Officer:

PREMIUM PROCESSING
COVERSHEET
PLEASE RETURN THE REQUESTED INFORMATION AND
ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS **WITH**
THIS PAGE ON TOP TO:
USCIS/TSC
ATTN: RFE/NOID/NOIR/NOIT
6046 N BELT LINE RD STE 140
IRVING, TX 75038-0014

Please check the appropriate box regarding if there is a new Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative, additional fees, additional forms, etc. Please place the new Form G-28, additional fees, additional forms directly under this sheet.

Yes, there is:

☐ **A New G-28** ☐ **Additional Fees**
☐ **Additional Forms** ☐ **Other:**

If you have moved, write your current address in the blank area below. Please be sure to write clearly.

(Select appropriate check box)

☐ **Applicant/Beneficiary** ☐ **Petitioner**

New Address:

As required by Section § 265.1 Reporting change of address. "Except for those exempted by section 263(b) of the Act, all aliens in the United States required to register under section 262 of the Act must report each change of address and new address within 10 days of such change in accordance with instructions provided by USCIS."

REQUEST FOR EVIDENCE

I-140 Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker

IOE0935791493

DO NASCIMENTO, RAFAEL
DO NASCIMENTO, RAFAEL

March 16, 2026

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Texas Service Center
6046 N Belt Line Rd STE 140
Irving, TX 75038-0014

RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO
c/o OTAVIO HAVERROTH SILVA
HS LAW CORP
PO BOX 90487
SAN DIEGO, CA 92169

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

IOE0935791493

RE: RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO
I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker

PREMIUM PROCESSING

IMPORTANT: THIS NOTICE CONTAINS YOUR UNIQUE NUMBER. THE ORIGINAL NOTICE MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE REQUESTED EVIDENCE.

You are receiving this notice because U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires additional evidence to process your form. Please provide the evidence listed on the attached page(s). Include duplicate copies if you are requesting consular notification.

Your response must be received in this office by June 11, 2026.

Please note that you have been allotted the maximum period allowed for responding to an RFE. The time period for responding cannot be extended. 8 Code of Federal Regulations (8 CFR 103.2(b)(8)(iv). Because many immigration benefits are time sensitive, you are encouraged to respond to this request as early as possible, but no later than the deadline provided above. If you do not respond to this notice within the allotted time, your case may be denied. The regulations do not provide for an extension of time to submit the requested evidence.

You must submit all requested evidence at the same time. If you submit only some of the requested evidence, USCIS will consider your response a request for a decision on the record. 8 CFR 103.2(b)(11).

If you submit a document in any language other than English, the document must be accompanied by a full and **complete** English translation. The translator must certify that the translation is accurate and he or she is competent to translate from that language to English. **If you submit a foreign language translation in response to this request for evidence, you must also include a copy of the foreign language document.**

Processing of your I-140 will resume upon receipt of your response. If you have not heard from USCIS after **15 days of responding**, you may contact the Texas Service Center Premium Processing at email address tsc-premium.processing@uscis.dhs.gov.

Reference is made to this Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker, seeking E11 immigrant classification as an individual of extraordinary ability for RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO (self-petitioner), filed on his own behalf on February 26, 2026.

The petitioner intends to work as an Athlete and Sports Competitor in the field of Mixed Martial Arts.

In addition, it is noted that the petitioner intends to be both a MMA fighter and a coach. While it is acknowledged that there is a nexus between competing and coaching a given sport, to assume that every athlete's area of expertise includes coaching would be too speculative. Therefore, it must first be determined whether the petitioner has demonstrated extraordinary ability as either a MMA fighter or a coach. If the petitioner has demonstrated extraordinary ability as a MMA fighter but not as a coach, the level at which the petitioner has coached will be considered.

The E11 immigrant classification applies to individuals with extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics. The individual must demonstrate that he has sustained national or international acclaim and that his achievements have been recognized in the field of expertise, indicating that he is one of that small percentage who have risen to the very top of their field of endeavor. The individual must plan to continue to work in his area of extraordinary ability and must substantially benefit prospectively the United States.

To process the petition and determine if the beneficiary is eligible, additional information is required. This request provides suggested evidence that you could submit to satisfy each requested item. You may submit one, some, or all of these items. Or, you may choose to submit none of them, and instead submit other evidence to satisfy the request. You may also explain why or how the evidence in the record already establishes eligibility. Please note, however, that you are responsible for providing evidence that best shows the beneficiary meets all requirements. The evidence must show that the beneficiary was eligible for the requested benefit when you filed the Form I-140.

Documentation to establish that the beneficiary will continue to work in their claimed area of expertise

It must be shown how the beneficiary will continue working in the United States in the claimed area of expertise. The petition does not indicate that the beneficiary has prearranged commitments for working in this field. The petitioner provided a personal statement dated October 23, 2025, which indicates, in part:

> Looking ahead, I intend to continue competing in the United States while expanding my contributions as a coach and mentor. My goals include teaching at established academies, developing new talent, and eventually opening my own training facility. I plan to share the methods that shaped my development in striking and grappling, including detailed instruction in kickboxing fundamentals, advanced jiu-jitsu systems, and MMA integration that emphasizes defense, conditioning, and strategy. I also wish to support my daughter's athletic journey as she grows, and I will encourage young athletes from diverse backgrounds to pursue excellence through discipline and perseverance. By combining active competition with structured coaching, I aim to support athlete pipelines, create employment opportunities in the sports community, and help elevate the standard of MMA practice and education in the United States.

This statement is vague and does not provide details on how the petitioner will continue working in the United States in the claimed area of expertise. Please submit evidence that the beneficiary is coming to the United States to continue work in the field. The work must be in the field in which the beneficiary has garnered sustained national or international acclaim and that their achievements have been recognized indicating that they are one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field. Evidence that may be submitted to satisfy this requirement includes, but is not limited to:

- Letters from current or prospective employers;

- Employment contracts; or,
- A statement from the beneficiary detailing plans on how they intend to continue work in the United States.

Documentation to establish that the beneficiary's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States

It must be shown how the beneficiary's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States. The petition does not indicate that the beneficiary's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States. The petitioner provided a personal statement dated October 23, 2025, which indicates, in part:

> My work aligns with essential interests in the United States, including the growth of professional sports, youth development, and the transfer of knowledge that strengthens training methodologies and enhances athlete performance. MMA continues to expand across the country, supporting gyms, academies, events, and related industries. By competing, coaching, and mentoring, I can contribute to this ecosystem, help raise technical standards, and support safe and effective training practices. The visibility of high-level competition also inspires participation among young athletes, creating positive pathways through disciplined sport.

This statement is vague and does not establish that the beneficiary's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States. Please submit evidence that the beneficiary's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States. Evidence that may be submitted to satisfy this requirement includes, but is not limited to:

- Letters from current or prospective employers, or individuals who work in the beneficiary's field;
- Other evidence explaining how the beneficiary's work will be advantageous and of use to the interests of the United States on a national level; or,
- A statement from the beneficiary detailing plans on how their work will substantially benefit prospectively the United States.

A two-part analysis is used to determine whether the beneficiary is an individual of extraordinary ability:

- First, we determine whether the petitioner has submitted evidence to show that the beneficiary:
  - Has received a one-time achievement (a major internationally recognized award); or,
  - Qualifies under at least three of the ten criteria required for this classification.
- Second, if the petitioner establishes that the beneficiary has received a one time achievement (a major internationally recognized award), or meets at least three of the other criteria, we then determine whether the petitioner has submitted evidence demonstrating that the beneficiary:
  - Has sustained national or international acclaim.
    - In determining whether the beneficiary has enjoyed "sustained" national or international acclaim, such acclaim must be maintained. A beneficiary may have achieved extraordinary ability in the past but then failed to maintain a comparable level of acclaim thereafter; and,
  - Has achievements that have been recognized in the field of expertise, indicating that the beneficiary is one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor.

The petitioner has provided documentation under the following regulatory areas:

- Documentation of the alien's receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor;

- Documentation of the alien's membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought, which require outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields;

- Published material about the alien in professional or major trade publications or other major media, relating to

the alien's work in the field for which classification is sought. Such evidence shall include the title, date, and author of the material, and any necessary translation;

- Evidence of the alien's original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field; and

- Evidence of the display of the alien's work in the field at artistic exhibitions or showcases.

A discussion follows addressing the areas of insufficiency and what could be submitted to overcome them.

USCIS notes that the petitioner provided an exhibit list, which indicated that the record included exhibit A through Exhibit H. However, the evidence in the record only included exhibit A through exhibit D.

Please note that the terms petitioner, beneficiary, and self-petitioner are used interchangeably throughout the notice to refer to Rafael Do Nascimento.

Documentation of the beneficiary's receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor.

The petitioner submitted the following evidence:

- MMA Fighter Page - tapology.com;
- Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts - July 26, 2022;
- Media Reports;
- Photos; and
- Website Print Screens.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence (1) of the beneficiary's receipt of a prize or award, (2) that the prize or award is in beneficiary's field, (3) that the prize or award is recognized nationally or internationally, and (4) that the award or prize is for excellence in the field of endeavor. The petitioner must satisfy all of these elements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion.

The petitioner provided evidence that he received the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) 2025 Fans' Choice Award for LFA Submission of the Year in 2025, he was the winner of his bout at Jungle Fight Championship 99 in November 2019, he won "Fight of the Night" distinction at the New Corpore Extreme (NCE 23) in 2018, and he has won multiple MMA contests in Legacy Fighting Alliance Competition.

While these prizes or awards reflect institutional recognition for excellence, they do not reflect national or international recognition for excellence in the field. The record contains insufficient evidence to demonstrate that these awards are recognized beyond the awarding sponsors on a national or international level.

Further, the limited evidence of the media coverage of the "awards" is insufficient to establish the level of national or international recognition associated with the awards. The submitted evidence does not demonstrate, for example, that the award winners receive a level of media coverage associated with nationally or internationally recognized awards in the field.

There is no objective evidence to ascertain whether the awards or prizes are nationally recognized or internationally recognized, for excellence in the field of endeavor, and in beneficiary's field. In addition, the evidence provided about the awards is from the host of the event, which cannot attest to its own recognition at the national or international level. Without objective documentary evidence about the awards or prizes, the petitioner impedes USCIS in determining

ether the awards or prizes satisfy all of the elements within this criterion.

In order to fulfill this criterion, the petitioner must demonstrate that he received the prizes or awards, and they are nationally or internationally recognized for excellence in the field of endeavor. The word "national" or "international" in the title of the certificate or the name of the conferring organization is not sufficient to establish the necessary recognition. Relevant considerations regarding whether the basis for granting the prizes or awards was excellence in the field include, but are not limited to, the criteria used to grant the prizes or awards, the national or international significance of the prizes or awards in the field, and the number of awardees or prize recipients as well as any limitations on competitors.

As such, the submitted evidence does not meet this criterion.

The record must contain sufficient evidence to satisfy each of the plain language elements of this criterion. Therefore, please submit evidence:

- To show the beneficiary's receipt of an award, for any prize or award submitted, please provide:
  - A copy of each prize or award certificate;
  - A clear photograph of each prize or award; or
  - Public announcement regarding the awarding of the prizes or awards issued by the granting organization.
- To show that the prizes or awards are in the beneficiary's field, please submit:
  - Documentary evidence of national or international prizes or awards received that were granted for excellence in the beneficiary's field;
  - Documentary evidence establishing what the criteria was for winning the prizes or awards;
  - Documentary evidence describing how the prizes or awards relate to the beneficiary's field;
  - Documentary evidence of the following:
    - The significance of the prizes or awards;
    - Who is considered for the prizes or awards;
    - How many prizes or awards are given each year; and
    - Previous winners who are related to the beneficiary's field.
- To show that they are nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards, please submit:
  - Objective documentary evidence demonstrating the following:
    - The criteria used to grant the prizes or awards;
    - The significance of the prizes or awards, to include the national or international recognition that the prizes or awards share;
    - The reputation of the organization or panel granting the prizes or awards;
    - Who is considered for the prizes or awards, including the geographic scope from which candidates may apply;
    - How many prizes or awards are awarded each year; and
    - Previous winners of the prizes or awards.
- To demonstrate excellence in the field was the basis for the prizes or awards, the petitioner may submit:
  - Objective, documentary evidence describing how the prizes or awards relate to excellence in the beneficiary's field; and
  - Objective, documentary evidence of the criteria used to grant the prizes or awards, including evidence that a criterion for winning the prizes or awards was excellence in the field.

Documentation of the beneficiary's membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought. The association must require outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields.

The petitioner submitted the following evidence:

- Letter dated January 30, 2026, from Edward Soares, CEO, Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA); and
- Promotion and Ancillary Rights Contract dated August 6, 2022.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence (1) of membership in associations, (2) that the associations are in the beneficiary's field, (3) that the associations require outstanding achievements of their members, and (4) that membership eligibility is judged by recognized national or international experts in their field.

The evidence submitted only demonstrates that the petitioner has been affiliated with the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) since August 5, 2022. There is no objective evidence to ascertain whether the association requires outstanding achievement of its members, that outstanding achievements are judged by recognized national or international experts, and that the association is in the field for which classification is sought. Without objective documentary evidence about the association, the petitioner impedes USCIS in determining whether the petitioner's membership with the association satisfies all of the elements within this criterion.

Evidence must demonstrate that the association requires outstanding achievement as an essential condition for admission to membership. Requirements that only include employment or activity in a given field; minimum education, experience, or achievement; recommendations by colleagues or current members; or payment of dues do not satisfy this criterion since these requirements do not constitute outstanding achievements.

As such, the submitted evidence does not meet this criterion.

The record must contain sufficient evidence to satisfy each of the plain language elements of this criterion. Therefore, please submit evidence:

- To show evidence of the beneficiary's membership, please submit:
  - Objective documentary evidence of membership such as a certificate of membership, membership profile page, etc.
- To show that the association requires outstanding achievement of its memberships, please submit:
  - The section of the association's constitution or bylaws, which discuss the criteria for membership for the beneficiary's level of membership in the association.
- To show that outstanding achievements are judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields, please submit:
  - Information to establish that the individuals who review prospective members' applications are recognized as national or international experts in their disciplines or fields.
  - The section of the association's constitution or bylaws, which discuss the qualifications required of the reviewers on the review panel of the association.
- To assist in determining that the association in the field for which classification is sought, please submit:
  - Objective documentary evidence which describes the association's goals, mission, or target membership.

Published material about the beneficiary in professional or major trade publications or other major media. The materials must relate to the beneficiary's work in the field for which classification is sought.

The petitioner submitted the following evidence:

- Article - *Former gold miner Rafael Mulisha plans to sign a contract with the UFC: "I deserve it."* - Author: Nathalia Movilla - ge.globo.com - November 18, 2022;
- Article - *Meet Rafael Mulisha, a former prospector who fights in the UFC's lower divisions in the United States* - uol.com.br - September 26, 2022;
- Article - *With a title fight between Brazil and Argentina, Jungle Fight on DAZN returns to Rio de Janeiro* - redetv.uol.com.br - November 27, 2019;
- Article - *MMA fighter from Mato Grosso celebrates debut with victory in American event; "it's a dream"* -

Author: Kelvin Ramirez - sonoticias.com.br - July 11, 2022;

- Article - *Rafael do Nascimento, "Rafael Mulisha" will face the American John Sweeney on July 12th* - Author: Ari Miranda - unicanews.com.br - May 26, 2024;
- Article - *Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento MMA Stats, Pictures, News, Videos, Biography* - secure-au.imrworldwide.com;
- Article - *Jungle Fight on DAZN 99 returns to Rio de Janeiro with a title fight between Brazil and Argentina in the main event* - Author: Mateus Machado - tatame.com.br - November 27, 2019;
- Article - *Mato Grosso residents are featured at LFA 199 held in California* - Author: Nilson Aranha - mtesporte.com.br - January 11, 2025;
- Article - *Mato Grosso fighter faces American for LFA belt* - Author: Nilson Aranha - mtesporte.com.br - July 12, 2024;
- Article - *Rafael Nascimento and Erik Visconde fight at LFA 199, the world's biggest MMA event* - Author: Nilson Aranha - mtesporte.com.br - January 9, 2025; and
- Website Print Screens.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence (1) of published material, (2) that the published material contains the title, date, and author of the material, and any necessary translation, (3) that the published material is about the beneficiary relating to the beneficiary's work in the field, and (4) that the published material qualifies as professional or major trade publications or other major media. The petitioner must satisfy all of these elements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion.

The petitioner submitted several articles, however, some of the material only cites, quotes, references, or includes a photograph of the petitioner and there is no discussion of the petitioner or his work. The plain language of this criterion requires evidence of published material that is written about the petitioner and relating to his work in the field. In addition, some of the material does not contain the author as required by the plain language of this criterion. Further, the evidence in the record is insufficient to demonstrate that the materials were published in professional, or major trade publications, or other major media.

To demonstrate a publication qualifies as a professional or major trade publication, or other major media, a petitioner should "identify the [publication's] circulation (online or in print) and intended audience of the publication, as well as the title, date and author of the material." The petitioner provided general background and historical information for the media outlets. The petitioner did not submit evidence to establish the circulation statistics for any of the publications, nor did the petitioner provide other circulation data to compare with those of this publication, or information about its intended audience. Without additional corroboration, the petitioner has not illustrated that the article was published in professional or major trade publications or other major media.

As evidence regarding the publication in which the above materials (articles) appeared, the petitioner offered webpage print screens from Similar Web (similarweb.com) regarding traffic overviews (Total Visits, Bounce Rate, and Pages per Visit) for the websites. The petitioner, however, did not demonstrate the significance of these internet rankings and viewing statistics, or explain how such information reflect status as a major trade publication or other major medium.

Websites that are portals or offer services from news, opinions, blogs and videos to network platforms for business do not qualify as they combine both professional media and user generated content as well as material targeted to regional interests, therefore it cannot be determined where the postings originated or that they are objective, credible, and reliable. Journals and major media require an editorial or peer review process to ensure a level of objectivity, reliability and accuracy. International accessibility via the internet (such as postings in blogs, social media, web portals, search engines, user-created content or an organization's website) is not commensurate with "major media." As there are no assurances about the reliability of the content from this open, user-edited Internet site, information from Wikipedia will be accorded no evidentiary weight." *See Laamilem Badasa v. Michael Mukasey*, 540 F.3d 909 (8th Cir. 2008).

In order to meet the requirements of this criterion, the petitioner must satisfy multiple evidentiary requirements. First, the published material must be about the petitioner and the contents must relate to his or her work in the field under which they seek classification as an immigrant. The published material must also appear in professional or major trade publications or other major media. The final requirement is that the petitioner provide each published item's title, date, and author and if the published item is in a foreign language, the petitioner must provide a full English translation that complies with the requirements found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(3). The petitioner must submit evidence satisfying all of these elements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion.

As such, the submitted evidence does not meet this criterion.

The record must contain sufficient evidence to satisfy each of the plain language elements of this criterion. Therefore, please submit evidence:

- To assist in determining that the material is published, please submit:
    - Documentary evidence that the material has been published.
- To assist in determining that the published material contains the title, date, and author, please emphasize (highlight or underline) on the original and translated copy:
    - The title, date, and author of the published material;
    - Include a certified translation. The translator must certify that:
        - The translations are accurate and complete, and
        - The translator is competent to translate from the foreign language into English.
- To assist in determining that the publications qualify as professional or major trade publications or other major media, please submit:
    - Objective documentary evidence including:
    - The circulation (online and/or in print); and,
    - The intended audience of the publication.
        - Note: The evidence submitted should be specific to the media format in which it was published. If the material was published online, the evidence should relate to the website. If it was published in print, the evidence should relate to the printed publication.
- To assist in determining that the published material relates to the beneficiary and the beneficiary's work in the field, the petitioner may submit:
    - Additional published material that relates to the beneficiary and the beneficiary's work in the field.
    - Objective documentary evidence that the submitted published material was about the beneficiary and the beneficiary's work in the field.
- Notes:
    - Additional published material should be dated prior to the date of submission of this Form I-140.
    - The published material should be about the beneficiary's work in the field, not just about the beneficiary's employer or other organizations the beneficiary is associated with.
    - Marketing materials created for the purpose of selling the beneficiary's products or promoting the beneficiary's services are not generally considered to be published material about the beneficiary.
    - Unevaluated listings in a subject matter index or footnote, or reference to the beneficiary's work without evaluation are insufficient.

Evidence of the beneficiary's original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence (1) of the beneficiary's contributions related to scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic or business fields, (2) that the beneficiary's contribution is original, and (3) that the beneficiary's original contribution has been of major significance. The petitioner must satisfy all of these elements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion.

Evidence must demonstrate that the beneficiary's contributions are not only original, but that they are of major significance in the field. The evidence does not demonstrate the major significance of the beneficiary's original contributions.

The plain language of this regulatory criterion contains multiple evidentiary elements that must be satisfied. The first is evidence of your contributions to the field. These contributions must have already been realized rather than being potential, future contributions. You must also demonstrate that your contributions are original. The evidence must establish that the contributions are scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related in nature. The final requirement is that the contributions rise to the level of major significance in the field as a whole, rather than to a project or to an organization. Major significance in the field may be shown through evidence that your work has been widely accepted and implemented throughout the field, have remarkably impacted or influenced the field, or have otherwise risen to a level of major significance in the field.

The petitioner asserts that he made original contributions to the field of Mixed Martial Arts. Generally, an original contribution is research, techniques, inventions, or other intellectual property that the petitioner created or developed. In order to substantiate an original contribution, the petitioner must submit documentary evidence. However, there is no documentary evidence such as patents, copyright or trademark material to corroborate the contributions claimed. Without additional corroboration, the petitioner has not illustrated the originality of the contribution.

USCIS notes that the petitioner through counsel indicated that he provided four (4) letters of recommendation from individuals in his field. However, the letters of recommendation were not included as evidence in the record.

Letters that repeat the regulatory language but do not explain how an individual's contributions have already influenced the field are insufficient to establish original contributions of major significance in the field. *See Kazarian*. 580 F.3d at I 036, *aff'd* in part 596 F.3d at 1115.

Letters of support alone generally may not be sufficient to meet this criterion. Letters, though not without weight, cannot form the cornerstone of a successful extraordinary ability claim. USCIS may, in its discretion, use such letters as advisory opinions submitted by expert witnesses. However, USCIS is ultimately responsible for making the final determination of the alien's eligibility. *See Matter of Caron International*, 19 I&N Dec. 791, 795 (Comm. 1988). Without documentation showing that the beneficiary's work has made original contributions of major significance to the field, USCIS cannot conclude this criterion has been met.

Independent, objective evidence that indicates your contributions are "original" and have "significantly" influenced the field overall — reaching beyond your collaborators, employer/company, and its customers/clients has not been provided. Consequently, the evidence does not establish that you have made contributions of major significance to the field.

In order to satisfy the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(v), a petitioner must establish that not only has he made original contributions, but that they have been of major significance in the field. For example, a petitioner may show that the contributions have been widely implemented throughout the field, have remarkably impacted, or influenced the field, or have otherwise risen to a level of major significance.

As such, the submitted evidence does not meet this criterion.

The record must contain sufficient evidence to satisfy each of the plain language elements of this criterion. Therefore, please submit evidence:

- To assist in determining the beneficiary's contribution, please submit a statement from the petitioner that explains, in detail:

- How the contribution is original and been of major significance to the field; and
- How the contribution is in the scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic or business field.

- To assist in determining that the contribution is original, please submit:
  - Patents, trademarks, material with copyrights, etc.;
  - Peer-reviewed published material;
  - Licensed technology or ideas; or
  - Any evidence that shows the contribution is original.
- To assist in determining that the original contribution has been or major significance to the field, please submit:
  - Objective, documentary evidence of the significance of the beneficiary's contribution to the field;
  - Objective, documentary evidence that people throughout the field currently consider the beneficiary's work important;
  - Objective, documentary evidence that the beneficiary's major significant contribution has provoked widespread public commentary in the field or has been widely cited; and
  - Objective, documentary evidence of the beneficiary's work being implemented by others. Possible evidence may include but is not limited to:
    - Contracts with companies using the beneficiary's products;
    - Licensed technology being used by others; and
    - Patents currently being utilized and shown to be significant to the field.

In addition to the objective documentary evidence, the petitioner may submit testimony and/or support letters from experts, which discuss the beneficiary's contributions of major significance. However, letters and testimonies, if submitted, must provide as much detail as possible about the beneficiary's contribution and must explain, in detail, how the contribution was "original" (not merely replicating the work of others) and how they were of "major" significance. General statements regarding the importance of the endeavors, which are not supported by documentary evidence are insufficient.

Evidence of the display of the beneficiary's work in the field at artistic exhibitions or showcases.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence (1) of the beneficiary's work in the field, and (2) that the beneficiary's work in the field has been displayed in an artistic exhibition or showcase. The petitioner must satisfy all of these elements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion.

The record demonstrates that the petitioner participates at athletic events. Generally, these events issue awards or prizes based on an individual's placement or based on a set of standards. While the petitioner may have displayed his athletic work, the nature of these events is competitive, and cannot satisfy the plain language requirement of artistic.

According to the plain language requirements of this criterion, a qualifying exhibition or showcase must be artistic in nature. Various forms of artistic display may satisfy this requirement, including visual art, performing arts, music, graphic art, and fine art.

As such, the submitted evidence does not meet this criterion.

The record must contain sufficient evidence to satisfy each of the plain language elements of this criterion. Therefore, please submit evidence:

- To assist in determining that the work displayed was created by the beneficiary, the petitioner may submit:
  - Objective documentary evidence that the work was primarily created by the beneficiary;
  - Materials created for the purpose of promoting the beneficiary's artistic works; or
  - Sales records listing the beneficiary as the creator of the sold works.
- To assist in determining that the venues where the beneficiary's work has been displayed qualify as artistic

exhibitions or showcases, the petitioner may submit:

- Objective documentary evidence that the venue (virtual or otherwise) where the beneficiary's work was displayed were artistic exhibitions or showcases; or
- Materials created to promote and publicize the artistic exhibitions or showcases.

Comparable Evidence

8 C.F.R. Section 204.5(h)(4) states that if the above standards do not readily apply to the beneficiary's occupation, the petitioner may submit comparable evidence to establish the beneficiary's eligibility. The petitioner asserts that 204.5(h)(3)(vii) does not apply to his occupation.

