

## Rampage beats Jardine to earn title shot

### UFC 96 main event solid finish to night of spectacular knockouts

#### HEADLINE ANALYSIS

By Wade Keller, Torch editor

Going into the Keith Jardine vs. Rampage Jackson fight, the debate wasn't who would win, but whether Rampage would beat Jardine early in the first round or late in the first round. It turned out to be more competitive than most expected, but with the expected outcome.

Rampage beat Jardine in a solid and competitive but not spectacular main event fight. Jardine put up a good fight, including winning the first round, but in the end Rampage was the stronger striker and simply outscored Jardine in the final two rounds decisively. Rampage dropped Jardine in the final seconds of the fight; it appeared he might have finished him via TKO with another 20-30 seconds. One judge ruled the fight 30-27, while the other two scored it 29-28.

Jardine had three big recent wins on his record (Brandon Vera, Chuck Liddell, Forrest Griffin), which UFC touted of course during the pre-match hype, which created a sense that anything could happen. Jardine beat Forrest Griffin, and Griffin beat Rampage, so anything could happen, went the pitch. Jardine also had two big losses mixed in there (Wanderlei Silva, Houston Alexander). The UFC text poll revealed, though, a strong belief among viewers that his losses told more than his wins did, with the prediction going toward a Rampage win (by a 67-33 margin).

The UFC 96 preview show made a strong case for Rampage having his best training camp and being more dedicated than ever, including a touching moment where he was trying to explain to his young son on the phone why he couldn't stop out to his mom's house to say hello (because he wasn't in the state!). But Rampage has a rep for a training to the level of his opponent, and Jardine is someone who can surprise you if you take him lightly. Jackson never appeared to be in jeopardy of losing, but it wasn't a foregone conclusion until the middle of the third round that Jackson was the strong bet to win on points should it go the distance.

Jardine may have surprised Rampage in the first round by standing up to his early attempts to end the fight early. In fact, Jardine dictated the pace of the fight. Announcers Mike Goldberg and Joe Rogan pointed out a moment when Rampage hit Jardine with a punch that looked a lot like the punch that knocked out Chuck Liddell. Jardine's chin is suspect, but in that case, it hardly looked like glass.

In the post-fight interview in the Octagon with Rogan, Rampage said Jardine was tougher than he

expected. He also said he totally veered away from his gameplan at the start of the fight. Rather than regretting how long the fight lasted, though, Rampage said it was good for him to get that deep into a fight and test his endurance since he may face that again with a future UFC Light-Heavyweight Title shot.

As a result of the loss, Jardine moves into his rightful place as a mid-card gatekeeper rather than a PPV headliner. It was only a lack of available healthy big-name fighters that led to this headlining a PPV. Jardine, despite his high-profile wins over Liddell and Griffin, wasn't and isn't seen as a PPV main event caliber fighter.

Had Jardine won, he wasn't even in line for a title shot. Then it would go to Lyoto Machida in May. Since Rampage won, he earned a title shot against champ "Sugar" Rashad Evans.

After Rampage's victory speech, where he charitably said he wouldn't call Jardine "sardine" anymore, Evans entered the Octagon. This is where things can get cheesy, although even UFC fans who don't like this boxing marketing tradition carrying over into UFC had to be anticipating the fireworks of these two getting in each other's face.

Evans, who had done color commentary on this fight and came across as a respectful and fair-minded, got in Rampage's face. Rampage then did what he does best (yes, even better than fighting)—he yapped at 100 miles an hour at Evans, who could barely react to what Rampage was saying before Rampage had taken three more shots at him. Evans didn't blink and held his ground. Finally Rampage grabbed the mic and said fans are going to see some "black on black crime." The fans in the arena booed Evans and cheered Rampage throughout. UFC has a fight on their hand that will be easy to market, as there's a clear line between the fan favorite and the villain in this one.

The fight, though, will have to wait longer than most expected. Rampage, it was revealed days later, will be undergoing jaw surgery for a nagging injury that got worse in his fight on Saturday night. He's out of the May PPV and Machida is in. Unfortunately for UFC as an organization and MMA fans in general, a less marketable fight will replace the Rampage-Evans fight. However, it's definitely PPV main event worthy and a pretty strong consolation prize. If Evans wins, Rampage is next in line. If Evans loses, the Evans-Rampage fight will have to wait until another time as Rampage deserves an immediate title shot as soon as he's healthy. Rampage joins Frank Mir on the injured reserve list, delaying another big fight.



RAMPAGE JACKSON  
ARTIST CORY GOULD

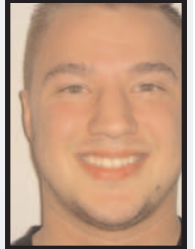
#### TOP FIVE STORIES OF THE WEEK

- (1) Rampage beats Jardine in UFC 96 main event
- (2) Mir has surgery, Lesnar fight moved to July
- (3) Carwin scores big KO win over Gonzaga
- (4) Baby Fedor suspended for steroid violation
- (5) Penn files formal complaint with NSAC

#### ROUNDTABLE

By MMATorch Staff

### Ideas for CBS Strikeforce



This is the Writers' Roundtable here at MMATorch. In this feature our own Matt Pelkey will be providing our questions each week, and then we'll provide the answers from members of our staff here at MMATorch.com. This week, we've got Torch Contributor Frank Hyden, along with Torch Columnists Matt Pelkey and Jason Bent as well as Torch Editor Jamie Penick. We've got three questions for the weekend, and today we present question two:

You're the Strikeforce matchmaker; what is your first "Strikeforce on CBS" card?

#### Frank Hyden, MMATorch Contributor

Well, you have to have a Gina Carano fight, that's a must. I think a fight between her and Cristiane Santos would be great. Honestly, the Strikeforce card that's taking place on April 11th would be a pretty good choice, with a few modifications. I'd keep the Frank Shamrock vs. Nick Diaz fight but I'd have Jake Shields fight someone else. I don't think Joe Riggs is a good opponent for Shields. I suppose Riggs deserves a shot so I can't complain too much but I don't think he'll last very long against Shields. I would also go with Josh Thomson vs. Gilbert Melendez in a rematch for the Lightweight title. Thomson and Melendez went all 5 rounds last June and Thomson dominated, but I think that'd be an entertaining fight.

#### Matt Pelkey, MMATorch Columnist

This is fun because Strikeforce has quietly (and cheaply, more importantly) assembled a very good roster full of some real quality fight potential. I'll start at the top with my main event of Frank Shamrock vs. Robbie Lawler. It's the best fight they can put on with the current roster, and this one should be built up to with some sort of "Primetime"-ish series. Our semi-main event would be the long-awaited clash between Chris "Cyborg" Santos and Gina Carano. This isn't fantasy booking on my part; this one will happen. We'll need a guaranteed slugfest on the card, so let's borrow Melvin Manhoef from K-1 and match him up with Scott Smith. Let's also have the rematch of Josh Thomson vs. Gilbert Melendez on a show where people would actually get to see

—ROUNDTABLE continued on pg. 16

## Rampage to undergo surgery; Machida to get long awaited Title shot at UFC 98

Well it's all but official now. Rampage won't be able to take the fight with Rashad Evans on May 23rd and Lyoto Machida will step into his place to get his long awaited shot at the Light Heavyweight Championship. According to a report from Sam Caplan at FiveOuncesOfPain.com, Rampage is expected to undergo surgery to take care of a jaw injury he received while training for his bout with Wanderlei Silva at UFC 92. The report states that the UFC is in the process of finalizing agreements with Evans and Machida to headline the UFC 98 event, which was left with a vacant headlining slot due to the injury to Frank Mir that forced him to postpone his bout with Brock Lesnar.

*Penick's Analysis: In many ways this will end up being a good thing, but for the UFC it will be a lot of money left on the table, and they've got no one to blame but themselves. The money fight was Rashad vs. Rampage, and that was the money fight after UFC 92. They were ready to put Rampage right into that slot after his victory over Wanderlei, despite his vocal desires to face Forrest Griffin once again. Then, the UFC inexplicably put together the Rampage vs. Keith Jardine fight for last weekend's event, and with them needing someone to plug into the UFC 98 main event Rashad was almost the only choice. They heavily pushed Rampage as the next guy due to his victory but with a previous injury it appears it's just too soon. The benefactor in this situation is Lyoto Machida, who after being dragged along because of his supposed "boring" fighting style and lack of marketability will get his first shot at the UFC Light Heavyweight crown. He's going to be a very dangerous opponent for Rashad Evans, and while the fight won't sell as well as one with Rampage would, it may end up being a closer and more hotly contested bout. Plus, depending on his timetable for return Rampage could get his rematch with Forrest next with Griffin expected to be ready for a return late in the summer. Rampage/Griffin II at UFC 101 wouldn't be a bad thing at all.*

## Penn files formal complaint with the NSAC

This thing isn't over by a long shot folks. After receiving the official response from Georges St. Pierre's camp to the allegations presented by the camp of B.J. Penn regarding the improper use of Vaseline during the January 31st UFC 94 event, the NSAC now has an official complaint to mull over. Penn's camp filed a 20-page document with the Nevada State Athletic Commission on Monday which, among other things, requests sanctions against St. Pierre and his cornerman along with a formal hearing into the matter.

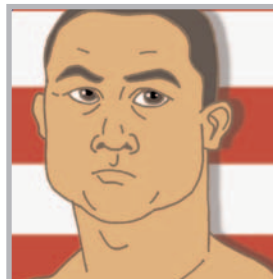
MMAWeekly.com first reported on the filing. According to the document, Penn's of the belief that St. Pierre used "strategies [that] were intentional and were orchestrated by Pierre as a means to unfairly and illegally defeat Penn in a regulated and sanctioned championship bout..."

The document also alleges further misconduct beyond what's been discussed, namely stating that St. Pierre "ingested a substance that would cause his body to become highly and unnaturally slippery during the bout."

The report states that Penn is wanting the commission to "fine St. Pierre, Jackson, Nurse, and the unnamed parties up to \$250,000; suspend St. Pierre's license as well as the licenses of Jackson, Nurse, and the unnamed parties; change the result of the bout to a 'no contest;' and require Pierre undergo a pre-bout shower to make sure no substances exist on his body."

This is still only just beginning of this situation, and there's been no response from St. Pierre's camp in regards to this particular document thus far.

