, officers, staff and members of the public. The ERC is chaired by the Chair of the Relevant Committee or the delegated representative, and one(1) delegate each from four(4) countries which are represented at the event. The ERC will address formal requests, complaints or protests about any issue concerning event or off-event activities. Requests, complaints or protests may be brought to the attention of ERC by any Representative or registered athlete. Requests, complaints or protests may be brought at any time during the period starting from the beginning of the Sanctioned Event to midnight on the final day of play. Upon receipt of a request, complaint or protest the ERC will meet at its earliest convenience and make a decision available to all parties involved at least two (2) hours before the start of play the following day. The decision shall be posted in writing where all athletes may have access to read the outcome. Further, any issue that is reviewed by the ERC or that involves any ejection of an athlete from a game, match or balance of an event must be reported to the IFMA Executive Board in

writing by the chairperson of the ERC within 30 days from the end of the Sanctioned Event. The ERC may, at its discretion, disqualify an athlete or an entire team from any event or from the entire event whenever that athlete or team exhibits violent, obscene, abusive, disruptive or illegal behavior; cheats or otherwise attempts to create an unfair advantage for themselves or disadvantages others through circumvention of the rules; or otherwise causes substantial hardship, inconvenience or annoyance to spectators, officials or athletes. The ERC may also censor an individual athlete or team orally or in writing; alter or nullify the result of any event; or order an event to be partially or completely refought. In the event of an extremely serious conduct violation the ERC may, after disqualifying an athlete or team from competition, refer the matter for later review and sanctioning actions by the IFMA Executive Board. Any athlete or team disqualified from the event shall forfeit all fees paid. Should any member of the ERC have a vested interest in any matter, that member shall be withdrawn to be replaced by another representative, or in the case of a delegate from one of the four countries another delegate from another country. Should two or more members of the ERC have a vested interest in the matter put to the ERC they shall be replaced by unbiased IFMA officials available at the event. Should an issue be brought to the ERC that effects the general interest of all or a group of teams participating in the event, the ERC may call an advisory Meeting of all or selected teams. The calling of such a meeting does not in any way reduce the powers of the ERC and the ERC is in no way bound to suggestions or decisions made by such a Meeting. Should any athlete or team, or group of teams, choose to challenge a decision made by the ERC in the course of handling a request, complaint or protest during an IFMA World Championship event, they should file a written protest to the IFMA Executive Board within 30 days of occurrence.

**(ii) Conflicts or Additional Actions**

It is feasible that more than one Acting Disciplinary Authority may have jurisdiction over an event. In such cases, the multiple Acting Disciplinary Authorities with jurisdiction should coordinate their efforts, in order to determine a consistent and appropriate course of action. The immediate decisions of an Acting Disciplinary Authority are essential for the proper administration of the sport and are not recorded as violations of the conduct policy. For example, the TRG has the authority to eject a violent athlete from an event. In such case, the ejected athlete may face further sanctions if a violation of conduct is found to have occurred after a complaint is submitted to the Conduct Committee -- a separate enforcement body.

**B. The Conduct Committee**

The second system of ensuring proper conduct is the disciplinary oversight of the Executive Committee directly or through the establishment of an *ad hoc* Conduct Committee. The Executive Committee, or Conduct Committee acting as proxy, employs a complaint-defense-review-appeal process to ensure justice in resolving allegations of improper conduct. In the example of the ejected athlete, if a conduct complaint is filed and the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee determines that the complaint merits hearing, the athlete shall be given an opportunity to submit a written defense against the allegations, and, as described below, the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee will rule based on the complaint, the defense, and its own investigations. The defendant may appeal the ruling. The Executive Committee or Conduct Committee ensures that conduct complaints are adjudicated equitably and in fairness and those violations are met with appropriate punishments, independent of those necessary to keep events running smoothly. Both

systems of enforcement protect the same standards of conduct as in this herein Conduct Policy. The two pronged regulatory structure described here ensures the expedient administration of Muaythai-related activities by IFMA as well as swift and equitably enforcement of its Code of Conduct.

