

# Total MMA

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## THE RETURN OF THE MIGHTY PENN

Ross McTavish, Co-Editor

It appears the Ultimate Fighting Championships can do no wrong. Just when one of their marquee matches is called off due to injury – they add a replacement which makes for an even more captivating bout. Some people have all the luck...

It was April 7 when Georges St. Pierre had his pleas for a re-match with UFC Welterweight Champion Matt Hughes answered by Dana White and a second bout between the duo was confirmed for September 23.

Their first meeting took place on October 22 2004 and ended with only one second remaining in the opening round, when Hughes forced the French-Canadian to submit.

St. Pierre attempted a Kimura from bottom position, but as he switched to his side, only had one leg resting across Hughes' torso and did not have the American in a strong guard.

That allowed Hughes to hop on to his feet, move around St. Pierre's body while in control of his right-arm and eventually apply an arm-bar just before the hooter sounded to call an end to the round.

It was a dramatic victory for the Miletich Martial Arts fighter and one which deeply frustrated St. Pierre who conceded that the contest had come too soon in his UFC career.

He said: "When I fought Matt Hughes the first time, I wasn't ready mentally because it was my third fight in the UFC and I was not ready for a championship bout.

"Matt Hughes was my idol, and I gave him too much respect, but right now, I'm a totally different fighter.

"I've improved so much physically and especially mentally, and I'm going to fight him like I fight everybody else."

Unfortunately for St. Pierre, a serious groin pull sustained in training means he will have to wait a little longer for his re-match with Hughes.

However, one man's loss is another man's

## EVOLUTION FIGHTWEAR

gain and ironically the person who the 25-year-old last defeated will now step into his place.

B.J. Penn made his return to the UFC on March 4 this year and lost a closely contested split decision to St. Pierre – only the third defeat of his career.

The Hawaiian's reappearance in the Octagon ended an acrimonious period between the former Welterweight champion and the American organisation after, Penn accepted a bout with Duane Ludwig on

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**Now I've got something to really look forward to. I've already beaten Georges and here I get to fight BJ Penn, a guy who's beaten me - Matt Hughes.**

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May 22, 2005 in K-1 Romanex without the UFC's approval.

Ultimate Fighting Championships' President Dana White lived up to his promise of stripping Penn of his title if he signed to fight Ludwig and when the contest was confirmed, the 27-year-old lost his gold

Penn retaliated by filing a lawsuit against the UFC and unsuccessfully attempted to get an injunction that would have prevented Hughes and St. Pierre squaring off for the title two years ago.

However, earlier this year both parties reconciled giving Penn the opportunity to win back the title which he was never defeated for.

It was Hughes who 'The Prodigy' beat to

become the UFC Welterweight Champion on January 31, when the Illinois native submitted to a rear naked choke at 4:39 of round one, in what was considered one of the biggest ever shocks in MMA.

The bout broke a 13 fight win streak for Hughes – who has not lost in the two years following his surprise defeat to Penn.

Indeed, the 170lb combatant has gone on to become one of the leading lights in the UFC on the back of a coaching role in the second season of 'The Ultimate Fighter' and a one-sided victory over 'Hall of Famer' Royce Gracie on May 27.

Hughes has seen off a host of pretenders to his throne over his two reigns as Welterweight Champion, including Carlos Newton, Frank Trigg, Renato Verissimo and St. Pierre.

Now, the self-styled country boy will finally get a chance to gain redemption for his loss to Penn – much to his delight.

Hughes said: "Now I've got something to really look forward to.

"I've already beaten Georges and here I get to fight BJ Penn, a guy who's beaten me.

"I'm a month out and I can really concentrate on BJ Penn now and I'm looking forward to it."

Penn is technically taking the fight on four weeks' notice, but revealed that he was scheduled to compete at UFC 64 in October and therefore has been in training.

Given the magnitude of the contest, Penn is sure he will be in top form come the bout and is relishing facing Hughes again.

He said: "I thrive on these big fights, I thrive on pressure, and that's when I perform my best."

IN FOCUS: UFC



ALSO: MAURO RANALLO INTERVIEWS DENIS KANG, STASH CAPAR SPEAKS TO REMY BONJASKY, UFC AND PRIDE PREVIEWS

# UFC 62 CHUCK VS. BABALU PREVIEW

By Chris Brown, Tommy Hackett, Stuart Millard and Robin Jahdi

What happened when four of Total MMA's writers got together to preview the three marquee matches of Saturday's UFC 62 card? The answers are below...

## Chuck Liddell vs. Renato 'Babalu' Sobral

**CB:** BABALUUUUUUUU!!!!!!! Sorry, got a little carried away there. What I meant to say, obviously, is that this is an intriguing rematch for the UFC Light-Heavyweight Championship. The first fight ended with Liddell winning by KO in the opening round, but it wasn't as one sided as most seem to remember it. Liddell was never in trouble and always looked the more dangerous fighter, but Sobral landed some solid leg kicks and a few good straight lefts before getting caught with a shin to the face after ducking to avoid a Liddell flurry.