*Penick's Analysis: This is getting out of hand. First off, even if you think that Nurse was majorly in the wrong and that his actions had even a small effect on how the fight played out, for Penn to go so far as to accuse St. Pierre of ingesting a substance to make himself more slick is a little sad. He cannot accept that he was defeated by a better fighter, and it's getting a bit maddening the further we get into this situation. I don't think there's a chance in hell that St. Pierre did anything "intentionally" in this situation, and this continued attempt by Penn to drag this thing out and damage Georges as much as he can is getting ridiculous. He's already succeeded in that. Fans are never going to look at GSP the same way again, sadly, because the seed of doubt has been planted by Penn and the continuation of these continually farcical accusations. Penn continues to harm his own image, in my opinion, because he's coming off like a whiny brat that can't handle a loss. There's no possible way it was GSP being better, no, there's just no way that makes sense. It was all because he cheated! Penn is taking a small mistake that was made, and he's grasping onto that and blowing it up to a ridiculous proportion to what actually occurred. I sincerely hope the Commission can see through the extended amounts of bullshit being slung here and will not allow this bout to be ruled a "no contest." On another note, I would hope they would not suspend St. Pierre's license as well, as then Penn would not only succeed in wrongfully destroying the name of Georges St. Pierre, but he'd rob fans around the world of the GSP/Alves fight at UFC 100 on top of that. Enough is enough, B.J.; you lost and it's time to move on.*



B.J. PENN  
ARTIST CORY GOULD

## Akiyama could debut at UFC 100 against Belcher

UFC 100 keeps looking better. Already expected to be a blockbuster card, this week brings the talk of the Frank Mir vs. Brock Lesnar rematch being moved to headline, and now a report at MMAJunkie suggests we could see the debut of Japanese star Yoshihiro Akiyama that night as well. According to the report, Akiyama has been in negotiations to face Alan Belcher on the July 11th event, and while nothing is set but agreements could be handed out this week.

Akiyama brings a 12-1 record into his Octagon debut, with the majority of his fights coming with K-1 Heroes/DREAM. Since July of 2005, Akiyama has gone 11-0 with two no contests. It's those bouts that stick out for Akiyama. The first no contest came due to "greasing" allegations from Kazushi Sakuraba in their bout on New Year's Eve 2006, and the other left him knocked out due to an

illegal blow. He's won two fights since that last incident, but has been a noticeably different fighter.

Belcher would come into this bout riding a lot of momentum after submitting PRIDE standout Denis Kang in Kang's Octagon debut in January. He's been increasingly impressive in each bout he's been in and will be a definite test for Akiyama in his Octagon debut.

In addition to those two fights, Georges St. Pierre is expected to defend his Welterweight Title against Thiago Alves and TUF 9 coaches Michael Bisping and Dan Henderson are set to square off. UFC 100 comes live on pay-per-view on Saturday, July 11th, from Las Vegas, NV.

*Penick's Analysis: This would be a very good under card fight for this already big event. With Lesnar/Mir, Alves/GSP, Hendo/Bisping and the possibility of Penn/Florian this could be one of the greatest events in the history of the sport. And that's not hyperbole, that's just the truth. I have a feeling they hold off Penn/Florian for UFC 101, but even still this 100 card is going to be a very, very big deal. I'm very intrigued by Akiyama coming into the UFC, as he's looked very different in his last two bouts than he had prior to that illegal knockout blow he suffered at the hands of Kazuo Misaki. For Belcher it will be another in a series of increasingly more difficult fights, and it'll be another chance for him to prove he's up to the task. The televised portion of this card should be awesome.*

## Nick Nolte to star in drama set in the world of MMA

Going into production this April is the film "Warrior," a drama set in the world of MMA. According to a report in Variety, Nick Nolte will head up the cast that also includes Tom Hardy and Jennifer Morrison.

The plot synopsis from the report describes that "Nolte plays an ex-Vietnam vet boxer-

turned-steel mill worker whose family was torn apart by his alcoholism; the now-sober and remorseful dad welcomes back his youngest son (Hardy) and trains him to compete in a mixed martial arts tournament. He and his older brother, played by Edgerton, are on a collision course in the ring."

Hardy was in Guy Ritchie's last film "RocknRolla," and Jennifer Morrison is best known for her role on the Fox medical drama, "House." She will also be in the J.J. Abrams reboot of "Star Trek." Nolte of course has had well tumultuous career that has been well documented elsewhere. His last appearance was in last year's "Tropic Thunder."

*Penick's Analysis: Of course it's far too early to tell if this will be any good, but it seems like a decent premise for a drama and with the players involved could be a good film. With the success of "The Wrestler" I'm sure studios are open to a more realistic portrayal of the sport than what has come before. Whether this film provides that remains to be seen, but I'm intrigued at the prospects. Despite being crazy, Nolte can still act, and this seems like a part he can step into with some personal experience to back it up. We'll definitely need to keep an eye on this one.*

### The Ultimate Fighter: Team United States vs. Team U.K. cast revealed

The ninth season of the Ultimate Fighter kicks off on April 1st on Spike TV, and this time around the teams will be comprised of fighters from the U.S. on one side and the U.K. on the other. 16 lightweights and 16 welterweights will compete to become the next Ultimate Fighter in each weight division, in a tournament format with the finals coming live on Spike TV on June 20th in Las Vegas. With former PRIDE Middleweight and Light Heavyweight Champion Dan Henderson and Ultimate Fighter season three winner Michael Bisping serving as this year's coaches, the teams will have a nationalistic pride backing their respective sides.

Kevin Iole at Yahoo! Sports today revealed the entire cast by region and weight class, with some notes about each fighter to go along with it. The ninth season cast is below:

Team United States - Welterweights

-Ryan Biglar (2-1): Biglar, 24, is a jiu-jitsu fighter originally from Guam who represents the Cobra Kai in Las Vegas.

-Ray Elbe (20-11): A Muay Thai fighter, the 25-year-old Elbe has spent the last three years working on his game in Phuket, Thailand. The most notable man he's faced was Renato Verissimo, who knocked him out in 2003.

-Christian Fulgium (6-2-1): A wrestler, Fulgium represents the Gladiator camp in Lafayette, La.

-DaMarques Johnson (13-6): Johnson took up MMA training while in the military. Training out of Elite Performance in Salt Lake City,

Johnson once faced former World Extreme Cagefighting welterweight champion Brock Larson, who submitted him in a 2005 bout.

-Kevin Knabjian (10-3-1): A wrestler from Eastern Illinois University, the same school that produced UFC star Matt Hughes, the one-time WEC fighter trains at Gilbert Grappling in Chicago.

-Mark Miller (10-4): A Muay Thai fighter also based in Chicago, Miller trains at Dino Costeas MMA and Toro Muay Thai.

-Jason Pierce (9-0): A one-time collegiate soccer player, Pierce trains with the vaunted Miletich Fighting Systems camp in Bettendorf, Iowa.

-Kiel Reid (8-1): A native of Bettendorf, Reid also trains with Miletich, whose experience includes a 2004 fight against UFC veteran Luigi Fiorvanti.

Team United States - Lightweights

-Paul Bird (4-1): A striker, Bird trains at Des Moines (Iowa) MMA. He has fought in the Midwest Cage Championships promotion.

-Santino DeFranco (13-4): A wrestler and jiu-jitsu specialist, DeFranco has experienced fighting in the now-defunct International Fight League. He also helped coach Efrain Escudero, the TUF 8 winner.

-Jason Dent (19-9): A submission specialist, Dent runs his own gym in Mentor, Ohio, at Griffon Brawl. He is a UFC veteran who has losses to Roger Huerta and Gleison Tibau.

-Cameron Dollar (4-1): Dollar trains in Colorado Springs, Colo., and is a former teammate of TUF alums Cory Hill and Noah Thomas.

-Tom Hayden (4-0): A submission fighter, Hayden is trained by popular UFC veteran Jorge Gurgel in West Chester, Ohio.

-Waylon Lowe (5-2): Lowe, 28, also fights for Gurgel.

-Josh Souder (7-2): A member of Team Prodigy, Souder has faced castmate Jason Dent in 2005, losing by TKO.

-Richie Whitson (4-0): A native Alaskan who trains with Team Quest in Temecula, Calif., Whitson is a heavy-handed striker.

Team United Kingdom - Welterweights

-Dean Amarasinghe (4-1): A grappler from Nottingham, England, Amarasinghe trains at Rough House Gym.

-James Bateman (2-1): A striker, Bateman trains at Grimsby NHB in Grimsby, England.

-David Faulkner (2-1): A member of the Wolfslair team that features U.K. coach Michael Bisping and UFC star Quinton Jackson, Faulkner is a submissions expert.

-Tommy Maguire (5-2): The 20-year-old Maguire is a striker who works with the Tsunami Gym in Wisbech, England.

-Che Mills (7-2): A tall welterweight at 6-foot-2, Mills works with ex-UFC fighter Mark Weir's Range Fighting Gym.

-Nicholas Osipczak (3-0): Osipczak trains in

London with Pancrase UK. He's finished all of his fights in the first round.

-Alex Reid (10-9-1): Reid, 33, trains in London with the London Shoot Fighters. He's faced notable opponents such as Murilo Rua, Tony Fryklund, Dave Menne and Jorge Rivera.

-James Wilks (5-2): Trained by veteran Eric Paulson in Orange County, Calif., the 30-year-old Wilks is a striker.

Team United Kingdom - Lightweights

-James Bryan (3-1): A striker, Bryan, 25, is from Somerset, England.

-Dan James (3-0): A striker from Swansea, Wales, he's finished two of his three pro bouts.

-Gary Kelly (2-1): A striker, the 25-year-old Kelly trains alongside Bisping and Jackson at Wolfslair in Liverpool, England.

-Jeff Lawson (13-2): A submission fighter with 12 finishes, Lawson trains with Team Bulldog in Dorset, England.

-Ross Pearson (9-3): A striker, Pearson trains at Sunderland Jiu-Jitsu & MMA Club in Sunderland, England.

-Martin Stapleton (5-1): A Muay Thai fighter, Stapleton is a product of Quannum Combat Arts.

-A.J. Wenn (7-2): A well-rounded fighter from the Tsunami Gym, Wenn is from Cambs, England.

-Andre Winner (9-2-1): Winner is a member of the Rough House team in London and is coming off a loss and a draw in his two fights prior to appearing on the show.

