

## "Touching Down" in MMA

### Suggested Referee Rules Meeting Language

Kicking or Kneeing the head of a grounded opponent is considered a foul. A grounded opponent is any fighter who has more than just the soles of their feet on the ground. For example, a fighter with one shin or one finger down is to be considered a grounded fighter.

One established deviation from this rule is that the referee may determine a fighter would be a grounded fighter but is not solely because the ring ropes or cage fence has held fighter from the ground, the referee can instruct the combatants that they are treating the fighter held up solely by the cage or ropes as a grounded fighter.

Recently, some concern has arose over fighters who are taking punishment (usually thru knees) while both fighters are standing. The fighter then begins to bring his or her finger(s) down and up again, and then down again as a strike is being delivered. In certain situations, it appears as if the "touching down" fighter is attempting to draw a foul and benefit from the foul.

**Referees should instruct the fighters that they may still be considered a standing fighter even if they have a finger or portion of the hand (or entire hand) on the canvas. In the discretion of the referee, a fighter who has a finger or hand on the canvas may still be legally struck in the head with knees and kicks. The referee may decide that the downed fighter is placing his or her finger or hand down without doing so for an offensive or countering maneuver in an attempt to advance or improve their position.** The referee may decide that the downed fighter is instead simply trying to draw a foul. If the referee decides that the fighter is "touching down" simply to benefit from a foul, the referee may consider **that fighter a standing fighter and decide that no foul has occurred.**

**NOTE: (Referee should give VERBAL command Your UP when this occurs and should be followed by Your DOWN when the situation no longer applies.)**

Additionally, a referee may penalize, via warning or point deduction, the offending fighter for timidity.