All of that said, their first encounter is almost an irrelevance. Liddell is now the champion and at the top of his game while 'Babalu' comes into the bout on a ten fight winning streak and has been competing with the confidence of man very much in the form of his life. Yes, it does seem like a simple case of whether or not 'Babalu' can get the takedown and I think he can. Sobral will be fully aware, much like Randy Couture and Quinton Jackson before him, that the best way to get a takedown against Liddell is to engage him on the feet and.....ah, to hell with it. BABALUUUUUUUU!!!!!!!

**TH:** I see the re-match as being similar to the first fight. Liddell may not avoid all of Sobral's takedowns, but he'll eventually get the TKO. Sure, Babalu's submissions are probably improving with the Gracie Barra Combat Team, but I don't think he'll get a chance to use them.

**SM:** As good as Sobral is, and as impressive a run as he's been on, for some reason nobody really seems to think he has a genuine chance. Even Dana White looked past Sobral when announcing the Silva fight. I do think everyone is right to do that though, as Chuck's sprawl is tremendous and he'll kick Sobral's face off within the first two rounds.

**RJ:** 'Babalu' is one of my favourite fighters in the business, but this will be a tough fight for him. If Sobral can maintain his composure, not shoot in too recklessly, and potentially last until rounds four and five, he might be able to tire Liddell to the point where he can get the takedown and go for a submission. That strategy relies a lot on Liddell not knocking him out in the meantime, which is a very real, and likely, danger.

## Forrest Griffin vs. Stephan Bonnar

**CB:** It's a shame that we have limited space here, because I'd love to do a detailed technical and tactical analysis of their first fight. I think it may go something like "Griffin hits Bonnar, Bonnar hits Griffin, Griffin hits Bonnar, Bonnar hits Griffin, Griffin kicks Bonnar, Bonnar kicks Griffin." That bout took place almost entirely on the feet with both fighters pushing the action the entire time, but as much as it may disappoint



Chuck Liddell And Renato 'Babalu' Sobral Will Meet For The Light-Heavyweight Title

some onlookers, I can't see the rematch being all that similar. There's just far more to lose this time around, for both fighters, especially with as they are each coming off defeats in their last fights.

This will actually be the first time Bonnar has competed on the main PPV show and he is in desperate need of a win after a very disappointing performance in his decision loss to Rashad Evans.

Griffin on the other hand, showed a great improvement in a hotly debated decision defeat to former light-heavyweight champion Tito Ortiz. After that showing, a loss here to his old adversary could prove devastating and it would take him a long while to climb back up the ladder (that's metaphorical for the easily confused).

While I don't expect them to be very cautious, I also highly doubt that they'll fight with the same reckless abandon as in their first meeting. Though he hasn't really shown it in his UFC appearances, Griffin does have good technical ability and I expect him to show it in this fight.

**TH:** Second verse, same as the first? Neither guy has changed his game since their first meeting and both have experienced problems with wrestlers that can control them. But that won't happen here. They've made their names by applying a wide open style so expect more of the same. I'll give Bonnar the decision this time.

**SM:** Expectations are wildly high for this fight, but since 'The Ultimate Fighter' final, Bonnar has struggled slightly while Forrest has only looked better and more impressive. I could see Bonnar getting tapped early, but I think Forrest, ever the entertainer, will keep the fight standing. Neither man is known for great knockout power, so there won't be any early KO's, and it may well go to a decision, which will go to Forrest.

**RJ:** Their last fight was a classic brawl that, while not a technical masterpiece, displayed all

the intestinal fortitude and fighting spirit one could ask from two young fighters. Since that bout, though, Griffin has been beating the likes of Elvis Sinosic and losing closely contested fights to Tito Ortiz. Bonnar, meanwhile, has been having his close fights with the less glorious likes of Keith Jardine and Rashad Evans. That disparity in recent experience and performance tips the scales in favour of Griffin.

## Josh Neer vs. Nick Diaz

**TH:** Neer's just 23 and he has improved in leaps and bounds in just a year since losing via armbar to Drew Fickett in his UFC debut – but this is just a nightmare opponent for him. Diaz is that rare late replacement which actually represents an improvement over the guy he's filling in for. Watch for Nick to use his sound boxing skills to take the lead, and should Neer try and shoot for a takedown, watch for Nick to use his fluid guard to keep it.

**SM:** Diaz has to win here, he's coming off three straight defeats in the UFC, and no matter how competitive the losses were, it's going to take more being a bit mouthy and throwing the odd tantrum to stop himself falling way down the ladder unless he pulls out the victory. I think he'll pick out the win though and just as well because the UFC hates losers.

**RJ:** Diaz is another of my favourites. After impressing massively in his UFC debut against Jeremy Jackson and knocking the then UFC golden boy Robbie Lawler clean out, he seems to have reached a plateau. After a decision loss in a great fight with Sanchez, Diaz then lost a fight to a Joe Riggs that he really should have beaten in the first round.

In this contest, Diaz is facing a very game fighter in Neer, and while I don't like to play 'who beat who', they have a common opponent in Drew Fickett, who beat Neer and lost to Diaz. Take that or leave it, but, I'm hoping Diaz can get the submission, although realistically see this one going the distance.