Link to Kevin Iole article

*Penick's Analysis: This looks on paper like a great mix of veteran's and untested rookies alike, which should make for a great dynamic in the fights. For the overwhelming majority it will be their first shot at truly letting people know who they are; for some they've had a shot or two. Either way, for many it will be their only shot, and it will be fun to watch how the nationalist feel plays out on the show, and if they can make it anything more than a contrived rivalry. I'm very much excited to see what they can do this season and to see if we've got another crop of good, talented fighters to compete. Oh, and Hendo v. Bisping at UFC 100 isn't too shabby of a coach fight itself.*

### Payouts for UFC 96; Jackson tops list by far

The total payroll figures have been released by the Ohio State Athletic Commission for Saturday's UFC 96 event in Columbus. Quinton "Rampage" Jackson, victorious in the night's main event, by far made the most of the evening, scoring nearly 43% of the night's total fight purse for a \$325,000 payday. Gabriel Gonzaga and Brandon Vera each took in the next highest paydays with \$60,000 apiece, with Keith Jardine right behind them at \$55,000. These figures do not include the \$60K "Fight Night" bonuses handed down to Jackson, Jardine and Matt Hamill. The full disclosed salary for the event was \$762,000, and the full payouts are below:

-Quinton Jackson: \$325,000 (includes \$100,000 win bonus)  
 -Keith Jardine: \$55,000  
 -Shane Carwin: \$32,000 (includes \$16,000 win bonus)  
 -Gabriel Gonzaga: \$60,000  
 -Matt Brown: \$16,000 (includes \$8,000 win bonus)  
 -Pete Sell: \$12,000  
 -Matt Hamill: \$40,000 (includes \$20,000 win bonus)  
 -Mark Munoz: \$12,000  
 -Gray Maynard: \$20,000 (includes \$10,000 win bonus)  
 -Jim Miller: \$9,000  
 -Tamdan McCrory: \$20,000 (includes \$10,000 win bonus)  
 -Ryan Madigan: \$3,000  
 -Kendall Grove: \$44,000 (includes \$22,000 win bonus)  
 -Jason Day: \$5,000  
 -Jason Brilz: \$10,000 (includes \$5,000 win bonus)  
 -Tim Boetsch: \$12,000  
 -Brandon Vera: \$60,000 (includes \$30,000 win bonus)  
 -Michael Patt: \$5,000  
 -Shane Nelson: \$16,000 (includes \$8,000 win bonus)  
 -Aaron Riley: \$6,000  
 [Source: MMAJunkie.com]

*Penick's Analysis: It's interesting to see that Jackson made nearly double the combined total of the rest of the main card, but it's not all that surprising. Considering this fight was kind of thrust into this spot because they had no main event it makes sense that Jackson would take it when he's getting tossed nearly half the night's payroll. He made it close to a cool \$400K with that "Fight of the Night" bonus as well. If he's not able to turn around and recover quick enough to accept the Rashad fight, however, it may mean missing out on an even bigger pay day due to being put in this spot. The war of words at the end of the pay-per-view sold that fight, and even though I'd love to see Lyoto Machida get his shot I want to see the Rashad/Rampage showdown even more now.*

### **\$60K "Fight Night" bonuses go to Jackson, Jardine and Hamill for UFC 96**

With no submission wins at UFC 96, bonuses were only handed out to the "Fight of the Night" and "Knockout of the Night" for the event. In the main event, Quinton Jackson and Keith Jardine battled back and forth for three full rounds, leading to a decision victory for Jackson but an extra \$60K in both fighters' pockets as they took home "Fight of the Night" honors.

Ohio's own Matt Hamill took the prize for "Knockout of the Night" for his high kick knockout of Mark Munoz in their bout. The hometown boy connected with a right kick the

landed squarely on the side of Munoz's head, sending him down with his head landing on his own knee. Hamill got in a couple of shots more before the ref could get in, but it was clear Munoz was out from the kick. [Source: MMAJunkie.com]

*Penick's Analysis: Jackson and Jardine for me wasn't the most exciting bout, but they fought back and forth at a fairly even pace for three full rounds and with the majority of the fights ending early in one sided affairs this was very much deserving of the "Fight of the Night" honors. With so many tko's it was definitely a task for them to come up with the "Knockout of the Night" but Hamill's was for sure the most memorable. Shane Carwin's short right hand dropping Gonzaga is a very close second, though.*

### **Weigh-in results for UFC 96 in Columbus, OH**

UFC 96: Jackson vs. Jardine airs tomorrow night on pay-per-view from the Nationwide Arena in Columbus, OH. Weigh-ins took place on location today and all fighters including the night's main event made weight. Full results are below:

#### **MAIN PAY-PER-VIEW CARD**

-Quinton Jackson (205) vs. Keith Jardine (204)  
 -Shane Carwin (259.5) vs. Gabriel Gonzaga (257.5)  
 -Matt Brown (170.5) vs. Pete Sell (170)  
 -Matt Hamill (205) vs. Mark Munoz (204.5)  
 -Gray Maynard (155) vs. Jim Miller (154.5)

#### **PRELIMINARY CARD**

-Ryan Madigan (169) vs. Tamdan McCrory (170)  
 -Jason Day (184.5) vs. Kendall Grove (185)  
 -Tim Boetsch (205) vs. Jason Brilz (204)  
 -Michael Patt (204.5) vs. Brandon Vera (205)  
 -Shane Nelson (155) vs. Aaron Riley (155)

### **Sanchez vs. Guida to headline TUF 9 finale**

After a string of successful performances in the Octagon, UFC lightweight Clay Guida gets a large step up in competition this June at the finale for season nine of The Ultimate Fighter. According to a report from Sherdog.com, a fight has been agreed to by Guida and Diego Sanchez to headline the reality show's ninth season send off.

Sanchez last month made a successful debut in the lightweight division, dispatching of Joe Stevenson with a hard fought unanimous decision victory. The very first winner of the Ultimate Fighter, Sanchez seems poised for greatness at 155, but he'll have a powerhouse challenger in Guida this June.

Clay Guida has gone on a string of victories recently after deciding being in exciting fights wasn't enough. A part of a couple of the best fights of 2007, Guida found himself on the wrong end of those, and despite his exciting and impressive performances, they weren't enough to gain

victories over the likes of Din Thomas, Tyson Griffin and Roger Huerta. Since the Huerta loss, Guida's reeled off three straight victories using an effective grappling strategy that has entailed controlling his opponents, even if it hasn't produced the most exciting fights. Now, he'll face perhaps the toughest fight of his career to date in Sanchez.

The Ultimate Finale 9 is set to air live on Spike TV on June 20th from the Pearl inside the Palms Resort in Las Vegas, NV.

*Penick's Analysis: This is going to be an extremely tough fight for Guida. His last two fights against Nate Diaz and Mac Danzig showed his ability to control an opponent with his grappling, but there's not a chance that he's successful in that strategy against Sanchez. "Nightmare"'s going to be much bigger and much stronger than Guida, and he's no slouch when it comes to the ground game himself. This fight may force Guida to stand up and play the striking game, which could lead to an absolutely fantastic fight reminiscent of his bouts with Huerta and Griffin from '07. This is a very cool fight to have for that finale, and it makes sense for Sanchez inasmuch as the top of the lightweight division is busy at the moment with scheduled bouts and he'll need to keep himself fresh and busy in the meantime.*

### **Hardy vs. Davis headed to UFC 99 in Germany**

Almost immediately after dispatching Rory Markham in London last month at UFC 95, Dan Hardy was ready to call out the next man he wanted to face, the "Irish Hand Grenade," Marcus Davis.

At the post fight press conference, Hardy had this to say concerning Davis, "[Davis has] had a couple of fights in the UK, and he's kind of building himself a fan base, but he's not English; he's not Irish...I was born here, and I've been bred here. I don't mind taking on that challenge and showing him this is my home and not his."

Davis took exception to that statement and lobbied to have the bout made, and he's gotten his wish according to a report at FiveOuncesOfPain.com. The fight is set to take place at UFC 99 in Cologne, Germany, marking yet another European event for Davis. The report states that the UFC's original plan was to pit Davis against Ben Saunders on this event, but due to him wanting this bout with Hardy Saunders will now be taking on Mike Swick in Germany.

UFC 99 airs on pay-per-view on June 13 from the Lanxess Arena in Cologne, Germany.

*Penick's Analysis: This is going to be a great match up between two very good welterweight fighters. Hardy's been very impressive in his limited Octagon appearances and Davis has taken his game to a whole different level as of late. While we may have complaints about the main event not being pay-per-view worthy, the rest of the card is shaping up into something definitely worth paying for, so they're off setting that, unlike this Saturday's card.*

## Struve vs. Stojnic added to UFC 99 in Germany

In a bout fit for the scripted world of pro wrestling, UFC heavyweights Denis Stojnic and Stefan Struve find themselves in a veritable "loser leaves town" bout at UFC 99 in Cologne, Germany.

The two 0-1 heavyweights have signed on to face each other at the UFC's first event in Germany according to the U.K. based *Fighter's Only Magazine*.

With the UFC in the midst of an active roster cutting movement, the loser of this bout will almost assuredly be among those names on the chopping block with an 0-2 record inside of the Octagon, with both fighters also suffering decisive defeats in their respective debut bouts.

The 16-3 Struve was out-muscled and beat down by the much shorter, yet much stronger, Junior Dos Santos in :54 of the first round at last month's UFC 95. Also last month, Denis Stojnic was beaten handily by Cain Velasquez minutes into the second round of their bout. The fighter who can impress the most and pull off a victory in this UFC 99 bout will be the one with a job by day's end.

UFC 99 airs live on pay-per-view on the afternoon of June 13 from the Lanxess Arena in Cologne, Germany, and will be rebroadcast later that night at the standard 10pm ET as well.

*Penick's Analysis: Well, neither fighter did much of anything in their debut bouts, so really there's not any immediate desire to see either in the Octagon anytime soon. On the other hand, both were also debuting against fighters definitely on the cusp of the UFC heavyweight top tier. On a less scrutinized spot on the card both may perform better than they showed themselves to be capable of in their debuts.*

## UFC 98 adds Okami vs. Miller to main card

Yushin Okami hasn't fought since December, and while he may be next in line for a shot at Anderson Silva's Middleweight Title after Thales Leites, a man's got to stay busy. And busy he'll be as he's set to face Dan Miller at UFC 98 this May.

The UFC announced almost the entire lineup for the May 23rd event headlined by the rematch between Frank Mir and Brock Lesnar, and Okami vs. Miller is listed as being on the televised portion of the event.

Okami is 7-1 in the UFC, with his sole loss coming at the hands of Rich Franklin back in 2007. Despite his impressive record, he's been labeled a "boring" fighter by many, as the overwhelming majority of his fights reach the judges scorecards with Okami using control to score points en route to victory. It's not a redeeming style, but it's been effective, and after a win over Dean Lister at UFC 92 Okami was promised a title shot. He's got to get past Dan Miller now to solidify that shot.

Miller's first UFC fight came only last September at Fight Night 15, where he defeated Rob Kimmons via submission in the first round. Since that fight, he's posted two more consecutive wins against Matt Horwich and Jake Rosholt, bringing his current record to 11-1 overall. While he's taking a dramatic leap up in competition against Okami, he can't be counted out of the fight.

UFC 98 airs live on pay-per-view on May 23rd, airing from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, NV. The full card, as it stands now, is below:

### MAIN TELEVISED CARD

-Brock Lesnar vs. Frank Mir - Undisputed UFC Heavyweight Title bout  
-Matt Hughes vs. Matt Serra  
-Dan Miller vs. Yushin Okami  
-Frank Edgar vs. Sean Sherk

### PRELIMINARY CARD

-James Irvin vs. Drew McFedries  
-Kyle Bradley vs. Phillippe Nover  
-Pat Barry vs. Tim Hague  
-Houston Alexander vs. Andre Gusmao  
-Brandon Wolff vs. Yoshiyuki Yoshida  
-David Kaplan vs. George Roop

[Link to official UFC 98 fight card page](#)

*Penick's Analysis: Well, an upset by Miller in this fight would do a lot of MMA fans a favor by knocking Okami out of the Title picture. Regardless of anyone's own personal feelings on Okami as a fighter, there is a large contingent that thinks a fight against him would be a waste for Anderson Silva, who has already discussed only wanting to fight a limited number of times more before he retires. With possible fights against Demian Maia, GSP and a possible rematch with Marquardt for many it would be preferable to not have Okami's name in that mix. That being said, while Miller's record is impressive he hasn't faced anyone with Okami's skill level yet, and we won't know until May 23rd if he'll be able to handle that step up in competition. It's an intriguing bout, for sure, and with a rumored bout between Josh Koscheck and Chris Wilson most likely coming to this card to round it out it's going to be an interesting mix of fights at UFC 98. The main event sells itself, but the big fight between Serra and Hughes will be a big selling point for some as well. On top of that, the Sherk/Edgar bout should be fantastic. This should be an exciting show, to say the least.*

## "Baby Fedor" suspended one year for positive steroid test

Kirill "Baby Fedor" Sidelnikov has been suspended for one year and fined \$2,500 by the California State Athletic Commission following his loss to Paul Buentello at Affliction's Day of Reckoning pay-per-view in January.

