



News Release

EMBARGOED

Until June 5, 2019 at 2:15 p.m.

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Criminal Charges involving Unsanctioned Mixed Martial Arts Events Continue to Mount against Sarria and Whitmoyer

Phoenix – The Maricopa County Attorney’s Office (MCAO) filed additional charges in justice court on May 22, 2019, against Mr. Roland Sarria and Mr. Todd Whitmoyer for their suspected involvement in unsanctioned combat sporting events. These charges relate to an event that took place on February 2, 2019, at Maya New York Pizza Bar & Grill, located near Brown Road & Mesa Drive, in Mesa.

These new charges are in addition to those filed against the defendants on April 26, 2019, for similar cage-style, unsanctioned events conducted in Phoenix and Glendale (<http://bit.ly/2MCAO1stCharges>). All charges arose from an Arizona Department of Gaming (ADG) investigation into the activities of both defendants who reside in Maricopa County. City of Mesa officials and Mesa Police Department aided ADG’s investigation, which began in 2018.

For the unsanctioned event in Mesa, each subject faces two, class 2 misdemeanors for failing to procure a license and failing to provide a ringside physician. These new charges bring the total number of class 2 misdemeanors each defendant is facing related to unsanctioned events in Glendale, Phoenix and Mesa, to six.

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. Any event not approved by an authorized sanctioning body is unsanctioned.

“Fighters competing in an unsanctioned event put themselves and their opponents at risk for serious harm,” said Dr. Ken Ota, Arizona-licensed and certified ringside physician. “Event sanctioning is necessary to ensure maximal health and safety of competitors.”

Arizona’s requirements for sanctioned events are in place to protect the health and safety of participants and the public, and ensure a fair fight. These requirements 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.

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.

- more -

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

INTERESTED IN COMPETING? CALL (480)599-7661

**AMERICAN AMATEUR
MARTIAL ARTS
COMPETITION
(HANDS ONLY)**

**OPEN
TO ALL
AGES**

SATURDAY
February 2

Doors Open @ 6pm
Fight Time 7pm

Maya New York
Pizza Bar & Grill
223 E. Brown rd, Mesa

TICKETS: \$30, \$40, \$50

 **BUFFALO
WILD
WINGS**

 **TITLE**

 **Yellow
Cab**

 **Mesa Sports
Center**

 **Mesa Sports
Center**

About ADG

Established by the Arizona State Legislature in 1995, ADG is the state regulatory agency for [tribal gaming](#), [racing and pari-mutuel/simulcast wagering](#), and [unarmed combat sports](#). 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.

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