# REVIEW: THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER 4

By Michael Farrow

Baby, it's back. Everybody's favourite pugilistic combat-based game show has returned and this time, it's 'The Comeback'. Of course, it's sad that I find myself singing along with the theme tune. Of course, it's sad that I was somewhat startled when "The Comeback" was stamped across 'The Ultimate Fighter' ident. Of course, I don't care about being sad in this case because 'TUF's back, baby.

So, I have a confession. I hated the idea of this series. A bunch of guys who couldn't cut it and no coaches? How could this show possibly work? Any hatred dissipated in the first five seconds though when I saw Shonie Carter dressed like a pimp warrior, because how can you be mad at somebody who dresses like that without a bad attitude or a hint of irony?

Straight out of the gate, Dana 'Fucking' White managed to make this show sound like a brilliant idea, explaining it away with ease and without making these fighters sound like bums, instead making them sound like down-on-their-luck veterans who just need a break and some focus. Carter is, of course, the early star of the show. The charismatic veteran is a walking quote machine and looks to be this season's leading light, along with Matt 'The Terror' Serra, the BJJ black belt from Long Island, who insisted he was going to wear the same thing that Carter had. Serra's pissed because one of his protégés, Luke Cummo, is now more well-known than him so he wants a piece of the reality TV action.

Serra played the coach role with aplomb, putting aside the wound to his pride from an earlier loss to Carter to mentor him and the whole team to the point where he was the unofficial captain of the side draped in grey, named Team Mojo.

The Blue team didn't have the same presence. First of all, they're named Team No Love, which is the same as Rich Clementi's nickname. Rich Clementi is a tit, he should be nicknamed 'The Arrogant Cock', which has a good ring to it. Mikey Burnett seemed interesting, if only because he looks so beaten down by life. He obviously has a story to tell. I thought he looked the same as he did before but gone is the more articulate man and he's replaced by somebody who can now barely speak. Obviously the week he fights is going to be very interesting.

So, we progress through the show with Serra being the ultimate professional, Carter struggling to keep up with the hard training and Clementi being, well, an arrogant cock. Maybe it's the editing. I'm willing to blame the editing.

When Team No Love won the coin toss, which saw Clementi call out Carter, who had been placed in danger by his lack of conditioning, it was the apt clash at the start of the show. The charismatic veteran, 'Mr International', the man who can put bums in seats for 'Rage In The Cage' against a gobby bloke with a goatee. For the sake of the series, they needed the gobby bloke to lose. It's just the gall of the man. How dare he try to intimidate Shonie fucking Carter –



*The Ultimate Fighting Championships Reality Television Show Has Returned*

who clearly wasn't impressed. He's been shot at, he's been threatened with knives and his baby mama threw a flat iron skillet at him. You can't phase 'Mr International'. The only thing that bothers him is an insufficient amount of rhinestones.

Carter is a philosopher; an articulate man that belies his image as a flamboyant player with carefully-chosen words. He covers the peak of his hat with rhinestones, he turns up to weigh-ins with a cane, he seems like he should be a stereotype, but he isn't. He's unique. He's 'Mr International'. Meanwhile, a cast iron strategy was prepared by Matt Serra – a man who badly wants to avenge his first loss in UFC but puts that aside for the sake of his team-mates.

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**He's been shot at, he's been threatened with knives and his baby mama threw a flat iron skillet at him.**

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I won't say much about the fight. It was an enjoyable contest and a clinic in the basics of MMA. The ending was perfect in the context of the show. The arrogant Clementi gets his comeuppance from the wiley veteran and everybody can go home happy. Serra again shone as the brilliant cornerman and coach, providing support for Carter – who, for his part, listened and took it all on board and finished the fight exhausted but victorious. He most certainly left it all out in the cage.

I was disappointed but unsurprised by Clementi. He came off as an arrogant challenger and a sore loser. He wanted the fight, he underestimated his foe and rather than be magnanimous and take the praise for fighting a good fight, he cried about it. "He was slippery"? I thought you were a rounded fighter now, Rich, not a one-dimensional grappler?

All in all, thumbs up to the show and the concept. When it was announced, I was very down on the idea but this not only exceeded expectations but it lived up to, and exceeded in some ways, the standard of the show. I'm not sure if I am going to be able to go back to a bunch of kids arguing over food.

## OPINION:

**Resident TV Critic Stuart Millard gives his thoughts on the key personalities in the first episode.**

**Shonie Carter:** Judging from his attire, Shonie developed his skills by giving spinning backfists to mouthy prostitutes who had the cheek to ask him for a bigger cut. He even managed to look like the biggest pimp in the universe while wearing nothing but a pair of tiny little pink knickers and a coating of his own watery vomit. Shonie simply must win, it only for the weigh-in pimp-cane and slipping phrases like 'baby mama' and 'iron skillet' into anecdotes.

**Rich Clementi:** He has the voice of a CGI child from a Pixar movie, and handled his defeat by whining about how slimy Shonie Carter was, like a disgruntled Ghostbuster laying on the floor of the Sedgewick Hotel.

**Matt Serra:** At first, I found myself questioning his cornering techniques, which seemed to consist of patronizingly talking to Shonie as though he was a child with special needs, and saying his name over 100,000 times, but it definitely got the job done.

**Mikey Burnett:** I fell out of my seat when he first came onscreen. Visually, he's Chunk from The Goonies after a white power kerbstomping, but at least you know he isn't scared to get hit.