Sidelnikov tested positive for Stanozolol, the synthetic anabolic steroid that was also found in Chris Leben following his bout with Michael Bisping at last October's UFC 89 event.

The CSAC sent out a press release today to announce the suspension and fine.

Sidelnikov's bout against Paul Buentello was stopped as he had facial lacerations that would not allow him to continue.

*Penick's Analysis: Well after a disappointing performance here comes an even more disappointing result. With every other sport getting caught up in steroid scandals left and right it's sad to see MMA fighters adding to that trend. Seems like Fedor's "protege" needed more than natural athletic gifts to come up short against Buentello.*

### ROUNDTABLE FROM COVER

it, and I'd open the show with Nick Diaz against whatever halfway decent 170 pounder the UFC casts off in the next couple months after the influx from the WEC. Boom goes the dynamite.

## Jason Bent, MMA Torch Columnist

Josh Thomson vs. KJ Noons  
Jake Shields vs. Phil Baroni  
Renato Sobral vs. Bobby South worth (necessary rematch from their bout at Strikeforce: Destruction)

Alistair Overeem vs. Brett Rogers

There are tons of great matchups to be had for this company and especially so if they pick up all of the contracts of the Pro Elite fighters and I feel this lineup is a blend of solid fights with enough name recognition and personality to provide for promotional opportunities.

Noons has much to prove and a match with Thomson would certainly be one worth watching. Baroni has been looking good at 170 and Shields looks to be one of the next great things at that weight. Sobral and Southworth need to lock up again and in both men you have fighters of name recognition as well as this being the best match for Sobral outside of Tito Ortiz so long as he isn't under the UFC banner. Overeem is a special fighter and Rogers is an intriguing prospect and at any rate this would either deliver Overeem to the masses or serve as proof that Rogers really is a heavyweight on the rise.

## Jamie Penick, MMA Torch Editor-in-Chief

I like Jason's Overeem vs. Rogers fight, as it would be one of the better heavyweight fights they could put together. For the dream card match-ups for my theoretical CBS card I'd want the Gina Carano vs. Cris Cyborg fight for sure. It was built up on CBS with EliteXC and it's a women's fight that everyone is legitimately interested in seeing. I'd want to see a middleweight unification bout between Cung Le and Robbie Lawler, as that would be an absolutely great match-up. I'd put the Thomson/Melendez rematch on this show instead of Showtime, and I love Matt's Manhoef/Smith idea. That's another bout that would be legitimately great to see. Strikeforce has so many great fights available for them right now, they're really in a great spot in that regard. Throw in Jake Shields and Nick Diaz in bouts on this card and it's already much better than any of the three cards put out by EliteXC on CBS.

## UFC 96 PPV REPORT

By Jamie Penick, MMATorch Editor

Alright, after a half hour outage from the cable company, the show has started here, cutting into the very end of Gray Maynard vs. Jim Miller. Round by round results will come later this evening, but Maynard defeated Miller by unanimous decision in the first and only bout of the evening thus far. Here we go for the rest of the show!

### FIGHT TWO: MATT HAMILL VS. MARK MUNOZ (LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT)

ROUND ONE: Munoz shot in for a single leg early but Hamill sprawled nicely. Hamill threw a nice leg kick to set up a jab and he used some very nice location landing a bunch of strikes until Munoz came in for a single leg. Hamill overpowered Munoz and got on top. After a short struggle they both stood up. Hamill continues to stalk Munoz and lands some nice shots. Munoz starts landing some nice body punches. Hamill again sets up a jab with a leg kick and while nothing's coming in really fast it's landing effectively. Hamill covers up nicely when Munoz throws some shots and he's responding with solid punches of his own. Nice right hand lands from Hamill. Munoz lands a knee and then an overhand right. Hamill again walks him across the cage with the jabs. Hamill throws a high kick and knocks Munoz out cold! Holy shit. He gets in a couple of shots before the ref can get over there, but holy hell that was a great finish from Hamill. That's a highlight reel knockout for Hamill there. Wow.

WINNER: Matt Hamill via ko at 3:53 of the first round.

POST FIGHT: Hamill was extremely excited as they announced him the victor. He was extremely excited and happy as he thanked the Ohio hometown crowd. He said he's getting better and better everytime he fights and he exclaimed "the Hammer is back!"

STAR RATING: (\*\*+) It was a bit methodical for a while but Hamill was awesome and worked his striking very effectively before delivering a great highlight reel knockout.

-Frank Mir was interviewed by Mike Goldberg cageside to update his injury. He said the knee popped on him in training and he had the knee scoped and he wanted to push the fight out to July 11th, which would be UFC 100.

-Rashad Evans then came in and talked about who his next challenger could be depending on the outcome of tonight's fight.

### FIGHT THREE: MATT BROWN VS. PETE SELL (WELTERWEIGHT)

ROUND ONE: High kick from Brown starts off the show. Brown lands a superman punch. Brown keeps throwing high kicks and punches and then drops Sell with a right hand.

Yvel Lavigne ran in and there was some confusion as they thought he stopped the fight but he let it continue. Brown came in and landed a few knees and then kept laying on the punishment. Sell tried to grab a leg and stay alive. Brown continued rocking Sell and Sell backed up and fell to his back. Brown looked at Lavigne wondering why the fight wasn't stopped and he just dropped a couple of bombs forcing Yves to stop it. That was not needed.

WINNER: Brown via tko at 1:32 of the first round.

POST FIGHT: Brown was wondering why it wasn't stopped earlier as he was interviewed. Sell came up and interrupted to say "why are you stopping it I'm still here fighting."

STAR RATING: (\*\*+) That was a great, great performance from Matt Brown. Despite the confusion on the stoppage and the fact that it could have been stopped earlier, that was a coming out party for Matt Brown as a force at 170. That was dominant. Great fight for Brown.

### PRELIM FIGHT A: KENDALL GROVE vs. JASON DAY

ROUND ONE: Day is pressing the action early throwing shots and kicks but Grove withstands it. Grove tried to grab the Muay Thai clinch but Day unleashed a ton of shots on him and forced him to release it. Grove gets a big right hand through that drops Day and he follows it up with elbows to the head to finish it off. He needed that. Great finish from Grove.

WINNER: Grove via tko at 1:32 of the first round.

POST FIGHT: Grove said he was very happy, he thought he was going to lose his job. He said, "I guess not." He said he was working a lot with his hands coming in. To all his fans, he said, "I'm f\*\*\*ing back."

STAR RATING: (\*\*) Well Grove gets to keep his job. That was a much needed performance, but Day had him in trouble a bit early and was landing some nice shots. That was a great right hand that got through, though, and a huge needed finish for Grove.

### FIGHT FOUR: GABRIEL GONZAGA VS. SHANE CARWIN (HEAVYWEIGHT)

ROUND ONE: Carwin comes in early with a couple of punches pushing Gonzaga back. Gonzaga gets in a big right hand that seems to rock Carwin. Gonzaga gets Carwin to the cage and takes him down. As he tries to pass Carwin gets back to his feet. Gonzaga lands a right hand and then Carwin throws a punch out of nowhere that drops Gonzaga. He gets in another two shots and the fight is stopped. Wow, that was one hell of a short fight.

WINNER: Carwin via ko at 1:09 of the first round.

POST FIGHT: Carwin said Gabe caught him a few times early but he was able to get back to it. The replay of the knockout punch showed he was flat footed when throwing it, holy hell is that power.

STAR RATING: (\*\*+) Great fight for only being a minute long. Gonzaga had Carwin hurt early but Carwin showed some great tenacity to

survive and then get back to his feet. The flat footed knockout punch was amazing, and Carwin is legit. He's ready to take on the top flight heavyweights in the UFC. Great performance.

### PRELIM FIGHT B: TAMDAN MCCRORY VS. RYAN MADIGAN

ROUND ONE: McCrory threw a nice knee but then grabbed a leg and took Madigan down. Madigan tried to hold the closed guard as Tamdan tried to posture up. McCrory passes nicely over to side control. As Tamdan tries to get into a better position he postures up and lands a couple of big shots but then he ends back in Madigan's guard. McCrory gets another beautiful pass into side guard and then the mount. He tries to grab a triangle from the top but loses the mount. He pins an arm and tries to get something going with that but gives up a leg. Madigan can't do anything with it though and McCrory moves to side control and then the mount quickly and he pounds out Madigan for a bit leading to the stoppage.

WINNER: McCrory via tko at 3:35 of the first round.

POST FIGHT: McCrory said he's ready to kill. He drops a few expletives as he talks about everything that went wrong in training including not getting to pick his music. He wanted Thunder Horse from Metalocalypse.

STAR RATING: (\*\*) That was some dominating ground fighting from McCrory. Madigan was just out of his element and not on the same level as McCrory.

### MAIN EVENT FIGHT FIVE: KEITH JARDINE VS. QUINTON JACKSON

-Rashad Evans joins the commentary team for the main event. He says there will never be a fight between him and Jardine, as being teammates and friends they don't want to get in there against each other.

ROUND ONE: Jackson came right after Jardine and they clinched. They wrestled against the cage. Jardine threw a punch. Yves Lavigne separated them. Jardine comes in and lands a shot. He comes in again and throws a leg kick. Jardine throws a high kick. Another leg kick lands from Jardine as Rampage lands a jab. Jardine came in to grab a leg but Rampage tossed him off. Jardine came in again and grabbed a single leg. They again stall a bit on the cage. Jardine backs away. Jardine lands a left jab and gets another punch in. Jardine lands another leg kick. Rampage throws a nice right and pushes Jardine back. Rampage catches a kick from Jardine and throws a bunch of shots. Jardine gets out. Rampage lands a nice right and follows with a bunch more shots again. Nice sequence from Jackson including a kick that landed. Jardine lands a knee and then Rampage pushes forward with a few shots as the round ends.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Jardine. Very very close round but Jardine pressed the pace early and landed more early on, and despite Rampage's late surge Jardine was in charge for the round.

**ROUND TWO:** Jackson lands a few nice counter punches and then a leg kick to begin. Jardine lands a good body shot. Jardine stumbled with a leg kick and Jackson barely missed a big right hand. Jardine threw a high kick that was blocked. Another leg kick landed by Jardine. Jardine gets a nice leg kick jab combo in. He comes in and does it again. Jackson gets a right hand in. Jackson gets in a few shots that barely miss but then he catches Jardine and drops him down. Jardine recovers but Jackson lands some more punishment on the ground before Jardine gets back to his feet. Jackson grabs a takedown as Jardine comes in. Jardine is able to get back to his feet. Jardine is standing with his hands at his sides. Jardine threw a kick that landed low. They restart it quickly. Jardine pushes forward on Rampage and starts throwing a ton of shots. Rampage survives and throws a few shots of his own to get out of it. Jardine lands another body shot. Jackson gets in another right hand and a left following that.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Rampage. The knock down and take down took it for him there. Much better round than the first.