However, the petitioner did not declare and demonstrate why the standards do not readily apply to his occupation. A general unsupported assertion that the listed evidentiary criterion does not readily apply to the petitioner's occupation is not probative. The burden is on the petitioner to demonstrate this. As such, this evidence will not be considered in the context of "comparable"

Conclusion

As discussed above, the beneficiary has not garnered a one-time achievement award or met at least three of the ten criteria. As such, USCIS is affording the petitioner the opportunity to submit additional evidence to establish that the beneficiary meets the regulatory criteria. The response to this request should address the insufficiencies articulated by USCIS in this request.

Additionally, meeting the minimum regulatory criteria outlined above, alone will not establish eligibility for the E11 immigrant classification. Any evidence submitted in response to this request, should also articulate how the evidence establishes that the beneficiary possesses the required high level of expertise for the E11 immigrant classification.

This is the petitioner's opportunity to articulate further details or provide additional evidence in regards to how the evidence submitted in the initial filing or in response to this Request for Evidence establishes that the beneficiary meets the requirements regarding the required high level of expertise for the immigrant classification.

Establishing eligibility for the high level of expertise required for the E11 immigrant classification is based on the beneficiary possessing:

- Sustained national or international acclaim.
  - In determining whether the beneficiary has enjoyed "sustained" national or international acclaim, such acclaim must be maintained. A beneficiary may have achieved extraordinary ability in the past but then failed to maintain a comparable level of acclaim thereafter; and,

- Achievements that have been recognized in the field of expertise, indicating that the beneficiary is one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor.

In conclusion, when ultimately making a final decision regarding eligibility, USCIS will first evaluate the evidence submitted by the petitioner to determine which regulatory criteria the beneficiary meets in part one of the analysis. If the petitioner establishes that the beneficiary has received a one-time achievement (a major internationally recognized award) or meets at least three of the antecedent evidentiary prongs, then USCIS will evaluate all of the evidence in the record to make a final merits determination of whether or not the petitioner, by a preponderance of the evidence, has demonstrated that the beneficiary has sustained national or international acclaim and that the beneficiary's achievements have been recognized in the field of expertise, indicating that the beneficiary is one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor.

This is the petitioner's opportunity to meet his legal burden of proof to establish eligibility in all respects. Whenever any person makes an application for an immigration benefit, he shall bear the burden of proof to establish eligibility for the benefit sought. Therefore, the petitioner must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, in other words, that it is more likely than not, that the beneficiary is fully qualified for the benefit sought. Accordingly, the decision will be based on the initial evidence submitted upon filing and all additional evidence submitted in response to this request.

PLACE THE ATTACHED COVERSHEET AND THIS ENTIRE LETTER ON TOP OF YOUR RESPONSE. SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE WITHOUT THE COVERSHEET AND THIS LETTER WILL DELAY PROCESSING OF YOUR CASE AND MAY RESULT IN A DENIAL.

Sincerely,

Carrie M. Selby
Acting Associate Director, Service Center Operations

May 22, 2026

Via USPS

USCIS/TSC
ATTN: RFE/NOID/NOIR/NOIT
6046 N BELT LINE RD STE 140
IRVING, TX 75038-0014

PREMIUM PROCESSING REQUEST

Re: Response to Request for Evidence dated March 16, 2026.
DO NASCIMENTO, Rafael
IOE0935791493

Dear Sir or Madam,

This letter is respectfully submitted as a response to the request for evidence dated March 16, 2026. We are submitting the additional requested evidence and providing new documentation in support of Mr. Nascimento's application.

The RFE is responded to timely. It was dated March 16, 2026, with a response deadline of June 11, 2026.

In the document, USCIS requested additional evidence that Mr. Nascimento will continue to work in his area of claimed extraordinary ability and that his entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States. Moreover, further evidence for the following eligibility criteria required for the classification under section 203(b)(1)(A) was requested in the Request for Evidence from Mr. Nascimento:

i. *Receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor.*
ii. *Documentation of the beneficiary's membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought and that require outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields.*
iii. *Published material about the beneficiary in professional or major trade publications or other major media relating to the beneficiary's work in the field for which classification is sought.*
v. *Beneficiary's original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field.*
vii. *Evidence that the beneficiary has performed in a leading or critical role for organizations or establishments that have a distinguished reputation*.

This letter outlines previous and additional evidence demonstrating that Mr. Nascimento qualifies as an alien of extraordinary ability pursuant to INA 203(b)(1)(A) in **Athletics – Mixed Martial**

Arts. In addition, it clearly demonstrates that he qualifies in the second part of the analysis as he has proven sustainable national and international acclaim and his achievements have been recognized in the field of expertise, indicating that, by applying the **preponderance of evidence evidentiary standard ("more likely that not")**, he is one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor. *Kazarian v. USCIS*, 596 F.3d 1115 (9th Cir. 2010).

The content of this letter is divided into chapters per the request of evidence criterion to clearly address all requests necessary to resume processing Mr. Nascimento's Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker of extraordinary ability.

Response to USCIS note regarding omitted exhibits referenced in the initial filing

USCIS noted that the petitioner provided an exhibit list indicating that the record included Exhibits A through H, while the evidence initially submitted only contained Exhibits A through D. The omission of certain referenced exhibits resulted from an inadvertent clerical oversight during the final assembly of the filing package, and we truly appreciate USCIS note and apologize for this administrative issue. Through this response, we respectfully submit the previously omitted exhibits corresponding now to **Exhibits E through G**, which contain additional evidence establishing Mr. Nascimento's eligibility under each of the regulatory criteria claimed in the petition and reinforce the eligibility already asserted in the original filing.

A. Eligibility for extraordinary ability classification:

Mr. Nascimento seeks to enter the United States to continue work in the area of extraordinary ability, and his entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States

In the initial filing, Mr. Nascimento submitted his personal statement, professional portfolio, and sponsorship statement letter from Valter Paiva Rocha Junior. USCIS questioned whether the evidence submitted with the initial petition sufficiently established that Mr. Nascimento intends to continue working in the United States in the same field in which he achieved sustained national and international acclaim and whether his entry would substantially benefit prospectively the United States. However, the record, as supplemented through this response, demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento intends to continue his professional **activities in the exact field** in which he has attained extraordinary ability, namely professional mixed martial arts ("MMA"), and that his continued participation in the U.S. combat sports industry will prospectively benefit the United States.

The USCIS Policy Manual provides that a beneficiary seeking classification as an individual of extraordinary ability must intend to continue work in the area of expertise forming the basis of the extraordinary ability claim. Here, the evidence establishes complete continuity between Mr. Nascimento's prior internationally recognized achievements and his intended activities in the United States. As demonstrated through his revised personal statement, expert testimonial letters, and evidence of ongoing MMA competitions in the United States under the Legacy Fighting Alliance ("LFA") promotion, Mr. Nascimento intends to continue competing professionally in high-level MMA events in the United States, precisely the same field in which he garnered sustained acclaim abroad. Unlike cases where a beneficiary seeks to transition into a materially distinct occupation, such as coaches, Mr. Nascimento seeks to continue directly performing as a

professional MMA athlete and envisions the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), thereby satisfying the regulatory requirement that he continue work within his area of extraordinary ability.

Moreover, the evidence demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States. Although the statute and regulations broadly interpret the "substantial benefit" requirement, the record here establishes concrete prospective benefits arising from Mr. Nascimento's continued professional participation in the U.S. MMA industry. The submitted evidence confirms that Mr. Nascimento is **actively engaged in professional competitions associated with the LFA brand, a recognized MMA organization operating within the United States and widely regarded as a developmental platform for elite fighters advancing into major international promotions**. Through his participation in these events, Mr. Nascimento contributes to the continued growth, competitiveness, visibility, and commercial vitality of the U.S. combat sports sector, an industry generating substantial economic activity through sporting events, athlete promotion, training operations, sponsorships, broadcasting, and fan engagement.

Notably, Mr. Nascimento is positioned to generate measurable economic and industry-specific benefits to the United States through his continued progression within the MMA sport. His advancement toward the UFC would place him on a global stage headquartered in the United States, where elite athletes drive significant revenue through ticket sales, pay-per-view purchases, broadcasting rights, sponsorships, and merchandising. Athletes of his caliber elevate the quality of competition, which in turn sustains fan engagement and strengthens the commercial viability of events hosted across the country. His demonstrated ability to execute rare, high-level techniques and consistently perform against top-tier opponents positions him as a valuable asset in maintaining the United States' leadership role in the global MMA market.

The expert letters submitted in response confirm that Mr. Nascimento possesses highly developed technical skills, competitive experience, and professional recognition that distinguish him within the field of professional MMA. These experts clarify that his continued participation in the United States will elevate the competitive level of events, contribute to athlete development and technical exchange within the sport, and strengthen the quality and international profile of U.S.-based MMA competitions. **Collectively, the evidence establishes not merely speculative plans, but a concrete continuation of professional activities already underway within the United States.** To demonstrate that Mr. Nascimento has concrete and objective short- and medium-term plans to continue to work in the area of claimed extraordinary ability and that his work will substantially benefit prospectively the United States, we are submitting the new supporting evidence under **Exhibit A**:

> **Exhibit A.1:** Mr. Nascimento's revised personal statement, clarifying on how he intends to work and continue contributing and benefiting prospectively the United States (April 6, 2026).
>
> **Exhibit A.2:** Expert Letter from Lyoto *"The Dragon"* Machida.
>
> **Exhibit A.3:** Letter of Support from Chinzo Machida.

Exhibit A.4: Printout LFA official website with recent fight showcasing Mr. Nascimento, demonstrating his active work and contribution to his field.

B. Evidence of Extraordinary Ability

1. Initial Evidence of Extraordinary Ability

Criterion 1. Evidence of the beneficiary's receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards in the field of endeavor.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence: (1) of the beneficiary's receipt of a prize or award; (2) that the prize or award is recognized nationally or internationally; and (3) that the award or prize is granted for excellence in the field of endeavor. The petitioner must satisfy all these requirements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion.

The Officer acknowledged that Mr. Nascimento was the recipient of multiple awards after accessing the initially submitted credible evidence, namely "the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) 2025 Fans' Choice Award for LFA Submission of the Year in 2025, he was the winner of his bout at Jungle Fight Championship 99 in November 2019, he won "Fight of the Night" distinction at the New Corpore Extreme (NCE 23) in 2018, and he has won multiple MMA contests in Legacy Fighting Alliance Competition". The RFE also stated that "While these prizes or awards reflect institutional recognition for excellence, they do not reflect national or international recognition for excellence in the field. The record contains insufficient evidence to demonstrate that these awards are recognized beyond the awarding sponsors on a national or international level." For this reason, the focus will shift to the consideration that these are **lesser nationally or internationally** recognized awards **for excellence** in athletics (and not merely regional recognitions).

In the original submission, as evidence to demonstrate that the awards are lesser nationally or internationally recognized for excellence in the field, Mr. Nascimento provided: (1) the organizational profile of LFA, officially demonstrating its standing as a premier U.S. and international MMA promotion and feeder league of UFC; (2) printout of UFC's electronically stored information obtained on their website with the unified rules of MMA (which includes LFA and Jungle Fight rules), demonstrating the judging criteria for selecting the winners, and; (3) printout of Jungle Fight organizational story demonstrating its national prominence and international recognition in the athletics field.

The burden of the applicant's proof to establish every element of a given criteria is that of the **preponderance of evidence.** Such standard of proof determines that, even if there is a doubt, if the presented evidence is relevant, probative, and credible establishing that the claim "is probably true" or "more likely than not", then applicant has satisfied the standard of proof. Thus, given all the evidence presented by Mr. Nascimento, it is conspicuous that he has satisfied the standard of proof.

1.1. That the prize or award is recognized nationally or internationally; That the prize or award is granted for excellence in the beneficiary's field.

The Officer stated that "the limited evidence of the media coverage of the 'awards' is insufficient to establish the level of national or international recognition associated with the awards. The

submitted evidence does not demonstrate, for example, that the award winners receive a level of media coverage associated with nationally or internationally recognized awards in the field."

Moreover, USCIS determined that the record lacked sufficient objective evidence establishing that the awards are nationally or internationally recognized for excellence in the field of martial arts. Specifically, USCIS noted that much of the submitted information originated from the awarding organization itself and therefore did not independently establish the award's broader recognition or significance within the field. USCIS further indicated that the record did not sufficiently demonstrate the competitive standards, selection criteria, limitations on competitors, or overall national or international prestige associated with the awards.

Mr. Nascimento has submitted several pictures of the competitions taking place **all over the world (which demonstrates the geographic scope from which candidates may apply)**, official organization's information about the relevance of the awards, the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports unified rules containing the uniform judging criteria for *all* MMA competitions, with all the foregoing serving to substantiate the international relevance and distinguished caliber of LFA competitions and the national relevance of Jungle Fight competitions. However, there is no explanation as to the reasons why this evidence is considered insufficient to establish the national or international relevance of the awards and that they are granted for excellence in the field of athletics. We believe that this evidence may have been inadvertently overlooked, as it clearly supports Mr. Nascimento's claim.

AAO reasoned in *Matter of Chawathe* that the "preponderance of the evidence" standard requires that the evidence, which must be **relevant, probative, and credible,** demonstrated that the applicant claim is "probably true," where the determination of "truth" is made based on the factual circumstances of each individual case. Notably, the RFE does not assert the reasons why the submitted evidence is inadmissible or insufficient to establish that the awards are lesser nationally or internationally recognized awards granted for excellence in the field.

Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) - internationally known MMA promotion (multiple first place victories).

As previously submitted under exhibit B.2.a, official information published on the organization's website confirms that LFA operates as a **premier professional MMA promotion with broad visibility and influence within the global combat sports industry**. The organization publicly promotes events across the United States, maintains international broadcasting and media partnerships, and **is widely recognized as a platform for elite fighters and the official feeder to UFC**[1]. Importantly, Mr. Nascimento himself is identified on the official LFA champions roster as the Interim Lightweight Champion, demonstrating that his title was awarded within a professionally recognized organization operating at a nationally and internationally visible level within the MMA industry. **Accordingly, contrary to USCIS's concern that the awards lacked recognition beyond the awarding organization itself, the submitted evidence establishes that the distinction conferred upon Mr. Nascimento is directly tied to an organization possessing**

[1] As can be demonstrate through the accolade within Mr. Nascimento's petition, including letters of support and publicly available information.

substantial recognition, visibility, and prestige within the international field of mixed martial arts.

While USCIS noted that portions of the evidence concerning LFA's recognition originated from the organization's own materials, **neither the governing regulation nor the USCIS Policy Manual imposes a requirement that evidence of national or international recognition must exclusively derive from third-party publications in order to satisfy 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i)**. The relevant inquiry is whether the submitted evidence, considered in its totality, demonstrates that the prizes or awards are nationally or internationally recognized for excellence in the field. With all due respect, nothing within the regulation or applicable policy guidance provides that recognition evidenced through official organizational materials is inherently insufficient or incapable of establishing the national or international significance of the distinction.

Nevertheless, to aid USCIS's request and reinforce the objective recognition associated with Mr. Nascimento's achievements, the petitioner submits with this response independent media publications and professional MMA industry sources recognizing LFA as a nationally visible and internationally recognized professional MMA organization operating as a principal developmental platform for athletes advancing into the UFC. These independent sources describe LFA as one of the sport's leading developmental organizations and confirm its recognized standing within the professional CMMA industry.

Furthermore, the international prestige and recognition of LFA competitions, and therefore the awards received from the organization, are supported by the broadcasting of its fights on major sports streaming channels such as ESPN, Combate (Globo Group) and through its new partnership with VICE TV, an Emmy Award-winning television network available in more than 40 million U.S. cable and satellite households, in addition to international distribution platforms.

Regarding whether the awards are received for excellence in the field, the previously submitted evidence under exhibit B.2.b, establishes that victories obtained within LFA are granted based upon **objective standards of athletic excellence** governed by the official Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports ("ABC"), the principal regulatory body overseeing professional MMA competition in the United States. **The submitted rules demonstrate that professional MMA contests are not subjective exhibitions or popularity-based events, but rather highly regulated athletic competitions governed through standardized technical and judging criteria applicable across sanctioned professional events**.

The Unified Rules in the record provide that all MMA bouts are evaluated and scored by a minimum of three judges utilizing the "10-Point Must System," with judges specifically instructed to evaluate objective performance factors including "effective striking/grappling," "effective aggressiveness," and "control of the fighting area." The rules further establish detailed scoring criteria assessing "impact," "dominance," and "duration," including the fighter's ability to impose effective offense, execute successful grappling techniques, inflict visible damage, maintain strategic control, and attempt fight-ending actions. These standards confirm that victories in professional MMA competitions are awarded through technical evaluation of athletic excellence.

Moreover, the fact that LFA victories are widely known as the official feeder to the UFC, the highest MMA recognition, collectively demonstrates that the awards are granted for excellence.

Finally, USCIS requested objective documentary evidence concerning previous winners associated with LFA in order to evaluate whether victories obtained within the organization possess the requisite national or international recognition in the field of athletics. The submitted evidence directly responds to this request and demonstrates that LFA competitions have served as a recognized platform for elite athletes who later achieved substantial international prominence within professional mixed martial arts. **(please refer to the letter of support submitted herein under exhibit A.2.).**

Specifically, the supporting documents includes evidence concerning former LFA competitors and champions who subsequently became internationally recognized athletes in the sport. For example, Victor Altamirano, a former LFA Flyweight Champion, currently competes in the UFC, and has become internationally recognized within the professional MMA community. Similarly, Sean O'Malley, widely known as "Suga," an American professional MMA athlete and former UFC Bantamweight Champion who competed in LFA prior to achieving global prominence as one of the most recognizable figures in the sport. The petitioner also submits evidence regarding Alex Pereira, known professionally as "Poatan," a Brazilian athlete and former UFC Middleweight and Light Heavyweight Champion internationally recognized as one of the most accomplished combat sports athletes of his generation.

As demonstrated by the submitted evidence supporting the record, the awards and titles conferred by LFA satisfy the regulatory framework under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i) and the corresponding USCIS Policy Manual guidance concerning nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field. The documentation clearly demonstrates that LFA operates as a professionally recognized MMA organization **with substantial national and international visibility**, including broadcasting partnerships with ESPN, VICE TV, and Combate, thereby confirming the recognized significance of the competitions in which Mr. Nascimento prevailed.

Moreover, the evidence demonstrates that victories and championship titles within LFA are granted based upon objective and highly regulated standards of athletic excellence governed by the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports. These rules impose standardized judging criteria evaluating effective striking, grappling, aggressiveness, control, impact, and technical dominance, confirming that such distinctions are awarded exclusively to athletes who demonstrate excellence. Lastly, The caliber of LFA's awards previous winner corroborates to its standing as a lesser international recognized award for excellence in athletics.

Accordingly, the record clearly satisfies the relevant considerations identified in the USCIS Policy Manual, including the recognized significance of the awards within the field, the objective criteria governing their conferral, and the substantial competitive limitations inherent to elite professional MMA competition.

Jungle Fight Championship (JFC 99) – lesser nationally recognized award from a professional MMA promotion in Brazil

In November 2019, Mr. Nascimento was the fight number 01 winner at Jungle Fight Championship 99, an official event of the Jungle Fight promotion held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In the underlying petition, Mr. Nascimento submitted under exhibit B.2.c, the official website printout from *Jungle Fight* describing it as "**the largest MMA event in Latin America and the fifth largest MMA event in the world. Jungle Fight is part of a select group of the world's biggest MMA events."** Jungle Fight is Latin America's most established and influential professional mixed martial arts promotions, nationally and even internationally recognized for developing elite Brazilian fighters who later compete in major global organizations such as the UFC[2]. Therefore, the awards granted for such organization carry *at least* the level of national prestige.

The championship victory obtained by Mr. Nascimento at Jungle Fight 99 constitutes a lesser nationally recognized award for excellence within the field of professional MMA. As an initial matter, the record demonstrates the recognized reputation and significance of Jungle Fight within the global MMA industry. Independent media sources describe Jungle Fight as one of the largest and most influential MMA organizations in Latin America and Brazil, as well as a developmental platform for athletes advancing to elite international promotions such as the UFC. MMA Fighting, a widely recognized combat sports publication, specifically referred to Jungle Fight as the **"biggest Brazilian MMA promotion"** and reported that the organization **has produced more than 100 fighters who later competed in the UFC**, including internationally recognized athletes such as José Aldo, Lyoto Machida, Fabrício Werdum, Renan Barão, and John Lineker.

The additional evidence submitted within this response establishes the national recognition of Jungle Fight competitions. Independent international reporting published by MK Sports identified Jungle Fight as one of the global "Top 15" MMA organizations based on Fight Matrix rankings and noted that the organization included **51 world-ranked fighters** (**Exhibit B.11**). The same publication described Jungle Fight as "the largest mixed martial arts competition in South America" and documented participation by international athletes, including Korean competitors disputing Jungle Fight championship titles. The evidence therefore demonstrates that candidates and competitors are originate from multiple countries and compete within an internationally visible professional platform.

Regarding the reputation and public prominence of the organization granting the award, the evidence also demonstrates that Jungle Fight events receive substantial national media exposure and broadcasting partnerships. Independent reporting published through Estadão and distributed by Globo[3] confirms that Jungle Fight partnered with Rede Globo, Brazil's largest television network, for the nationally televised "Fight do Milhão" MMA reality competition, described as one of the largest MMA initiatives in Brazil. The same evidence confirms that Jungle Fight events are broadcast through Combate, Globo's dedicated martial arts channel, as well as on open television programming. **Such media partnerships corroborate the organization's recognized stature and visibility within the professional sports industry** (**Exhibit B.12**).

Additionally, Jungle Fight awards are granted based upon objective standards of athletic excellence within a highly selective professional competition environment. Championship

[2] https://junglefc.com.br/

[3] Both venues are widely recognized as major media in Brazil

victories at Jungle Fight events are awarded **only to athletes who prevail in professionally sanctioned MMA contests governed by the Official Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports, the same regulatory framework utilized in major professional organizations such as Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA)**.

Lastly, previous Jungle Fight champions and competitors demonstrates that the organization has produced athletes who later achieved international prominence within the sport, including UFC champions and title contenders. Accordingly, the totality of the submitted evidence establishes that Jungle Fight 99 constitutes a nationally and internationally recognized professional MMA distinction satisfying the requirements of 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i) and USCIS policy.

To assist to this claim and further demonstrate that the multiple LFA awards and the Jungle Fight award received by Nascimento are lesser nationally and internationally recognized award granted for excellence in the field of athletics, narrowly mixed martial arts, the petitioner is submitting previous and new supporting documents to fulfill the criteria under **Exhibit B:**

Exhibit B.1. Section A, *judging criteria*, of the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports, Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts, with the criteria to grant the award in all MMA competitions, including LFA and Jungle Fight, demonstrating that they are lesser nationally or internationally prizes or awards and that they are granted for excellence in the field.

Exhibit B.2. Independent third-party publication from Foxwoods Resort Casino describing LFA as "the number one developmental organization in the world" and one of the most respected MMA promotions internationally, further establishing the recognized significance of LFA competitions and titles within professional mixed martial arts.

Exhibit B.3. Independent third-party publication from ATL Fight Shop describing LFA as "one of the higher-level feeder leagues for the UFC," "one step below the top fight leagues," and a promotion recognized for developing elite MMA athletes competing at the highest international levels of the sport, demonstrating that they are a lesser internationally recognized award of prize.

Exhibit B.4. Official ESPN MMA schedule and event records documenting the inclusion and coverage of LFA professional MMA events alongside premier global MMA organizations and events, including UFC, PFL, Bellator-related events, and other internationally recognized combat sports promotions, thereby confirming the recognized visibility and professional stature of LFA events within one of the world's leading sports broadcasting and media platforms.

Exhibit B.5. Independent evidence confirming that LFA title fights and championship events are selected for national television broadcasting through Vice TV, including LFA heavyweight championship programming, demonstrate that they are lesser internationally recognized prizes or awards.

Exhibit B.6. Independent publication from Globo/Combate describing Legacy Fighting Alliance as "one of the most important MMA events in the world" and documenting the organization's international expansion, corroborating to show its international recognition.

Exhibit B.7. Website printout from MMA Weekly confirming that Victor Altamirano earned the distinction of LFA's all-time wins in multiple sanctioned LFA events, thereby demonstrating the highly competitive nature and recognized athletic standards governing LFA awards and championship distinctions.

Exhibit B.8. Website printout from Tapology concerning Sean O'Malley, professionally known as "Suga," former LFA fighter, documenting his professional MMA record, UFC ranking, and career achievements within the sport of mixed martial arts, demonstrating that the prizes or awards are granted for excellence in the field.

Exhibit B.9. Website printout from Tapology concerning Alex Pereira, professionally known as "Poatan", former LFA fighter, documenting his professional MMA record, UFC ranking, and internationally recognized achievements in combat sports, to demonstrate that the prize or award is grantes for excellence in the field.

Exhibit B.10. Website printout from MMA Fighting, as third-party evidence describing Jungle Fight as the "biggest Brazilian MMA promotion," thereby confirming the nationally recognized stature and reputation of the organization within the professional MMA industry.

Exhibit B.11. Website printout from MK Sports, as third-party evidence describing Jungle Fight as "the largest mixed martial arts competition in South America," thereby confirming the organization's recognized stature and visibility within the international MMA industry.

Exhibit B.12. Website printout from Estadão/MSN confirming national television broadcasting through Combate and Globo open television programming, thereby establishing the broad public visibility and nationwide media recognition associated with Jungle Fight championship events and distinctions.

Hence, the evidence on record objectively demonstrate that the LFA and Jungle Fight awards are lesser nationally or internationally recognized to recognize excellence in the field of athletics pursuant to 8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(i).

Criterion 2. Membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought that require outstanding achievement of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields.

In this specific criterion, USCIS evaluates whether the organization in which the petitioner holds current or prior membership requires demonstrated outstanding achievements in the field, as

assessed by recognized experts. Where an association offers multiple tiers of membership, the petitioner must show that their specific level was conferred based on a determination, by nationally or internationally acknowledged authorities, that the individual has achieved distinction in expertise relevant to the classification sought.

To support his petition, Mr. Nascimento provided under exhibit C.1. statement letter from LFA, confirming his membership within the professional association since august 2022 and **the criteria for the affiliation**, as well as **the LFA promotion and ancillary contract** (exhibit C.2.) between the organization and Mr. **Nascimento, objectively sections 2.1., 2.2.(b), 3, and 4.2., demonstrating that LFA's membership requires outstanding achievement of its members**, and online articles, also confirming that the organization requires outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized experts in mixed martial arts.