**Dana White:** Half of the recent financial success of the UFC could well be down to someone putting a swearbox in Dana's office. Unless I missed it, there didn't seem to be the obvious deliberately announced 'two five minute rounds' mime in the opening credits this season, which is disappointing. Maybe Matt Hamill's constant wooing noise put him off people who have to lipread.

**The Concept:** I wasn't too hot on it, but was instantly sold by Dana's speech. I'm looking forwards to the banter between the guys who already have a history. It's good to see my adopted uncle Randy Couture again, but I was less impressed by the return of annoying phrase 'The Hammer', as used to indicate control. We're only one episode in, and a star has already been made. Shonie? Sho 'nuff.

# SUCCESS THROUGH ADVERSITY

By Stash Capar

**We often hear the saying that adversity is the path to success. A true fighter welcomes challenges (both physical and psychological), and sees them as obstacles that need to be overcome, rather than hindrances.**

That's definitely what Remy Bonjasky believes, and for good reason. Few K-1 fighters have had to deal with the obstacles that this two-time K-1 World GP champion has had to triumph over in the last year or so. The majority of K-1 fans heard about his falling out with long time trainer/manager and friend Andre Manaart of legendary Mejiro Gym.

However, it wasn't until I sat down with Remy and his new manager Charles Heus at the beautiful outdoor patio of the Paladium restaurant in downtown Amsterdam, that I began to realize just how hard life has been for Remy recently.

It was a beautiful sunny summer's day in the city on the water, the outdoor patios were full of Dutch beauties, the canals full of boaters, and the stoners had just started visiting the coffeeshops, many still dazed from all the drugs they had smoked and swallowed the night before. It was my first meeting with Remy and Charles, and I wasn't sure what to expect. I had run into my fair share of obnoxious fighters and more than my fair share of obnoxious, annoying, and just plain rude managers. That wasn't the case this time: Remy and Charles were perfect gentlemen.

After ordering a *chevre chaud*, a delicious light salad with a big hunk of goat's cheese, Remy began to tell me about his last year. Although the smile never wavered from his face, I could see the pain in his eyes as he retold the events.

"I had been training with Andre for 12 years, we had won those two titles together," Remy told me. "When you're with someone for that long you become very good friends, you pretend that various problems don't exist, even though you know they're there."

After barely winning his second K-1 title, Remy realized that he needed to change his style. The flying attacks and quickness that won him his K-1 titles were no longer secrets; it was time to come up with something new, and soon.

"People watch my DVDs, they watch my fights on the Internet, and they pick up on everything. I was really worried so I tried to develop new strategies with Andre, but it wasn't working. We had a lot of conflicting viewpoints," Remy recalls.

Remy's poor performance at the 2005 K-1 World GP was followed by a series of arguments with Manaart. Soon after Bonjasky made up his mind; it was time to move on. Unfortunately, it wouldn't be that easy.



Dutchman Remy Bonjasky (C) FEG Inc.

"I was also going through a divorce at that time and it got really bad. I was sleeping in hotels, unable to see my son. My personal life was a mess," says Remy. "On top of all that I didn't have a trainer or manager anymore, and nowhere to train."

Unsure with what to do and with the K-1 Amsterdam GP coming up, Remy reached out to his acquaintance Charles Heus, a sports chiropractor who also manages several professional athletes - and so began the transformation. Charles Heus, a calm, collected, motivational machine of a man wasted no time.

"I approached Remy's problems from three unified perspectives," says Charles between sips of cappuccino. "First, was the physical - we needed to find him quality people to train with."

Well if there's one gym in Amsterdam that's even better known than Mejiro, it's the Vos Sports School, founded by Johan Vos, and home turf of 'Mr. Perfect' himself, Ernesto Hoost. At first glance, Vos Sports School is the last place you would expect two K-1 champions to train. Hidden in a small side street near Amsterdam's central train station and covered by years of graffiti, there's definitely a 'Rocky' feel to it. Remy began training with Ivan Hippolyte, a former multi title kickboxing champ and human encyclopedia of martial arts knowledge. Hippolyte took Remy's training to a new level, I won't reveal any specifics out of respect for Remy and Ivan, but rest assured, Ivan's training methods are amongst the most intense and effective I have ever seen.

With training taken care of, Remy's manager Charles could focus on the other two aspects of Remy's life that needed to get under control.

## UK TV:

Here is the pick of the upcoming MMA action on British television:

### Saturday 26

21:00 - 22:00 - UFC - Player

22:00 - 00:00 - UFC 61 Highlights - Bravo

23:00 - 00:45 - Pride - Eurosport

### Sunday 27

21:00 - 22:00 - UFC - Player

22:00 - 23:00 - TUF 4 - Bravo

23:00 - 02:00 - UFC 62 - Bravo

### Monday 28

21:00 - 00:00 - UFC 62 Repeat - Bravo

22:00 - 23:00 - UFC - Player

"I'm not a trainer," admits Heus. "So there's only so much I could do when it came to the physical. Once we got Remy with Ivan I could focus on the other two areas; the psychological side of Remy Bonjasky, and the product Remy Bonjasky."