**ROUND THREE:** Jardine comes in with a kick and rampage starts swinging. Nothing lands solid there. Rampage lands a nice jab. Jackson throws a body kick and Jardine lands a jab. Jackson with another left hand and then he ducks under a punch and takes Jardine down. Jardine fights back up to his feet again. Jardine is cut open. Jackson barely misses an uppercut, which has kind of been the story of the fight. Rampage gets a short flurry in. He lands a nice right to the head. Jardine gets in a very nice right hand. Jardine lands a body kick. Jackson with a shot of his own. Big left from Jackson. Leg kick from Jardine. Jackson lands a big left but Jardine again recovers quickly. Jardine shot in but got stuffed and he put Jardine up against the cage. Lavigne separates them again. Jackson lands a big left and then a right and another big shot. They trade with Rampage landing a ton of shots with :30 left but Jardine stays standing. Jardine throws a high kick with :10 left. Jackson drops Jardine with a shot with only seconds left but there's not enough time to get a stoppage.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Rampage. Lots of big shots, another takedown, and a finish where he knocked Jardine down gave Rampage the fight. He definitely took a safe play to this fight tonight but he did enough in my opinion to solidify his title shot.

**WINNER:** Jackson via unanimous decision (29-28, 29-28, 30-27)

**POST FIGHT:** Jackson said there was a lot of pressure coming into this fight and he didn't expect Jardine to be that tough. Jackson said he didn't stick to his gameplan from the beginning. He said he felt he needed these three rounds as the last one only went a round. He said he won't call him "Sardine" anymore. Rampage screamed that he wants his belt back. Rashad came in and they got face to face with Rashad saying he's going to knock him out. They held the microphone up during their exchange. This is beautiful. Rampage grabbed

the mic and said you're going to see some "black on black crime." The Ohio crowd booed Rashad pretty heavily.

**STAR RATING:** (\*\*) That was a very even fight that just didn't get too exciting. Jardine showed an ability to take punishment in the fight and Rampage did what he needed to do to hold his spot as the number one contender.

#### **PRELIM FIGHT C: BRANDON VERA VS. MIKE PATT**

**ROUND ONE:** Vera started off highly aggressive with a few leg kicks and a couple of punches. He pounces in and out on Patt here. Another big leg kick from Vera. Nice big right hand from Vera. Vera threw a high kick that was blocked. Another big leg kick from Vera with a few shots attached. Nice one two shot from Vera. Big left hand lands from Vera. Vera with another punch and high kick. He's laying on the punishment right now. Patt throws a leg kick of his own. Vera comes back with another kick. Inside leg kick from Vera lands. Patt's taking a ton of punishment here. Vera landed another leg kick that really hurt Patt. He let him get up. Another leg kick lands from Vera. Left hand from Vera. Patt lands a high kick to the head. Vera gets in a nice body shot. Inside leg kick from Vera again. Nice right and left combo from Vera. Vera landed a nice left hand. Vera with another left hand. Round ends.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Vera. Close to a 10-8 but Vera never really had Patt near finished there. He hurt him a lot though.

**ROUND TWO:** Vera comes right out as the aggressor again. More of the same from the last round. Vera keeps throwing the leg kicks and takes Patt down. Patt is badly hurt in the knee. Vera gives him the option to stand again, he does and gets dropped with another nasty leg kick that takes Patt down and forces the stoppage. Too bad for Patt, but the best performance from Vera in a long, long time.

**WINNER:** Vera via tko at 1:27 of the second round.

**POST FIGHT:** Vera said he was taking for granted that he could take the guys at 205 without training hard, but now he's back to work and he's back. He thanked all of his training partners.

**STAR RATING:** (\*\*) Dominating performance with those leg kicks. Awesome to see Vera get back to it in this fight and look very very good.

#### **PRELIM FIGHT D: TIM BOETSCH VS. JASON BRILZ**

**ROUND ONE:** Boetsch comes out firing and lands a big flurry right off the bat. Brilz takes it and Boetsch backs off. Brilz grabs Boetsch and lands some shots in a little dirty boxing action. Brilz catches a kick and takes Boetsch down. Boetsch kicks Brilz off and gets back to his feet. They clinch on the cage. Brilz comes in with some nice shots of his own. After that initial onslaught he's been the aggressor now. Boetsch gets a nice right hand in. Brilz lands a couple of nice jabs. The pace has slowed considerably from the start of the fight. Boetsch gets a nice body shot in and another to follow. They trade shots as the

round closes.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Brilz. He stole that round after Boetsch had him early. He had a nice takedown and landed a bunch of shots while pushing the action himself.

**ROUND TWO:** Brilz throws a decent right. Boetsch gets in another punch. Brilz grabs Boetsch and takes him down nicely. Brilz passes to side control. Brilz holds control on the ground and gets right back to the side as Boetsch tries to turn out of it. Nice short elbow from Brilz. Brilz with some more elbows to the head. Nice knee to the body from Brilz. Brilz tried to grab a guillotine but isn't able to, but still holds control. Boetsch gets back up to his feet but Brilz takes his back. He throws a ton of knees to the legs, head and body of Boetsch from the back. Big knee lands to the midsection by Brilz.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Brilz. Great round for Brilz there. He got the takedown and dominated throughout. He didn't really do much other than control him, though.

**ROUND THREE:** Brilz again came in to the clinch and tried to get Boetsch down again. Boetsch fights it off and stays on his feet. Brilz again shot in to the clinch. Boetsch gets in a knee in the clinch. Boetsch lands a nice knee to the head and body as Brilz came in for a shot. Brilz again got to Boetsch's back and took him down. Boetsch rolls to half guard. Brilz gets to side control but Boetsch gets back to his feet. Brilz again grabs a single leg and takes Boetsch down. Brilz moves to full mount. Boetsch is cut here. Brilz throws some lackluster shots to finish off the round.

Penick's Scorecard: 10-9 Brilz. Another dominating round, although it was mostly ground domination with no intention of really finishing it anywhere.

**WINNER:** Brilz via unanimous decision (29-28, 29-28, 29-28)

**STAR RATING:** (\*+) Not much to the fight, as Brilz just dominated on the ground without doing much there, but it was impressive for him nonetheless.

#### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Alright, that's another event under our belts, and we've got a replacement main event for UFC 98 it seems in Rampage/Rashad. This was a much better event than I think anyone could have expected, with nine fights airing on the show and a very good under card. The main event wasn't really what was expected, but it was still a decent fight and set up the replacement bout at UFC 98 with the Frank Mir injury.

I definitely enjoyed the show much more than I thought I would coming in. Shane Carwin is a legit threat in the heavyweight division, as his knockout of Gonzaga with a flatfooted right hand is a testament to his power. Great showing from him there. Thank you again, ladies and gentlemen for sticking with us tonight and stick around for the fall out from this event as well as all the big stories and commentary throughout the week here at MMATorch Newsletter and MMATorch.com.

## JASON BENT

By Jason Bent  
columnist



# Match By Match Analysis of UFC 96

one scored easily for Maynard but a round in which he faced adversity for the first time. Maynard looked to be close to getting caught by a leg lock but survived and just went on to not only take this round but this fight in what was his best fight in recent memory.

-Winner is Gray Maynard by Unanimous Decision-

I had predicted this one to be a unanimous decision victory for Maynard, and while that came true I could not have been any more wrong as to how this one would play out. Maynard actually fought his way to victory; and not only could he eventually be a force to be reckoned with but he also could now be a fighter I wouldn't mind seeing on a pay-per-view. Before it was as if Gray Maynard on a pay-per-view was as welcome a sight as looking out the door and seeing relatives piling out of their car and wanting to stay at my home for awhile. I still don't want relatives to show up and turn my home into their Super 8 but I won't mind seeing Maynard listed as fighting on a future pay-per-view event. Not at all.

## Matt Hamill vs. Mark Munoz

I said it before and I will say it again, Mark Munoz was fed to the wolves in his UFC debut. Fights sometimes take place in a ring or a cage, and once in a while can take place in jell-o or mud in a kid's wading pool at the Gold Club, but they are never actually fought on paper. So, I was willing to give Munoz at least a fighting chance given his physical attributes, wrestling ability and size, but I saw this one as a showcase for Hamill and expected nothing less. This is exactly what we got as Hamill scored the easy victory and now has a highlight reel KO to show the kids, grandkids and anyone else who might be walking by the house at the time.

Admittedly this wasn't just a walk in the park for Hamill as he did eat some punches for his troubles along with an excellent knee along the way. Munoz is a strong, tough guy, but he just had no answer for the strength of Hamill and "The Hammer" stalked him down from the very start of the first round. I thought Hamill threw some excellent jabs and his right hand not only looked better but garnered him better results in the damage they caused. It was clear to me that he has been working hard on his striking and is slowly but surely getting better.

The most impressive thing about this fight was of course the brutal finish, but what really got me was how he set things up. Hamill walked his man down and used the jab effectively and efficiently to back him across the cage. The one thing he lacked in his fight with Rich Franklin was the presence of mind to know where he was in the Octagon and the ability to control the space which left him open to being picked apart by the superior striking of Franklin. Obviously Munoz is not Rich Franklin, but I am still impressed by the way Hamill owned his domain and dictated the action. All of this of course led to the high kick which knocked MarkMunoz senseless and ended the fight early.

-Winner is Matt Hamill by KO at 3:53 of Round 1-

Matt "The Hammer" Hamill uncorked a leg kick that I wouldn't have even imagined he could have been capable of landing. This was one of those knockouts that causes everyone in the bar to exclaim,

"Holy sh\*t!" before grabbing everyone by the shirtsleeve and instructing them to watch the replay. Sheer brutality brought to you by the gentle man who enjoys cold milk and a thick peanut butter and jelly sandwich. What makes this even more special is the fact that he was able to pull off such a victory on pay-per-view, and in front of his hometown friends and family. Hamill is a feel good story to say the least but he really is one of the sport's good guys and his celebration was very enjoyable. He didn't posture or brag about it and instead was as excited as we were for simply seeing a knockout of this magnitude. I don't know if I would go as far to agree with him when he stated, "The Hammer is back!" because I never really imagined he went anywhere at all but I will say that "The Hammer" is better. A better Matt Hamill is bad news for all of those who could soon face him in the light heavyweight ranks.

## Matt Brown vs. Pete Sell

I had predicted this one to be a victory for Matt Brown and I got that much right but nothing else whatsoever. He not only won this bout but put on a performance that makes a future fight of his something we would watch and something his opponents could fear. I won't go as far as to declare this to be proof of his being a threat in the welterweight division, but that doesn't mean he won't be in the future. I think he is still very much a work in progress but after his victory over Sell it appears as if he needs less work than I imagined.

