



**California State Athletic Commission**  
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Members of the Commission

John Frierson, Chair  
Christopher Giza, MD, Vice-Chair  
VanBuren Lemons, MD  
Dean Grafilo  
Martha Shen-Urquidez  
Mary Lehman  
John Carvelli

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**Action may be taken on any item listed on  
the agenda except public comment.**

**Agenda items may be taken out of order**  
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**CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

July 22, 2013

**10:00a.m. –12:35p.m.**

**Stakeholder's Meeting – Pankration Subcommittee**

Location:

Santa Ana State Building  
Conference Room Number 142  
28 Civic Center Plaza  
Santa Ana, California 92701

**Commissioners Present**

Mary Lehman  
John Carvelli

**Staff Present**

Mark Relyea, Inspector  
Christine J. Lally, Deputy Director  
Taryn Smith, State Senate

An open invitation was extended to stakeholder's to attend this subcommittee hearing conducted by commissioners Mary Lehman and John Carvelli. There were 24 people representing various gyms, CAMO, United States Fight League (USFL), and parents with children involved in youth pankration. They were provided with an agenda listing 11 points of discussion.

**Agenda Item 1 – Regulation of Youth Pankration Events.**

John Frank representing the United States Fight League spoke to this issue. He strongly supported the regulation of youth pankration. He provided a written response highlighting the rules that the USFL has adopted to regulate the sport. Most of the stakeholder's in the room agreed that all youth pankration activities should be regulated with the same rules.

Roy Englebrecht, promoter defined youth pankration as a combative sport. He believed without state regulation, anyone can form a league with arbitrary rules. It is California State Athletic Commission's (CSAC) duty to ensure youth pankration is adequately regulated. Attorney Thomas S. Gruenbeck, believed it is inappropriate to regulate youth pankration under the direction of California Mixed Martial Arts Organization, Inc. (CAMO) as it is structured.

Several parents spoke to the issue expressing their hope that the regulation of youth pankration would be based on the concern for the kids, not a concern for regulation.

**Agenda Item 2 – Defining “light contact” for Youth Pankration.**

John Frank referenced the Business and Professions Code 18627d which defines "Light contact" as the use of controlled martial artstechniques whereby contact to the body is permitted in a restrainedmanner, no contact to the face is permitted, and no contact ispermitted which may result or is intended to result in physical harmto the opponent.

Several members of the group stated that pankration is safer than mixed martial arts with no head strikes. The rules outlined in the Business and Professions Code should be adhered to.

**Agenda Item 3 – What is the appropriate age range for youth competition?**

Thomas S. Gruenbeck, stated he believes it is suitable for children as young as 5 or 6 to participate in youth pankration. However, it has to be non-competition with no winners or losers.

Many parents in the room agreed with Gilbert Melendez from the Santa Ana Athletic Foundation, who believed ages 7 and up were suitable with caution against injuries.

John Frank pointed out FILA wrestling and pankration events are competitive all over the world. In Croatia, the children began these events at a young age. Many believe this is a future Olympic sport and restrictions on children participating in these events at a young age will put children in California well behind the learning curve and limit their ability to compete on a national and international level.

Many of the parents of children who participate in pankration believed that age 7 to 8 is appropriate to start competition.

**Agenda Item 4 – What about girls fighting boys and appropriate ages?**

Most of the coaches and parents who had children in youth pankration believed that it is always better to have boys and girls compete separately once they reach ages somewhere between 9 and 12. However, many in the group believed girls would be left of the sport if they were not allowed to compete against boys in the younger age groups due to lack of competition. Many believe girls and boy’s competition at the younger ages is not problematic.

There were varying opinions on this topic.

**Agenda Item 5 – What is the appropriate head, shin and hand gear and for what ages?**

Most of the coaches believed head gear was a hindrance to competing. Most believed headgear was unnecessary because of a lack of head strikes.

There was a large debate as far as shin guards being necessary but the majority of the coaches present felt they prevent injury and should be required.

Ages and hand gear were not discussed in detail.

**Agenda Item 6 – Suggestions to make Youth Pankration safer for participants.**

Thomas S. Gruenbeck believed a scoring system should be implemented that takes away the incentive of a youth to be brutal.

Anthony Frank discussed certification and proper training of referees and several committee members suggested that subject matter experts such as Herb Dean, John McCarthy and other qualified referees be used to certify the youth pankration referees. Anthony Frank pointed out that the USFL currently uses Herb Dean to help train their referees.

**Agenda Item 7 – what about medical evaluations and treatment for children at events?**

Ty Hutchinson is a professional trained medic. He pointed out that the USFL does not use a physician for pre-bout physicals.

There is a significant lack of consistency among the trainers and youth pankration promoters concerning the requirements for medical evaluations prior to the competitions.

Ty Hutchinson pointed out that USFL currently uses paramedics and EMT's to conduct pre event screenings. He is currently working on developing a detailed checklist that will ensure these are thorough and consistent.

Some organizations are requiring yearly doctor's physicals. Some require more frequent physicals. However, the group did not believe that there should be a regulations requiring doctors be present at these events. It is rare to have an ambulance present.

Roy Englebrecht and others expressed a concern stating that youth pankration should be required to comply with California standards to have physicians, paramedics, and ambulance present at events. There was an open debate on this issue. Ty Hutchinson and many others believe youth pankration does not entail head strikes and should not be required to pay the expense.

Thomas S. Gruenbeck believes statistics should be kept on all injuries that occur during youth pankration. If something is learned to be dangerous it can be excluded with rules.

Anthony Frank pointed out that most wrestling events and martial arts events were not required to have doctors, ambulance, and paramedics present. Youth pankration should not be any different. Anthony Frank suggested youth pankration adopt the practice of requiring all coaches to have basic first aid training.

**Agenda Item 8 – Are there insurance requirements?**

Roy Englebrecht believed there should be a requirement of the promoter to have medical insurance coverage for each individual competing.

Many of the coaches and parents in the room believed there should be a general liability insurance with a medical second. The participating youth should be required to have their own medical insurance. The expense of the promoter providing medical insurance would prohibit them from hosting events.

**Agenda Item 9 – What are the officials’ requirements?**

The consensus in the room was that the officials should be trained and certified prior to regulating youth pankration events.

**Agenda Item 10 – What are the promoter requirements?**

Coaches, gym owners, and parents have been the promoters for the events. The stakeholders stated that there are no profits. Fee’s cover the cost of the event. Most of the coaches were adverse to requirements requiring additional funds.

Anthony Frank stated additional costs will close the door on kids being allowed to participate.

Roy Englebrecht pointed out that a license is required in California if you promote events and sell products or tickets.

**Agenda Item 11 – What are the fee requirements?**

The fee requirements vary depending on the size of the event. They range from \$30 to \$90 to cover expenses. Most stakeholders requested that USA Boxing and USA Wrestling be used as a model. They charge a sanctioning fee of \$300 per year for promoters.

Anthony Frank requested that CAMO not be used. He stated that was too expensive and not suited for youth pankration.

**Open Agenda**

Gilbert Melendez stated that the sport needs regulation. He believes the USFL should be used as a model and regulation by CAMO should be avoided.

Roy Englebrecht stated that CSAC should decide who should be the “CAMO” of youth pankration. CSAC will decide if USFL will take the lead.

Thomas S. Gruenbeck believes that CAMO should not have exclusive rights to regulate all martial arts sports. He believes Business and Professions Code 18646b allows the regulatory bodies to be divided up for mixed martial arts, jiu-jitsu, wrestling, karate and youth pankration.