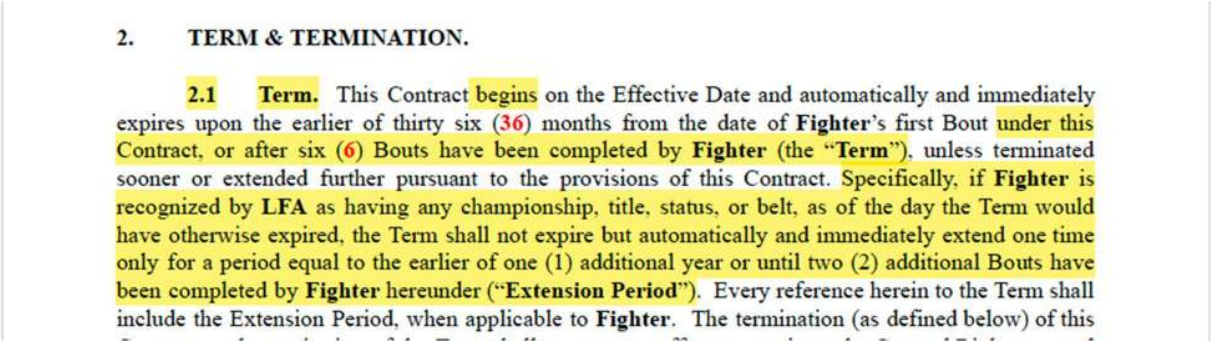
Nevertheless, the RFE stated that:

> The evidence submitted only demonstrates that the petitioner has been affiliated with the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) since August 5, 2022. **There is no objective evidence to ascertain whether the association requires outstanding achievement of its members, that outstanding achievements are judged by recognized national or international experts, and that the association is in the field for which classification is sought**. Without objective documentary evidence about the association, the petitioner impedes USCIS in determining whether the petitioner's membership with the association satisfies all of the elements within this criterion.
>
> Evidence must demonstrate that the association requires outstanding achievement as an essential condition for admission to membership. Requirements that only include employment or activity in a given field; minimum education, experience, or achievement; recommendations by colleagues or current members; or payment of dues do not satisfy this criterion since these requirements do not constitute outstanding achievements. *U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Servs., Request for Evidence re: Form I-140 Petition for Alien Worker (EB-1A), (issued March 16, 2026), at 6.*

Respectfully, the petitioner notes that LFA **does not** carry bylaws or handbooks, rather it is regulated by the Unified Rules of MMA (Exhibit B.1.) complemented by the agreement signed individually with each athlete. Mr. Nascimento's agreement was submitted as part of the initial request. The executed LFA Promotion and Ancillary Rights Contract objectively demonstrates that participation within LFA is **merit-based and conditioned upon high-level athletic performance**. **Section 1.1** grants LFA the "exclusive worldwide right" to promote the fighter's professional MMA bouts, confirming that LFA operates as an international professional combat sports organization rather than a recreational association.

Moreover, **Section 2.1** establishes that fighters recognized by LFA as holding a "championship, title, status, or belt" receive special contract extensions, thereby demonstrating that LFA formally recognizes elite competitive achievement within its organization. The agreement further

demonstrates that the **contract only begins and demands** continued participation and advancement within LFA **depend directly upon objectively measured competitive success**.



2. **TERM & TERMINATION.**

2.1 Term. This Contract begins on the Effective Date and automatically and immediately expires upon the earlier of thirty six (36) months from the date of **Fighter**'s first Bout under this Contract, or after six (6) Bouts have been completed by **Fighter** (the "**Term**"), unless terminated sooner or extended further pursuant to the provisions of this Contract. Specifically, if **Fighter** is recognized by **LFA** as having any championship, title, status, or belt, as of the day the Term would have otherwise expired, the Term shall not expire but automatically and immediately extend one time only for a period equal to the earlier of one (1) additional year or until two (2) additional Bouts have been completed by **Fighter** hereunder ("**Extension Period**"). Every reference herein to the Term shall include the Extension Period, when applicable to **Fighter**. The termination (as defined below) of this

Specifically, Section **2.2(b)(iii)** authorizes LFA to terminate or accelerate the contract if the fighter "is not declared the winner of any Bout" by the governing Athletic Commission. Likewise, **Section 3.1(a)-(g)** establishes a progressive compensation structure in which fighter purses and bonuses increase only if the athlete is repeatedly declared the winner of sanctioned professional bouts. These provisions objectively demonstrate that LFA **retains** and advances athletes based upon outstanding achievements in professional MMA competition.

Additionally, the evidence establishes that fighter achievements within LFA are judged by recognized professional experts and officials in the field of mixed martial arts. The record demonstrates that LFA bouts are governed by the Official Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports, the same regulatory framework utilized by internationally recognized organizations including the UFC. Under these rules, **professional judges** evaluate athletes according to objective technical criteria. Thus, fighter performance and victories within LFA are objectively evaluated by recognized professional authorities and experts within the field of professional MMA.

The evidence also establishes that LFA operates directly within the field for which classification is sought and possesses recognized national and international stature within professional mixed martial arts. **Section 2.1.a** of the agreement specifically references release from **exclusivity for fighters advancing to the UFC**, objectively confirming LFA's recognized position within the hierarchy of elite professional MMA organizations. Such evidence objectively demonstrates that athletes selected to compete in LFA represent a highly distinguished and competitively accomplished group of professional fighters rather than ordinary participants in the field.

Pursuant to **Section 14** of the Official Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts **(Exhibit B.1.)** adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports, all professional MMA bouts are evaluated and scored by a minimum of three judges utilizing objective technical criteria including effective striking, effective grappling, aggressiveness, control of the fighting area, and defensive performance. These same rules govern competitions within LFA, UFC, and other major professional MMA organizations, thereby demonstrating that athlete performance within LFA is objectively judged by recognized professional experts and officials in the field of mixed martial arts.

LFA is not a dues-based professional association with open admission. Rather, it is a highly selective professional MMA promotion whose roster is composed exclusively of **admitted athletes evaluated through sanctioned professional competition under the Official Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts**. Fighters are judged by licensed Athletic Commission officials and retained, promoted, compensated, and advanced based upon objective competitive success in professional bouts. Accordingly, participation within LFA inherently requires demonstrated excellence in the field of professional mixed martial arts.

Moreover, new statement letter from Edward Soares, CEO, Legacy Fighting Alliance, reinforces the criteria to become a fighter affiliated with LFA, demonstrating that it requires outstanding achievements:

> Mr. Nascimento has competed in LFA, an organization widely recognized within the United States and internationally as a primary feeder league to the UFC. LFA consistently attracts highly skilled fighters from diverse national and international backgrounds, many of whom are actively recruited into the UFC roster. As such, athletes competing in LFA are evaluated within a deeply competitive environment that reflects the upper tier of professional MMA outside of the UFC itself.
>
> Submissions at this level are not recognized arbitrarily; they are evaluated through a competitive selection process conducted by LFA leadership and technical staff, including matchmakers, executives, and professionals with extensive experience in high-level MMA.
>
> (Edward Soares, CEO, Legacy Fighting Alliance, Letter in Support of Rafael Nascimento 2–3 (Apr. 20, 2026))

The USCIS Policy Manual recognizes that qualifying memberships must reflect selection based on "outstanding achievements" as judged by recognized national or international experts in the field, but it also contemplates that the form such recognition takes may vary depending on the profession. In scientific and technology-related fields, this distinction is often demonstrated through elevated classifications within professional associations, such as "Fellow" status, where candidates are selected by panels of experts based on sustained contributions to the discipline. See USCIS Policy Manual, Vol. 6, Pt. F, Ch. 2. **However, the field of professional athletics, including MMA, does not traditionally operate through scholarly or academic membership associations of this nature. Instead, elite recognition in MMA is conferred through admission into internationally recognized professional leagues that selectively recruit athletes based exclusively on demonstrated competitive excellence, rankings, and performance against high-level opponents.**

Within MMA, organizations such as LFA serve the same gatekeeping and evaluative role that distinguished associations perform in scientific fields. As explained by LFA CEO Edward Soares, LFA is "widely recognized within the United States and internationally as a primary feeder league to the UFC," and "consistently attracts highly skilled fighters from diverse national and international backgrounds." He further confirms that athletes competing in LFA are evaluated "within a deeply competitive environment that reflects the upper tier of professional MMA outside

of the UFC itself," and that distinctions within the organization are determined by "matchmakers, executives, and professionals with extensive experience in high-level MMA."

Accordingly, while MMA lacks the formal "fellowship" structures commonly found in academic disciplines, participation, and recognition within prestigious leagues such as LFA constitute the functional equivalent of selective membership in an elite association because athletes are admitted and distinguished based on internationally recognized achievements evaluated by established experts in the sport.

In response, we hereby submit existing and newly compiled documents pursuant to USCIS request under **Exhibit C:**

> **Exhibit C.1.** Highlighted sections in the LFA promotion and ancillary rights contract between Mr. Nascimento and Legacy Fighting Alliance, with provisions that clearly demonstrate that the organization requires outstanding achievements to **become and maintaining** the status of a member, as judged by experts in the field.
>
> **Exhibit C.2.** New statement letter from Edward Soares, CEO, Legacy Fighting Alliance, dated April 20, 2026, declaring that the association requires outstanding achievement as an essential condition for admission to membership.

As such, Mr. Nascimento meets the criterion for membership in an association that requires outstanding achievement of its member, as judged by recognized experts in athletics, pursuant 8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(ii).

Criterion 3. Published material about the beneficiary in professional or major trade publications or other major media, relating to the beneficiary's work in the field for which the classification is sought.

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence that (1) the published material is related to the person and the person's specific work; (2) the publication qualifies as a professional publication, major trade publication, or major media publication.

The RFE stated that the **several articles** presented by Mr. Nascimento did not meet this criterion because "*some* of the material only cites, quotes, references, or includes a photograph of the petitioner and there is no discussion of the petitioner or his work. The plain language of this criterion requires evidence of published material that is written about the petitioner and relating to his work in the field". In addition, the adjudicator considered that "*some* of the material does not contain the author as required by the plain language of this criterion. Further, the evidence in the record is insufficient to demonstrate that the materials were published in professional, or major trade publications, or other major media.".

At the outset, the fact that some submitted media materials may primarily feature photographs of Mr. Nascimento without extensive accompanying text discussing his accomplishments or does not indicate an individual's name as the author of the publication, **does not diminish or invalidate the substantial evidence demonstrating that he satisfies this criterion**. The relevant inquiry is not whether every individual publication contains a lengthy narrative about the beneficiary's

achievements or whether an editorial staff publishes the article, but whether **the record as a whole** establishes that the beneficiary has attracted media attention and recognition within the field and that the material was, in fact, published.

Indeed, even a brief independent online search readily reveals **numerous** articles, interviews, rankings, fight analyses, promotional materials, and international combat sports coverage specifically discussing his performances, victories, technical abilities, and career progression as a professional MMA fighter. For this reason, the existence of certain image-focused publications does not undermine the broader evidentiary record, which clearly confirms that Mr. Nascimento has received sustained media recognition connected directly to his achievements and standing within the international MMA community.

The Petitioner respectfully notes that the fact that certain published materials identify the author collectively as "Editorial Staff" does not diminish the evidentiary value of the articles under this criterion. **In modern digital journalism, particularly within the sports and entertainment industries, it is common for event coverage, rankings, athlete features, and fight analyses to be published under collective editorial bylines rather than the name of an individual author**. **The relevant inquiry is whether the material was legitimately published through established media outlets and made publicly available to the general audience.**

In this case, the submitted publications were disseminated through recognized major media platforms. As a matter of fact, one of them, *Globo*, is widely known as the largest media outlet in Brazil and the Latin America. These publications remain publicly accessible, and clearly constitute independent publications. The use of collective editorial attribution in some articles does not undermine the clear evidentiary showing that Mr. Nascimento has been the subject of qualifying published material within the meaning and purpose of the regulation.

In the original submission, Mr. Nascimento provided the following evidence as a sample of the published material about him and his specific work applicable to the classification, mainly in professional and major media publications. We are summarizing the most relevant material in the following table as well as resubmitting the evidence, highlighting the points that will aid USCIS to make the final determination:

Source	Title of publication	Author and date	How it discusses Mr. Nascimento's work in athletics	Nature of publication
Ge.globo.com (online article from Globo's sport's section)	*Former gold miner Rafael Mulisha plans UFC contract: 'I deserve it'*	**Nathalia Movilla,** November 18, 2022.	Besides in citing Mr. Nascimento's name in the title of the publication, the article focuses directly on his experiences and professional trajectory, detailing his plans to secure a contract with the UFC and his personal	Online major media publication

			reflections on deserving that opportunity.	
UOL.com.br (One of the largest and most influential digital media companies in Brazil).	*Meet Rafael Mulisha, a former prospector who fights in the UFC's lower divisions in the United States*	**Editorial Staff,** September 26, 2022	Another publication that features Mr. Nascimento's name in the title and which is devoted specifically to Mr. Nascimento's personal and professional trajectory, highlighting his transition from working as a gold prospector to competing as a professional mixed martial artist in the United States. The piece focuses on his background, career development, and participation in the UFC feeder divisions	Online major media publication
Tatame magazine (tatame.com.br)	*Jungle Fight on DAZN 99 returns to Rio de Janeiro with a title fight between Brazil and Argentina in the main event*.	**Mateus Machado,** November 27, 2019.	Documents the main event featuring a title bout between Brazilian and Argentine athletes in which Mr. Nascimento participated. The publication focuses on the event, the principal fighters, and the championship context, thereby reporting directly on his professional athletic activity and competitive standing	Professional Publication (online format)
Mtesportes.com.br (Multiple articles)	***1***.*Mato Grosso residents are highlights at LFA 199 held in California.* ***2****. Fighter from Mato Grosso*	**Nilson Aranha, 1**. January 11, 2025. **2**. July 12, 2024. **3**. January 9, 2025.	**1.** Discusses Mr. Nascimento's professional work by reporting his participation in LFA 199 in California,	Professional Publication (online format)

	faces American for the LFA belt. ***3****. Rafael Nascimento and Erik Visconde fight at LFA 199, the world's biggest MMA event.*		identifying him as a featured professional MMA athlete competing in a major international event. **2.** Discusses Mr. Nascimento's professional work by covering his selection to compete for an LFA championship title bout, highlighting his competitive standing and recognition within the organization. **3.** Discusses Mr. Nascimento's professional work by detailing his participation in LFA 199, his involvement in a high-level MMA event, and his status as a professional fighter competing internationally.	

The submitted publications satisfy the regulatory requirements for professional publications and major media publications.

Regarding to the second part of the request, the Petitioner respectfully notes that the evidence initially provided fully satisfies the regulatory requirements for published material under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(iii). The Request for Evidence appears to apply standards that are not contained in either the regulation or the USCIS Policy Manual. Specifically, neither the regulation nor the Policy Manual identifies a **mandatory or exclusive source** for circulation metrics, nor do they prohibit the use of recognized digital analytics platforms such as SimilarWeb to demonstrate online audience reach and public accessibility. To the contrary, USCIS guidance merely requires petitioners to provide evidence sufficient to establish the nature, intended audience, and significance of the publication. In modern digital journalism, independent web analytics services such as SimilarWeb are routinely utilized by businesses, advertisers, media professionals, and market analysts to evaluate website traffic, audience engagement, and publication reach. The fact

that the evidence was derived from SimilarWeb does not diminish its reliability or probative value absent any regulatory authority excluding such evidence.

Moreover, the RFE conflates the distinct concepts of "major media" and "professional publications." The regulation is written in the disjunctive and recognizes "professional or major trade publications or other major media." Accordingly, not every qualifying publication must independently establish nationwide circulation comparable to mainstream mass-market media. Rather, publications directed toward a specialized professional audience may qualify precisely because of their intended readership within the relevant field. Here, the submitted evidence demonstrated both the intended audience and the professional nature of the outlets at issue. The articles concern professional MMA competition, athlete rankings, title fights, and coverage of internationally recognized organizations such as LFA, and were published by sports journalism outlets specifically directed toward combat sports audiences and MMA followers.

The Petitioner also provided background information regarding the publications **to demonstrate that the outlets are legitimate, established, and professionally operated media entities with editorial oversight and specialized sports journalism focus**. This evidence was submitted to establish the publications' reliability, intended audience, and professional nature within the MMA industry. Importantly, the record contains official printouts directly from the media outlets themselves, including publication titles, dates, authorship information where available, and publicly accessible article links. The publications therefore constitute independently disseminated editorial content; not self-published material created by the Petitioner.

Additionally, to the RFE references concerns regarding Wikipedia and user-generated content. Respectfully, such concerns are inapplicable to the present petition because the Petitioner **never** submitted Wikipedia materials or relied upon Wikipedia as evidence. Likewise, the Petition did not rely on blogs, open-source editing platforms, or user-generated content. Instead, the evidence consists exclusively of printouts from official media publications and established sports journalism outlets discussing Mr. Nascimento's professional career, performances, title opportunities, rankings, and participation in internationally recognized MMA events. The cited concerns regarding unreliable open-source internet materials therefore do not apply to the evidence submitted in this case.

Finally, the totality of the evidence demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento has been the subject of qualifying published material relating directly to his work as a professional MMA athlete. The record includes **multiple** articles identifying him by name, discussing his participation in LFA events, title fights, rankings, and professional achievements, and published through recognized sports media outlets directed to the MMA community and are publicly available for consultation, if needed. The articles include the required publication titles, dates, and authorship information where available, along with certified English translations where necessary. Accordingly, the evidentiary record satisfies both the plain language and intended purpose of the regulation.

To enable a better evaluation of this criterion, we are submitting the following documents under **Exhibit D**:

> **Exhibit D.1.** Previously submitted major media and professional publications about Mr. Nascimento, with highlighted required information, which clearly

demonstrate that the materials were published and that the published material relates to the beneficiary and the beneficiary's work in the field.

Exhibit D.2. Supporting evidence demonstrating the nature of major media publication for Globo website and UOL.com.br, containing official data about online circulation.

Exhibit D.3. Supporting evidence demonstrating the nature of professional media publication for Sherdog and Tatame online publications, containing official information about the intended audience.

All things considered, Mr. Nascimento meets this criterion since material about him and his work were published in several major and professional media related to athletics, in strict observance with USCIS evaluation standards for 8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(iii).

Criterion 7. Display of the Petitioner's work in the field in Public Exhibitions – athletic and artistic nature (claimed as comparable evidence)

Beginning with this regulatory criterion under Exhibit E, the Petitioner, through this counsel, respectfully resubmits all supporting evidence that should have been originally submitted with the initial petition. Counsel respectfully submits that reintroducing these materials into the present record will assist the Officer in conducting a complete and accurate review of the evidentiary record and will clearly demonstrate Mr. Nascimento's eligibility for the requested classification. The resubmission of these materials should not be construed as unduly repetitive evidence, but as a good-faith effort to ensure that all previously submitted exhibits are properly accessible and fully available for adjudicative review.

When adjudicating the criterion under 8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(vii), USCIS first determines whether the work that was displayed is the person's work product. Second, USCIS determines whether the venues (virtual or otherwise) were a public showing as per Merriam- webster Dictionary. The guidelines go on with additional clarifications by stating that "While the dictionary definition includes public showings other than those that are artistic in nature, the plain language of the criterion includes the modifier "artistic" and explicitly requires that the exhibitions or showcases be artistic in nature. USCIS only considers non-artistic exhibitions or showcases as part of a properly supported claim of comparable evidence".

Moreover, under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(4), when the enumerated regulatory criteria do not readily apply to a beneficiary's occupation, the petitioner may submit comparable evidence to establish eligibility for the classification. **The regulation expressly recognizes that the nature of extraordinary ability occupations varies significantly across professional fields and therefore permits adjudicators to consider alternative forms of evidence that are functionally equivalent to the listed criteria**. Fort this reason, the Petitioner respectfully submits that the criterion relating to the display of work at artistic exhibitions or showcases should be analyzed in Mr. Nascimento's case through the comparable evidence framework because the traditional form of "artistic exhibitions" does not readily apply to the occupation of professional mixed martial arts athlete. In the context of MMA, internationally broadcast fights, featured appearances in elite professional organizations, televised main events, and performances before live audiences

constitute the functional equivalent of public exhibitions of the beneficiary's highly technical and performance-based work.

The RFE acknowledges that the Petitioner publicly performs and displays his athletic abilities during professional MMA events but takes the position that such events are inherently competitive in nature because they involve rankings, awards, or performance-based outcomes. Accordingly, USCIS concluded that these athletic competitions do not satisfy the plain language of the regulatory criterion relating to artistic exhibitions or showcases.

As argued in the initial petition, the **comparable evidence** submitted regarding the public exhibition of Mr. Nascimento's work must be analyzed within the professional structure of the field of professional athletics and Mixed Martial **Arts**. Unlike traditional artistic fields, where public exhibitions may occur in galleries, museums, or formal performance venues, MMA athletes publicly exhibit their work through internationally broadcast sporting events, televised fight cards, and participation in prestigious professional organizations such as LFA and UFC. Even if the regulatory criterion regarding public exhibitions does not readily apply to Mr. Nascimento's occupation in its traditional form, USCIS may nevertheless consider the submitted evidence as comparable evidence because professional MMA events constitute the functional equivalent of public exhibitions in the athletic context, where athletes publicly display highly technical, performance-based skills before live and international audiences.

Alternatively, the Petitioner respectfully requests that the criterion may also be appropriately considered **in light of the artistic nature of mixed martial arts itself**, which combines athletic competition with expressive, choreographic, and highly technical martial arts performance. For the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts[4], mixed martial arts ("MMA") is also a form of artistic and expressive performance involving aesthetics, choreography, embodiment, symbolism, and audience engagement. The study describes MMA as a "generative drama" in which fighters publicly display highly technical martial arts movements that communicate creativity, discipline, identity, and expression before spectators, thereby supporting the proposition that MMA possesses a significant artistic dimension extending beyond pure sport.

The supporting evidence submitted with this response demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento has publicly displayed his work in martial arts across numerous prestigious competitions and events throughout his career, since his professional debut in 2013 at state competitions to the Brazil's and the globe's most respected organizations.

Since 2022, Mr. Nascimento has publicly exhibited his highly technical mixed martial arts work **before live and international audiences** through participation in elite professional MMA events held throughout the United States. His appearances in major LFA events, including LFA 135, LFA 147, LFA 155, LFA 161, LFA 188, LFA 199, and LFA 215, demonstrate repeated public presentation of his athletic and artistic performance within one of the world's leading MMA developmental organizations. His consistent participation in main-card and main-event fights, combined with multiple nominations for major LFA awards and recognition as Submission of the

[4] https://digitalmaine.com/academic/72/

Year nominee in 2025 and recently awarded in 2026, reinforces that his work has been publicly displayed.

The competitive martial arts events in which Mr. Nascimento has participated can be classified as public showings of athletic skills. In these professional competitions, Mr. Nascimento performed in front of live audiences and global livestreams, showcasing his technical expertise and athleticism under the scrutiny of official judges and spectators alike. Moreover, mixed martial arts are not solely a competitive sport, but also a highly technical and expressive martial discipline involving choreography, timing, movement, creativity, and performance before an audience. As such, MMA possesses significant artistic characteristics, rendering these public competitions functionally comparable to artistic exhibitions or showcases within the meaning and intended purpose of the regulation.

Applying the foregoing regulatory framework to the present case, the evidence establishes that Mr. Nascimento has publicly exhibited his highly technical mixed martial arts work before live and international audiences through participation in elite professional MMA events throughout the United States and abroad. The record demonstrates that his performances occurred in internationally broadcast fight cards, televised main events, and high-profile professional organizations such as LFA, one of the world's leading MMA developmental promotions and a recognized feeder organization to the UFC. These events were not private, but public showcases viewed by live spectators, digital streaming audiences, judges, commentators, promoters, and members of the international MMA community. Through these appearances, Mr. Nascimento publicly displayed his work product underlying his claimed extraordinary ability: his technical martial arts performance, grappling expertise, striking ability, creativity in submissions, tactical execution, and professional athletic expression.

Furthermore, the evidence demonstrates that the submitted events are functionally comparable to artistic exhibitions or showcases within the meaning of 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(4). Because the traditional concept of an "artistic exhibition" does not readily apply to the occupation of a professional MMA athlete, the comparable evidence provision permits USCIS to evaluate equivalent forms of public performance and technical display within the professional realities of the field. Here, Mr. Nascimento's participation in nationally and internationally broadcast MMA events served as the athletic equivalent of public exhibitions, where he publicly performed before audiences while his technical abilities were evaluated by judges, commentators, industry professionals, and spectators. Unlike ordinary recreational sporting activity, these events involved elite-level professional martial arts performances within globally recognized organizations.

Additionally, although MMA is a highly competitive combat sport, it also involves the expressive performance of highly technical martial disciplines before an audience. Fighters develop individualized styles through the creative integration of striking, grappling, movement, timing, and strategy, transforming combat into a sophisticated form of technical and artistic expression. As recognized by the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, MMA incorporates aesthetics, choreography, creativity, embodiment, and public spectatorship consistent with expressive performance art. Thus, even if USCIS determines that the criterion does not traditionally apply to athletics in its ordinary form, the submitted evidence nevertheless satisfies the criterion through the comparable evidence framework expressly authorized under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(4).

For these reasons, the petitioner respectfully submits that the totality of the evidence demonstrates that he has publicly exhibited his work through artistic-in-nature and performance-based professional MMA events before live and international audiences. The evidence, therefore, satisfies the purpose and intended scope of 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(vii), or alternatively qualifies as proper comparable evidence under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(4).

In support with this criterion, we submit the previous listed supporting evidence under **Exhibit E**:

> **Exhibit E.1**. Representative Evidence of Numerous Occasions on Which Mr. Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento Publicly Exhibited His Work in Artistic-in-Nature Professional MMA Events (2019–2025).
>
> **Exhibit E.2**. Additional Representative Evidence and Miscellaneous Photographs Demonstrating Numerous Occasions on Which Mr. Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento Publicly Exhibited His Work in Artistic-in-Nature Professional MMA Events, Including LFA Main Events, International Broadcast Competitions, Professional Fight Photography, and Publicly Disseminated Images of His Technical Martial Arts Performances.

Therefore, Mr. Nascimento meets this criterion as comparable evidence under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(4) that his work's product was displayed in major public martial arts events that can be both classified as having athletics and artistic nature pursuant to 8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(vii).

Supporting Criterion - The person's original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field (8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(v)).

The plain language of this criterion requires evidence (1) of the beneficiary's contributions related to scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic or business fields, (2) that the beneficiary's contribution is original, and (3) that the beneficiary's original contribution has been of major significance. The petitioner must satisfy all of these elements to meet the plain language requirements of this criterion. USCIS Policy Manual instructs that officers must evaluate whether the beneficiary's work has been adopted, relied upon, or recognized by others in the field, and not merely whether the beneficiary is personally skilled or successful. Accordingly, for athletes, this criterion is satisfied only when a specialized technique or contribution has demonstrable field-level influence, rather than representing individual athletic excellence alone.