The product Remy Bonjasky? Well it's no secret that Bonjasky is one of the most marketable kickboxers in the world. His looks, style, fame and overall pleasantness give him the qualities needed to be the David Beckham of kickboxing, except without the ex-Spice Girl around his arm of course. Charles got to work, and in no time had a plethora of things for Remy, including his own column in a Dutch fight magazine, a clothing line, appearances in a couple of films and his own national sports television show.

"These are all things Remy has a passion for," says Heus. "He has a passion for martial arts, now he can share that passion through writing. He loves clothes and enjoys looking good, now he can share that as well. At the same time his financial situation is more stable, which impacts his confidence and makes him a more complete individual."

It all sounds wonderful, a new trainer, a new manager, new interests and a new outlook on life, but how does Remy feel about it? More importantly, will he bring home the 2006 title?

"I feel great," says Remy as Charles pays the bill despite my protests. "Expect a new Remy Bonjasky. When you come back here next year I'll have done two more movies, I'll have my column, my TV show, and I'll be the K-1 Champion." If that is going to be the case, he should also procure a new nickname, 'The Renaissance Man'.

# PRIDE BUSHIDO GP PREVIEW

By Chris Brown and Robin Jahdi

**With Pride Bushido on Saturday, what better time for Chris and Robin to get together and preview the show?**

The premier non-tournament bouts are listed first, before the Quarter Finals of the 2006 Bushido Grand Prix are analysed. On with the show...

**Mitsuhiro Ishida vs. Cristiano Marcello**

**RJ:** Ishida really impressed in his dominating Bushido 11 victory over number one lightweight contender Marcus Aurelio; pairing him with the inexperienced Marcello (one of many Azeredo victims) seems to be Pride's way of putting over Ishida to the crowd. Certainly, Marcello's BJJ stylings may not be such a great weapon in the light of the Aurelio fight. Expect Ishida to take this with ground and pound.

**Tatsuya Kawajiri vs. Chris Brennan**

**CB:** It just wouldn't be a Pride show without the ritual sacrifice. Chris Brennan signed a multi-fight deal with Pride after his victory over Eiji Mitsuoka in the first edition of Bushido, but was dropped from the show after his loss to Daiju Takase at Bushido 2. The only reason his contract is being honoured now is because he threatened DSE with legal action and has thusly been 'rewarded' with a fight against 'The Crusher'.

Brennan is woefully out of his depth here. He's not a bad fighter by any means, but he's just not on the elite level of Kawajiri. Brennan's only possibility for a win is to catch Kawajiri with a submission from his back, but I really can't see that happening.

**Shinya Aoki vs. Jason Black**

**CB:** Shinya Aoki is a judo and jiu-jitsu black belt with a 5-2-0 record and if t'internet is to be believed, he's the next big thing. Oh, he's also the Shooto Champion at 170lbs (I forget what weight classifications they use). To suggest that he's very slick on the ground would be quite the understatement.

I'm going to shame myself here and admit that I haven't seen much of his opponent, Jason Black. What I have seen would lead me to believe that Black is possibly the slightly better striker and also possibly physically larger. He's also good on the ground, but shouldn't trouble Aoki at all in terms of submissions. Aoki is no great striker, but he did survive on the feet against Hayato Sakurai (many believe that Sakurai was given a gift decision against Aoki as it was his first fight back in Shooto) and I don't see him being in any danger there either.

**David Baron vs. Takanori Gomi**

**RJ:** Baron certainly has a decent win-loss record to his name; I have to admit that I have never heard of most of his victims.

Compare that to the laundry list that Gomi has beaten: Kawajiri, 'Mach' Sakurai, Azeredo, Rumina Sato... I'd hate to seem snobbish toward the debuting Baron, but it would seem he has been contracted to lose to Gomi. I'm picking the native to take this one, by knockout.

**CB:** Having not heard of Baron myself I conducted some painstaking research and found that yes, he does actually exist. In seriousness, Baron has a good record, but this is a hell of a step up for him.

This fight is a lot like when Gomi first competed in Pride and was given a string of opponents that for the most part weren't really a danger to him. It makes sense that after his loss to Aurelio, Pride would want to build him back up but this is stretching it a bit. Baron could be a very good fighter in the future but it's senseless to sacrifice him at this stage of his career and doesn't do Gomi any favours either since it seems like he had a motivation problem after winning the title on New Years Eve.

**Ikuhisa Minowa vs. 'Butterbean'**

**CB:** Minowa by submission in the first round. Next.

**Denis Kang vs. Amar Suloev (QF)**

**RJ:** It has to be said that Denis Kang, always a good fighter, was the breakout star of Bushido 11, in his scintillating and furious seconds-long dismantling of Murilo Rua. Suloev is not an opponent to be sneezed at, though. With a win over Dean Lister to his name, he also recently upset the elite Bustamante, showing great takedown offence. That said, Kang has been very consistent, and now seems to be on a new level. We shall see whether the 'Ninja' fight was a taste of things to come, as Denis should take this one.

**Dan Henderson vs. Kazuo Misaki (QF)**

**RJ:** This is an interesting fight, as Misaki was another fighter who eliminated one of my favourites (that's right, I'm a Baroni fan). However, he now steps into the ring with probably the top fighter at the weight, and a man who already holds a victory over Misaki. The native combatant might well be practicing his flying knee attacks and ground and pound, but the former is a risky proposition, and the latter is unlikely to come to fruition against such a talented wrestler. Going on probability, I'd choose Hendo's right punch over Misaki's Tiger Knee...