Pete Sell was never in this fight at all. He was inside of the Octagon but much like hitting the wrong hole on your first girlfriend he was uncomfortable and figuring he did the wrong thing. Well, that girlfriend was able to quickly correct your aim, unless she liked it of course, and Matt Brown let Pete Sell know that he did not want him inside of his Octagon on Saturday night. He unleashed a beating that finally lived up to the legend of Matt Brown which was created during his time on "The Ultimate Fighter."

Remember when Jeremy May put lime juice in Matt Brown's can of dip?

Well, I don't know what Pete Sell did. I just know that no one should ever, ever do it again. The last guy I saw take a beating this bad was a friend I had in third grade who made the mistake of spilling Daddy's beer on the same night that Mommy burned dinner and the steel mill closed down. I never did see Claude again, and am left to wonder if he grew up to resent his father while living a life as a homeless meth addict offering up oral sex in bathrooms of bus stations, or he is looking down on me and giving me the thumbs up as I write this, but either way Pete Sell took a "Claude" beating from Matt Brown.

-Winner is Matt Brown by TKO at 1:32 of Round 1-

This one could have been stopped once and was so bad that Matt Brown looked to Yves Lavigne before landing a few more which finally caused the referee to stop this one. Pete Sell is a tough guy and he would probably tell you the fight shouldn't have been stopped at all, but it really should have been stopped earlier on. Sell's days in the UFC are clearly numbered and Brown's number looks to be ever so close to coming up in terms of moving up in the ranks towards a meaningful bout.

Well, UFC 96 is behind us and it turned out to be a little bit better than I had expected. This one was kind of like hiring a hooker and then finding out she has an Adam's apple. I mean things looked really, really bad with this pay-per-view lineup but once you had committed yourself to doling out the fifty dollars to see it, there wasn't much you could do other than hope for the best. Doing just that, I found myself sitting down to watch this card and a few hours later had come to the realization that, while it wasn't the greatest of all time, it could have been far worse, and in fact turned out to not be so bad after all. A main event with Keith Jardine is like a hooker with an Adam's apple because sometimes you can still find a way to enjoy yourself!

Clearly this was the weakest UFC pay-per-view in some time, and is not going to be one that we look back on and remember for all times, but this one did have its entertaining moments and I found a way to have a good time. When life gives you some lemons, make lemonade; and when the hooker you paid for turns out to have an Adam's apple, close your eyes and pray you don't also feel any stubble. I really don't want to see UFC 96 again and am more than excited to look forward to the upcoming cards, but I didn't feel any stubble on Saturday night.

A mouth is a mouth, right? An MMA show is an MMA show, right? Well, no. However, this wasn't Elite XC getting the band back together for one night, and it sure as hell wasn't a show on which Tank Abbott appears to be one of the most fit fighters in the locker room. So it could always be worse and in all honesty if UFC 96 is as bad as the UFC can get today, no one else stands a chance of even trying to compete with them. Don't judge a book by its cover, or a pay-per-view because it has Keith Jardine in the main event, because you could be missing out on something worthwhile inside. UFC 96 certainly turned out to be somewhat underwhelming in one respect but was certainly a worthwhile show from top to bottom.

## Gray Maynard vs. Jim Miller

I expected this one to be a unanimous decision victory for Maynard, but I had no idea that he would be able to get this done and also fight in a crowd pleasing manner. It appeared as if he broke Miller's nose in the first round and easily took the first round on the scorecards due to superior striking. This was not the usual Gray Maynard and it was nice to finally see a fire lit underneath his ass, and for him to fight in a manner so unlike his recent appearances inside of the Octagon.

The second round was once again scored for Maynard and the beatings continued as Miller's face looked like hamburger by the time it was over. It was clear that Maynard was the stronger fighter throughout but I cannot continue to stress how much he impressed me by fighting in an aggressive manner and not just utilizing his strength to get by and simply neutralize his opponent.

The third and final round of this bout was another

## Kendall Grove vs. Jason Day

Kendall Grove did not want to be the first winner of "The Ultimate Fighter" to find himself out of work. He needed this win, and I expected that he would get it, but I did not imagine that he would take in the manner he did. This was great to see as this is not only the victory he needed but the sort of performance that he needed to show in order to prove that he does indeed belong on the roster.

Day opened up from the very start of the first round and Grove was able to eat the shots and continue to trudge forward. He attempted to clinch and took a few more shots which forced him to change his plans, but he again looked to be no worse for wear and as if he were a different fighter. It was at this point that Grove caught Day with a big shot that dropped him to the canvas and signaled the beginning of the end of Day's night but not Grove's UFC career. Kendall Grove would drop some nasty elbows to the head for good measure and it was all over in under two minutes.

-Winner is Kendall Grove by TKO at 1:32 of Round 1-

Kendall Grove has been an underachiever for some time, and both he and Ed Herman have teamed up to be the two worst finalists in "TUF" history, but this all changes now. Well, for one it changes because Amir Sadollah has yet to even fight and CB Dollaway hasn't exactly set the house on fire in his own right, but mainly it changes because Kendall Grove isn't finished yet; and he looked really good against a tough customer in Jason Day.

After the fight Grove would tell his fans that, "I'm f\*\*\*ing back" which made me think of Kenny Powers shouting, "You're f\*\*\*ing out!" on HBO's 'Eastbound and Down' but I really beg to differ with Grove's statement. I just don't think he is back yet. I just believe that he is still around. Although I have to admit it does sound much better to announce that you are "f\*\*\*ing back" rather than "still f\*\*\*ing here" because the latter suggests that you are like herpes and we would be better off without you popping up every so often.

At any rate, Grove is still here and he got the chance to fight for his job and succeeded. Can you imagine if every other company that was laying off employees would allow them to fight for their jobs? Microsoft holding a "Tyler Durden" night in the breakroom with two guys from accounting trying to stab each other in the jugular with a ballpoint pen in hopes of not getting the pink slip? Or how about two truckers from your local hauling company doing their best on "Seabass" night in the diner? People would of course still be losing their jobs but those who remained employed would be as excited as Kendall Grove for not only still having a job but surviving the purge. Grove is safe for now and he will have to continue to fight for his right to remain under the employ of Zuffa, but if he can continue to fight like this in the future it would seem certain that he will not be the first 'TUF' winner to lose his job.

## Gabriel Gonzaga vs. Shane Carwin

I called this one correctly but predicting this was as easy as saying that the price of gas might go up again soon. It doesn't mean you could see into the future and you were just making an educated guess based on the information available. Carwin hits hard and is built like Ben Grimm, so it didn't take much

for me to see that if he connected on Gonzaga that it could short circuit him and end the night early.

Carwin immediately made Gonzaga fight while going backwards after landing a couple of punches. Gonzaga landed a shot of his own which not only seemed to answer Carwin's power but visibly rock him and it looked like we were in for a brutal fight. Gonzaga was able to take Carwin down which was something I didn't see coming and at this point it looked like perhaps the upstart could be in some trouble.

Carwin was able to get back to his feet and ate a right hand for good measure before reaching into his back pocket and landing a punch of his own which dropped Gonzaga on impact. Shane would land a few more shots but this one was over before it was waved off and these were not necessary. This fight was short and we still may never know what happens if you make Shane Carwin fight for longer than two minutes. Perhaps he isn't allowed at all, and is like a Mormon athlete who won't practice or play on Sundays it would seem as he fights with an urgency that suggests anything beyond the first round is akin to sacrilege. This guy is like the bus from 'Speed' and he hits like it is being driven into the Octagon and over his opponents.

-Winner is Shane Carwin by KO at 1:09 of Round 1-

Before this bout it was Dana White who said that if Carwin could defeat Gonzaga that this would definitely mean that the heavyweight upstart is for real. Well, he definitely is for real and while I still would give an edge to Cain Velasquez, I would love to see those two fight in the future. One of the two will wind up being one of the best heavyweights in the UFC and it is going to be fun to see who can survive unscathed. Right now it looks like Carwin can do it just as long as the fights don't last beyond two minutes and he doesn't turn into a pumpkin but this man made Gonzaga look like a tomato can on Saturday night and has definitely arrived.

## Tamdan McCrory vs. Ryan Madigan

Another fight in which I predicted the winner but couldn't have been any more wrong as to how this victory would be achieved. McCrory is intense. We are talking trenchcoats and be sure to not look him in the eyes or ever, ever be one of those who once called him a nerd or worse. McCrory just looks like he would show up and throttle you with a windmill of flying limbs fueled by hatred. For all of you meatheads out there who doled out wedgies through high school, take a look at Tamdan McCrory and you had better be extra kind to those you bullied at the high school reunion. Because the disc jockey might make the mistake of not playing "Thunderhorse" from Metalocalypse and you just might find yourself tapping out in the restroom while being asked if you remember him from third period Chemistry.

Madigan was unable to do anything against McCrory who was going to do anything he damned well pleased on this night. McCrory worked for the submission throughout and even went for a triangle but he found success early on with his strikes and was able to pound out a victory. I imagined that he would submit Madigan but once he hit his opponent it seemed apparent that this wasn't his game plan at all and he was literally going for the kill. McCrory was able to get the mount and did his best impression of Pickles from Dethklok as he pounded out the victory

by treating Madigan as his very own drum kit while "Thunderhorse" surely played in his head.

-Winner is Tamdan McCrory by TKO at 3:35 of Round 1-

The "Barn Cat" is a bad ass and from now on they need to let him select his music or else risk seeing bodies pile up in the corner. If he starred in 'Rush Hour' he would have killed Jackie Chan for touching his radio, and from now on the UFC needs to just do the right thing by getting him back in the Octagon quickly and leaving the music alone.

## Keith Jardine vs. Quinton Jackson

The big, fat friend made her way into the Octagon on Saturday night and when it was all over it just was not as bad as I expected it to be. She didn't smell like sour milk and wings and once things got under way it was like riding a scooter over some hills. Sure, not something to brag about or even share with your buddies at all, but you ended up having more fun than you would care to admit. Jackson vs. Jardine was all of the above and wrapped into one as this was one ugly, behemoth of a main event that couldn't light up bulbs in a marquee but could engulf a bag of excrement on a doorstep, and yet when it was all over was a fight worth having seen. I still disagree that it was a main event but the fight itself has me standing corrected on how I saw it to be going into this weekend.

Keith Jardine won the first round.

Only one judge saw it the other way but all rational folks with some modicum of intelligence scored it for Jardine. Jardine landed a ton of kicks and changed levels constantly while maintaining composure and aggression in light of Jackson's onslaught. Jackson tried to get in, do his damage and set this up for an early finish, but give a world's worth of credit to Jardine who didn't come into this fight as just an opponent. He clearly didn't get the memo that he was supposed to just be beaten up in order for "Rampage" to get a crack at Rashad.