Within the professional mixed martial arts community, Mr. Nascimento has become widely known for his specialized and highly effective use of **the calf slicer** submission technique, following in the lineage of elite submission experts such as Charles "Do Bronx" Oliveira[5]. Multiple media references and expert testimonials identify Mr. Nascimento as a fighter specifically associated with this submission, noting that opponents, commentators, and peers recognize the calf slicer as a defining feature of his competitive identity.

[5] Charles Oliveira, widely known as "Charles do Bronx," is one of the most accomplished submission specialists in UFC history and a former UFC Lightweight Champion recognized internationally for his elite Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and finishing ability. Source: https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/fighters/charles-oliveira-do-bronx.

The calf slicer is a technically complex lower-limb submission that applies compressive force to the calf muscle and Achilles region, producing intense pain and mechanical leverage. Although the technique predates Mr. Nascimento and has long existed in grappling and jiu-jitsu traditions, it is rarely employed successfully at the highest levels of professional mixed martial arts due to its technical difficulty, positional risk, and limited margin for error. Effective execution requires exceptional timing, positional control, and biomechanical precision. **As a result, only a small number of elite athletes worldwide are known for applying this technique in high stakes.**

Although the independent expert letters alone do not constitute the cornerstone of this criterion, they strongly corroborate the media recognition linking the calf slicer submission to Mr. Nascimento and his original contributions to professional MMA. The evidence can persuasively demonstrate that he **developed a distinctive, refined, and highly effective adaptation of the calf slicer that has achieved recognition within professional mixed martial arts**. The evidence also establishes that his application of the technique is uncommon at the professional level and sufficiently original that opponents, coaches, and analysts specifically prepare for and study it as part of tactical fight strategy, thereby demonstrating that his contribution reflects originality and major impact on professional MMA consistent with the criterion under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(v).

As a matter of fact, in January 2025, Mr. Nascimento executed a rare calf slicer submission victory at LFA 199, **an achievement that led to his LFA's Submission of the Year Award in 2025**. **Mr. Nascimento is only the second athlete in the history of professional MMA to secure a victory using this specific submission, following former UFC Lightweight Champion Charles Oliveira**. The recognition of the same specialized submission by one of the world's leading MMA organizations strongly demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento developed a distinctive and identifiable technical application associated with his professional performance and competitive identity.

Rodrigo Freitas, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu World Champion (IBJJF, 2014) and a 4th Degree Black Belt, with more than twenty years dedicated to high level competition in Brazil and the United States, indicates that: "Mr. Nascimento has maintained a high level of efficiency. A prominent example of this was his calf slicer victory at LFA 199 (January 2025). This performance serves as objective evidence of the viability of his technical system, as he is one of the very few athletes in the documented history of the sport to have successfully implemented this specific technique in a major professional organization.".

Moreover, Lyoto Machida's letter **(Exhibit A.2.),** former UFC Light Heavyweight champion, clarifies that:

> From a technical standpoint, Rafael distinguishes himself through his exceptional grappling ability, particularly his capacity to apply high-level submissions with precision, timing, and control. This is exemplified by his execution of a rare and highly technical calf slicer submission, an advanced and uncommon technique in professional MMA, which earned him the "Submission of the Year" award. The successful application of such a complex maneuver against a resisting, skilled opponent reflects his technical mastery, creativity, and composure at the highest level of competition. Importantly, this is not an isolated achievement; rather, it is consistent with his overall performance profile, where he repeatedly demonstrates

> the ability to execute advanced techniques reliably. Fighters capable of maintaining this level of technical execution against qualified opponents represent a select group within the professional MMA field, further underscoring Rafael's distinction and elite standing.

Melsik Baghdasaryan, UFC featherweight athlete, corroborates to Mr. Nascimento's recognition linked to the calf slicer technique:

> Internationally, Rafael has established himself as a prominent athlete in Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), one of the world's leading MMA organizations and a recognized gateway to the UFC. Since signing with LFA in 2022, he has had multiple main card and main event appearances, with notable wins over Marcus McGhee, Justin Wetzell, Jordan Winski, Brandon Altomare, and Arnold Jimenez. These performances led to important recognition, including five LFA award nominations in 2023 for Fighter of the Year, Submission of the Year, Fight of the Year, Knockout of the Year, and Best Photo of the Year, as well as a new Submission of the Year nomination in 2025 after his rare calf slicer finish, a technique that has only been successfully used to end a professional MMA bout by him and UFC champion Charles "Do Bronx" Oliveira. In current professional rankings, he is ranked among the top featherweights in North America and California, reflecting his position at the top of an intense, competitive field.

Else, Joshua Lawrence Barnett, known internationally as Josh "The Warmaster" Barnett, UFC Heavyweight Champion (2002), states that: "In January 2025, Mr. Nascimento executed a calf slicer submission at LFA 199. To provide context for the importance of this feat: Mr. Nascimento is only the second athlete in the history of professional MMA to finish a bout with this specific technique, following only the legendary UFC Champion Charles Oliveira."

Taken together, the independent expert letters, widespread media recognition, professional commentary, the 2025 LFA Submission of the Year award, constitute compelling evidence that Mr. Nascimento has made original contributions of major significance within professional mixed martial arts under 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(v). The record demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento's refined execution of the calf slicer has achieved recognition beyond his personal athletic success and has influenced professional awareness, opponent preparation, technical analysis, and competitive strategy within the MMA community. Independent experts confirm that his adaptation of the technique is uncommon at the elite professional level, while media outlets and professional organizations have specifically associated the submission with Mr. Nascimento's name and fighting style. Accordingly, the evidence establishes originality, industry recognition, peer acknowledgment, and meaningful impact on professional MMA practice consistent with the regulatory and adjudicative standards governing this criterion.

The previous listed evidence and the new supporting document in this response is presented **as a supplemental showing**, **rather than as an anchor pillar of eligibility**. **The petitioner does not claim invention of the technique, yet aims to demonstrate distinctive development, refinement, and professional impact, supported by independent expert testimony and industry recognition**. When considered in conjunction with the other regulatory criteria and the

final merits determination, this evidence supports the conclusion that Mr. Nascimento has made original contributions of major significance within the field of professional mixed martial arts.

Credible evidence to support this criterion are listed under **Exhibit F**:

> **Exhibit F.1**. Expert letter from Rodrigo Freitas, 4th Degree Black Belt and World Champion, providing a highly technical assessment of Mr. Nascimento's calf slicer technique, demonstrating that the beneficiary has made an original contribution of major significance to the field.
>
> **Exhibit F.2**. Expert letter from Melsik Baghdasaryan, UFC featherweight fighter and professional kickboxer, stating the calf slicer as evidence of elite-level technical proficiency and professional recognition, demonstrating that the beneficiary has made a significant contribution of major significance to the field.
>
> **Exhibit F.3.** Expert letter from Josh Barnett, former UFC Heavyweight Champion and PRIDE Grand Prix Champion, addressing Mr. Nascimento's calf slicer technique, demonstrating that t the beneficiary has made a significant contribution of major significance to the field.
>
> **Exhibit F.4.** Public commentary following Mr. Nascimento's calf slicer finish further evidencing the technique's significance, demonstrating that he has made original contribution of major significance to his field.

Collectively, the submitted evidence demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento has made original contributions of major significance to the field of athletics, as a supporting and accessory criterion, which places him among the top fighters in MMA worldwide pursuant to 8 CFR 204.5 (h)(3)(v).

2. Final Merits Determination

In *Kazarian v. USCIS*, 596 F.3d 1115 (9th Cir. 2010), the court ruled that USCIS officers should use a two-step analysis to evaluate the evidence submitted with the petition to demonstrate eligibility for classification as a person with extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics **through sustained national or international acclaim** indicating that the person is one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor. **The** officer applies a preponderance of the evidence standard when making this determination.

Furthermore, according to the USCIS Manual: "At this step, officers consider **any potentially relevant evidence in the record, even if such evidence does not fit one of the above regulatory criteria or was not presented as comparable evidence**. The officers consider all the evidence in the totality. Some evidence may weigh more favorably on its own, while other evidence is more persuasive when viewed with other evidence." (Emphasis added). See U.S. Citizenship & Immigr. Servs., Policy Manual, vol. 6, pt. F, ch. 2, § A(2) (2025), https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual.

After establishing that Mr. Nascimento meets **at least five** of the initial eligibility criteria, it is also conspicuous that he also meets the *Kazarian* standard of extraordinary ability in the field of athletics. When the totality of the evidence is considered under the final merits determination

framework, the record demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento is not merely an accomplished professional athlete, but rather one of that small percentage of mixed martial artists who has risen to the very top of the field of professional MMA.

The evidence reflects sustained national and international acclaim earned through years of elite-level competition in internationally recognized organizations, repeated participation in high-profile LFA events throughout the United States, nationally and internationally recognized awards, published material in major and professional media, selective membership within one of the world's leading MMA developmental organizations, and original contributions of recognized significance within the sport. This sustained acclaim is also clearly maintained through these years. In fact, Mr. Nascimento is positioned to do more, through his imminent ascension to UFC.

In addition, the record demonstrates that Mr. Nascimento's acclaim is sustained and directly tied to objective competitive excellence at the highest developmental levels of international MMA. His selection and retention with LFA, an organization widely recognized as one of the principal feeder leagues to the UFC, is itself compelling evidence of elite standing within the sport. The evidence confirms that LFA athletes are not casually admitted participants, but highly selective professional competitors evaluated through sanctioned bouts governed by the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts and judged by licensed experts and athletic commissions. Mr. Nascimento's repeated appearances in major LFA events, title opportunities, award nominations, and recognition for one of the rarest submissions in professional MMA history demonstrate that his accomplishments are neither routine nor comparable to those of ordinary professional fighters. His calf slicer submission, publicly associated with his fighting identity and recognized through expert testimony, media commentary, and the LFA Submission of the Year distinction, further evidence.

Besides, Mr. Nascimento intends to continue working **in the exact field** in which he achieved extraordinary ability and that his continued presence in the United States will prospectively benefit the country in concrete and meaningful ways. The record confirms that Mr. Nascimento is already actively competing within the United States through nationally broadcast LFA events and is pursuing continued advancement toward the UFC, the world's premier MMA organization headquartered in the United States. As recognized throughout the submitted expert testimony, athletes of Mr. Nascimento's caliber contribute directly to the strength, visibility, and commercial vitality of the U.S. combat sports industry by elevating the technical quality of competition, increasing audience engagement, strengthening athlete development, and contributing to the continued international prominence of U.S.-based MMA organizations. His participation generates prospective economic and industry-specific benefits through sporting events, broadcasting, sponsorships, fan engagement, training activities, and the continued expansion of one of the fastest-growing sports markets in the world.

Finally, the evidentiary record demonstrates exactly the type of sustained acclaim and top-of-the-field distinction contemplated by Congress for classification under INA § 203(b)(1)(A). Mr. Nascimento has demonstrated far more than ordinary professional competence or isolated athletic success. The evidence shows a professional athlete whose work has been publicly recognized, internationally displayed, independently analyzed, and repeatedly distinguished within one of the world's most competitive athletic industries. His achievements have been validated through objective competitive success, major media coverage, recognition from internationally respected

experts, elite organizational participation, and technical contributions acknowledged throughout the MMA community. Under the preponderance of the evidence standard, and considering the record in its totality, the evidence establishes that Mr. Nascimento possesses sustained national and international acclaim and has risen to the very top of the field of professional mixed martial arts, fully satisfying the final merits determination under *Kazarian* and the governing USCIS adjudicative framework.

To assist the final adjudication of this petition, we hereby submit relevant and credible evidence showing that Mr. Nascimento has sustainable national and international acclaim, and it is placed at the very top of his field under **Exhibit G**:

Exhibit G.1. Other recognitions received by Mr. Nascimento, including the certificate of commendation, city council of Apiacas, Mato Grosso state, awarded on August 9, 2022, and the Certificate of commendation, House of Representatives in the state of Mato Grosso, awarded on July 5, 2023.

Exhibit G.2. Mato Grosso kickboxing federation culture and martial arts – black belt 1st degree ID card.

Exhibit G.3. Picture alongside Lyoto Machida, owner at US Machida Academy, former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion, and one of the most influential mixed martial artists in history, renowned for introducing and popularizing a karate-based, elusive counter-striking style at the highest levels of professional MMA.

Exhibit G.4. Support Letter from Chad "Savage" George, head coach and owner at California Martial Arts, CMMA, dated December 2, 2025.

Exhibit G.5. Support Letter from Victor Westley Henry, UFC professional fighter, bantamweight division, Coach and athlete at CMMA, Gardena, California, dated November 27, 2025.

Exhibit G.6. Support Letter from Weberson Almeida da Conceicao, Professional mixed martial arts fighter, Karate Combat athlete and former Bellator MMA fighter, and Pan-American Kickboxing Champion (WAKO), dated November 12, 2025.

Exhibit G.7. podium photograph from the North American Grappling Association (NAGA) tournament documenting Mr. Nascimento's 1st place finish in his division, evidencing his championship title and national competitive achievement within a widely recognized U.S. grappling organization.

Exhibit G.8. Mr. Nascimento's victory at LFA 227, together with public announcements and miscellaneous photographs of the event, providing additional persuasive evidence supporting the final merits determination, especially considering that the victory occurred after the filing of the Form I-140 petition.

In sum, given all the evidence presented along with the initial petition and additional documentation in this response, it is conspicuous that Mr. Nascimento has satisfied the standard of proof.

We trust that by the **preponderance of the evidence** (“more likely than not") the documents attached along with documents already presented, are sufficient to warrant a favorable decision on the request. In totality, Mr. Nascimento has proven his eligibility for classification as a person with extraordinary ability in athletics – mixed martial arts by providing evidence in his original submission and further solidifying his eligibility with the documents presented herewith.

Thus, for all of the reasons set forth in this letter, we respectfully request that the USCIS grant Mr. RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO's request for the EB-1 Visa so he can continue bringing substantial benefits to the sport in the United States.

Your attention to this case will be deeply appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration of the request on behalf of Mr. Rafael do Nascimento.

Sincerely,

Otavio Haverroth Silva
California Bar # 343486

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Exhibit A: Eligibility for Extraordinary Ability Classification

April 6, 2026

To USCIS,

This letter is intended to provide clarification and additional detail regarding my ongoing and prospective professional activities in the United States. Specifically, it demonstrates my prearranged commitments for work in the field and how I intend to continue contributing to the U.S. MMA community. As outlined below, I am actively engaged in professional activities within my area of expertise, and I have a clear, structured trajectory to continue competing, training, and advancing within the United States' mixed martial arts industry, supported by concrete opportunities, established relationships, and a well-defined professional path.

At this stage of my career, my objective in the United States is to continue competing professionally at a high level, remain active in the American MMA circuit, and participate in recognized events that allow me to advance through consistent performance and results. To date, I have accumulated numerous professional victories, reflecting my progression and competitiveness within the sport, and I am strategically positioning myself to reach the UFC in the short term. I have been actively training and competing in the United States since 2022, representing a U.S.-based professional team, and maintaining a consistent fight schedule within the American MMA circuit.

My work as a professional athlete contributes directly to the sport and to the sports entertainment industry in the United States. Professional MMA events depend on active fighters who are prepared to compete at a high level. These events attract audiences, generate fan engagement, and create commercial value through sponsorships, media exposure, and ticket sales. By competing regularly in these events, I contribute to their competitive quality, audience interest, and overall commercial relevance within a growing sector of the U.S. sports industry.

My recent activity demonstrates a clear and consistent competitive trajectory. I have competed in eight bouts within Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), one of the main feeder organizations for larger promotions in the United States, and I remain an active fighter in the organization. My performances have included high-impact victories, such as a knockout and rare submissions, notably a ninja choke and a calf slicer. Regarding the latter, I am only the second athlete in MMA history to win using this specific technique. Over the past year, I have maintained a regular schedule with three fights and am currently on a three-fight winning streak. My most recent bout, a high-intensity match against a top-tier Japanese opponent, generated significant international attention and visibility, further strengthening my position within the competitive landscape.

This is not a hypothetical projection. I am currently active, competing, and advancing in my career within the United States. My focus is to build on this momentum by participating in increasingly relevant events and progressing within the sport. As my career progresses, I intend to expand my contribution to the sport by supporting the development of other athletes and sharing my experience in training environments. I am confident that I can pursue this as a long-term goal based on my technical expertise. However, at this moment, my primary focus remains on active competition and continued performance as a professional fighter in the United States.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento

Rafael do Nascimento

UPCOMING EVENTS **PAST EVENTS**

This event has passed.

LFA 227: NASCIMENTO vs. KAMIKUBO, presented by Monster Energy, takes place Friday, February 27th, 2026 at the Ventura County Event Center in Ventura, California. Doors will open at 4:00 p.m., with the preliminary card beginning at 4:30 p.m., followed by the main card at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are available now at LFATIX.com. The event will be broadcast LIVE in the United States on VICE TV.

The main event will feature long-time LFA veteran Rafael “Mulisha” do Nascimento (11-3) taking on dangerous Japanese standout Shuya Kamikubo (16-2-1) in a bantamweight showdown that pits experience against international pedigree.

Nascimento has been a staple of the LFA bantamweight division, known for his durability, well-rounded skill set, and consistency against high-level opposition. With multiple appearances inside the LFA cage, “Mulisha” has built a reputation as one of the promotion’s most reliable veterans, capable of pushing the pace and breaking opponents over the course of a hard-fought battle.

Standing across from him will be Kamikubo, one of Japan’s most accomplished bantamweight competitors. With 16 victories, including wins across respected international promotions, Kamikubo brings a polished striking arsenal, strong grappling fundamentals, and championship-level experience. This bout marks a major opportunity for the

Japanese standout to make a statement on American soil against a proven LFA mainstay.

About VENTURA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS:

Ventura County Fairgrounds is a premier meeting venue on the Central Coast, boasting more than 135,000 square feet of indoor space and expansive oceanside parkland perfect for any special occasion. Offering comprehensive services from planning and setup to onsite amenities and catering options, the Ventura County Fairgrounds ensures that both planning and execution are seamless and successful. Visit their website for more information.

DETAILS

Date:

February 27

VENUE

Ventura County Event Center

Ventura, CA + Google Map

To the USCIS Immigration Officer,

I am pleased to provide this letter in strong support of Mr. Rafael Nascimento and his continued work in the United States. My name is Lyoto Machida, also known as “The Dragon,” and I am a former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion currently based in the United States. Throughout my career, I have achieved recognition at the highest levels of international mixed martial arts and have remained actively involved in the development of athletes and the advancement of the sport. Through this experience, I have developed the ability to identify individuals who possess elite technical skill, discipline, mindset, and potential to make a meaningful impact on the sport and the country. It is from this well-informed perspective that I can confidently attest to Mr. Nascimento’s exceptional talent, professionalism, and capacity to substantially benefit the field of mixed martial arts in the United States if allowed to continue his work.

I have closely observed Rafael “Mulisha” do Nascimento through the professional MMA environment in the United States and through my familiarity with his training and competitive development. This has allowed me to follow his steady progression, observe his performances, and assess his development within a highly competitive training and fighting context. My evaluation of Rafael is based on this exposure and on my experience working with and competing against athletes at the highest levels of the sport.

Rafael is currently in a highly active and advanced stage of his professional career. He has competed consistently within Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), widely recognized as one of the premier feeder organizations to the UFC. LFA is known for assembling top-tier prospects and highly competitive matchups, meaning that athletes competing successfully within LFA are already operating at an elite professional standard. Within this context, Rafael has built a strong record and maintained a high level of performance across multiple bouts against skilled and well-matched opponents. His recent sequence of victories and sustained activity demonstrates that he is not in a developmental phase, but rather competing at a level where he is consistently tested among top prospects and advancing toward the highest ranks of mixed martial arts.

From a technical standpoint, Rafael distinguishes himself through his exceptional grappling ability, particularly his capacity to apply high-level submissions with precision, timing, and control. This is exemplified by his execution of a rare and highly technical calf slicer submission, an advanced and uncommon technique in professional MMA, which earned him the “Submission of the Year” award. The successful application of such a complex maneuver against a resisting, skilled opponent reflects his technical mastery, creativity, and composure

at the highest level of competition. Importantly, this is not an isolated achievement; rather, it is consistent with his overall performance profile, where he repeatedly demonstrates the ability to execute advanced techniques reliably. Fighters capable of maintaining this level of technical execution against qualified opponents represent a select group within the professional MMA field, further underscoring Rafael's distinction and elite standing.

Rafael's contribution to mixed martial arts in the United States is not hypothetical or limited to plans. He is actively competing in events held in the United States, contributing to the sport's competitive landscape and participating in a system that generates public interest, audience engagement, and commercial activity. Fighters at his level play an important role in maintaining the quality and competitiveness of professional events, which directly impact the sport's growth and visibility.

From my perspective as a former UFC Champion with extensive experience in elite mixed martial arts, Rafael's contribution to mixed martial arts in the United States is both immediate and forward-looking. He is not merely participating in the sport, but actively competing at a level that feeds directly into the UFC pipeline, with a clear trajectory toward reaching the organization that represents the highest global platform in MMA. Athletes like Rafael play a critical role in sustaining and elevating the competitive standard of events held in the United States, which in turn drives audience engagement, ticket sales, sponsorship opportunities, and media visibility for the sport. As he continues to progress toward the UFC, his presence contributes to strengthening the United States as a central hub for elite MMA talent, enhancing its international prominence while generating economic and cultural benefits tied to high-level sporting events. In my professional opinion, Rafael's continued development and competition in the United States will advance his own career, but will also contribute meaningfully to the growth, visibility, and global leadership of mixed martial arts within the country.

Sincerely,

14 April 2026

Lyoto Machida
Former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion
Fabyolamachida6@gmail.com
+1 (310) 962-9181

Lyoto Machida ("The Dragon") | MMA Fighter Page

tapology.com/fightcenter/fighters/lyoto-machida-the-dragon

Tapology Privacy Policy

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- FightCenter
- Fighters

- Lyoto "The Dragon" Machida

"The Dragon"

Lyoto Machida

Pro MMA Record

26-12-0

News
Update / Claim Page *print*

Photo Source:

Fighter Details

Given Name: Lyoto Carvalho Machida

Nickname: The Dragon

Pro MMA Record: 26-12-0 (Win-Loss-Draw)

Current MMA Streak: 4 Losses

Age: 47 **| Date of Birth:** 1978 May 30

Height: 6'1" (186cm) **| Reach:**

74.0" (188cm)

Weight Class: Middleweight **| Last Weigh-In:** 185.0 lbs

Affiliation: Black House MMA
Last Fight: May 13, 2022 in BFC
Career Disclosed Earnings: $2,090,000 USD

Born: Salvador, Brazil

Fighting out of: Los Angeles, California

College: N/A

Foundation Style: Karate

Resource Links:
Personal Links:

Black House MMA

Worldwide MMA Rankings Rankings FAQ

#15

Greatest MMA Striker of All Time
#46

Greatest MMA Fighter of All Time
#37

Top Fan Favorite MMA Fighter

Regional MMA Rankings Rankings FAQ

Lyoto Machida is ineligible for Tapology's regional MMA rankings due to inactivity. Fighters must have at least one completed MMA bout in the past two years to be ranked.

