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 **Boxing Is Behind On the Scorecards When It Comes to Fighter Safety
By Justin Jones**

Boxing is one of the [most dangerous](http://menshealth.about.com/od/fitness/a/boxing.htm) and physically taxing sports there is, but somehow the attention to fighter safety and quality of life preservation remains far behind the other major professional sports such as football, basketball, baseball, hockey, and even mixed martial arts.

Ask a member of the boxing media or a diehard fan, if he/she can recite boxing’s concussion protocol, performance enhancing drug testing standards, or what tests a fighter needs to pass in order to receive clearance to fight. I bet you if you ask 10 different people, you’ll receive 10 different answers, and that’s all because there isn’t one unified approach.

In fact, standards vary from state to state and country by country. You’ll frequently see cases where fighters can’t get a license to fight in a particular state but then go to another state, maybe even down the road, and get approved. Some even trek thousands of miles out to a foreign country just to earn a purse – boxing terminology for a payday/contract.

I understand everyone has a right to make a living and pursue their dreams, but where do we draw the line? How many fighters do we have to see [die](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/boxer-braydon-smith-23-dies-two-days-after-finishing-10-round-fight/) in the ring or days later, end up in a [coma](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/04/sports/meet-mago-former-heavyweight.html?_r=0), or have their [speech slurred](http://sports.yahoo.com/news/boxing--welterweight-champ-timothy-bradley-standing-up-against-one-of-sports--biggest-problems--concussions-164459602.html) before we see serious reform? These “warriors,” as we like to call them, don’t have a hefty pension or medical plan waiting for them to help pay for the laundry list of medical issues they’ll likely face when they decide to hang up the gloves. Therefore, more education and awareness needs to be provided to our fighters on how to best manage their health during their careers. There must also be a greater emphasis put on healthcare and financial strategic planning for life after boxing.

Yes, professional boxers are adults and know the risks they face every time they step into a ring, but sometimes you have to protect individuals from themselves. The federal government needs to seriously push for the creation of a boxing commission to protect these men and women from spending the next 40-50 years of their lives as broke, battered, or non-functional citizens. In addition, boxers should roll out their own union dedicated exclusively to their well-being in and out of the ring, because let’s face it, not everyone can be Floyd Mayweather, the highest paid athlete according to [Forbes](http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2015/06/10/with-300-million-haul-floyd-mayweather-tops-forbes-2015-list-of-the-worlds-highest-paid-athletes/), and earn a gazillion dollars while taking minimal punishment.

Just like the referees who tell the fighters to protect themselves at all times, it should be our – the government, the media, and public – responsibility to ensure that boxers’ health and safety is a top priority. Why? Because all lives matter. Right?