

# Power Slap League: A brutal 'sport' that may leave contestants with brain damage

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Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) president Dana White has created a new brutal sport: [Power Slap League](#). In this "sport," contestants (men and women) slap each other as hard as they can in the head. A winner is decided by judges after three rounds.

This latest violent sport, licensed by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, focuses on slapping the head, with defense expressly forbidden. Competitors are not allowed to move in ways that might blunt the force of the oncoming slap, such as by raising their shoulder, tucking their chin or rolling with the slap. They have to have their hands behind their back while being slapped.

Video footage shows some contestants twitching on the ground after being slapped unconscious. And one female fighter crashed into the podium after being severely concussed.

Power Slap is the latest sport to be added to the growing list of violent contests, including wrestling, boxing and cage fighting. The arguments against violent sports are [well-rehearsed](#), yet clearly ignored by people who promote these contests.

Concussions caused by blows to the head or violent shaking of the head, [in the short term](#) lead to headaches, loss of memory, [brain fog](#) and confusion. But the long-term effects can be more important.

We should not assume that participants in Power Slap are unharmed if they do not sustain obvious signs of concussion. Repetitive head trauma in amateur boxing causes [injury](#) to the [nerve cells](#) that can be detected by measuring the leaking of the [brain](#) neurofilaments into the [cerebrospinal fluid](#), [even when boxers pass cognitive tests](#). Similar low-level brain damage is likely to occur in [power](#) slapping, where the unprotected head is the sole target of the blow.

These repeated mild head injuries could cumulatively lead to an increased risk of chronic brain injury diseases and possibly neurodegeneration and dementia. As we have seen in boxing, most of the injuries sustained will [become apparent long after the athletes have retired](#).

## Only a matter of time

Extreme violent sports can also have extreme outcomes beyond the loss of cognitive function. A punch or a slap does not have to be exceptionally powerful to kill somebody. A hit that is delivered quickly and at a particular angle can cause torsional forces to the neck and head, injuring the arteries that supply blood to the brain.

There are many examples of [one-punch deaths documented through the courts](#). Most neurologists and neurosurgeons, including myself, have dealt with the splitting of the neck arteries (dissection) caused by trauma, and in most cases, the inflicted trauma was not excessive. Evidence suggests some victims have weaker arteries, others were just unlucky in terms of the direction or rotation of the force applied to their neck and [head](#).

While it may be rare, replicating the conditions for such an event is madness. While risking serious brain injury is unacceptable, it is only a matter of time before the game will result in a one-slap death. It will take only a moment, but it will ruin many people's lives. Is it really worth it for a measly [purse of £3,200](#) per bout if you win?

In response to criticism about safety at the first Power Slap event at the Columbus Convention Center on March 5 2022, [Dana White has replied](#): "The commission is working on it. Everyone is in a learning process right now. They have learned a lot since the March event and u will see that as the show goes on."

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