



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 29, 2019

Media Contact | Caroline Oppleman
602.255.3814 | coppleman@azgaming.gov

Self-Proclaimed "Godfather" of Arizona Mixed Martial Arts Charged on Numerous Criminal Offenses involving Unsanctioned Events

Phoenix – On April 26, 2019, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office filed charges in justice court against Mr. Roland Sarria and Mr. Todd Whitmoyer for suspected involvement in unsanctioned combat sporting events in Maricopa County. Charges arose from an Arizona Department of Gaming (ADG) investigation into the activities of both defendants who reside in Maricopa County.

Each subject faces four, class 2 misdemeanors for failing to procure a license and failing to provide a physician for unsanctioned events that occurred on September 15, 2018, in Phoenix, and another event on September 29, 2018, in Glendale. Additional charges could be forthcoming. In Arizona, class 2 misdemeanors can carry a maximum fine of \$750 and four months jail time, per violation. In some instances, courts may assess a maximum fine of \$10,000, per violation.

The Arizona Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Commission regulates and sanctions amateur and professional MMA, professional boxing and kickboxing, and tough man contests conducted statewide. Arizona's requirements for sanctioned events are in place to protect the health and safety of participants and the public and include on-site medical and security professionals, match officials (referees, judges, inspectors, timekeepers, etc.), safety gear/equipment, licensed/bonded promoters (who provide health insurance for combatants), and specific combatant health tests/documentation. Any event not approved by an authorized sanctioning body is unsanctioned.

"It's our duty to protect the integrity of these sports, the unarmed combatants and the public," said ADG Director Ted Vogt. "We do this by ensuring that individuals engaged in unsanctioned unarmed combat events are held accountable in a court of law."

"Unarmed combat sports are highly regulated competitions that require careful oversight to ensure the safety of the combatants and the spectating public, as well as a fair competition and impartial result," said Francisco Meneses, Jr., Executive Director, Arizona Boxing & MMA Commission. "Unsanctioned events pose a physical danger to fighters and the public alike and compromise the integrity of combat sports."

ADG takes tips about unsanctioned events involving unarmed combat sports events very seriously. If you have a tip, or just need information, please call (602) 364-1721.

All defendants are presumed innocent until convicted in a court of law.

About ADG

Established by the Arizona State Legislature in 1995, ADG is the state regulatory agency for [tribal gaming](#), [pari-mutuel racing and wagering](#), and [boxing and mixed martial arts](#). ADG also provides and supports education, prevention and treatment programs for people and families affected by problem gambling through its [Division of Problem Gambling](#) and 24-hour confidential helpline, 1-800-NEXT-STEP.

###