

Case 5.

Egged on by screaming fans, Cage Fighting is a bloody contest with one cage, two men, three rounds, and four rules (no eye gouging, no fishhooks to the mouth, no fingers in orifices, no groin attacks). The cage, about the size of a king-size bed, is made of chain link with a padded floor.

Although some states now ban boxing because of its violence, most allow Cage Fighting, which is less regulated and more brutal. In response to municipalities' bans on cage fighting, organizers have instituted changes such as weight classes and shorter matches, and outlawed some practices such as stomping and biting. Yet, while some organizations travel a circuit with trained fighters, others solicit inebriated participants from the audience and nearby bars.

To some, a Cage Fight is a test between modern-day gladiators demonstrating their athletic prowess. To others, it is cockfighting with humans that sometimes leaves participant crippled. Supporters of Cage Fighting argue that it is a legitimate sport, and while it does pose a danger to participants, so do many other contact sports that are not restricted. Competitors want to fight, and fans (sometimes thousands at a time) want to watch them. Fights are refereed, and a fighter can stop the action anytime by tapping on the cage or the opponent's thigh, or telling the referee. Opponents agree that while other contact sports pose the threat of harm to participants, the goal of Cage Fighting is to annihilate the opponent. A contestant may become too debilitated to signal the fight to stop. In addition to the violence of the fights and the danger to participants, opponents raise concerns that the atmosphere surrounding the matches encourages irresponsible alcohol consumption and fan violence. Often matches are held in portable cages in parking lots next to a bar. Others suggest a middle ground, calling for regulation and oversight, codified procedural rules, standardized safety rules, and trained referees. Still others who personally disapprove of Cage Fighting believe fighters have a right to get pummeled if they so choose. They fear even more brutal fights if Cage Fighting is forced underground.

Dr. Rosi Sexton, a mathematician at Manchester University, is a cage fighter. She says Cage Fighting, like mathematics is a challenge. She loves the mental challenge of mathematics, and the combined physical and mental challenge of Cage Fighting.

Despite an increasing number of cities banning Cage Fighting, its popularity continues to grow.