Pro MMA Statistics Record: 26-12-0

- KO/TKO

  11 wins, 4 losses

  W

  L

  42% of wins

  33% of losses

- Submission

  2 wins, 2 losses

  W

  L

  8% of wins

  17% of losses

- Decision

13 wins, 6 losses

W

L

50% of wins

50% of losses

MMA Record By Promotion

2007 TO 2018

16

win

8

loss

0

draw

0

no contest

7

1

8

-

44%

6%

50%

-

KO/TKO

SUB

DECISION

DQ

38%

25%

38%

-

3

2

3

-

2018 TO 2022

2

win

4

loss

0

draw

0

no contest

1

-

1

-

50%

-

50%

-

KO/TKO

SUB

DECISION

DQ

25%

-

75%

-

1

-

3

-

2004 TO 2005

3

win

0

loss

0

draw

0

no contest

-

1

2

-

-

33%

67%

-

KO/TKO

SUB

DECISION

DQ

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

Lyoto Machida MMA Fight Record

View Mode Basic

Odds *casino*

Expand All Details *add_circle*

filter_list Cancelled:

L

TKO

Fabian Edwards
26-11
9-2

Left Hooks · 3:18 · R1
Bellator 281
2022 May 13

add_circle

L

DEC

Ryan Bader
26-10
27-6

Decision · Unanimous
Bellator 256
2021 Apr 9

add_circle

L

DEC

Phil Davis

26-9
21-5

Decision · Split
Bellator 245
2020 Sep 11

add_circle

L

DEC

Gegard Mousasi
26-8
45-7-2

Decision · Split
Bellator 228
2019 Sep 28

add_circle

W

TKO

Chael Sonnen
25-8
30-16-1

Flying Knee to Ground & Pound · 0:22 · R2
Bellator 222
2019 Jun 14

add_circle

W

DEC

Rafael Carvalho
24-8
15-2

Decision · Split
Bellator 213
2018 Dec 15

add_circle

W

TKO

Vitor Belfort
23-8
26-13
#10

Front Kick to Chin · 1:00 · R2
UFC 224: Nunes vs. Pennington
2018 May 12

add_circle

W

DEC

Eryk Anders
22-8
10-0
#37

Decision · Split
UFC Fight Night 125
2018 Feb 3

add_circle

L

TKO

Derek Brunson
22-7

17-5
#12

Punches · 2:30 · R1
UFC Fight Night 119
2017 Oct 28

add_circle

C

Dan Henderson
Cancelled Bout
2016 Apr 16

add_circle

L

TKO

Yoel Romero
22-6
9-1
#3

Elbows · 1:38 · R3
UFC Fight Night 70
2015 Jun 27

add_circle

L

SUB

Luke Rockhold
22-5
13-2
#8

Rear Naked Choke · 2:31 · R2
UFC on FOX 15

2015 Apr 18

add_circle

W

TKO

C.B. Dollaway
21-5
15-5
#14

Body Kick & Punches · 1:02 · R1
UFC Fight Night 58
2014 Dec 20

add_circle

L

DEC

Chris Weidman
21-4
11-0
#1

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 175: Weidman vs. Machida
2014 Jul 5

add_circle

C

Chris Weidman
Cancelled Bout
2014 May 24

add_circle

W

DEC

Gegard Mousasi
20-4
34-3-2
#36

Decision · Unanimous
UFC Fight Night 36
2014 Feb 15

add_circle

C

Tim Kennedy
Cancelled Bout
2013 Nov 6

add_circle

W

TKO

Mark Muñoz
19-4
13-3
#7

Head Kick · 3:10 · R1
UFC Fight Night 30
2013 Oct 26

add_circle

L

DEC

Phil Davis
19-3

11-1
#13

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 163: Aldo vs. Korean Zombie
2013 Aug 3

add_circle

W

DEC

Dan Henderson
18-3
29-8
#8

Decision · Split
UFC 157: Rousey vs. Carmouche
2013 Feb 23

add_circle

W

TKO

Ryan Bader
17-3
14-2
#3

Punches · 1:32 · R2
UFC on FOX 4
2012 Aug 4

add_circle

L

SUB

Jon Jones

17-2
14-1
#1

Guillotine Choke · 4:26 · R2
UFC 140: Jones vs. Machida
2011 Dec 10

add_circle

W

TKO

Randy Couture
16-2
19-10
#12

Head Kick · 1:05 · R2
UFC 129: St. Pierre vs. Shields
2011 Apr 30

add_circle

L

DEC

Quinton Jackson
16-1
29-8
#4

Decision · Split
UFC 123: Rampage vs. Machida
2010 Nov 20

add_circle

L

TKO

Maurício Rua
16-0
18-4
#9

Punches · 3:35 · R1
UFC 113: Machida vs Shogun 2
2010 May 8

add_circle

W

DEC

1
Maurício Rua
15-0
18-3
#12

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 104: Machida vs Shogun
2009 Oct 24

add_circle

W

TKO

Rashad Evans
14-0
13-0-1
#1

Punches · 3:57 · R2
UFC 98: Evans vs. Machida
2009 May 23

add_circle

W

TKO

Thiago Silva
13-0
13-0
#12

Punches · 4:59 · R1
UFC 94: St-Pierre vs. Penn 2
2009 Jan 31

add_circle

C

Thiago Silva
Cancelled Bout
2008 Oct 18

add_circle

W

DEC

Tito Ortiz
12-0
15-5-1
#6

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 84: Ill Will
2008 May 24

add_circle

W

SUB

Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou
11-0
4-1

Arm Triangle Choke · 4:20 · R2
UFC 79: Nemesis
2007 Dec 29

add_circle

W

DEC

Kazuhiro Nakamura
10-0
11-6

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 76: Knockout
2007 Sep 22

add_circle

C

Forrest Griffin
Cancelled Bout
2007 Apr 21

add_circle

W

DEC

David Heath
9-0
9-0

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 70: Nations Collide
2007 Apr 21

add_circle

W

DEC

Sam Hoger
8-0
6-2

Decision · Unanimous
UFC 67: All or Nothing
2007 Feb 3

add_circle

C

Alex Stiebling
Cancelled Bout
2006 Dec 9

add_circle

W

DEC

Vernon White
7-0
24-26-2

Decision · Unanimous
WFA 4: King Of The Streets
2006 Jul 22

add_circle

W

TKO

Dimitri Wanderlei
6-0
3-1

Exhaustion · 3:24 · R3
Jungle Fight

2006 Apr 29

add_circle

W

DEC

BJ Penn
5-0
9-1-1

Decision · Unanimous
K-1 HERO'S: LeBanner vs. Akiyama
2005 Mar 26

add_circle

W

DEC

Sam Greco
4-0
2-0-1

Decision · Split
K-1: Romanex 2004
2004 May 22

add_circle

W

SUB

Michael McDonald
3-0
0-0

Forearm Choke · 2:30 · R1
K-1: Beast 3
2004 Mar 14

add_circle

W

TKO

Rich Franklin
2-0
14-0

Head Kick, Punches · 1:03 · R2
Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2003
2003 Dec 31

add_circle

W

TKO

Stephan Bonnar
1-0
4-0

Doctor Stoppage · 4:21 · R1
Jungle Fight
2003 Sep 13

add_circle

W

DEC

Kengo Watanabe
0-0
7-8-2

Decision · Unanimous
NJPW: Ultimate Crush 1
2003 May 2

add_circle

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Lyoto Machida News
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Graphic video: Russian fighter attempts Justin Gaethje-style cage backflip, suffers severe injury
SALT LAKE CITY, UT - JULY 29: Justin Gaethje flips after beating Dustin Poirier during their BMF Title Lightweight fight at UFC 291 at the Delta Center July 29, 2023 at the in Salt Lake City,...

1 month ago (2026-02-24 23:59:00 -0500)

'Mexican Jake Paul' returns to MMA, fights Combate Global 'Hitman' on Feb. 26 in Burbank
Mexico has its own version of Jake Paul, but unlike the "El Gallo" of United States, Jawy "The Mexican Jake Paul" Mendez actually made good on his promise to fight in MMA. Mendez (1-1) re...

1 month ago (2026-02-12 14:15:43 -0500)

Best of the Best: MMAmania.com's UFC/MMA week in review – Paddy Piblett's mangled face was brutal

Welcome to “This Week in MMAmania.com,” Maniacs! As you know, MMAmania.com churns out a ridiculous amount of stories weekly. And if you don’t refresh this site constantly, you might just ...

2 months ago (2026-02-01 21:00:00 -0500)

Jon Jones responds to Alex Pereira’s sly callout

Jon Jones received Alex Pereira’s latest message loud and clear. It’s only the start of 2026 so we have no idea when (or if) the recently retired Jones will fight again and we also don’t ...

2 months ago (2026-01-18 10:00:00 -0500)

Luke Rockhold explains ripping Bo Nickal at RAF 5 press conference: ‘He hasn’t done anything yet’

Luke Rockhold knows what it takes to become UFC champion and he’s waiting for Bo Nickal to get on his level. At a press conference for RAF 5 ahead of Saturday’s wrestling show in Sunrise,...

2 months ago (2026-01-09 20:22:54 -0500)

Luke Rockhold explains ripping ‘condescending’ Bo Nickal at RAF 5 press conference: ‘He hasn’t done anything yet’

Luke Rockhold knows what it takes to become UFC champion and he’s waiting for Bo Nickal to get on his level. At a press conference for RAF 5 ahead of Saturday’s wrestling show in Sunrise,...

2 months ago (2026-01-09 20:22:54 -0500)

Videos & Highlights

Highlight | "A True Master" Lyoto Machida HL Vid by TheDrinkableOne

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Underground MMA video maker TheDrinkableOne brings us this Lyoto Machida highlight video, featuring "The Dragon's" greatest knockouts and more.

- Watch on YouTube

Promo Video | Signature Moves: Lyoto Machida **report dead link**

Watch Lyoto Machida demonstrate his favorite Octagon techniques.

- Watch on YouTube

24333 Narbonne Ave, Lomita, CA 90717
April 6, 2026

To USCIS,

My name is Chinzo Machida, and I am the owner of Machida Academy in Lomita, California, where I train and work directly with professional mixed martial arts athletes daily. As both a former professional fighter and a coach, I evaluate athletes based on their performance in training, their consistency, and their ability to execute techniques in real competitive scenarios.

I have worked directly with Rafael do Nascimento since he arrived in Los Angeles in 2022. During this time, I have trained with him consistently and observed his development across all aspects of his preparation, including sparring, technical training, and conditioning. This direct, continuous interaction allows me to assess his performance not only in isolated situations but also across the full scope of his training environment.

Rafael demonstrates a level of consistency in training that is not common among professional fighters. He maintains technical precision and control across different training scenarios, including sessions with athletes of varying styles and experience levels. In my experience, this type of consistency is one of the strongest indicators that a fighter has reached an advanced stage within the sport.

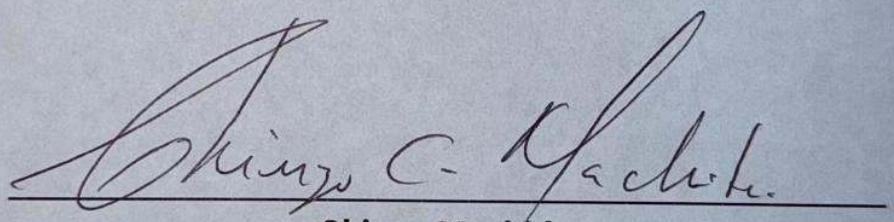
He also shows a clear ability to apply what is developed in training to real competition. His recent performances in professional events reflect the same technical control and awareness that I observe in the training environment. This connection between preparation and execution is essential at higher levels of MMA and not something all athletes can achieve.

Having trained and worked with a range of professional fighters, I can say that Rafael operates at a level above many of the athletes I have encountered. His discipline, adaptability, and ability to perform under pressure place him in a small group of fighters capable of progressing in the sport and competing at increasingly demanding levels.

Rafael is fully integrated into the mixed martial arts environment in the United States. He trains regularly within our academy, works alongside other professional athletes, and continues to prepare for and participate in professional events held in the country. His current focus is to continue competing at a high level, building on his recent performances, and advancing his career within the American MMA circuit.

Based on my direct experience working with him, I can state that Rafael do Nascimento is an athlete who has demonstrated consistent progression, operates at a high competitive level, and is actively engaged in the professional MMA environment in the United States. His continued presence contributes to the quality and competitiveness of the training and competitive landscape in which he is involved.

Sincerely,



Chinzo Machida
Former professional MMA fighter and owner of Machida Academy

CHINZO MACHIDA

BRAZIL
SALVADOR, BAHIA

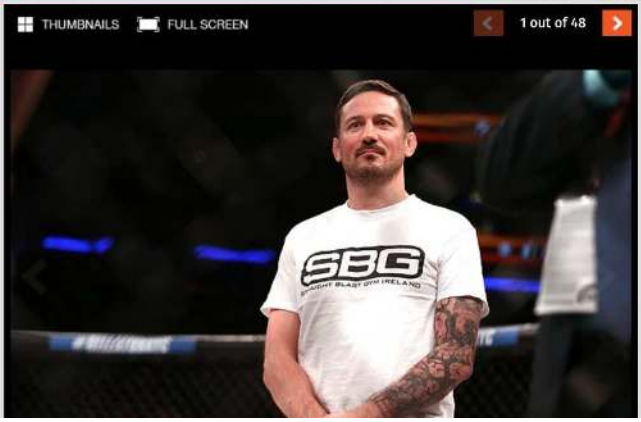
AGE	48 / MAR 9, 1977
HEIGHT	5'9" / 175.26 CM
WEIGHT	145 LBS / 65.77 KG
ASSOCIATION	MACHIDA KARATE ACADEMY
CLASS	FEATHERWEIGHT

	WINS 5	LOSSES 3
KO / TKO	4 / 80%	0 / 0%
SUBMISSIONS	0 / 0%	2 / 67%
DECISIONS	1 / 20%	1 / 33%

FIGHT HISTORY - PRO

RESULT	FIGHTER	EVENT	METHOD/REFEREE	R	TIME
LOSS	James Gallagher	Bellator 180 - Sonnen vs. Silva Jun / 24 / 2017	Submission (Rear-Naked Choke) Rob Hinds VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	1	2:22
WIN	Jamar Ocampo	Bellator 170 - Sonnen vs. Ortiz Jan / 21 / 2017	KO (Punch) Blake Grice VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	3	3:48
WIN	Mario Navarro	Bellator 160 - Henderson vs. Pitbull Aug / 26 / 2016	TKO (Punches) John McCarthy VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	1	2:57
WIN	Dmitry Gerasimov	RFA 15 - Casey vs. Sanchez Jun / 06 / 2014	Decision (Unanimous) Steven Davis	3	5:00
WIN	Brian Wood	RFA 11 - Manzanares vs. Makovsky Nov / 22 / 2013	KO (Flying Knee) Eric Heinz	1	4:53
LOSS	Leonardo Laiola	WFE 8 - Platinum Dec / 15 / 2010	Decision (Unanimous) Carlos Barreto	3	5:00
LOSS	Brayan Rafiq	Jungle Fight 6 - Amazonas Apr / 29 / 2006	Submission (Guillotine Choke)	2	0:56
WIN	Cristiano Rosa	Jungle Fight 4 - Amazonas May / 21 / 2005	TKO (Soccer Kick and Punches)	1	1:40

PICTURES



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Chinzo Machida Discusses Combat Sports Future, Alex Pereira's UFC Title Reign

Multiple-time Brazilian karate champion Chinzo Machida made a return to the ring earlier this month at Karate Combat 43, where he earned a...

MARCELO ALONSO · DEC 27, 2023 · 0 COMMENTS

5 Defining Moments: James Gallagher

The braggadocious 26-year-old will attempt to rebound from his second career defeat under the Bellator MMA banner when he confronts James Gonzalez in a...

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By The Numbers: James Gallagher vs. Callum Ellenor

The featherweight rivals will square off in the Bellator Euro Series 9 headliner on Saturday in Milan, Italy.

BELLATOR MMA · BRIAN KNAPP · SEP 30, 2020 · 0 COMMENTS

By the Numbers: James Gallagher vs. Jeremiah Labiano

James Gallagher bounced back from his first professional defeat by stopping Steven Graham. But the real test may be coming in the form of Filipino-American Jeremiah Labiano. The two featherweights

EVENTS / FIGHTS

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- Jan 24 2026 — UFC 324 Gaethje vs. Pimblett
- Jan 31 2026 — UFC 325 Volkanovski vs. Lopes 2
- Feb 07 2026 — UFC FIGHT NIGHT 266 Bautista vs. Oliveira
- Feb 21 2026 — UFC FIGHT NIGHT 267 Strickland vs. Hernandez
- Feb 28 2026 — UFC FIGHT NIGHT 268 Moreno vs. Almabayev

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FIGHTER OF THE WEEK

DENISE KIELHOLTZ

TOP TRENDING FIGHTERS

Paddy Pimblett

Dakota Ditcheva

Amanda Nunes

Alfie Davis

MORE FIGHTERS...

Sean O'Malley | Shamil Musaev | Kayla Harrison | Magomed Umalatov | Derrick Lewis | Pouya Rahmani | Fedor Emelianenko

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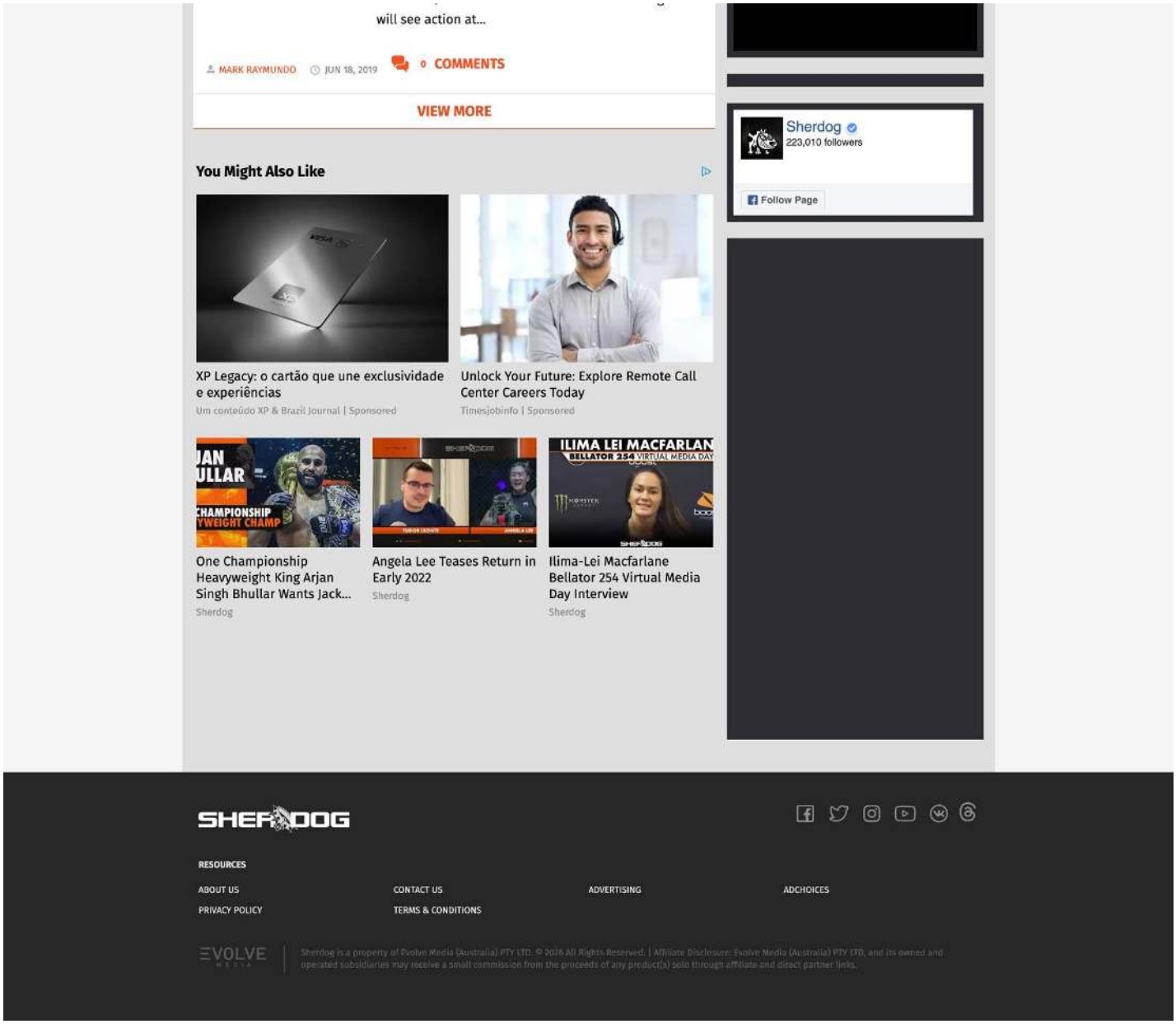
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Potentially relevant evidence, although Mr. Nascimento's victory is dated after his I-140 submission

Potentially relevant evidence although the victory happened after form I-140's submission

Potentially relevant evidence for final merits determination

Exhibit B: Evidence of the beneficiary’s receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards in the field of endeavor

Unified Judging criteria for MMA competitions such as UFC, LFA, and Jungle Fight (Please refer to item A.

ASSOCIATION OF BOXING COMMISSIONS AND COMBATIVE SPORTS
UNIFIED RULES OF MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

AS APPROVED APRIL 2001. AMENDED 2010. AMENDED AUGUST 3, 2016. AMENDED WITH PROCEDURES JULY 26, 2017. AMENDED WITH PROCEDURES AUGUST 1, 2018. AMENED WITH PROCEDURE AUGUST 1, 2019. AMENDED WITH PROCEDURE JULY 26, 2022.

Note: These are the Official Unified Rules of MMA. Any other form of these rules may not be called the "Unified Rules of MMA" and shall be referred to by the name of the commission sanctioning the/an event.

1. Each round shall consist of a five (5) minute duration (professional), with a one (1) minute rest period between rounds.
    a. No contests shall exceed five (5) rounds and/or twenty-five (25) minutes.
    b. Bouts may consist of one (1), two (2), three (3), four (4), or five (5) rounds, with a five (5) minute duration.
    c. No contestant shall exceed competing more than five (5) rounds and/or twenty-five (25) minutes of fighting in a twenty-four (24) hour period.
2. The referee is the sole arbiter of a bout and is the only individual authorized to stop a contest. This shall not preclude a video or other review of a decision under the procedure of the applicable regulatory authority if a protest is filed claiming a clear rule violation.
    a. The authority of a referee begins when the inspector(s) exit the cage/ring and does not end until the inspector(s) re-enter the cage/ring, upon conclusion of the fight.
3. Instant replay may be used to review a "Fight Ending Sequence" and shall only be used after a fight has been officially stopped. Once instant replay has been used to review a fight ending sequence, the fight shall not be resumed.
4. All fighters are required to wear a mouthpiece during competition. The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece is dislodged during competition, the referee will call time and have the mouthpiece replaced at the first opportune moment, without interfering with the immediate action. Points may be deducted by the referee if he/she feels the mouthpiece is being purposefully spit out.
5. If an MMA bout is being conducted in a ring and is a fighter is knocked out of the ring, the fighter must return to the ring unassisted by spectators or his/her seconds. If assisted by anyone, the fighter may lose points or be disqualified with such a decision being within the sole discretion of the referee. Once knocked from the ring, the competitor will have five (5) minutes to return to fighting surface, similar to an accidental foul, but shall be examined by the ringside physician before returning to action.
6. The reapplication of petroleum jelly or another similar substance, to the face, may be allowed between rounds and shall only be applied by an approved cutman or licensed cornerman.
7.. Hand Wraps.
    a. A maximum of one roll (no more than 2" wide by 15 yards in length) of white, soft, cloth gauze is permitted per hand. The gauze may not exceed the wrist of the competitor's glove. The exposed thumb is an option to be protected.
    b. A maximum of one roll (no more than 1.25" wide by 10' in length) of white athletic tape is permitted per hand. The tape may not exceed the wrist of the competitor's gloves. Tape may be placed through the fingers but may not cover the knuckles. The exposed thumb is an option to be protected.
    c. A single layer of elastic or flex-type tape is allowed to be applied over the completed wrap.
    d. Approved tape/gauze of all brands may be allowed.

8. Joint/Body Coverings.

a. Other than the competitor's hands (as previously listed), there will be no taping, covering or protective gear of any kind on the upper body. This includes but is not limited to: joint sleeves, padding, any form of brace or body gauze/tape.

b. A competitor may use soft neoprene type sleeves to cover only the knee or ankle joints. Approved sleeves may not have: padding, Velcro, plastic, metal, ties or any other material considered to be unsafe or that may create an unfair advantage. Tape and gauze or any materials other than the approved sleeves are not permitted on the lower body.
The sleeves must be Black in color, with the exception of matching the athletes Commission assigned corner with sleeves being Red or Blue in color as appropriate.

9. Cage/Ring Attire.

a. All mixed martial artists will be required to wear such protective gear as deemed necessary by the Commission.

b. Male contestants shall not wear any form of clothing on their upper body.

c. Male and female mixed martial artists shall wear the appropriate trunks, mouthpiece, and gloves. Male mixed martial artists shall also wear the appropriate groin protection.

d. Female mixed martial artists shall wear a short sleeved (above the elbow) or sleeveless form fitting rash guard and/or sports bra(s). No loose-fitting tops and/or breast protectors shall be allowed. Female competitors will follow the same requirements for bottom covering as the male competitors, minus the requirement for groin protection.

e. The hem of the trunks may not extend below the knee.

f. Fighting shorts/trunks shall not have exposed Velcro, pockets, or zippers.

g. Mixed martial artists in the same match, contest, or exhibition may wear different color trunks or be designated by glove taping and/or glove coloring to the corner they are assigned.

h. Mixed martial artists shall not wear shoes in the cage or ring.

i. When deemed necessary by the referee all mixed martial artists shall have their hair secured in a manner that does not interfere with the vision and safety of either contestant.

i. No object can be worn to secure the contestant's hair which may cause injury to either contestant.

j. The wearing of jewelry will be strictly prohibited during all contests.

k. Wearing body cosmetics shall be prohibited during all contests. Wearing facial cosmetics shall be at the discretion of the commission and/or referee.

Fouls

1. Butting with the head;
   a. The head may not be used as a striking instrument in any fashion. Any use of the head as a striking instrument whether head to head, head to body or otherwise is illegal.
2. Eye gouging of any kind;
   a. Eye gouging by means of fingers, chin, or elbow is illegal. Legal strikes or punches that contact the fighter's eye socket are not eye gouging and shall be considered legal attacks.
3. Biting or spitting at an opponent;
   a. Biting in any form is illegal. A fighter must recognize that a referee may not be able to physically observe some actions and must make the referee aware if they are being bit during an exhibition of unarmed combat.
4. Fish Hooking;
   a. Any attempt by a fighter to use their fingers in a manner that attacks their opponent's mouth, nose or ears, stretching the skin to that area will be considered "Fish hooking". Fish hooking generally is the placing of fingers into the mouth or your opponent and pulling your hands in opposing directions while holding onto the skin of your opponent.

5. Hair pulling;
   a. Pulling of the hair in any fashion is an illegal action. A fighter may not grab a hold of his opponent's hair to control their opponent in any way. If a fighter has long hair, they may not use their hair as a tool for holding or choking in any fashion.
6. Spiking the opponent to the canvas onto the head or neck (pile-driving);
   a. Any throw with an arc to its motion is to be considered a legal throw. It does not matter if the opponents head hits the canvas. A pile driver is considered to be any throw where you control your opponent's body placing their feet up in the air with their head straight down and then forcibly drives the opponents head into the canvas or flooring material. It should be noted when a fighter is placed into a submission hold by their opponent, if that fighter is capable of elevating their opponent, they may bring that opponent down in any fashion they desire because they are not in control of their opponent's body. The fighter who is attempting the submission can either adjust their position or let go of their hold before being slammed to the canvas.
7. Strikes to the spine or the back of the head;
   a. The back of the head starts at the Crown of the head with a one (1) inch variance to either side, running down the back of the head to the occipital junction.
   b. This area stretches out at the occipital junction (nape of the neck) to cover the entire width of the neck. It then travels down the spine with a one (1) inch variance from the spine's centerline, including the tailbone.
8. Throat strikes of any kind and/or grabbing the trachea;
   a. No directed throat strikes are allowed. A directed attack would include a fighter pulling his opponents head in a way to open the neck area for a striking attack. A fighter may not gouge their fingers or thumb into their opponent's neck or trachea in an attempt to submit their opponent. If during stand-up action of a fight a strike is thrown and the strike lands in the throat area of the fighter, this shall be viewed as a clean and legal blow.
9. Fingers outstretched toward an opponent's face/eyes;
   a. In the standing position, a fighter that moves their arm(s) toward their opponent with an open hand, fingers pointing at the opponent's face/eyes, will be a foul. Referees are to prevent this dangerous behavior by communicating clearly to fighters. Fighters are directed to close their fists or point their fingers straight up in the air when reaching toward their opponent.
10. Downward pointing elbow strike (12 to 6);
    a. The use of a linear "straight up straight down" elbow strike is prohibited. Any variation of this straight up and down linear elbow strike makes the strike legal. Any arc, or any angle change from straight up to straight down makes the strike legal. Any variation of position does not alter the legality of the strike.
11. Groin attacks of any kind;
    a. Any attack to the groin area including, striking, grabbing, pinching or twisting is illegal. It should be clear that groin attacks are the same for men and women.
12. Kneeing and/or Kicking the head of a grounded opponent;
    a. A grounded fighter is defined as: Any part of the body, other sole of the feet touching the fighting area floor. To be grounded, the palm of one hand (a flat palm) must be down, and/or any other body part must be touching the fighting area floor. A single knee, arm, (not fingers) makes the fighter grounded without having to have any other body part in touch with the fighting area floor. At this time, kicks or knees to the head will not be allowed.
13. Stomping of a grounded fighter;
    a. Stomping is considered any type of striking action with the feet where the fighter lifts their leg up bending their leg at the knee and initiating a striking action with the bottom of their foot or heel.
    b. Axe kicks are not stomping. Standing foot stops are NOT a foul. As such, this foul does not include stomping the feet of a standing fighter.