**Akihiro Gono vs. Gerard Mouassi (QF)**

**CB:** Although Mouassi has my undying appreciation for his stoppage of Makoto Takimoto, I can't see him beating the man responsibly for one of the greatest ring entrances of all time. I'm not usually a fan of the afro wig, but I can never resist the funk.

Fortunately for Mouassi this is a fight and

## CARD:

**Pride Bushido Grand Prix: Round 2**

Nagoya Rainbow Hall, Japan - 26/08/06

Dan Henderson vs. Kazuo Misaki (QF)  
 Paulo Filho vs. Ryo Chonan (QF)  
 Denis Kang vs. Amar Suloev (QF)  
 Akihiro Gono vs. Gegard Mousasi (QF)  
 Tatsuya Kawajiri vs. Chris Brennan  
 Takanori Gomi vs. David Baron  
 Hayato Sakurai vs. Luciano Azeredo  
 Mitsuhiro Ishida vs. Cristiano Marcello  
 Gilbert Melendez vs. Nobuhiro Obiya  
 Shinya Aoki vs. Jason Black  
 Hatsu Hioki vs. Jeff Curran  
 Ikuhisa Minowa vs. Eric 'Butterbean' Esch  
 Daisuke Nakamura vs. Seichi Ikemoto  
 Hiroyuki Abe vs. Naoki Matsushita

not a dance competition. Unfortunately for Mouassi, it's a fight against Gono.

Traditionally Gono isn't the strongest of starters, but he remains very composed and asserts himself later into the fight.

**Paulo Filho vs. Ryo Chonan (QF)**

**CB:** Filho is a weird one. I don't mean that he's odd or unhinged, just that he's immensely gifted but hasn't really excelled yet. Explosive takedowns and excellent jiu-jitsu, Filho is unbeaten in MMA and is one of the favourites for the tournament. And yet he's one of the most unpopular fighters to have appeared in Pride, solely because of the common belief that he's boring. Like watching paint dry, or Bolton Wanderers.

Ryo Chonan is pretty much his opposite. Not the most talented of fighters, he always gives his all and always tries to make it an exciting fight.

What a shame then (for most anyway, I don't mind Filho), that he'll most likely lose here. There's a chance that he can catch Filho standing, but I think Filho is too strong and too technically skilled to lose this fight.

**RJ:** After big back-to-back losses at the hands of Baroni and Henderson, 'The Piranha' has regained some ground with wins over Ryuta Sakurai and Joey Villaseñor. The latter battle was a brutal one indeed, and he looked impressive for the most part. In Filho, though, Chonan is now facing a heavily muscled opponent with great wrestling and submission skills.

Chonan will be hoping he can get a quick knockout in this fight; otherwise, the odds are that he will be taken down and controlled for the duration. Filho has recently been apologising for a lack of activity in recent fights, so perhaps he might dust off a submission attempt or two here. Perhaps this eagerness to entertain will lead to mistakes being made, if Filho is not careful against cagey veteran Chonan.

# KANG: A FIGHTER OF MANY FLAGS



Denis Kang (Left) En Route To Defeating Andrei Semenov In Bushido On July 17 2005 (C) Dream Stage Entertainment Inc.

By Mauro Ranallo, 'The Voice Of Pride'

**PRIDE BUSHIDO** star Denis Kang is the **MMA world's version of the United Nations.**

Born in 1977 on the French island of St.Pierre of Miquelon to a Korean father and French mother, Kang spent his formative years in Vancouver, Canada. Currently he resides in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and represents South Korea when in the PRIDE ring.

This man of many flags has emerged as one of the favorites in the 2006 BUSHIDO Welterweight tournament on the back of a stunning 15 second dismantling of talented PRIDE veteran Murilo 'Ninja' Rua in the opening round held in June. This Saturday, he will take on Amar Suloev - the Armenian assassin who bounced former UFC middleweight titleholder and 2005 BUSHIDO Welterweight tournament finalist Murilo Bustamante out of the competition.

Kang was impressed with the way Suloev fought the co-founder of Brazilian Top Team and said: "I was surprised by Suloev's footwork and defence and I don't think that Murilo was expecting that from him."

When queried about the similarities between Rua and Suloev, Kang noted that they were both stand-up fighters but he sees differences in their styles.



**Since I can remember I have always been a fan of Martial Arts. My father introduced me to Tae Kwon Do when I was a toddler and I started doing Judo at age nine... When I first saw the UFC I literally thought it was a dream come true. I mean I didn't want to compete in it yet but I loved everything about it.**



He said: "I think Amar is more technical and 'Ninja' is more aggressive because Amar fights mostly with counter attacks."

Kang is a renowned ground fighter who is a Marcus Soares BJJ black belt. He was the first student from Soares' Vancouver based school to achieve such lofty status and he cites Soares as being more than just a teacher.

"He has been like a second father or mentor to me, said Kang, who then added: "he has stuck by me through the ups and downs of my tumultuous career and always kept me on the positive. He is a great example of what a coach should be like".