The second round was Quinton Jackson's round but I believe it was his dropping of Jardine that sealed the deal. The difference in this round was Jackson's willingness to counter Jardine and use his opponent's aggression against him. Jardine still was able to land a few kicks but "Rampage" was able to block some and also came perilously close to knocking Jardine out with some big right hands that just missed their mark. Keith Jardine is an ugly man who is durable and he reminds me of my car with some leaves hanging out of the grill. When you see my war wagon bearing down on you, it's time to get out of the way because you won't be able to kill it and it won't look any worse for wear if you do score a dent or three. Jackson was able to put a few dents into the side of Jardine's Dodge Dart and did more than enough to win this round but Jardine was still in this fight and round three was up for grabs.

Quinton "Rampage" Jackson needed to win the third round in order to win the fight and he just that in spectacular fashion. Both men were exhausted and it was clear to me that neither imagined it would make it to this round at all from the looks of them. The edge definitely went to "Rampage" in terms of conditioning but in my opinion it was as if he didn't ramp up his cardio due to the perceived caliber of opponent and I don't see this being a problem in the future. He trains to the level of his opponent and definitely took Jardine lightly which led to this one

being much more competitive than any of us imagined it any right to be. Jackson was able to rock Jardine throughout this round but Keith found a way to land enough shots of his own that it looked like a sure bet that we would be going to the scorecards. Jackson dropped Jardine with only seconds left and the round ended with Jardine clutching onto Jackson's leg. Had there been more time left in the round it is possible that "Rampage" could have finished him off, but the way this round ended virtually guaranteed that all three judges would score the third round for Jackson and award him the much deserved victory.

-Winner is Quinton "Rampage" Jackson by Unanimous Decision-

Jackson admitted that he wasn't expecting Jardine to be too tough of an opponent and stated that he would no longer refer to the man as "Sardine." He was full of it when he declared that he needed to go rounds since his last one only went a round. If you can win in thirty seconds, win in thirty seconds. It proves nothing to anyone if you "go rounds" at all as the fight game is not like sex, in which a fast finisher gets scolded for being anything less than awesome. I feel that Jackson took Jardine lightly and was not in peak cardio condition and that once he began, to gas that he chose to fight in a cautiously effective style while doing just enough to eke out the rounds and garner the win. Kudos to him for getting the win but by no means was this a victory by design at all.

Rashad Evans entered the Octagon and everyone groaned inside as this one reeked of something out of a bad 'Rocky' film or professional wrestling. The UFC does push their fighters to do this and often times do hint at what they want, which is exactly what they did when Georges St. Pierre stormed the Octagon and told Matt Hughes that he was not impressed by his efforts. Which is why I take this Evans and Jackson faceoff with a grain of salt and the eyes rolled ever so slightly.

Faceoffs like this are akin to frosted mini-wheats in that a part of me loves the sweet and sugary side which is the pro wrestling promo, and the other part of me shudders at the absurdity of it when it is often not so very genuine at all and quite stilted. I do believe there is some competitive blood between Rashad and "Rampage" and I would have to believe that Evans would feel the need to KO Jackson in order to prove something to lend some credence to his post fight bluster. "Rampage" announced that there would be some "black on black" crime which was solely for a reaction and part of selling the fight rather than anything else. I do believe that he too has something to prove as he feels that the UFC Light Heavyweight Championship is still his title and that Evans is nothing but a placeholder. So a part of me enjoyed this little exchange after the fight but in all actuality I would have preferred it if it were just a legitimate posturing between two men competing for something rather than a staged effort to sell a fight which now must main event instead of Brock Lesnar vs. Frank Mir.

Evans vs. Jackson is just as compelling of a fight as Lesnar vs. Mir but only a moron would say that the UFC isn't going to lose a few buys due to Mir dropping out due to injury. Lesnar is box office gold and no amount of catch phrases from "Rampage" or LL Cool J boasts from Rashad Evans are going to suddenly keep all of those fans interested in ordering the event. The hardcore fans will be just as excited for Evans-Jackson but in terms of getting the casual

fan or the general public to care about UFC 98 now that Lesnar is off of the card; it's going to take more than trying to paint this one as a blood feud.

## Brandon Vera vs. Mike Patt

Time for yet another preliminary fight to make air and in this one we were going to see if Brandon Vera could ever look like the Brandon Vera of old, instead of this guy that has been painful to watch in recent outings. This was a bout tailor-made for a return to prominence for the Lloyd Irvin product but that didn't mean that it was a complete given that he would win the bout with ease. The way Vera has looked in the past has made it to where not only didn't I favor him in a bout but I didn't favor the notion of having to watch him fight. I'd rather watch Reese Andy tie his shoes in slow motion than to see Brandon Vera hit the Octagon, but suddenly on Saturday night it was if we were living in a brand new world. One in which Reese Andy was of course no longer under the UFC banner but one in which Brandon Vera can still kick ass. Kendall Grove may think he is "f\*\*\*ing back" but Brandon Vera looks to actually be "f\*\*\*ing back" based on his performance against Mike Patt.

The first round was dominant and one which I did score 10-8 for Vera unlike Jamie Penick who chose to score it as 10-9 for Vera. I just thought that Vera showcased ring generalship from the word go, landed kick after kick with nothing but bad intentions behind them and even uncorked a few punches that looked to be the best he has thrown in months. Almost everything Vera threw seemed to land and everything that landed seemed to hurt Patt who was just getting bludgeoned for the course of five minutes.

Brandon Vera still looked good in the second round and came out as the aggressor, which retained not only my interest but got me to wondering if he was indeed back to his old form. Vera threw some fantastic looking kicks that were the equivalent of siccing a gang of midgets armed with miniature Louisville Sluggers on Patt and instructing them to immobilize him. Give Patt a lot of credit for not bursting into tears, yelling for someone to make it stop or just curling up into the fetal position next to the cage. The guy was game but it was Brandon Vera who had game and looked to be a close facsimile of the guy we once touted as a next big thing in our sport.

## Tim Boetsch vs. Jason Brilz

One more preliminary fight makes air before the show is over and nine fights means that we saw all but one from the entire card. This fight interested me but I could not have been any more wrong than I was when I predicted that Boetsch would drill through Brilz. While most would have Carwin's victory over Gonzaga pegged as the upset of the night it was this one that really did it for me as this was a shocking upset. I was not shocked at all when Carwin pulled off the victory, but that was indeed an upset while this one was a fight in which I imagined that Boetsch would make short work of his opponent.

It looked to live up to expectations as Boetsch unleashed a torrent of blows to start the fight. Brilz would score a takedown and also land a few hard blows of his own to Boetsch. Roles reversed as Brilz was in control from about the midway point of this round and things cooled down a bit. This was a tough round to score as it very easily could have been a 10-10 round based on the fact that both men enjoyed an equal amount of success but better still would be if

we would graduate to the half point scale of scoring a fight. I scored this one 10-9 for Brilz but would be happier to do so at 10-9.5 as he really did not win this one but rather enjoyed his success near the end of the round and left the more favorable impression as the round ended.

The second round was miserable in that Brilz was able to take down Boetsch but not do anything at all other than dictate the pace and keep him in place. Brilz did land a few elbows but he could have been a lot more aggressive and he really didn't make much more than a lazy attempt at a submission for the length of the round. Brilz wins this round based on control but it wasn't so much effective control in that he was not able to use this to his own advantage offensively and this was more a case of neutralizing his man and doing barely anything while keeping him from doing anything at all. This will win you a round on the scorecards but not much more than that and it just seemed lazy to me when he had opportunities to do much, much more.

The third round was much more of the same but I give Boetsch a lot of credit for fighting the best that he could in hopes of keeping this one on the feet. Brilz was able to take his man down and Boetsch was like a turtle placed upon his back since he could do little of anything at all. Brilz enjoyed side control and even found himself in the full mount position but looked to be content with doing as little as necessary in order to take home the victory. Jason Brilz did throw some shots at the end of the round but they were more of the pitty pat type that boxer "Sugar" Ray Leonard used to unleash in the final ten seconds of a round in order to look busier and more effective than he really, truly was. Sure, Brilz got off some shots but they had little behind them and were just for show as he cruised to a decision victory.

-Winner is Jason Brilz by Unanimous Decision-

This fight really wasn't much of anything at all but it was shocking in that I had never imagined Brilz would be capable of doing this to Boetsch. In this respect it was a shocking upset but it isn't going to be a memorable one or a fight which makes 'UFC Unleashed' and is nothing more than a respectable 'W' on the record of Jason Brilz and notice that Tim Boetsch needs to get back in the gym immediately. He wasn't hurt at all in this bout, save for a cut and there is no reason that he should not get back in the gym and right back in the Octagon sooner rather than later. He needs to redeem himself and he is generally a fun fighter to feature on an undercard. Jason Brilz moves on but if he ever hopes to really move up it is going to take more drive and hunger than what was exhibited here as a smarter and more talented fighter than Boetsch would eat him for lunch and crap him out by the time the main card hits broadcast.

So the hooker had an Adam's apple and Keith Jardine main evented a UFC PPV in 2009? Sometimes you just have to not pay attention to the details and make the most of it once you had already agreed to pay for the services and forked over your money to either the pimp or Comcast. I am telling you though that it would be easier to get money back from a pimp than to have Comcast credit you for anything so if you order a pay-per-view from them, make sure to watch it regardless of your enjoyment because you will be paying for it.

Anyhow, the money had already exchanged hands and I was in need of some release. In this

BENT CONTINUED ON PG. 11

**MATT  
PELKEY**

**By Matt Pelkey  
columnist**



# MMATORCH NEWSLETTER INTRO

## NOTE FROM THE SUPERVISING EDITOR

Welcome to the first edition of the MMA Torch Newsletter. This PDF is an experimental sample issue. We welcome your feedback on this project.

The Torch has been covering MMA dating back to UFC's first PPV within the pages of the Pro Wrestling Torch Newsletter. While many MMA fans aren't eager to acknowledge the evolutionary connection between what is known today as Pro Wrestling (with WWE the dominant brand in the marketplace) and Mixed Martial Arts (with UFC the dominant brand in the marketplace), what is known as MMA today evolved in Japan in the late 1980s and early 1990s from pro wrestling organizations who promoted worked fights.

We made an editorial judgment to discontinue comprehensive MMA coverage in the Pro Wrestling Torch Newsletter the late 1990s as other MMA-dedicated sources sprouted up on newsstands and the Internet. Although there was a substantial crossover among the fanbases, the sports or industries seemed to progress into a distinct separate entities.

We never took our eye off of MMA, though, and eventually launched a sister website to PWTorch.com called MMATorch.com in 2005. In mid-2008, we promoted Jamie Penick to Editor-In-Chief assuring increased daily content. Late in 2008 we launched the MMATorch App, reaching tens of thousands of new visitors on a daily basis via iPhones and iPod Touches.

Now, we are presenting a new format for our staff of writers, the MMATorch Newsletter. It is currently available exclusively in PDF format. It's a 12 page newsletter that can be viewed on your computer screen or printed out and read at your leisure in places where you don't have computer access.

We welcome your feedback and encouragement as we explore options for distribution, format, content, frequency, and availability going forward. Continue to check MMATorch.com for updates on the next MMATorch Newsletter, which ideally will be published most weeks with in-depth PPV previews, in-depth PPV coverage, and a solid all-in-one-package overview of the big stories of the week with our staff's take on all of that news!