### **III. CODE OF CONDUCT AND OTHER REGULATORY CODES**

#### **A. Code of Conduct**

IFMA Members and their Constituents are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the ideals and vision of the organization. This responsibility manifests itself in and outside of the Ring, in interactions with the administration and officers of IFMA, and in dealings with other Members and their Constituents.

##### **(i) Conduct During Sanctioned Events**

“Conduct During Sanctioned Events” refers to the actions of Members and their Constituents during the entire course of a IFMA Sanctioned Event; this is applicable both to actions during a competitive match as well as to actions outside of competition-related matters. Members and their Constituents are expected to treat one another with respect, to conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner, and to adhere to the rules of Muaythai while competing inclusive of all cultural rules – donning of the MonKong and performance of the Wai Kru, in addition to adhering to any specific tournament and site regulations, including the IFMA rules on anti-doping. Violations of conduct occur upon the breach of these expectations. Sanctioned Event Conduct violations may therefore include (with the clause being violated appearing in parentheses), but are not limited to, abusive heckling (respect), dangerous conduct (safety), spitting at another athlete (respect), cheating (rules), deliberate fouling (rules), reckless and improper behavior at a tournament party (order, safety), drinking on the sidelines when prohibited (site regulations), taunting (respect), and violence against another athlete (respect, order, safety). Repeated, excessive or deliberate inappropriate conduct constitutes a violation of this conduct policy. An individual instance of inappropriate conduct may also warrant sanctioning by the Conduct Committee if the action is severe enough. Such a sanction may be in addition to any sanctions or penalties imposed by an Acting Disciplinary Authority. Physical violence against another competitor or Officials can never be condoned and will always be sanctioned. Violations of the IFMA Anti-Doping Rules are governed under the specific provisions of that policy. Actions that result in the involvement of local legal authorities will be reviewed with particular scrutiny.

##### **(ii) Conduct regarding IFMA**

“Conduct regarding IFMA” refers to actions by a Member or its Constituents in dealing with Tournament Directors and their staff, officers and administrators of IFMA, including but not limited to actions, statements, emails, written words, or documents of a Member’s officers or staff, or athletes or teams governed by a Member. Members and their Constituents are expected to be truthful and respectful in their dealings with officials of IFMA. Violations of conduct occur upon the breach of these expectations. Violations of Conduct regarding IFMA may therefore include, but are not limited to, filing a fraudulent roster; hacking the IFMA Website; supplying fraudulent membership data to IFMA; hosting a IFMA Sanctioned Event but excluding a competitor based on a personal grievance; theft of privileged information from IFMA or its directors, officers or

administrators; obstructing an agent of IFMA from performing his/her duty; and libel or slander (defamatory) against a director, organizer or administrator regarding IFMA-related activity. For example, an athlete who groundlessly accuses a Board member of embezzlement while being interviewed live on television may violate this Code of Conduct on the grounds of slander, even if that athlete later recants while off camera. Tournament Directors and their staff, members of the administration of IFMA, and other such IFMA-appointed individuals or groups may serve as Acting Disciplinary authorities with respect to violations of the Conduct regarding IFMA, provided the conduct pertains to an event or process reasonably under their jurisdiction. For example, a Tournament Director is the Acting Disciplinary Authorities for Conduct regarding IFMA in connection with a Sanctioned Event. A Tournament Director who finds that a team has filed a fraudulent roster (one that has ineligible participants of other nations on it, or an over-aged junior athlete) may upon confirmation from members of IFMA's or Continental Federation's Executive Board exclude that team from competition. Any further disciplinary action beyond that imposed by an Acting Disciplinary Authority can only occur as a result of a complaint submitted to the Conduct Committee or Board.

### **(iii) Conduct within the IFMA Community**

Members and their Constituents are expected to act consistently with the mission of IFMA to Promote Muaythai. Actions inimical to Muaythai are violations of conduct. Such violations may include, but are not limited to, libel or slander (defamatory) against Members and their Constituents in the media, publicly bad-mouthing other Disciplines, obscene acts on televised media featuring Muaythai, and vandalism or other destructive behavior toward a Sanctioned Event facility.