14. Holding opponent's gloves or shorts;
    a. A fighter may not control their opponent's movement by holding onto their opponent's shorts or gloves. A fighter may hold onto or grab their opponent's hand as long as they are not controlling the hand only by using the material of the glove, but by actually gripping the hand of the opponent. It is legal to hold onto your own gloves or shorts.
15. Holding or grabbing the fence or ropes with fingers or toes;
    a. A fighter may put their hands on the fence and push off of it at any time. A fighter may place their feet onto the cage and have their toes go through the fencing material at any time. When a fighter's fingers or toes go through the cage and grab hold of the fence and start to control either their body position or their opponent's body position it now becomes an illegal action. A fighter may not grab the ropes or wrap their arms over or under the ring ropes at any time. The fighter may not purposely step through the ropes. If a fighter is caught holding the fence, cage or ring rope material the referee may issue a one-point deduction from the offending fighters scorecard if the foul caused a substantial effect in the fight. If a point deduction for holding the fence occurs, and because of the infraction, the fouling fighter ends up in a superior position due to the foul, the fighters should be re-started by the referee, standing in a neutral position.
16. Small joint manipulation;
    a. Fingers and Toes are small joints. Wrists, Ankles, Knees, Shoulders and Elbows are all large joints. Grabbing the majority of fingers/toes at once is allowed.
17. Throwing an opponent out of the ring or caged area;
    a. A fighter shall not throw their opponent out of the ring or cage.
18. Intentionally placing a finger into any orifice, or into any cut or laceration of your Opponent;
    a. A fighter may not place their fingers into an open laceration in an attempt to enlarge the cut. A fighter may not place their fingers into an opponent's, nose, ears, mouth, or any body cavity.
19. Clawing, pinching, twisting the flesh;
    a. Any attack that targets the fighter's skin by clawing at the skin or attempting to pull or twist the skin to apply pain is illegal.
20. Timidity (avoiding contact, or consistently dropping the mouthpiece, or faking an injury;
    a. Timidity is defined as any fighter who purposely avoids contact with his opponent or runs away from the action of the fight. Timidity can also be called by the referee for any attempt by a fighter to receive time by falsely claiming a foul, injury, or purposely dropping or spitting out their mouthpiece or other action designed to stall or delay the action of the fight
21. Use of abusive language in the fighting area;
    a. The use of abusive language is not allowed during MMA competition. It is the sole responsibility of the referee to determine when language crosses over the line to abusive. It should be clear that fighters can talk during a match. The mere use of auditory language is not a violation of this rule. Examples of abusive language would be (Racially motivated or Derogatory language).
22. Flagrant disregard of the referee's instructions;
    a. A fighter MUST follow the instructions of the referee at all times. Any deviation or non-compliance may result in the fighter's disqualification.
23. Unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to opponent;
    a. Every athlete competing in the sport of MMA is expected to represent the sport in a positive light emphasizing sportsmanship and humility. Any athlete that disrespects the rules of the sport or attempts to inflict unnecessary harm on a competitor who has been either taken out of the competition by the referee or has tapped out of the competition shall be viewed as being unsportsmanlike.

24. Attacking an opponent after the bell has sounded the end of the period of unarmed combat;
    a. The end of a round is signified by the sound of the bell and the call of time by the referee. Once the referee has made the call of time, any offensive actions initiated by the fighter shall be considered after the bell and illegal.
25. Attacking an opponent on or during the break;
    a. A fighter shall not engage their opponent in any fashion during a time-out or break of action in competition.
26. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee;
    a. Once the referee has called for a stop of the action to protect a fighter who has been incapacitated or is unable to continue to compete in the fight, fighters shall cease all offensive actions against their opponent.
27. Interference from a mixed martial artist's corner or seconds;
    a. Interference is defined as any action or activity aimed at disrupting the fight or causing an unfair advantage to be given to a corner's combatant. Corners are not allowed to distract the referee or influence the actions of the referee in any fashion.

A. Intentional Fouls

1. If an intentional foul causes an injury, and the injury is severe enough to terminate the bout immediately, the fighter causing the injury shall lose by disqualification.

2. If an intentional foul causes an injury and the bout is allowed to continue, the referee shall notify the authorities and deduct two (2) points from the fighter who caused the foul. Point deductions for intentional fouls will be mandatory.

3. If an intentional foul causes a laceration and/or swelling and the bout is allowed to continue, and the injury results in the fight being stopped in any round after ½ of the scheduled rounds, of the fight has been completed, by either another legal or illegal strike, the injured fighter will win by TECHNICAL DECISION if they are ahead on the score cards; and the bout will result in a TECHNICAL DRAW if the injured fighter is behind or even on the score cards.

4. If the fighter injures himself/herself while attempting to intentionally foul their opponent, the referee will not act in their favor, and this injury shall be the same as one produced by a fair blow.

5. If the referee feels that a fighter has conducted themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner, they may stop the action of the fight to deduct points or stop the bout to disqualify the fighter.

B. Accidental Fouls

1.If an accidental foul causes an injury severe enough for the referee to stop the bout, the bout will result in either a NO CONTEST or DISQUALIFICATION if stopped before:

- A completed 2 rounds of a scheduled 3 round bout or
- A completed 3 rounds of a scheduled 5 round bout

2. If an accidental foul causes an injury severe enough for the referee to stop the bout after

- A completed 2 rounds of a scheduled 3 round bout or
- A completed 3 rounds of a scheduled 5 round bout

The bout will result in a TECHNICAL DECISION awarded to the fighter who is ahead on the score cards at the time the bout is stopped. Partial or incomplete rounds will be scored. If no action has occurred, the round should be scored as an even round. This is at the discretion of the judges.

3. If a fighter, during the course of a round, visibly loses control of bodily function (vomit, urine, feces), the fight shall be stopped by the referee and the fighter shall lose the contest by a Technical Knockout (TKO) due to Medical Stoppage.

i. In the event a loss of bodily function occurs in the rest period between rounds, the ringside physician shall be called in to evaluate if the combatant can continue. If the combatant is not cleared by the ringside physician to continue, that combatant shall lose by a Technical Knockout (TKO) due to Medical Stoppage.

ii. If fecal matter becomes apparent at any time, the contest shall be halted by the referee, and the offending combatant shall lose by a Technical Knockout (TKO) due to Medical Stoppage

C. **Foul Procedures:** If a foul is committed, the referee shall:

1. Call Time;
2. Check the fouled mixed martial artist's condition and safety; and
3. Assess the foul for potential point(s) deductions and/or time considerations.
4. During all time out procedures, there shall be no coaching of a contestant permitted.

D. **Time Consideration:**

Low Blow

A fighter who has been stuck with a low blow is allowed up to five minutes to recover from the foul as long as in the ringside doctor's opinion the fighter my possibly continue on in the contest. If the fighter states that they can continue on before the five minutes of time have expired, the Referee shall as soon as practical restart the fight. If the fighter goes over the five minutes time allotment the fight cannot be restarted and the contest must come to an end with the outcome determined by the round and time in which the fight was stopped.

Eye Poke

A fighter who has received an eye poke as called by the referee is allowed up to five minutes to recover from the foul as long as the ringside doctors confirms the fighter may possibly continue in the contest once recovered. If the fighter states they can see and wish to continue, and confirmed by doctor, the referee shall as soon as practical restart the fight. If the fighter goes over the five-minute time allotment the fight cannot be restarted and the contest must come to an end with the outcome determined by the round and time in which the fight was stopped.

A. Judging Criteria

a. All bouts will be evaluated and scored by a minimum of three (3) judges.
b. The 10 Point Must System will be the standard of scoring about.
i. Under the 10-Point Must Scoring System, 10 points must be awarded to the winner of the round and nine points or less must be awarded to the loser, except for a rare even round, which is scored (10-10).
c. Judges shall evaluate Mixed Martial Arts techniques, such as effective striking/grappling(Plan A), effective aggressiveness(Plan B),and control of the fighting area(Plan C).Plans B and C are not taken into consideration unless Plan A is weighed as being even.
d. Evaluations shall be made in the specific order in which the techniques appear in (c)above ,giving the most weight in scoring to effective striking/grappling, and effective aggressiveness, and control of the fighting area.
e. Effective striking is judged by determining the impact/effect of legal strikes landed by a contestant solely based on the results of such legal strikes. Effective grappling is assessed by the successful executions and impactful/effective result(s)coming from: takedown(s), submission attempt(s), achieving an advantageous position(s) and reversal(s).
f. Effective aggressiveness means aggressively making attempts to finish the fight.
g. Fighting area control is assessed by determining who is dictating the pace, place and position of the bout.

1.Thefollowing objective scoring criteria shall be utilized by the judges when scoring a round:

(i) Around is to be scored as a 10-10 Round when both contestants have competed for whatever duration of time in the round and there is no difference or advantage between either fighter;

(ii)Around is to be scored as a 10-9 Round when a contestant wins by a close margin; where the winning fighter lands the better strikes or utilizes effective grappling during the round;

(iii)A round is to be scored as a 10-8 Round when a contestant wins the round by a large margin by impact, dominance, and duration of striking or grappling in a round.

(iv)A round is to be scored as a 10-7 Round when a contestant is completely dominated by impact, dominance, and duration of striking or grappling in a round.

2. Impact: A judge shall assess if a fighter impacts their opponent significantly in the round, even though they may not have dominated the action. Impact includes visible evidence such as swelling and lacerations. Impact shall also be assessed when a fighter's actions, using striking and/or grappling, lead to a diminishing of their opponent's energy, confidence, abilities and spirit. All of these come as a direct result of impact. When a fighter is impacted by strikes, by lack of control and/or ability, this can create defining moments in the round and shall be assessed with great value.

3. Dominance: As MMA is an offensive based sport, dominance of a round can be seen in striking when the losing fighter is forced to continually defend, with no counters or reaction taken when openings present themselves. Dominance in the grappling phase can be seen by fighter staking dominant positions in the fight and utilizing those positions to attempt fight ending submissions or attacks. Merely holding a dominant position(s) shall not be a primary factor in assessing dominance. What the fighter does with those positions is what must be assessed. In the absence of dominance in the grappling phase, as set forth in paragraph 3 of the promulgated rules, to be considered dominate, there must be a singularly or in combination, some types of submission attempts, strikes, or an overwhelming pace which is measured by improved or aggressive positional changes that cause the losing fighter to consistently be in a defensive or reactive mode

4. Duration: Duration is defined by the time spent by one fighter effectively attacking, controlling, and impacting their opponent; while the opponent offers little to no offensive output. A judge shall assess duration by recognizing the relative time in a round when one fighter takes and maintains full control of the effective offense. This can be assessed both standing and grounded.

5. Scoring of Incomplete Rounds: There should be scoring of incomplete rounds. If the referee penalizes either contestant, then the appropriate points shall be deducted when the scorekeeper calculates the final score for the partial round

B. Types of Decisions

a. Submission by:

i. Tap Out: When a contestant physically uses of their body to indicate that he or she no longer wishes to continue; or

ii. Verbal Tap Out: When a contestant verbally announces or voluntarily/involuntarily screams in pain or distress to the referee that they do not wish to continue;

iii. Technical Submission: When a legal submission act results in unconsciousness or broken/dislocated bone(s)/joint(s).

b. Technical Knockout (TKO) by:

i. Referee Stoppage: the referee stops the contest because the combatant IS NOT INTELLIGENTLY DEFENDING HIMSELF/HERSELF;

1. Strikes
2. Laceration
3. Corner Stoppage
4. Did Not Answer the Bell

ii. TKO due to Medical Stoppage;

1. Laceration
2. Doctor Stoppage
3. Loss of control of bodily function.

c. Knockout (KO) by:

i. Referee Stoppage: the referee stops the contest because the combatant CANNOT INTELLIGENTLY DEFEND HIMSELF/HERSELF.

1. Due to Strikes

d. Disqualification:

i. When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul is severe enough to terminate the contest, multiple fouls have been assessed, and/or there is flagrant disregard for the rules and/or referee's commands.

e. No Contest:

i. When a contestant is prematurely stopped due to accidental injury and a sufficient amount of time has not been completed to render a decision via the score cards.

f. Decisions:

i. Unanimous Decision: When all three judges score the bout for the same contestant;
ii. Split Decision: When two judges score the bout for one contestant and one judge scores for the opponent; or
iii. Majority Decision: When two judges score the bout for the same contestant and one judge scores a draw;
iv. Technical Decision: When a bout is prematurely stopped due to injury from an accidental foul and a contestant is leading on the score cards;

g. Draws:

i. Unanimous Draw – When all three judges score the bout a draw;
ii. Majority Draw – When two judges score the bout a draw; or
iii. Split Draw – When all three judges score differently and the score total results in a draw;
iv. Technical Draw - When an injury is sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul and the bout is allowed to continue, then later the injury requires stoppage from either a legal or illegal strike to the affected area after:

- A completed 2 rounds of a scheduled 3 round bout or
- A completed 3 rounds of a scheduled 5 round bout

If the injured contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage, the decision is a Technical Draw.

Weight Classes

Weight Class	**Weight**
Atomweight	up to and including 105 lbs.
Straw Weight	over 105 to 115 lbs.
Flyweight	over 115 to 125 lbs.
Bantamweight	over 125 to 135 lbs.
Featherweight	over 135 to 145 lbs.
Lightweight	over 145 to 155 lbs.
Super Lightweight	over 155 to 165 lbs.
Welterweight	over 165 to 170 lbs.
Super Welterweight	over 170 to 175 lbs.
Middleweight	over 175 to 185 lbs.
Super Middleweight	over 185 to 195 lbs.
Light Heavyweight	over 195 to 205 lbs.
Cruiserweight	over 205 to 225 lbs.
Heavyweight	over 225 to 265 lbs.
Super Heavyweight	over 265 lbs.

*a. **Allowances within Division:** there are no allowance restrictions if both combatants weigh-in within the same contracted division.*

*b. **Weight Miss Catch Weight:** If a person misses the contracted weight and the two competitors are in different weight classes, the heavier opponent shall not exceed five (5) lbs. of the lower weighing fighter.*

*c. **Contracted Catch Weight(s):** there is no weight spread allowance between contracted catch weight fighters, so long as both competitors are below the contracted weight. Commissions may deny Catch Weight fights if they see the weight differential as a large enough disparity to the safety of either of the fighters.*

LFA MMA

LFA is a professional Mixed Martial Arts promotion that gives rising stars and top contenders the opportunity to prove their talent to fans and leaders in the industry.

LFA was formed by the merger between RFA and Legacy FC. LFA presents live Mixed Martial Arts events on a monthly basis around the United States including Atlanta, Minneapolis, Dallas, Denver, Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles. LFA has also expanded internationally with multiple events across Brazil.

LFA has quickly become the number one developmental organization in the world as well as one of the most active and respected MMA promotions in the fastest growing sport in the world.

LFA MMA 232 will be headlined by a featherweight world title bout as Brazil's Erick Visconde faces Uruguay's Gustavo Pintos for the vacant championship.

Card subject to change with no notice, no refunds will be given

Dates & Times
May 15, 2026 ◆ 6:30PM
Location
Premier Theater
Best Parking
The Fox Tower
Bags + Purses

No Shopping Bags or Backpacks Permitted. All Bags Subject to Search.

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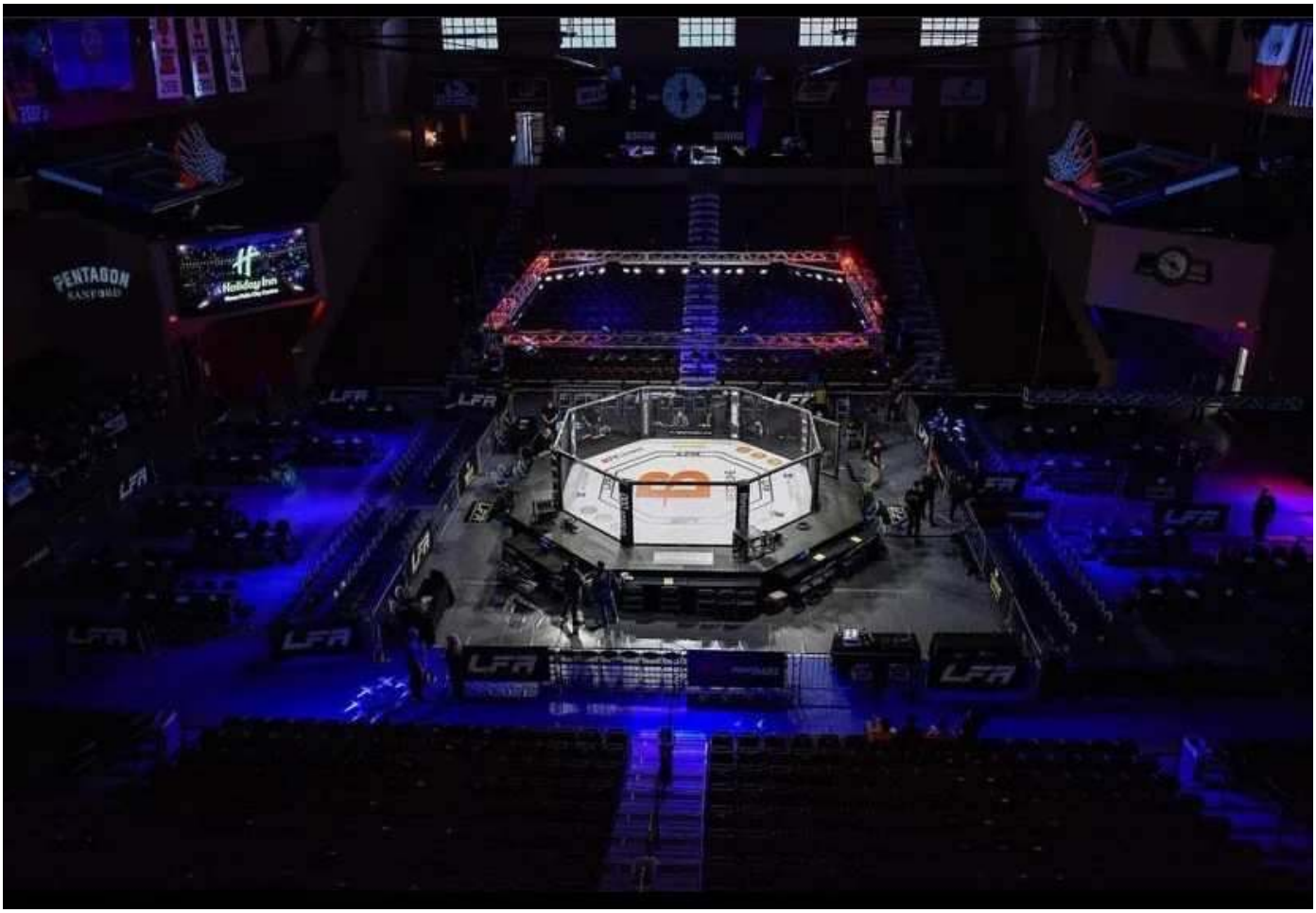

APRIL 9, 2023

Promoting Promotions: Legacy Fighting Alliance

This is the first article in a series by our rising MMA journalist Dylan Knostman in which we take a look into various MMA and combat sports promotions from around the world an' analyze the good, the bad, and how they contribute to the overall landscape of Mixec Arts.

Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) is a Mixed Martial Arts promotion based in Houston, Texas, and is one of the higher-level feeder leagues for the UFC, and is often considered just one step below the top fight leagues. Many top fighters currently in the highest levels of MMA have fought for LFA, and they continue to grow in size and reputation, bringing even better events and better prospects as the years go on. LFA may not be on many MMA fans' radar, but it is certainly a promotion worth watching and supporting, and you're almost guaranteed to see a future star on any of their fight cards.

Legacy Fighting Alliance History

LFA was formed in 2017 when Legacy Fighting Championship, based in Texas, merged with Resurrection Fighting Alliance, which was based out of Florida at the time. Both promotions were well respected regional organizations, but the merger allowed them to grow beyond just regional and turn into a true international organization. When the merger was agreed to, they combined rosters of both organizations and held a unifying Bantamweight championship, between now retired Stephen Peterson and current Bellator fighter Leandro Higo. Since then, LFA has hosted over 150 events, and they continue to lead the way when it comes to the development of rising professional MMA fighters. According to their website, LFA has sent over 260 fighters to the UFC, with 8 total champions across all weight divisions as well. Since the Covid-19 Pandemic, LFA has stepped up their activity as well, hosting at least one event a month, with sometimes even two or three. LFA is one of the younger successful promotions, but they are building a legacy for themselves that will remain for years to come

Notable Current and Former LFA Fighters

Between RFA, LFC, and LFA, there have been an incredible number of fighters who have fought and gone on to have success in the largest MMA organizations in the world. While there are no guarantees in the sport, winning a title for LFA is one of the fastest ways to earn a contract for organizations such as the UFC, Bellator, PFL, and ONE Championship. LFA does have strong financial ties to the UFC, therefore most of the prospects end up going that route after they finish their LFA career. Here are some of the former LFA fighters who are n

on the big stage:

- **Brandon Moreno** - current UFC Flyweight champion
- **Henry Cejudo** - former UFC Flyweight & Bantamweight champion
- **Kamaru Usman**- Former UFC Welterweight Champion
- **Holly Holm** - Former UFC Women's Bantamweight champion
- **Derrick Lewis** - UFC record: knockouts
- **Jason Jackson** - #1 ranked Bellator Welterweight contender
- **Brandon Royval** - #3 UFC Flyweight contender
- **Ricky Simon** - #10 ranked UFC Bantamweight Contender

Former UFC welterweight champion Kamaru Usman in his RFA days credit @LFAfighting lfa.com

While these are just a few of the names that the LFA has produced, the organization has continued to churn out high-level prospects and future stars. While it's nice to look back and see what kind of fighters they have produced, it's also important to see what kind of talent they are currently hosting. Here are some names to watch who have recently signed with

other organizations and have yet to make their debut, or are currently fighting under the LFA banner.

- **Jerrell Hodge** - current interim LFA Bantamweight champion
- **Chris Brown** - current LFA Welterweight champion
- **Mitchell McKee** - Bantamweight prospect from Minnesota, USA
- **An Ho** - Flyweight prospect from Arizona, USA
- **Azamat Bekeov** - Middleweight prospect from Russia
- **Cedric Katambwa** - Lightweight prospect from Arizona
- **William Starks** - Lightweight prospect from Missouri
- **Julia Polastri** - current LFA women's Strawweight champion
- **Ben Tynan** - Heavyweight prospect from Canada
- **Christian Natividad** - Flyweight prospect from Hawaii

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LFA
PSYCO

Current LFA women's Strawweight champions Julia Polastri credit @LFAfighting LFA.com

While these are just a few of the many immensely talented fighters who have or currently fight under the LFA promotional banner, these athletes are all names to watch moving forward. This is evidence that the LFA is truly one of the top MMA promotions in terms of hosting and developing the top up and coming talent in MMA, and that the route through this promotion, with success, can almost guarantee a chance at the big show as a Mixed Martial Artist.

LFA flyweight prospect An "The Highlight" Ho | credit @LFAfighting LFA.com

Fighter Pay and Treatment

Unlike organizations such as the UFC or even Bellator, smaller companies simply cannot pay their fighters a large amount due to the fact that they are trying to stay afloat in the financially challenging world of mixed martial arts. Fighter pay is a major problem in the sport, with almost all fighters outside the top 3-5% having to work second and third jobs, making

sometimes just a couple thousand dollars per fight even with an established professional record.

Through my research, LFA is on the higher end of pay in terms of current smaller promotions, with some of their fighters receiving purses of $6,000, with slightly higher payouts in rare situations for top-level fighters. Typically for most fighters on a given card, the fighter payout can be anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. This is not adequate for professional athletes, as much of this money goes to training camps, travel, health care, and other expenses but LFA seems to do the best with what they have, as the fighter pay issue is far more systemic and there needs to be change at the top before smaller organizations can begin to follow suit.

Overall treatment of fighters in LFA seems to be very good, with no fighter having to sign exclusive contracts meaning they can fight for other promotions or organizations in between contents for LFA. This allows for flexibility and freedom, as for example the UFC has fully exclusive contracts which means the fighter can only fight under that promotion. Fighters are also able to have sponsors on their shorts, and banners during walkouts and announcements which the UFC also does not allow. As LFA continues to grow, we hope to see even better treatment and better fighter pay.

Live Events and Streaming

The LFA hosts live events monthly all across the United States. The most common locations include but are not limited to Sioux Falls South Dakota, Prior Lake Minnesota, Niagara Falls New York, Commerce California, Phoenix Arizona, and many locations across Brazil. Tickets are generally relatively cheap for these events, ranging from $30 to over $100 depending on location of the seats. LFA boasts one of the best MMA environments for a fan, with electric bouts often delivering on the action in small but raucous venues. If you live near a city that hosts LFA, it is a must that you attend the next event they host in your area.

How To Watch Legacy Fighting Alliance

LFA is exclusively streamed under UFC Fight Pass, which is the best combat sports streaming app and you can see all of their events live or on replay for just $9.99 a month, which gets you access to the full UFC Fight Pass app. LFA is one of the better promotions for a reason, and they deserve all the attention on social media, streaming, and live attendance that we as MMA fans can give.

Final Thoughts

Legacy Fighting Alliance is one of, if not the top developmental MMA league for professional fighters, as they have produced many incredible athletes since even before the merger, and continue to host incredible events with the top-notch talent from across the world. While not recognized with the big promotions such as the UFC, Bellator, or PFL, LFA is certainly one of the organizations to watch and you will find the stars of tomorrow fighting under the Legacy Fighting Alliance banner. Make sure to follow LFA on both Twitter and Instagram @LFAfighting

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1

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LFA Begins New Era With Vice TV Broadcast Partnership

By **Eddie Law** - January 8, 2026

Ed Soares, LFA

Legacy Fighting Alliance has found a new home.

The rising MMA promotion announced a new broadcast partnership with Legacy Fighting Alliance, bringing its events to Vice TV in a move that signals a major step forward for the league as it continues to establish itself as one of the premier developmental pipelines in mixed martial arts. The deal will see 25 LFA events broadcasting on Vice TV through 2026.

