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## **A new Era for Sport Martial Arts in Ontario**

Sport Martial Arts is incredibly popular in Canada. Point Sparring, continuous point, forms, and weapons forms are all practiced in clubs across the country. Martial arts competitions are held within specific groups such as Karate and Tae Kwon Do. These events are referred to as closed association or traditional competitions and must follow the rules of their International Federations.

There also exist competitions that bring together different participant styles. The rules for these 'open competitions' vary across jurisdictions, organizing groups and even between competitions. There also exists an incredible range of health, safety and fair play practices at these events.

There have always been initiatives to standardize rules and competition requirements. Challenges to developing uniform policies and procedures have included a diversity of international bodies and getting acceptance by all stakeholders involved in the sport. Furthermore the sector has not had a regulatory structure in place to ensure industry standards, monitor events and ensure compliance.

In 2015 the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport released [Game ON – The Ontario Government's Sport Plan](#) in which it committed to clarify the legal status of amateur combative sport. By way of an [Order in Council](#), the government has designated eight amateur sports in which competitions are now legal if held with the permission of its associated Provincial Sport Organization (PSO). This new law goes in affect as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

With the change in government policy the regulatory structure has now been assigned to Provincial Sporting Organizations (PSO). Kickboxing Ontario is the PSO for all kickboxing disciplines including the Tatami disciplines of Point Sparring, Light Contact, Kick Light, and Forms/Weapons, as well as the ring disciplines of kickboxing.



International Federation

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Working with the International Federation (IF) and the National Sporting Organization (NSO), Kickboxing Ontario has established a regulatory framework for Tatami competitions. There will be certification and professional development for all coaches; accreditation and training for officials; and a long-term development pathway for athletes with more competitive opportunities. The priority for Kickboxing Ontario is to build excellence in sport and ensure the health and safety of all participants.

The regulatory requirements will require additional steps from membership registration, sanctioning of competitions, an athlete passport tracking system for athletes, and certification courses for referees and coaches.

With any new change there is uncertainty and apprehension. The goal of Kickboxing Ontario is to make the transition as smooth as possible and support clubs and competitions along the way.

Kickboxing Ontario will be releasing a roll out plan to sanction competitions through the PSO, as well as a schedule for certification courses for coaches and officials.

We encourage club owners, participants and parents to become informed of the new process as it rolls out. Information will be available at the website – [KickboxingOntario.com](http://KickboxingOntario.com) in the coming weeks. A new website with an online portal for individual and club registration and application for sanctioning will soon be available.

We are excited about this new era and we believe that it will propel our sport towards mainstream acceptance and provide further opportunities for our athletes.

For more information please contact the PSO office at [nhq@kickboxingcanada.org](mailto:nhq@kickboxingcanada.org).  
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