### **B. Other Regulatory Codes**

Note that an Acting Disciplinary Authority may adopt any of a number of reasonable regulatory measures for administering penalties for the violator(s) within the course of a Sanctioned Event:-

- i. a stern warning with a discretionary monetary penalty (fine not less than US\$500 and not exceeding US\$2,000);
- ii. exclusion, suspension and/or barring of the violator(s) from the Tournament and any other sanctioned events including but not limited to Championships, World Meets, Meetings, Seminars and Games. Period of exclusion, suspension and barring to range from one (1) to five (5) years;
- iii. rehabilitative initiatives decided upon by the Conduct Committee;
- iv. dismissal or expulsion from IFMA and/or Continental Federation(s);
- v. any other measures decided upon by the Conduct Committee.

Such regulatory guides must conform to the outlines of this Code of Conduct. Actions resulting in penalties administered through the application of such guides do not constitute conduct violations unless a complaint is filed by the Acting Disciplinary Authority or eyewitness member and are deemed so by the Board or Conduct Committee as proxy. Likewise, actions which receive no rebuke



under such codes may still be considered as improper conduct upon complaint and review, and thus are subject to sanctioning under this policy.

#### **IV. THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS**

##### **A. Complaint**

###### **(i) Complaint to or by an Acting Disciplinary Authority**

A complaint against a Member or its Constituents may be made by directly contacting an appropriate Acting Disciplinary Authority, which may act upon such a complaint as it sees fit. No written complaint is necessary. Further, an Acting Disciplinary Authority may originate a complaint if they personally witness a perceived violation of the Conduct Policy.

###### **(ii) Complaint to the Conduct Committee**

A complaint against a Member or its Constituents can be filed by any other Member or its Constituents, or group thereof, any Acting Disciplinary Authority, any member of the administration of the IFMA, or by any officer or other person or entity designated by IFMA. In the case of a complaint against on-field conduct, the complainant must be a witness to the conduct in question. An individual who hears of but does not witness offensive conduct may request an investigation by the administration or officers or directors, who may act on such requests at their discretion. A complaint is lodged by completing a Complaint Form and submitting it to IFMA. The complaint must be filed within thirty (30) days of the conduct in question, unless an extension has been granted by the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee as proxy. Multiple complaints regarding a single allegation of poor conduct may be treated as a single complaint. The Executive Committee or Conduct Committee as proxy will determine whether a complaint is credible enough to warrant a hearing. In the event that it is, the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee will inform the defendant of the complaint, making known to him/her the allegations being charged. The defendant will have thirty (30) days to submit a written defense.

##### **B. Review**

Actions by an Acting Disciplinary Authority may be taken without a formal complaint and without a hearing. However, it is encouraged that the Acting Disciplinary Authority uses its discretion in this authority, and ensures that all the facts are known prior to exercising its authority, and a hearing which gives all affected parties an opportunity to present their perspective on a situation will often be appropriate. Whenever there is a conduct complaint, the Executive Committee of IFMA will appoint an *ad hoc* Conduct Committee comprised of three Executive Committee members with no direct connection to or conflict of interest with the complainant or the defendant. The Conduct Committee acts as the disciplinary committee on behalf of the full Executive Committee of Directors. The Executive Committee retains the right to revoke such delegation and hear a complaint as a full Executive Committee if it so chooses. Rulings of the Conduct Committee are based on majority vote when no consensus can be reached. In the event of a tie, the chair of the ruling committee casts the deciding vote (i.e., the Chair of the Conduct Committee as proxy). Rulings of the Executive Committee are based on majority vote as defined by the IFMA Bylaws. Rulings must be delivered within sixty (60) days of receipt of the defendant's statement (or failure to file or stated waiver of the right to file, whichever is earliest). Unless otherwise stated, rulings take effect immediately. The Executive Committee or Conduct Committee will adjudicate based on the complaint, the defense, and any pertinent evidence obtained in the course of investigating the complaint.