Ariel Helwani was the first to report the news.

LFA began broadcasting its events on UFC Fight Pass in 2019, entering into a deal that ran through 2025. Following the UFC's decision to move all of its events to Paramount+, LFA opted to pursue a new broadcast partnership and chart a different path forward.

Along with LFA, Vice TV will also broadcast select events from the Professional Fighters League (PFL), as well as Bare Knuckle Boxing (BKB) cards. The network has steadily expanded its

combat sports footprint in recent years, beginning with the success of its documentary series Dark Side of the Cage featuring fighters such as Ronda Rousey and Nick Diaz.

In addition to live fight programming, Vice TV has also invested in professional wrestling content, further positioning itself as a destination for fans of combat and fight-adjacent sports. The growing lineup reflects a clear commitment to building a diverse and consistent combat sports portfolio across multiple disciplines.

The first event to air live the new broadcast home will be LFA 224, which takes place on January 16 from the Mystic Lake Showroom in Prior Lake.

The card will be headlined by a heavyweight title fight as Matt Adams fight for the LFA heavyweight championship against Arslan Bilalov.

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Vanessa Bryant Breaks Silence On Remarrying And Pregnancy Rumors

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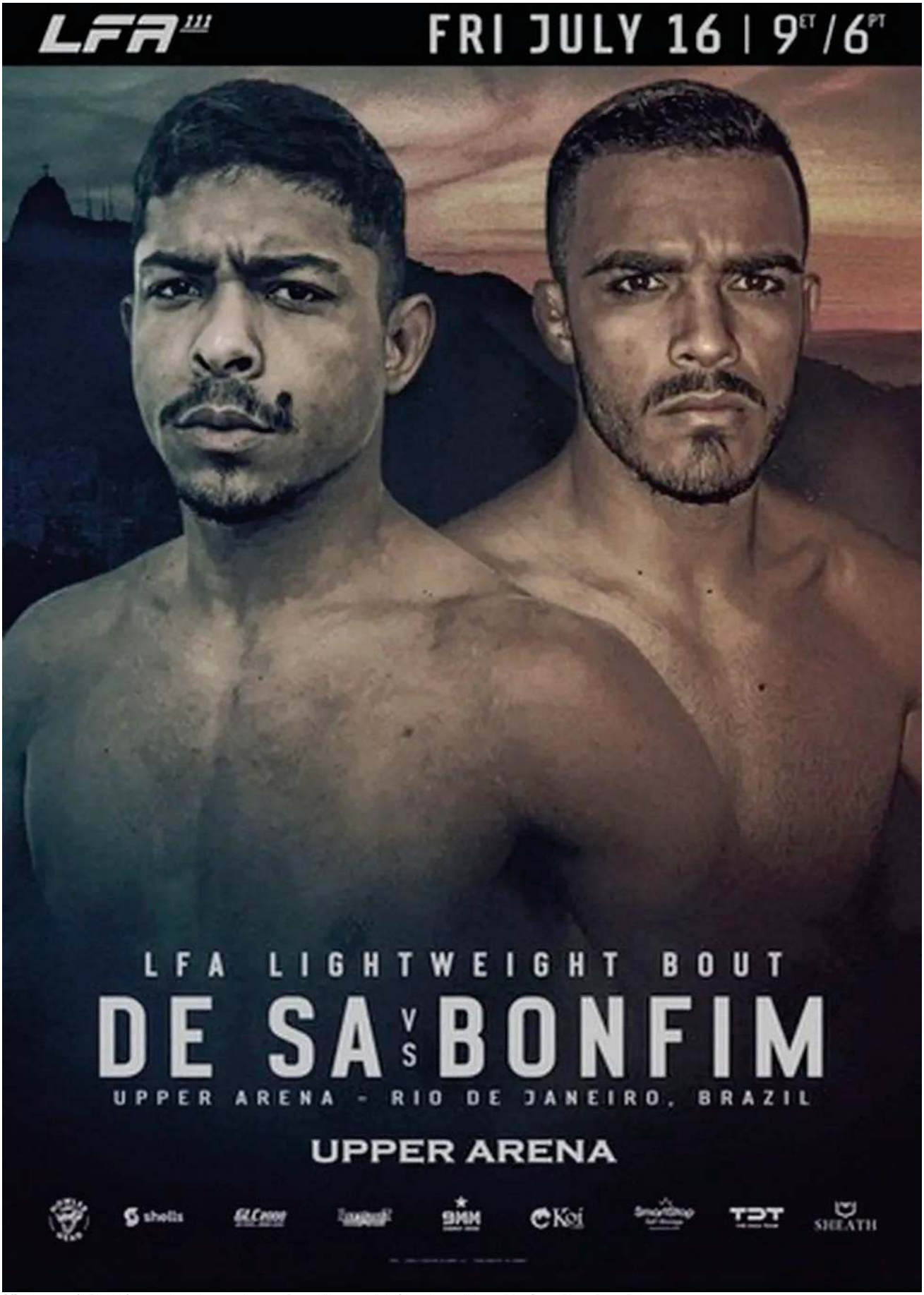
LFA arrives in Brazil for its first two international shows

Editions 111 and 112 take place in Rio de Janeiro this Friday and Sunday. There will be 21 bouts over the two days, culminating in a welterweight mini-GP. Combate broadcasts live

By Combate.com — Rio de Janeiro
07/16/2021 1:00 P.M. Updated

One of the most important MMA events in the world, the LFA decided to expand its borders outside the US, and will hold its first two international editions this weekend in Rio de Janeiro. LFA 111 and LFA 112 take place this Friday (7/16) and Sunday (7/18) at the Upper Arena, in the Flamengo neighborhood, the training center of team Nova União, which also regularly hosts Shooto Brasil. The cards are scheduled to start at 10 PM (Brasília time) and will be broadcast live on **Combate**.



Official poster of LFA 111 features the main event, between Rangel "Anaconda" de Sá vs. Ismael "Marreta" Bonfim — Photo: Press Release

We are thrilled to finally bring the LFA to Brazil. Brazil is the birthplace of modern MMA and has produced many of the sport's most legendary fighters, coaches and teams. Brazil's incredible fight fans have been supporting and watching LFA events for years on **Canal Combate**, so it made a lot of sense to bring the LFA to Brazil. As the premier developmental organization in the world, we will now be able to develop Brazilian talent on their own soil - said Ed Soares, CEO of the LFA, in an official statement.

Rangel Anaconda and Ismael Marreta face off at the LFA 111 weigh-ins — Photo: Reproduction / Instagram

The first of the two events taking place in Rio de Janeiro, LFA 111 would have had 23 of its 24 athletes born in Brazil. The exception would have been Argentine flyweight Rodrigo Roldan, who was set to face Carlos Tizil on the main card, but a member of the Argentine fighter's team was diagnosed with COVID-19 and the bout was pulled from the card, which will now feature only 11 fights. In the main event, the card features a clash of champions, with two lightweights who rank among the top names on the Brazilian circuit: Rangel Anaconda (10-1), from team Nova União, and Ismael Marreta (14-3), from Cerrado MMA. Anaconda is the reigning **Shooto Brasil super lightweight champion**, while Marreta is unbeaten in his last eight fights — his last loss came in 2014, against Renato Moicano. A teammate of UFC's Vicente Luque, the Brasília-based fighter is the reigning Federal Fight lightweight champion.

Official poster of LFA 112 featuring the welterweight mini-GP participants — Photo: Press Release

LFA 112 will feature, within the card, a welterweight mini-GP. Four fighters will compete in the two semifinals at the start of the main card, with the winners meeting in the final in the night's last bout. Gabriel Marretinha vs. Brenner Alberth will open the tournament, followed by Diego "DD" Dias vs. Carlos Lion. On the preliminary card, two bouts in the same division (Uyran Presunto vs. Wendell Giácomo and Junior Marques vs. Quemuel Ottoni) will send their winners into alternate status, should any issue arise with the main mini-GP participants.

LFA welterweight title on the line at LFA 112 in Rio de Janeiro — Photo: Reproduction / Instagram

Check out the event cards:

LFA 111
July 16, 2021, in Rio de Janeiro
MAIN CARD:
Lightweight: Rangel Anaconda x Ismael Marreta
Bantamweight: Ary Farias x Marcos Breno
Lightweight: Arthur Lima x Rodrigo Lídio
Light Heavyweight: Rodolfo Trator x Carlos Eduardo Bebezinho
Strawweight: Yasmin Monstrinha x Maristela Alves
Heavyweight: Eduardo Bebezão x Eduardo Gigante
PRELIMINARY CARD:

Lightweight: Kauê Fernandes x Luan Panterinha
Strawweight: Michele Oliveira x Stephanie Rondinha
Middleweight: João Vitor Dantas x Lucas Fernando
Bantamweight: Luan Lacerda x Tayron Pedro
Bantamweight: Gabi Hermógenes x Queila Braga

LFA 112
July 18, 2021, in Rio de Janeiro
MAIN CARD:
Welterweight: GP Final
Featherweight: Carlos Sparta x Otto Rodrigues
Flyweight: Rafael Macapá x Filipe Esteves
Lightweight: Junior Luiz x Kaynan Bahia
Welterweight GP (semifinal): Diego "DD" Dias x Carlos Lion
Welterweight GP (semifinal): Gabriel Marretinha x Brenner Alberth
PRELIMINARY CARD:
Welterweight: Junior Marques x Quemuel Ottoni
Welterweight: Uyran Presunto x Wendell Giácomo
Featherweight: Gabriel Braga x Jonathan Marrentinho
Flyweight: Brena Cardozo x Vânia Caceres

There's a Brazilian Squad in the night's main event. Live exclusively on Combate!

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Date: May 18, 2026.

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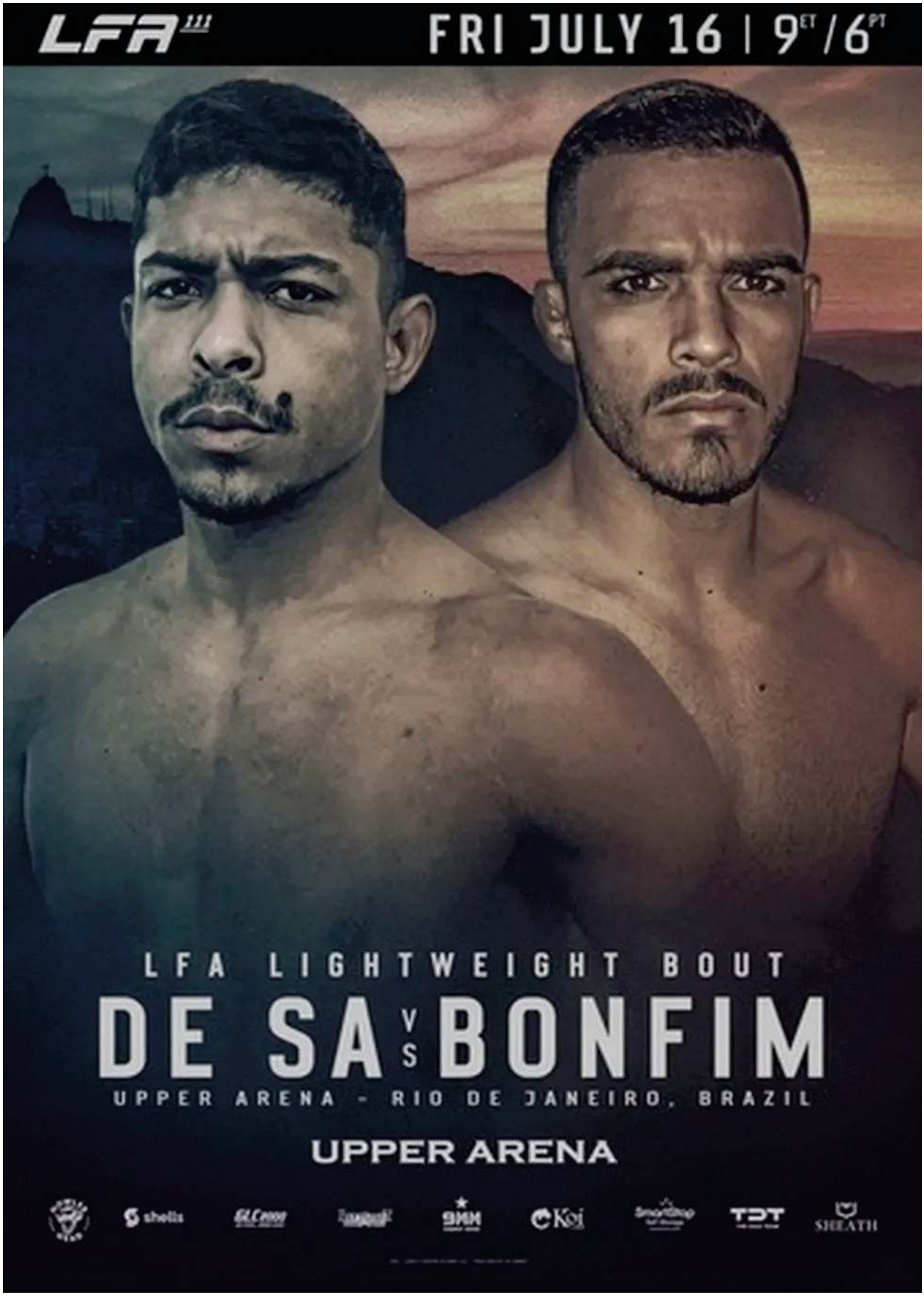
Reprodução

LFA chega ao Brasil para seus dois primeiros shows internacionais

Edições 111 e 112 acontecem no Rio de Janeiro nesta sexta-feira e no domingo. Serão 21 lutas nos dois dias, culminando com um mini-GP dos peso meio-médios. Combate transmite ao vivo

Por Combate.com — Rio de Janeiro
16/07/2021 13h00 Atualizado

Um dos eventos de MMA mais importantes do mundo, o LFA decidiu expandir suas fronteiras para fora dos EUA, e realizará neste fim d semana as duas primeiras edições internacionais no Rio de Janeiro. O LFA 111 e o LFA 112 acontecem nesta sexta-feira (16/7) e doming (18/7) na Upper Arena, no bairro do Flamengo, o centro de treinamentos da equipe Nova União, que também sedia regularmente o Shooto Brasil. Os cards têm horário de início marcado para 22h (de Brasília) e terão transmissão ao vivo do **Combate**.



Pôster oficial do LFA 111 traz a luta principal, entre Rangel "Anaconda" de Sá contra Ismael "Marreta" Bonfim — Foto: Divulgação

– Estamos empolgados em finalmente levar o LFA ao Brasil. O Brasil é o berço do MMA moderno e produziu muitos dos lutadores, treinadores e equipes mais lendários do esporte. Os incríveis fãs de luta do Brasil estão apoiando e assistindo aos eventos do LFA por anos no **Canal Combate**, então fazia muito sentido levar o LFA ao Brasil. Como a principal organização de desenvolvimento no mundo, poderemos agora desenvolver talentos brasileiros no seu próprio território – disse Ed Soares, CEO do LFA, em comunicado oficial.

Rangel Anaconda e Ismael Marreta se encaram na pesagem do LFA 111 — Foto: Reprodução / Instagram

Primeiro evento dos dois que acontecem no Rio de Janeiro, o LFA 111 teria 23 dos seus 24 atletas nascidos no Brasil. A exceção seria o peso-mosca argentino Rodrigo Roldan, que encararia Carlos Tizil no card principal, mas um membro da equipe do argentino foi diagnosticado com covid-19 e a luta foi retirada do card, que agora terá apenas 11 lutas. Na luta principal, o evento traz um duelo de campeões, com dois pesos-leves que estão entre os melhores nomes no circuito brasileiro: Rangel Anaconda (10-1), da equipe Nova União, e Ismael Marreta (14-3), da Cerrado MMA. Anaconda é o atual **campeão peso-super-leve do Shooto Brasil**, enquanto Marreta está invicto há oito lutas – sua última derrota aconteceu em 2014, contra Renato Moicano. Companheiro de equipe de Vicente Luque, c UFC, o lutador brasiliense é o atual campeão peso-leve do Federal Fight.

Pôster oficial do LFA 112 com os participantes do mini-GP dos pesos-meio-médios — Foto: Divulgação

O LFA 112 terá, dentro do card, um mini-GP dos pesos-meio-médios. Quatro lutadores farão as duas semifinais no início do card principal, e os vencedores disputarão a final na última luta da noite. Gabriel Marretinha x Brenner Alberth abrirá a disputa, sendo seguid por Diego "DD" Dias x Carlos Lion. No card preliminar, duas lutas da mesma categoria (Uyran Presunto x Wendell Giácomo e Junior Marques x Quemuel Ottoni) levarão seus vencedores à condição de substitutos, caso aconteça algum problema com os titulares do mini-GP.

Cinturão peso-meio-médio do LFA em disputa no LFA 112 no Rio de Janeiro — Foto: Reprodução / Instagram

Confira os cards dos eventos:

LFA 111
16 de julho de 2021, no Rio de Janeiro
CARD PRINCIPAL:
Peso-leve: Rangel Anaconda x Ismael Marreta
Peso-galo: Ary Farias x Marcos Breno
Peso-leve: Arthur Lima x Rodrigo Lídio
Peso-meio-pesado: Rodolfo Trator x Carlos Eduardo Bebezinho
Peso-palha: Yasmin Monstrinha x Maristela Alves
Peso-pesado: Eduardo Bebezão x Eduardo Gigante
CARD PRELIMINAR:

Peso-leve: Kauê Fernandes x Luan Panterinha
Peso-palha: Michele Oliveira x Stephanie Rondinha
Peso-médio: João Vitor Dantas x Lucas Fernando
Peso-galo: Luan Lacerda x Tayron Pedro
Peso-galo: Gabi Hermógenes x Queila Braga

LFA 112
18 de julho de 2021, no Rio de Janeiro
CARD PRINCIPAL:
Peso-meio-médio: Final do GP
Peso-pena: Carlos Sparta x Otto Rodrigues
Peso-mosca: Rafael Macapá x Filipe Esteves
Peso-leve: Junior Luiz x Kaynan Bahia
GP Peso-meio-médio (semifinal): Diego "DD" Dias x Carlos Lion
GP Peso-meio-médio (semifinal): Gabriel Marretinha x Brenner Alberth
CARD PRELIMINAR:
Peso-meio-médio: Junior Marques x Quemuel Ottoni
Peso-meio-médio: Uyran Presunto x Wendell Giácomo
Peso-pena: Gabriel Braga x Jonathan Marrentinho
Peso-mosca: Brena Cardozo x Vânia Caceres

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LAS VEGAS, Nevada — LFA CEO Ed Soares recently announced that the promotion will host its historic LFA 100 event in the state of Kansas. The main event of LFA 100 will feature a flyweight world title fight between the winningest fighter in LFA history and a top undefeated prospect. The winner will become the seventh 125-pound champion in LFA history. The four most recent champions are currently fighting in the UFC.

LFA 100: Altamirano vs. Mota takes place Friday, Feb. 19 at the Hartman Arena in Park City, Kansas, which is a suburb of Wichita. The main event will feature a flyweight title fight between LFA's all-time wins leader Victor "El Magnifico" Altamirano and top undefeated Brazilian prospect Carlos "Tizil" Mota. The co-main event will showcase the second middleweight tournament semi-final between LFA standouts Anthony "SugaFoot" Adams and Gregory "RoboCop" Rodrigues. The winner will face the winner of the LFA 98 headliner for the LFA middleweight title. The entire main card will be available worldwide on UFC FIGHT PASS® at 9 p.m. ET / 6 p.m. PT.

"We are excited to celebrate LFA 100 by bringing the flyweight championship and second LFA middleweight tournament semi-final to Kansas," stated LFA CEO Ed Soares. "Victor Altamirano just broke the LFA's all-time wins record in November. He will now fight top undefeated Brazilian prospect Carlos Mota for the LFA flyweight title. Anthony Adams and Gregory Rodrigues will also meet with a shot at the LFA middleweight title on the line."

There are a limited number of tickets available for LFA 100: Altamirano vs. Mota. These tickets are available for purchase through Ticketmaster.com.

Altamirano (8-1) became the LFA's all-time wins leader in November with a spectacular second round Triangle Choke submission against fellow LFA standout Lloyd McKinney at LFA 95. The win snapped a tie with current UFC fighter and former LFA featherweight champion Damon Jackson for the most wins in LFA history. The proud Texan has won all eight of his professional bouts for LFA and was hoping to build on that record-setting tally with LFA gold on the line. The charismatic 30-year-old, who moonlights as a cellist, will get that title shot at LFA 100.

Mota (5-0) is one of the most popular and promising flyweight prospects to emerge from the MMA hotbed of Brazil in recent years. The Brazilian dynamo burst onto the global MMA scene with a thrilling performance in his LFA and North American debut at LFA 79. The jiu-jitsu black belt faced another top undefeated prospect George Martinez that night, but he surprised his American opponent with a body kick KO just 36-seconds into their highly-anticipated encounter. The 25-year-old is now looking to become the fourth Brazilian to capture LFA gold.

The co-main event of LFA 100, will feature the long-awaited showdown between Anthony "SugaFoot" Adams and Gregory "RoboCop" Rodrigues. They were originally set to fight each other in April of 2020, but that event was postponed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As fate would have it, their paths are set to meet again. However, this time around the stakes are even higher. It will take place in the LFA middleweight four-man tournament. The first semi-final bout of the tournament features Josh Fremd and Bruno Oliveira. That fight takes place this Friday in the main event of LFA 98. The winner of that bout will face the winner of Adams vs. Rodrigues for the LFA middleweight title later this spring.

TRENDING > Dustin Poirier's KO of Conor McGregor one of top selling UFC PPVs of all time

Currently Announced LFA 100 Main Card

- Main Event | Flyweight Title Bout (125 lb)- Victor Altamirano (8-1) vs. Carlos Mota (5-0)
- Co-Main Event | Middleweight Tournament Semi-Final Bout (185 lb)- Anthony Adams (8-2) vs. Gregory Rodrigues (7-3)
- Featherweight Bout (145 lb)- Steven Nguyen (6-1) vs. Raihere Dudes (8-1)
- Flyweight Bout (125 lb)- Charles Johnson (7-2) vs. Karlee Pangilian (6-0)
- Bantamweight Bout (135 lb)- Christian Natividad (2-0) vs. Evan Woolsey (1-1)

About The Author

MMAWeekly.com Staff

"SUGA"

Sean O'Malley

PRO MMA
19-3-0

Fighter Details

Claim Page print

Age	Height	Reach	Weight
31	5'11"	72.0"	135.5
1994 • Oct 24	180cm	183cm	Bantamweight

Given Name: Sean Daniel O'Malley

Nickname: Suga

Pro MMA Record: 19-3-0, 1 NC (Win-Loss-Draw)

Current MMA Streak: 1 Win

Born: Helena, Montana

Fighting out of: Peoria, Arizona

Resource Links:

Personal Links:

Red Hawk Academy

UFC RANKING

#3

of 78 at Bantamweight.
View All »

75 Schedule Strength	11-3 UFC

verified Tapology's proprietary ranking system. No fan votes or opinions. Learn More »

PRO MMA STATISTICS

Record: 19-3-0, 1 NC

TKO	W	11		57% of wins
	L	1	33% of losses	
SUB	W	2	11% of wins	
	L	1	33% of losses	
DEC	W	6		32% of wins
	L	1	33% of losses	

MMA RECORD BY PROMOTION

		win	loss	draw	no contest
2017 TO 2026	UFC	11	3	0	1
DURING 2017	LFA	1	0	0	0

DURING
2017

CONTENDER SERIES

1	0	0	0
win	loss	draw	no contest

COMBAT SPORTS RECORD

VIEW MODE
Basic

Cancelled

view_list Sports:

PROFESSIONAL BOUTS

		Aiemann Zahabi 19-3		14-2 #16	Upcoming	**2026** Jun 14
W	DEC	**Yadong Song** 18-3		22-8-1 #6	Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2026** Jan 24
L	SUB	**Merab Dvalishvili** 18-2		19-4 #1	North South Ch. 4:42 · R3	**2025** Jun 7
L	DEC	**Merab Dvalishvili** 18-1		17-4 #3	Unanimous 5 Rounds	**2024** Sep 14
W	DEC	**Marlon Vera** 17-1 1		23-8-1 #9	Unanimous 5 Rounds	**2024** Mar 9
W	TKO	**Aljamain Sterling** 16-1		23-3 #1	Strikes 0:51 · R2	**2023** Aug 19
W	DEC	**Petr Yan** 15-1		16-3 #2	Split 3 Rounds	**2022** Oct 22
NC		**Pedro Munhoz** 15-1		19-7 #11	No Contest 3:09 · R2	**2022** Jul 2
W	TKO	**Raulian Paiva** 14-1		21-3 #44	Punches 4:42 · R1	**2021** Dec 11
C		Louis Smolka			Cancelled	**2021** Jul 10
		Kris Moutinho			Punches (TKO)	**2021**

W	TKO	13-1	9-4 NR	4:33 · R3	Jul 10	
W	TKO	**Thomas Almeida** 12-1	22-4 #82	Counter Left 3:52 · R3	**2021** Mar 27	
L	TKO	**Marlon Vera** 12-0	17-6-1 #17	Elbows 4:40 · R1	**2020** Aug 15	
W	TKO	**Eddie Wineland** 11-0	24-13-1 #20	Right Cross 1:54 · R1	**2020** Jun 6	
W	TKO	**Jose Alberto Quiñonez** 10-0	8-3 #40	Strikes 2:02 · R1	**2020** Mar 7	
D		**Gilbert Melendez** Grappling		Draw 8:00 · R1	**2019** Dec 12	
L	SUB	**Hector Lombard** Grappling		Ankle Lock 0:46 · R1	**2019** Dec 12	
W	SUB	**Takanori Gomi** Grappling		Guillotine 2:47 · R1	**2019** Dec 12	
C		Marlon Vera		Cancelled	**2019** Jul 6	
C		Jose Alberto Quiñonez		Cancelled	**2018** Oct 6	
W	DEC	**Andre Soukhamthath** 9-0	12-5 #28	Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2018** Mar 3	
W	DEC	**Terrion Ware** 8-0	17-6 #71	Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2017** Dec 1	
W	TKO	**Alfred Khashakyan** 7-0	8-3	Punch 4:14 · R1	**2017** Jul 18	
W	TKO	**David Nuzzo** 6-0	9-1	Wheel Kick 2:15 · R1	**2017** May 5	
W	TKO	**Irvin Veloz** 5-0	3-3	Punch 2:34 · R1	**2017** Mar 18	
W	TKO	**Tycen Lynn** 4-0	2-0	Punch 2:57 · R2	**2016** Oct 21	
W	TKO	**David Courtney** Boxing		KO/TKO 2:59 · R1	**2016** Jul 16	