While Soares provided Kang with the solid foundation for a career in Mixed Martial Arts, it wasn't until he made the move to Florida to align himself with American Top Team that his career really began to take off.

"The impact has been huge and to have so many high level athletes and coaches under one roof is such a blessing because I used to always have to drive around town from gym to gym", said Kang.

ATT fighters are indeed enjoying success in some of the biggest promotions in the world as Kang very proudly proclaimed.

He said: "If you look at any other team in



**Kang Last Lost To Jason Miller - Over 3 Years Ago (C) Dream Stage Entertainment Inc.**

the world right now there is no other team that has as many fighters fighting successfully in the big shows.

"You have myself and Marcus Aurelio in Pride, Jorge Santiago, Thiago Alves, and Wilson Gouveia in UFC, Cole Miller in Shooto, 'JZ' Calvacante in Hero's...we are producing a lot of good athletes. It is only going to get better."

Heading into this weekend's bout with Suloev,

Kang is the owner of one of the sport's more impressive winning streaks, having gone undefeated in his last 18 fights. His last loss came in 2003 against Jason 'Mayhem' Miller – a bout Kang is still disappointed with.

He said: "In that fight I completely underestimated Jason and I also beat myself mentally. He and I are friends now and have even trained together. It's possible that we may meet in the future but I don't think it's on our 'to

do' list for either of us."

Kang cares about the streak, but it won't mean the end of the world when it finally comes to an end. "I don't feel like I have to prove myself by maintaining it", said Kang.

Before adding: "I have the 'fall-down get back up' attitude so I'm not afraid to face defeat. I fight every fight like it's my last and whatever happens in the end is up to fate."

Kang is not about to look past his opponent on Saturday in Nagoya but he steals a page out of pro-wrestling legend Ric Flair when talking about who he would like to face in the future.

Much like 'The Nature Boy' he said: "Henderson is on top of that weight class right now. He's as tough as they come and I want to test him. I want to be the man, therefore I must beat the man."

Henderson, the reigning PRIDE World Welterweight Champion received a first round bye in the tournament and he will face Kazuo Misaki in a re-match of their tilt at BUSHIDO 10 in April. Henderson earned the judge's favour on that occasion, although Misaki scored a moral victory of sorts as he survived the champion's patented right hand to the jaw.

Another favourite in the tournament is, like Kang, undefeated during his PRIDE tenure. Paulo Filho eliminated newcomer Gregory Bouchelaghem in the opening round in a fight that Filho totally controlled on the ground. While he was successful, Filho stopped by the broadcast area and let Frank Trigg and I know that he was disappointed in the fact that he was unable to submit his opponent and he promised a better showing in the next round.

Kang agrees that his friend wasn't at his best at 'Survival 06', the first round and said: "We saw Filho get tired and his cardio get exposed in his last fight. He says he has been training more for this next round so we'll have to see."

Kang and Filho are comrades but Kang welcomes a fight with him knowing that they are professionals and this is what they get paid to do. If you ask Kang if he always thought he was going to make a living as a professional Mixed Martial Artist, this is what he'll tell you.

"To be honest I was never sure of that until I became a professional fighter. I was working in an office in the corporate world, not going anywhere soon. Since I can remember I have always been a fan of Martial Arts. My father introduced me to Tae Kwon Do when I was a toddler and I started doing Judo at age nine. Growing up I was into ninjas and shaolin monks like most kids but probably a little fanatic about it as well. When I first saw the UFC I literally thought it was a dream come true. I mean I didn't want to compete in it yet but I loved everything about it."

It is obvious Denis Kang made the right career choice. In addition to the success he has enjoyed in PRIDE, he is a big star in his father's native South Korea where he has helped put MMA on the map with his performances in Spirit MC. With matinee idol looks and a commitment to his chosen craft, Kang should enjoy a very lucrative career.

# LIVE ROADS: JAPAN NEWS & NOTES

By Jordan Breen

<http://completevaletudoaccess.blogspot.com>

**Bushido lightweight ace Takanori Gomi communicated his thoughts on the past, present and future at the end of the PRIDE Bushido rules meeting on Friday.**

The most immediate subject seemed to be Gomi's reaction to his April loss to Marcus Aurelio. Gomi expressed a positive mindset, declaring he had retrieved his original focus which guided him into superstardom last year. He appeared relaxed concerning the possible compromise of his future due to the effect of the bout and said: "There is a lot of pressure on me right now to win every fight convincingly, in an absolute manner. But I'm taking every fight seriously one at a time, as they come. That's what I learned from the Aurelio fight."

Concerning his present opponent, David Baron, Gomi laughed, "Don't his muscles look really cut? It's not intimidating or anything, but I guess I'll have to get into shape now!"

Gomi also was compelled to respond to talk of a future defence of his lightweight championship.

Regarding a potential opponent, he commented: "Anyone will do, really. But in all likelihood it'll either be Marcus Aurelio or Mitsuhiro Ishida. Although Aurelio looked rather poor didn't he? So it'll probably be Ishida."

Rumours are abound that Gomi's prediction will prove to come into fruition and should Gomi and Ishida win their respective bouts on Saturday, then November's Bushido will be the time for such a title fight.

Finally, talk of a possible venture to the United States for PRIDE's Real Deal card in October was further warranted by Gomi.