## **C. Appeal**

### **(i) Appeal of Decision of an Acting Disciplinary Authority**

A sanction imposed by an Acting Disciplinary Authority can be appealed by submitting a written appeal to IFMA within thirty (30) days of the sanction. Such appeals are heard by the President together with the Chair of the Committee for the involved event. For example, an appeal to the action of an Event Director at a Sanctioned Event for World Championships would be heard by the President and the Chair of the Executive Committee. The President has the sole vote in such appeals. Appeals will be decided within thirty (30) days of receipt.

### **(ii) Appeal of the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee**

A member found to have been in violation of proper conduct will have the opportunity to challenge the decision of the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee by submitting a written appeal to IFMA within thirty (30) days of notification of the decision. Appeals may contest the decision, challenge the appropriateness of the punishment, or introduce compelling new evidence. Appeals which merely restate a case will be deemed frivolous and need not be heard. The IFMA Executive Committee will review appeals (quorum of 8 Executive Committee members) and rule within ninety (90) days of receipt. Rulings on appeals of the Executive Committee are based on majority vote as defined within the IFMA Bylaws. Unless otherwise stated, rulings on appeal take effect immediately. In the event that a penalty or sanction by the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee pertains to an impending event, the appellant may request an expeditious hearing of his/her appeal. Despite any and/or all jurisdictional claims no case may be taken to a court of law, and as a condition of membership IFMA shall require Members to renounce their right to take a dispute before a court of justice in any jurisdiction. IFMA will only recognize and accept the decisions of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne (Switzerland) should the necessity of an appeal against an IFMA decision arise.

### **(iii) Appeals of Rulings Involving Violations of IFMA Anti-Doping Rules**

Cases involving further appeals of rulings involving violations of IFMA Anti-Doping Rules shall be governed under the specific rules contained in IFMA's Anti-Doping Policy.

## **V. SANCTIONS**

### **A. Sanctions by an Acting Disciplinary Authority**

An Acting Disciplinary Authority may impose all sanctions necessary for its administration of duties. Such sanctions include but are not limited to assessment of foul or demerit points against a team or athlete, ejection of a team or athlete from a single bout, ejection of a team or athlete from the remainder of a Sanctioned Event, or rejection from a match-up or bout.

No Acting Disciplinary Authority may suspend any athlete or team from participation in any event other than the immediate Sanctioned Event being administered by that authority. The same restriction applies to probation.

### **B. Sanctions by the Executive Committee or Conduct Committee**

The Executive Committee or the Conduct Committee acting as proxy is not limited in its range of sanctions, except by the legal requirement of proportionality with the severity of the action or its

consequences. Such sanctions include but are not limited to any sanctions that an Acting Disciplinary Authority may impose, public or private censure, demand of public or private apology, a demand for the completion of service to the Muaythai community, probation, and suspension from participation in IFMA Sanctioned Events. Suspensions or penalties imposed for a period of time longer than one (1) year will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

IFMA encourages and promotes the precepts of inter ties respects between all Members and their Constituents. Members and Constituents are to exercise sincerity and considerate in their dealings within the Muaythai community. These standards of conduct are to be maintained by the strong tradition of etiquette and sportsmanship within the Muaythai community, and by good-faith resolutions of disputes among the parties involved. In the rare event that self-governance does not suffice, the IFMA Code of Conduct is enforced by two bodies: (1) through Acting Disciplinary Authorities and (2) by the Executive Committee, through the Conduct Committee. During IFMA events, the Acting Disciplinary Authority may take such steps and impose such penalties as necessary to keep events running smoothly. An athlete or team thus penalized may appeal to IFMA Executive Committee or the designated Conduct Committee.

The Executive Committee oversees the conduct of IFMA members through a complaint-defense-review-appeal process. Complaints are filed within thirty (30) days of an incident and individual defendants and their representative Member Associations are given thirty (30) days to submit a defense. Rulings are made by the Executive Committee-designated Conduct Committee within sixty (60) days, and appeals filed within thirty (30) days of a ruling are then decided within ninety (90) days of receipt by the full Executive Committee (quorum of eight-8 Executive Committee Members) . The Executive Committee or Conduct Committee is not limited in its range of sanctions, but suspensions or penalties imposed for a period of more than one (1) year will be reviewed annually. The two systems of enforcement operate independently.