**-Wade Keller, supervising editor  
MMATorch & PWTorch**

## HOW THE MIR INJURY COULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED DIFFERENTLY

3/7: As you've probably heard, Frank Mir is pulling out of his Heavyweight Title unification bout with Brock Lesnar at UFC 98. Depending on who you believe, its either a bad back, knee surgery, or for you conspiracy theorists out there, this could just be mind games. I'm leaning towards the knee. Mir has now publicly stated that he had arthroscopic surgery to clean out his knee after it began to swell up during training. He claims he'll have to postpone his training for 4-6 weeks, thus not giving him enough time to be ready for May 23rd. The UFC is apparently planning to make an announcement tonight at UFC 96 on the status of the UFC 98 main event.

All is not lost. There are a couple of ways to salvage the show. One is to move the Matt Hughes-Matt Serra fight up to the main event, and push Mir-Lesnar back a few months, probably to UFC 100. Obviously the fight isn't as big as it once was when they were coaches on The Ultimate Fighter, but Matt Hughes' likely retirement match can be properly promoted as a main event. The only issue here is that UFC 98 would then need another good fight for it's main card. James Irvin-Drew McFedries and Andre Gusmao-Houston Alexander currently sit on the undercard of UFC 98, and while both should be exciting fights, neither are pay-per-view main card caliber fights at this point. We'll need something else. One possible fight that's been talked about recently that might fit in the time frame would be Nate Marquardt vs. Demian Maia.

If both were able to be ready by May 23rd, we could actually reset the timeline of the middleweight division. Anderson Silva fights a month before at UFC 97, and the winner of the Marquardt-Maia fight would fit perfectly into Silva's schedule after that. This would give UFC 98 a pretty nice top three fights of Hughes-Serra, Maia-Marquardt, and Sherk-Edgar to go along with Josh Koscheck vs. Chris Wilson and another middleweight eliminator in Yushin Okami vs. Dan Miller. Sounds like a card worth paying for, no?

In this scenario, Mir-Lesnar would just get pushed back to UFC 100, where it would still be the main event. Dana White has stated before that GSP-Alves will NOT be the main event on that show, so what better than Mir-Lesnar to take that spot? That gives you some leeway in scheduling the eventual Light-Heavyweight title fight between Rashad Evans and Rampage, should 'Page need some extra time to recover from his fight with Keith Jardine.

There's obviously another option here. The UFC can tell Brock he's still fighting on the UFC 98 card, and that the Mir fight will have to wait. Who, then, would be a suitable opponent for Brock Lesnar's Heavyweight title? I've heard

Chieck Kongo, and while the timing makes sense (Kongo is scheduled to fight Antoni Hardonk at UFC 97, but I'm guessing he'd be willing to take a title fight on semi-short notice. Plus there's several fights on that undercard that could be pushed up to the main card an no one would blink), but I'm not sure the fight itself makes sense. Logic says Lesnar would take Kongo down and control him for as long as it took, but Kongo has the 'ol puncher's chance here. On top of that, the aura of Brock Lesnar would be gone if Kongo were to defeat him, and I'm not sure that's something the UFC is willing to risk at this point. If Lesnar wins, so what? He would've beaten than man who was beaten by Carmelo Marrero. Yippee.

There is another fighter out there who makes sense. After only three fights of a failed run in the UFC, Mirko "Cro Cop" Filipovic was allowed his release so he could go back to Japan and, for lack of a better term, get his mojo back. While he hasn't exactly accomplished that as of yet, he still has a lot of name value, and a victory over Cro Cop would be another nice notch on Lesnar's belt. But, let's just assume for a second that Cro Cop was able to land one of his vaunted left high-kicks and sends Lesnar into next Tuesday. All of a sudden, Mir-Cro Cop would become the next "greatest fight in UFC history". Everybody wins.

My best guess is that it will be the first scenario, only without the Marquardt-Maia fight being added. If that's the case, I'll simply sigh at the lost opportunity and then reassure myself that all will be ok with Franklin-Silva, GSP-Alves, Rashad-Rampage or Machida, Mir-Lesnar, Couture-Nogueira, and Penn-Florian all coming to pass before summer is over. I guess I can live with that.

**BENT CONTINUED FROM PG. 10**

particular case I was in need of a release of endorphins and the opportunity to see one hell of an MMA card. Going into this I didn't expect it to deliver and figured I could have paid two guys at the bar to pretend they were Jardine and Jackson and have them beat the sh\*t out of each other over a can of Pabst Blue Ribbon in the parking lot and gotten a better show. Turns out that I was wrong, but it isn't like this show ranks up there with any of the great ones at all, it's just that it wasn't as rank as expected.

So I didn't pay any attention to the details and turned a blind eye to the ugly nature surrounding the main event and enjoyed it for what it was and that was a pretty good fight. I don't know about the "black on black crime" which "Rampage" predicts will take place at UFC 98 but I do know that I didn't get robbed in buying UFC 96 like I had imagined I would be and that in and of itself made for a pretty damned enjoyable night at the fights.

Because the only thing worse than a hooker with an Adam's apple would be if he/she robbed you. I mean who in the hell is going to report that one to the authorities or even mention it aloud?

In the case of UFC 96, I am not ashamed at all that I paid the money to order it and I am proud to say that I stand corrected on my assertions of how bad this card would suck based on just how well it turned out. I will forever bitch and moan when the UFC opts to sell us a pay-per-view based on a less than stellar main event but I will never complain so long as the fight itself and others on the card do more than make up for the lack of perceived star power, significance or marquee match ups.

•PUBLISHING INFORMATION: The MMATorch Newsletter is published approximately 12-50 times per year by TDH Communications Inc. including occasional double issue weeks. It is 12 pages standard.

•COPYRIGHT NOTICE: All material herein is copyright TDH Communications Inc. 2009. All rights reserved. No portion of the Torch may be extensively quoted, reprinted, or broadcast in whole or in part (including on the Internet) without written permission of the publisher. •CONTACTING THE TORCH:

Editorial and Subscription Offices: MMATorch Newsletter, P.O. Box 211654, St. Paul, MN 55121...

Editorial Office (for news, results, or to contact Wade Keller: (651) 452-2316... Subscription Concern Phonenumber or to **FAX A RENEWAL ORDER:** (651) 452-2316... **NEW 2008 E-Mail Sub Department:** **torchsubscriptions@gmail.com...** E-Mail Wade Keller: kellerwade@gmail.com. •The first edition of the MMATorch Newsletter is available exclusively as of issue #1 via MMATorch.com in PDF format. Visit MMATorch.com on a daily basis to be alerted to the next edition of the newsletter...

Daily News at [www.MMATORCH.com](http://www.MMATORCH.com) and [www.PWTORCH.com](http://www.PWTORCH.com)

**FIRST CLASS** (WARNING: SEAL TO BE BROKEN BY ADDRESSEE ONLY)

#### EVENTS SCHEDULE

- 4/1 - UFC 18 on Spike TV, Nashville, Tenn. (Condit vs. Kampmann)
- 4/18: UFC 97 on PPV, Montreal, Quebec (A. Silva vs. Leites)
- 5/23 UFC 98 on PPV, Las Vegas, Nev. at MGM (Evans vs. Machida)
- 6/13 UFC 99 on PPV, Cologne, Germany (Franklin vs. Silva)
- 7/11 UFC 100 on PPV, Las Vegas, Nev. (St. Pierre vs. Alves)

## END NOTES

By Wade Keller, Supervising Editor

**Random Thoughts on UFC 96:** Matt Hamill sure made a statement. It's fun to watch him fight because he's so unabashedly emotional and happy when he wins. He showed another side of his ever-evolving fight style, too, with strong stand-up. Sometimes he comes across as cocky and a bit full of himself, but without being patronizing, I do afford him some social slack for how he comes across as in every other way he seems like a genuinely good, hard-working, professional, skilled fighter. That knockout over Mark Munoz was amazing, not only for the punch, but for how Munoz dropped so hard and so out of control that if he had any chance of recovering quickly, his jaw landing on his knee ended that...

After all of that hype by Rogan for Pete Sell being ready for this fight, I began to think Brown was just a stepping stone by design. Even Yvel Lavigne refereed as if there was no way Sell could lose since he restarted the fight when, had that been Brown, he would stopped the fight right there. It was tough watching Brown reluctantly continue to punch Sell. I can't remember another occasion where a fighter was basically begging the referee to stop the fight so he didn't have to hit his opponent any harder. That's in stark contrast to, say, how enthusiastically Rampage pummelled the

Wanderlei Silva at the end of their fight...

The Carwin knockout was impressive. A lot happened in that one minute and nine seconds. What an up and down road it's been for Gonzaga, comparable to Jardine's wins and losses in big fights. Gonzaga's stock definitely drops here, although depending on how far and how quickly Carwin rises in the heavyweight ranks, it may not seem like a negative for Gonzaga as much as a sign of how dominant Carwin might be. However, like a young pitcher in baseball, you can't judge them until their second string of starts against batters he's faced before. If Carwin has weaknesses, his future opponents are going to be all over them and not letting him use the same gameplan each time...

Let's say Brock Lesnar beats Frank Mir in July, even decisively, until he stands there and takes a Carwin-level punch, Lesnar won't be considered a true top-level heavyweight. Lesnar needs to take a punch. After the Lesnar-Heath Herring fight at UFC 87, I asked Lesnar if in his next fight he'd at least take a few punches just so we could rule out that he has a glass jaw. He chuckled and said he'd see if he could accommodate my request, but unfortunately the Randy Couture fight didn't answer the mystery, either. With that win, a Carwin-Lesnar fight becomes a money-fight. Whether Carwin would deserve a shot or not doesn't mean it's not a money fight if the sales pitch is that Lesnar has yet to take a punch from a top level striker. With Carwin's overall resume, it's tough to argue he wouldn't be in line for a title shot, especially given how quickly Lesnar

received his...

The Frank Mir announcement had to disappoint a lot of fans who weren't aware of his situation going into the fight. UFC was obviously smart in letting Mir explain what happened. His reasoning for the delay in the fight sounded reasonable enough, and waiting just two months isn't all that bad. I'm a bit surprised UFC didn't give Lesnar any mic time to talk about the delay and how it affects his training...

Let's also check in on our Mike Goldberg Annoyance Meter. I'd give him a 7 out of 10 for annoying me this month, which is better than average. He seemed slightly more plugged in, slightly less reliant on just agreeing with Joe Rogan, and slightly less strange with his smiling gazes at Joe as Joe talked on camera. However, he still engaged in too much hyperbole. There's no such thing as a "great fight" with him. It's a "great, great fight - certainly a classic!" His huckster tendencies to oversell and overmodulate to 11 when a level 8 or 9 is called for continued. He's always professional, but usually in recent years appears to be in above his head a bit and faking it or calling it in. Rogan was good this month, but clearly not as excited as he usually is going into a fight card, other than the Shane Carwin vs. Gabriel Gonzaga fight...

Overall, a decent show that felt PPV-worthy, a notch above the line-up on a typical free Spike TV special or Fight Night, but only because in the end the main event went the distance and there were some decisive, memorable finishes and knockouts before that...