

Slap Fighting: The Next Big Thing in Combat Sports

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Effectiveness (Noun) /ɪ'fektɪvənəs/ the degree to which something produces a desired result
Example: Many customers were misled by the company regarding the effectiveness of the diet pills.
2. Knockout (Noun) /'nɔ:kaut/ an act of making someone unconscious by hitting them
Example: He won the match with a knockout punch in the third round.
3. Disqualification (Noun) /dɪs'kwɔ:lɪfɪ'keɪʃn/ the action of not allowing, or the state of not being allowed to take part in something
Example: Dangerous driving will result in immediate disqualification.
4. Concussion (Noun) /kən'kʌʃən/ a temporary loss of consciousness or period of confusion caused by a hard hit to the head
Example: The patient is exhibiting signs of a concussion.
5. Misleading (Adjective) /mɪs'li:diŋ/ giving people an incorrect idea or understanding of something
Example: It would be misleading to say that excessive screen time has no effect on children's development.
6. Dodge (Verb) /dɔ:dʒ/ to avoid someone or something by moving quickly
Example: His opponent threw a fierce punch, but he dodged it and delivered a powerful hit to his stomach.



The competitors stand with their hands behind their backs, waiting for a slap to the face. When it comes, some fighters barely move. Others step back or fall down. Some are knocked out.

UFC President Dana White is promoting slap fighting as the next big thing in combat sports. In October 2022, the Nevada Athletic Commission approved the Power Slap League for competitions in Las Vegas.

Fights are usually three to five rounds. Competitors take turns slapping each other in the face, with each fighter getting 60 seconds to recover and respond. They can get up to 10 points based on the effectiveness of the slap and the defender's reaction.

Fights can end in a decision, knockout, technical knockout or disqualification, such as for an illegal slap. Each event has two referees and three judges. Also present are several doctors and ambulances. Some worry in particular about the risk of a brain disease believed to be caused by repeated hits to the head.

Chris Nowinski, co-founder and CEO of the Concussion Legacy Foundation, calls slap fighting "one of the stupidest things you can do." But White says slap fighting is safer than boxing or mixed martial arts, because each fighter usually takes only three hits per fight. In boxing, White said, that number could be 400 or more.

But Nowinski said it's misleading to compare boxing to power slapping, because slap fighters take a full hit each time, while boxers can block and dodge. "You're taking out everything that's interesting to watch and everything sporting and just doing the brain damage part," he said. But Ryan Phillips, a Power Slap League fighter, said competitors can defend themselves without losing points by rolling away before the hit, for example.

Looking back on the decision to approve slap fighting, Stephen J. Cloobek, who was chairman of the Nevada Athletic Commission when it approved the sport, said, "I made a mistake. I'm not happy about it." The commission recently approved new rules in an effort to reduce serious injuries.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on slap fighting?
2. Do you think slap fighting will become popular?
3. Do you like watching combat sports? If so, which ones? If not, why not?
4. Have you suffered any sports injuries? If so, did it take you long to recover?
5. What do you imagine are the most dangerous sports in the world?