He said: "They're thinking about sending me to America. But I'm not thinking about it too much, although it is appealing. I have enough on my mind with my current fight."

It would be Gomi's third fight on American soil if the idea becomes reality, following after his debut against Stephen Palling and well-known loss to 'The Prodigy' B.J. Penn, both occurring in Hawaii.

**Foreign competitors Paul 'Semtex' Daley and Robert Emerson held their public work out on Friday at Pancrase's official P's LAB gym in Tokyo.**

The Californian Emerson defeated long time Pancrase veteran Takafumi Ito by decision in his Pancrase debut this past May. Emerson revealed he had trouble with an old knee injury in his last fight and was now hoping to gain the victory over his opponent Kenji Arai in a more impressive and decisive fashion.

Emerson also played to the cameras in brazen fashion. When presented with a photo of Arai, Emerson kissed the picture, and proceeded to rub it against his crotch.



**Kevin Randleman Will Fight Mauricio Rua**

Daley impressed the crowd with a series of explosive jumping kicks and knees. The Brit discussed his striking background with the media, coming from a karate and muay thai background - beginning training at the age of seven.

The Cage Rage British welterweight champion said he was very prepared to take on number two Pancrase ranked welterweight contender Satoru Kitaoka. Daley revealed that he has been training with the American Top Team, sparring with the likes of Marcus Aurelio and Gesias 'JZ' Calvancanti to prepare for his debut in Japan and he said he was ready for all surprises Kitaoka may offer him.

Daley also showed off his character to the media in sparring while wearing a pair of sunglasses and doing a robot dance for the audience. 'Semtex' is coming off three straight victories in Cage Rage, while Kitaoka is hoping to rebound with a win after his loss to number one welterweight contender Daizo Ishige in May.

**Though details still remain unclear, Dream Stage Entertainment president Nobuyuki Sakakibara has indicated that some kind of fight contract has been ironed out with former boxing world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson.**

The signing would come amidst PRIDE's known troubles with television carriers in Japan and their plan towards globalisation as they present their debut show in the USA in October. Sakakibara mentioned that details of the contract were specifically asked by Tyson not to be released at the current time.

Meanwhile, DSE announced two new fights for the Pride Openweight Grand Prix Finals show on September 10. Firstly, Kazahiro Nakamura will take on former K-1 MMA Yoshihiro Nakao while Yosuke Nishijima will try to score his first

MMA victory over Evangelista 'Cyborg' Santos from Chute Boxe.

Nakamura is coming off a first round submission victory over the aforementioned Santos in July. On that same card, Nakao, now nicknamed 'KISS' after his altercation with Heath Herring, made his PRIDE debut a successful one as he defeated Korean fighter Eun Su Lee on a doctor's stoppage after a barrage of knees on the ground caused Lee's eye to swell shut.

Boxer-turned-MMA fighter Nishijima is 0-2 in MMA, but received much praise for his first ever fight where he went toe-to-toe with Mark Hunt for fifteen minutes before being knocked out by the former K-1 World Grand Prix champion. Santos, like Nishijima, will be looking for his first win inside the PRIDE ring, as his debut loss to Nakamura was less-than-stellar.

Dream Stage Entertainment also announced the first two bouts for PRIDE's first endeavour into North America.

PRIDE heavyweight champion Fedor Emelianenko will return to the ring for the first time since New Year's Eve when he takes on former adversary Mark 'The Hammer' Coleman. Following a quick dispatching of Wagner 'Zuluzinho' Martins at PRIDE's 'Otoko Matsuri 2005: Itadaki', Emelianenko opted for long overdue surgery to repair his right hand, to which he had sustained multiple injuries. In his return, he meets a 41-year-old Coleman who has found new life after his shocking win over Mauricio 'Shogun' Rua this past February.

Coleman and Emelianenko met before in April of 2004, in the first round of PRIDE's Heavyweight Grand Prix. While the powerhouse wrestler was able to muscle Emelianenko to the mat, the champion showed the versatility which has made his the heavyweight division's most dominant force, as he executed a flawless armbar from his back, submitting Coleman just over two minutes into the bout.

Two other competitors will return to the ring as well, when the aforementioned 'Shogun' faces Kevin Randleman, the teammate of Coleman. After winning the PRIDE Middleweight Grand Prix in 2005, Rua stepped up to heavyweight to face Coleman at PRIDE's 'Dreamers' card in February. Just under a minute into the bout, Coleman tackled Rua to the mat. As Rua attempted to break his fall, 'Shogun' landed on his right arm, dislocated his elbow, ending the bout. 'Shogun' has since recovered from elbow surgery, and will look to regain the form which made him the sport's breakout fighter in 2005.

Former UFC heavyweight champion Randleman has not had an easy go of things as of late, either. Randleman defeated Fatih Kocamis in Holland in October of 2005, but following the bout, had to undergo surgery to repair a torn tendon in his shoulder. The injury woes did not end for 'The Monster', who underwent a nightmarish string of ailments, including a kidney stone, a torn bicep, a case of the shingles, and a collapsed lung. Fully recovered, Randleman, like Rua, will look to recapture his former glory when he steps into the PRIDE ring for the first time in 18 months.