W	DEC	**Mark Coates** 3-0	3-1	Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2015** Nov 7	
W	SUB	**Omar Avelar** 2-0	8-10	Rear Naked 2:55 · R1	**2015** Aug 21	
W	TKO	**Shane Sargent** 1-0	0-5	Punch 2:03 · R1	**2015** Jul 3	
W	SUB	**Josh Reyes** 0-0	0-0	Leg Lock 1:33 · R1	**2015** Mar 6	

AMATEUR BOUTS

W	SUB	**Brandon Caldwell** 8-2	4-6	Triangle Ch. 2:58 · R2	**2014** Nov 14	
C		Jake Marshall		Cancelled	**2014** Nov 14	
W	TKO	**Ryan Ibsen** 7-2	5-1	KO/TKO 0:30 · R1	**2014** Aug 22	
W	DEC	**Gregory Foster** 6-2	0-0	Win	**2014** Aug 2	
W	SUB	**Ryan Ibsen** 5-2	5-0	Triangle Ch. 2:22 · R1	**2014** Apr 12	
W	DQ	**Carlos Lozoya** 4-2	0-0	Strikes 2:12 · R5	**2014** Jan 11	
L	SUB	**Myles Mazurkiewicz** 4-1	0-0	Loss	**2013** Nov 30	
W	DEC	**Collin Lee** 3-1	0-0	Win	**2013** Nov 15	
L	SUB	**Shea O'Neill** 3-0	N/A	Loss	**2013** Oct 5	
W	SUB	**Luis Carranza** 2-0	0-0	Win	**2013** Aug 9	
W	TKO	**Skylar Anderson** 1-0	N/A	Win	**2013** May 24	
		Stein Anderson		Win	**2013**	

W TKO 0-0 0-0 Mar 30

"POATAN"

Alex Pereira

PRO MMA
13-3-0

Fighter Details

Claim Page print

Age	Height	Reach	Weight
38	6'4"	79.0"	204.5
1987 • Jul 07	194cm	201cm	Light HW

Given Name: Alex Sandro Silva Pereira

Nickname: Poatan

Pro MMA Record: 13-3-0 (Win-Loss-Draw)

Current MMA Streak: 1 Win

Born: São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, Brazil

Fighting out of: Bethel, Connecticut

Resource Links:

Personal Links:

Teixeira MMA & Fitness

UFC RANKING

#2

of 40 at Light Heavyweight.
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PRO MMA STATISTICS

Record: 13-3-0

TKO	W	11	85% of wins
	L	1	33% of losses
SUB	W	0	
	L	1	33% of losses
DEC	W	2	15% of wins
	L	1	33% of losses

MMA RECORD BY PROMOTION

2021 TO 2025	UFC	10 win	2 loss	0 draw	0 no contest

DURING
2020

LFA

1	0	0	0
win	loss	draw	no contest

COMBAT SPORTS RECORD

VIEW MODE
Basic

view_list Sports:

PROFESSIONAL BOUTS

		Ciryl Gane 13-3		13-2 #4	Upcoming	**2026** Jun 14	
W	TKO	**Magomed Ankalaev** 12-3		21-1-1 #1	Strikes 1:20 · R1	**2025** Oct 4	
L	DEC	**Magomed Ankalaev** 12-2		20-1-1 #4	Unanimous 5 Rounds	**2025** Mar 8	
W	TKO	**Khalil Rountree Jr.** 11-2 3		13-5 #9	Uppercuts 4:32 · R4	**2024** Oct 5	
W	TKO	**Jiří Procházka** 10-2 2		30-4-1 #3	Head Kick 0:13 · R2	**2024** Jun 29	
W	TKO	**Jamahal Hill** 9-2 1		12-1 #2	Strikes 3:14 · R1	**2024** Apr 13	
W	TKO	**Jiří Procházka** 8-2		29-3-1 #2	Strikes 4:08 · R2	**2023** Nov 11	
W	DEC	**Jan Błachowicz** 7-2		29-9-1 #3	Split 3 Rounds	**2023** Jul 29	
L	TKO	**Israel Adesanya** 7-1		23-2 #2	Counter Right 4:21 · R2	**2023** Apr 8	

W	TKO	**Israel Adesanya** 6-1	23-1 #1	Punches (TKO) 2:01 · R5	**2022** Nov 12	
W	TKO	**Sean Strickland** 5-1	25-3 #9	Left Hook 2:36 · R1	**2022** Jul 2	
W	DEC	**Bruno Silva** 4-1	22-6 #26	Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2022** Mar 12	
W	TKO	**Andreas Michailidis** 3-1	13-4 #67	Flying Knee 0:18 · R2	**2021** Nov 6	
L	DEC	**Artem Vakhitov** Kickboxing		Majority 5 Rounds	**2021** Sep 4	
W	DEC	**Artem Vakhitov** Kickboxing		Split 5 Rounds	**2021** Jan 30	
W	TKO	**Thomas Powell** 2-1	4-4	Left Hook 4:04 · R1	**2020** Nov 20	
W	TKO	**Ertugrul Bayrak** Kickboxing		Left Hook 3:00 · R1	**2019** Dec 21	
W	TKO	**Donegi Abena** Kickboxing		Left Hook 2:08 · R3	**2019** Sep 28	
W	TKO	**Jason Wilnis** Kickboxing		Flying Knee 1:31 · R1	**2019** May 17	
W	DEC	**Simon Marcus** Kickboxing		Unanimous 5 Rounds	**2018** Sep 14	
W	TKO	**Yousri Belgaroui** Kickboxing		Punch 2:28 · R1	**2018** Jul 20	
W	TKO	**Yousri Belgaroui** Kickboxing		Doc Stoppage 1:54 · R3	**2017** Dec 9	
W	DEC	**Simon Marcus** Kickboxing		Unanimous 5 Rounds	**2017** Oct 14	
W	TKO	**Maycon Silva** Kickboxing		Left Hook 2:00 · R2	**2017** Sep 16	
W	TKO	**Marcelo de Souza Cruz** Boxing		KO/TKO 0:58 · R3	**2017** Jun 17	
L	DEC	**Yousri Belgaroui**		Unanimous	**2017**	

	L		Kickboxing		3 Rounds	Apr 29
W	TKO	**Burim Rama**	Kickboxing		3 Knockdowns 1:42 · R3	**2017** Apr 29
W	TKO	**Israel Adesanya**	Kickboxing		Left Hook Round 3	**2017** Mar 4
L	TKO	**Artur Kyshenko**	Kickboxing		KO/TKO Round 2	**2016** Jul 31
W	TKO	**Marcus Vinicius** 1-1		6-0	Punches 4:28 · R2	**2016** May 21
W	TKO	**Antônio dos Santos Jr.**	Kickboxing		Right Hook 1:29 · R4	**2016** May 8
W	DEC	**Israel Adesanya**	Kickboxing		Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2016** Apr 2
W	TKO	**Marcelo Cruz** 0-1		8-7	KO/TKO 4:07 · R1	**2016** Jan 23
L	SUB	**Quemuel Ottoni** 0-0		3-0	Rear Naked 2:52 · R3	**2015** Oct 24
W	DEC	**César Almeida**	Kickboxing		Decision	**2015** Jul 25
L	DEC	**Jason Wilnis**	Kickboxing		Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2015** Apr 3
W	TKO	**Ivan Galaz**	Kickboxing		3 Knockdowns Round 2	**2014** Dec 20
W	DEC	**Robert Thomas**	Kickboxing		Unanimous	**2014** Sep 27
L	DEC	**Artem Levin**	Kickboxing		Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2014** Jun 21
W	DEC	**Aleksandr Dmitrenko**	Kickboxing		Decision	**2014** Apr 26
W	DEC	**Sahak Parparyan**	Kickboxing		Majority 3 Rounds	**2014** Mar 8
W	TKO	**Dustin Jacoby**	Kickboxing		KO/TKO 2:00 · R1	**2014** Mar 8

W	TKO	**Camilo Ferraz** Kickboxing	Right Knee Round 1	**2013** Dec 21	
L	DEC	**César Almeida** Kickboxing	Decision	**2013** Dec 21	
W	TKO	**Matías Adaro** Kickboxing	Right Cross Round 2	**2013** Aug 24	
W	DEC	**César Almeida** Kickboxing	Unanimous 3 Rounds	**2013** Mar 23	
L	TKO	**Jason Wilnis** Kickboxing	Retirement Round 2	**2012** Nov 10	
W	DEC	**Felipe Micheletti** Kickboxing	Unanimous	**2012** Sep 16	
W	TKO	**Fabio Alberto Cordovil** Kickboxing	KO/TKO Round 1	**2012** Jul 7	
W	DEC	**Clei Silva** Kickboxing	Decision	**2012** Jul 7	
W	DEC	**Clei Silva** Kickboxing	Unanimous	**2012** Mar 31	

AMATEUR BOUTS

L	DEC	**Sergej Maslobojev** Kickboxing	Decision 3 Rounds	**2013** Oct 1	
W	DEC	**Mattia Faraoni** Kickboxing	Split 3 Rounds	**2013** Oct 1	
W	TKO	**Selby Devereux** Kickboxing	KO/TKO	**2013** Oct 1	

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NEWS

‘Enter the Jungle’: Ice-T narrates documentary about Jungle Fight promotion

by **Guilherme Cruz**
Oct 30, 2014, 9:00 PM EDT

Jungle Fight

Guilherme Cruz is a Brazilian journalist covering combat sports since 2008.

Wallid Ismail, one of the most charismatic figures in MMA, will give fans an all-access pass to his MMA promotion Jungle Fight.

In a documentary called “Enter the Jungle,” produced by Alexander Harvey and Tommy Sowards and narrated by Ice-T, it shows how things work in the biggest Brazilian MMA promotion.

“It’s a hard job to go to the favelas, the heart of the favela, to look for new fighters. Now, I do this in Sao Paulo, Belem,” Ismail told Ariel Helwani on Monday’s edition of The MMA Hour. “Most of the fighters in this documentary are in the UFC right now. So many fighters... We put more than 100 fighters in the UFC.

“Alexander and Tommy are doing a great job. They did all the work,” Ismail said. “I just played real Wallid, going to the favelas, going to the cities, trying to discover new talent for the UFC and Jungle Fight. All the credit to the directors.”

Enter The Jungle Trailer

jungleghettollc

01:16

Many fighters currently ranked among the best in the UFC got to the promotion after competing at Jungle Fight, including Fabrício Werdum, Gabriel Gonzaga, Lyoto Machida, Antonio Rogerio Nogueira, Jose Aldo, Renan Barao, John Lineker and Bethe Correia.

"In Brazil, MMA is the second-biggest sport, losing only to soccer," Ismail said. "The trials for TUF: Brazil 4 had 600+ fighters. This is unbelievable. Brazil is the land of MMA. Brazil is not the land of soccer. The land of soccer is England. Brazil is the land of MMA.

ADVERTISEMENT

"We have the best fighters. Even if we're not getting a lot of UFC belts, Brazil is really well represented. I still work to develop and discover new fighters. If people wanna see how I do it, watch 'Enter the Jungle.'"

"Enter the Jungle" is available on InDemand, Dish TV, Direct TV and Vubiquity.

Ice T Enter the Jungle Promo

jungleghettollc

00:23

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Kang Daeho dogma01@maekyung.com

TOP
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Most read.

Brazil Jungle Fight, MMA Top 15 Competition The first Korean to participate in the Jungle Fight title match. MMA 5 minutes × 5 rounds. 2nd Korean woman to compete.

Jungle Fight is one of the global TOP15 mixed martial arts (MMA) organizations with 51 world ranking players for "Fight Matrix" updated on October 14, 2024 (Korea Standard Time).

The Jungle Fight 131 will be held from 9 a.m. on October 20 at Ginaugio Niusong Neusong (capacity of 11,105) in Brasilia, Brazil. Choi Jung-yoon (26) will play an away match against Laiji Serqueira (28) in the 4th women's bantamweight (-61kg) championship match.

ONE-turned-double-g champion Choi Jung-yoon (right) and junglefight two weight class title match experience player Laiji Serqueira. Photo = Jungle Fight

순위	단체	국가	세계랭킹 선수(명)	평균 세계랭킹
1	UFC	미국	647	95
2	ACA	러시아	304	206
3	PFL	미국	190	161
4	LFA	미국	149	279
5	Oktagon MMA	체코	121	233
6	KSW	폴란드	107	215
7	ONE Championship	싱가포르	106	210
8	Bellator	미국	92	136
9	Cage Warriors	영국	92	356
10	DWCS	미국	86	248
11	Rizin FF	일본	80	201
12	Brave CF	바레인	70	289
13	UAE Warriors	아랍에미리트	67	277
14	DEEP	일본	53	285
15	Jungle Fight	브라질	51	347

Mixed Martial Arts Competition Player Size Global Top 15

He is the first Korean to play the title match of Jungle Fight, the largest mixed martial arts competition in South America. It is also meaningful that she is the second female player in Korean MMA history to participate in the 5 minutes x 5 rounds to determine the major champions.

Choi Jung-yoon will continue her career as a Korean female fighter in the 5 minutes × 5 rounds of mixed martial arts for the first time in 387 days (1 year and 21 days) since Ham Seo-hee (37), the second ONE Championship atomweight champion.

Choi Jung-yoon, who played in the 2020-2021 One Championship, gained more experience on the domestic stage, including the double-g flyweight (-57kg) title match in August 2022 and the double-gain bantamweight champion in June 2024.

Choi Jung-yoon is waiting for the start of the One Championship 127 match in January 2021. 사진=Group One Holdings Pte. Ltd.

Laiji Serqueira is the third title match of the junglefight following the bantamweight challenger in July 2022 and the flyweight provisional championship match in October 2023. This time, I have no choice but to be determined to win the top.

"Fight Matrix" ranks Laiji Serqueira 28th in the UFC women's flyweight class. Choi Jung-yoon, who is in his ninth year of mixed martial arts, will face the strongest opponent since his professional debut.

Among the players who passed the 21-year-old Jungle Fight throne, one ▲UFC champion ▲ three UFC title matches ▲ two Professional Fighters League champions came out.

If Choi Jung-yoon overcomes the disadvantage of Brazil's long-distance away game and becomes the 4th Jungle Fight women's bantamweight champion, there will be enough foothold to dream bigger.

Choi Jeong-yoon Major career in mixed martial arts

2016~7 wins and 3 losses.

KO/TKO 5 wins and 3 losses

Submission, 2 wins and no loss.

ONE lost 2 times in 2020~2021.

2022 Double G title match.

Becoming the 2024 Double G Champion

2024 Jungle Fight Championship Game

Laiji Serqueira MMA career

2016~ 11 wins and 5 losses.

KO/TKO 1 win and no loss

Submission, 7 wins and no losses.

Laiji Serqueira December 2023 Vida Rijgeheiro Thumbnail. "Vida Gageheiro" is a content produced by Jungle Fight by focusing on the fighter's individual life. Photo = Jungle Fight Video Screen

2022 Jungle Fight title challenger.

2023 Jungle Fight Provisional Title Game.

2024 Jungle Fight Championship Game

[Kang Daeho, MK Sports Reporter]

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'Fight of the Million': Globo will have an MMA reality show with a R$ 500,000 prize for the winners

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Rede Globo and Jungle Fight, one of the biggest MMA events in the world, announced earlier this week their newest partnership. "Fight of the Million" will be a reality show focused on mixed martial arts that will offer eight women and eight men the chance to become "King and Queen of the Jungle".

The initiative is considered the biggest of its kind in Brazil. The winners of each division — women's and men's — will receive R$ 500,000 as prize money, the largest amount ever awarded by an MMA championship in the country.

On June 14th, the 16 competitors will be officially announced. The competition will follow an elimination format, starting from the quarterfinals through to the grand finale on October 25th, dubbed "Night of the Million." The selected men will compete in the lightweight division (up to 70 kg), while the women will fight in the flyweight division (up to 57 kg).

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Globo and Jungle Fight announce "Fight of the Million" for June. Photo: @junglefcoficial via Instagram

I, André Vinícius Inacio Penna Mello, telephone number 415 425-2508, mailing address P.O. Box 90487, San Diego, CA 92169, certify that the professional translation of this document from Portuguese to English has been performed by myself, a qualified translator fluent in both languages, and that the following is an accurate and complete translation of the document.

_____ **Date: May 18, 2026.**

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‘Fight do Milhão’: Globo terá reality show de MMA com prêmio de R$ 500 mil para vencedores

História de Ingrid Gonzaga • 11 mês • 2 minutos de leitura

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A **Rede Globo** e o ***Jungle Fight***, um dos maiores eventos de **MMA** do mundo, anunciaram, no início desta semana, sua mais nova parceria. O “Fight do Milhão” será um *reality show* focado nas artes marciais mistas que oferecerá a oito mulheres e oito homens a chance de se tornarem “Rei e Rainha da Selva”.

A iniciativa é considerada a maior da modalidade no Brasil. Os vencedores de cada categoria — feminina e masculina — receberão R$ 500 mil como premiação, o maior valor já dado por um campeonato de MMA no País.

No dia 14 de junho, os 16 participantes serão oficialmente anunciados. A disputa possuirá um formato eliminatório, começando pelas quartas de final até a grande decisão, no dia 25 de outubro, chamada de “Noite do Milhão”. Os homens selecionados competirão na categoria leve (até 70 kg), enquanto as mulheres lutarão no peso mosca (até 57 kg).

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Globo e Jungle Fight anunciam o "Fight do Milhão" para junho Foto: @junglefcoficial via Instagram

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Exhibit C: Membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought that require outstanding achievement of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields

Please refer to the highlighted sections

PROMOTION AND ANCILLARY RIGHTS CONTRACT

This promotion contract ("**Contract**") is made and entered into effective August 5th, 2022 (the "**Effective Date**") in Dallas, Texas, by and between **LEGACY FIGHTING ALLIANCE, LLC**, a domestic limited-liability company, d.b.a Legacy Fighting Alliance, ("**LFA**"), and **Rafael do Nascimento** ("**Fighter**"). **LFA** and **Fighter** are the only parties to this Contract and are at times referred to herein singly as a "**Party**" and collectively as the "**Parties**."

RECITALS

A. **LFA** promotes mixed martial arts fighting contests and desires to promote certain of **Fighter**'s future bouts and acquire certain ancillary rights to **Fighter**, both as provided for herein.

B. **Fighter** is a mixed martial artist who desires for **LFA** to promote certain of **Fighter**'s future bouts, and, in consideration therefore, is willing to grant certain of **Fighter**'s ancillary rights to **LFA**.

In consideration of the above recitals, the mutual covenants, agreements and promises of the Parties, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Parties, each intending to be legally bound, hereby covenant and agree as follows:

1. GRANT.

1.1 Promotion Rights. **Fighter** hereby grants to **LFA** the exclusive worldwide right to secure, arrange, promote and present mixed martial arts contests to be engaged in by **Fighter** (each singly a "**Bout**") during the Term (as defined below) (collectively, **Fighter** "**Promotion Rights**"). To the extent Fighter enjoys sufficient rights to each of her fights (each a "**Fight Clip**") or can reasonably and affordably obtain those rights, in furtherance thereof, upon **LFA**'s request, **Fighter** shall, at **Fighter**'s own cost and effort, obtain for and provide to **LFA** an audio-visual recording of every bout in which **Fighter** participated prior to and subsequent to (should **Fighter** participate in other bouts during the term of this contract with the permission of **LFA**) the Effective Date. **Fighter** hereby grants to **LFA** the non-exclusive right throughout the universe to use each such Fight Clip to publicize one or more Bouts.

1.2 Ancillary Rights. **Fighter** hereby grants to **LFA** the non-exclusive rights throughout the universe to:

1.2.1 forever use, edit, disseminate, display, reproduce, print, publish and make any other use of the name, sobriquet, voice, persona, signature, likeness and/or biography of **Fighter** (collectively, **Fighter**'s "**Identity**"), and those of every **Fighter** business entity,

partnership, affiliate, agent, representative, manager, trainer, corner person and second (each a **Fighter**'s "**Affiliate**");

1.2.2 to use, edit, disseminate, display, reproduce, print, and/or otherwise publish **Fighter**'s Identity in any media for the purpose of advertising, promoting, publicizing, merchandising, and exploiting **LFA**'s brand(s) (collectively, the "**Brand(s)**"), the Pre-Bout Events (as defined below), the Bout(s), the Post-Bout Events (as defined below), and/or endorsing any **LFA** or third-party product or service deemed appropriate for **Fighter** by **LFA** in its sole and arbitrary discretion (including the telecast and/or other broadcast of one or more Bouts);

1.2.3 to use, edit, disseminate, display, reproduce, print, and/or otherwise publish **Fighter**'s Identity in connection with the development, manufacturing, distribution, marketing and/or sale of any and all interactive devices, video and computer games and slot machines, compact discs (including read only memory), digital versatile discs, Blu-ray, and all other Internet applications, wireless, video and audio cassettes and discs, apparel, photographs, souvenirs, toys, merchandising tie-ups and advertising, and any and all other similar type products, including the packaging for such products, as made by any method and of any material, whether now known or hereafter created. **Fighter** further agrees that in the event **LFA** participates in "any media" formats that create additional exposure for **LFA** and its operations and that of **Fighter**, **Fighter** agrees to participate in all such activities. "Any Media" shall include but not be limited to, social media, radio, television (including but not limited to talk shows, reality programming and others). **Fighter** acknowledges that **LFA** and **Fighter** have vested interests in building **Fighter**'s career and exposure through various media outlets. In furtherance thereof, **Fighter** agrees not to participate in any unscripted television without **LFA**'s prior written approval;

1.2.4 to project, telecast, photograph, record, or otherwise produce and reproduce the recording(s) in any and every media and medium of each Bout and of the events immediately preceding, during, and following the Bout, and between the Bout's rounds ("**Bout Coverage**"), as well as footage of and/or audio from **Fighter**'s pre-Bout training, interview(s), press conference(s), weigh-in(s), and behind-the-scenes introspective pieces (each a "**Pre-Bout Event**," with the coverage of all Pre-Bout Events being the "**Pre-Bout Coverage**"), and footage of and/or audio from **Fighter** post-Bout interview(s) and press conference(s) (each a "**Post-Bout Event**," with the coverage of all Post-Bout Events being the "**Post-Bout Coverage**"). Collectively, the recording of the projection, telecasting, other broadcasting, photographing, and other production and reproduction of the Bout Coverage, Pre-Bout Coverage, and Post-Bout Coverage are herein referred to collectively as the "**Recordings**," which are and, as between the Parties, shall always remain **LFA**'s sole property free and clear of any and all claims by **Fighter** and every **Fighter** Affiliate (thus allowing **LFA** to take such actions as it deems necessary to protect all Recordings), but which shall be further detailed in the bout agreement executed by both Parties prior to each Bout, if any (each being the applicable "**Bout Agreement**").

The right to use, edit, disseminate, displace, reproduce, print, publish and make any and every other use of **Fighter**'s Identity and the Recordings is collectively referred to herein as **Fighter**'s

"**Ancillary Rights**." For avoidance of doubt, **LFA**'s rights in and to **Fighter**'s Ancillary Rights shall survive the termination and expiration of this Contract as well as **Fighter**'s death.

1.2.5 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Contract, there shall be no express endorsement of any product, service, other than LFA, without obtaining Fighter's prior written consent. Should there be a conflict between the terms of this Contract and any other agreement between the Parties, the terms of this Contract shall prevail.

1.3 Granted Rights. At times, the Promotion Rights and Ancillary Rights are collectively referred to herein as the "**Granted Rights**." The Granted Rights include the right to sell, assign, lease, license, sublease, use and otherwise dispose of any and all of the Granted Rights, and the results of and proceeds from the exercise thereof, and to authorize, license and grant the right to exercise any of the Granted Rights. The Granted Rights also include the right to do all things necessary for the full and complete use, exploitation, and exercise of the Granted Rights, including the right to promote and exploit all of the Granted Rights and the results of and proceeds from the exercise thereof, and the right to negotiate, enter into and perform any and all agreements relating to the Granted Rights for the production, promotion, and recording of advertisements, publicity, telecasts, other broadcasts, and recordings relating to **LFA**'s brand(s), the Bout(s), the Pre-Bout Event(s), and the Post-Bout Event(s).

2. TERM & TERMINATION.

2.1 Term. This Contract begins on the Effective Date and automatically and immediately expires upon the earlier of thirty six (36) months from the date of **Fighter**'s first Bout under this Contract, or after six (6) Bouts have been completed by **Fighter** (the "**Term**"), unless terminated sooner or extended further pursuant to the provisions of this Contract. Specifically, if **Fighter** is recognized by **LFA** as having any championship, title, status, or belt, as of the day the Term would have otherwise expired, the Term shall not expire but automatically and immediately extend one time only for a period equal to the earlier of one (1) additional year or until two (2) additional Bouts have been completed by **Fighter** hereunder ("**Extension Period**"). Every reference herein to the Term shall include the Extension Period, when applicable to **Fighter**. The termination (as defined below) of this Contract or the expiration of the Term shall not serve to affect or terminate the Granted Rights granted under this Contract, as they shall survive any such termination, expiration or acceleration (as defined below) and this Contract shall remain in full force and effect with respect thereto. Additionally, for ninety (90) calendar days after the Term ends, **Fighter** shall exclusively negotiate with **LFA** in good faith regarding commercially reasonable terms that the Parties' then intend to be memorialized within a new promotion contract.

2.1.a. Fighter shall be released from exclusivity and the non-surviving terms of this Contract to participate in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), provided that Fighter does not currently have a bout scheduled with LFA, unless LFA consents in a separate, prior written agreement.

2.1.b. Fighter, with LFA's separate, prior written consent on a case-by-case basis, may participate in third party promoted bouts during the Term, provided that if the compensation for that bout is less than what the LFA would pay for Fighter's next bout under this Contract, LFA may, as its discretion reduce Fighter's compensation under this Contract to match the compensation for the third party promoted bout for Fighter's remaining bouts under this Contract.

2.1.c Should Fighter fail to deliver a signed and initialed version of the Contract to LFA within forty-eight (48) hours of Fighter, or Fighter's representative, receiving the Contract from the LFA, the offer and the Contract will be null and void.

2.2 Termination by LFA.

a. If **Fighter** fails or refuses to fully perform any **Fighter** obligation under this Contract, or **Fighter** breaches or otherwise violates any **Fighter** representation or warranty herein, then, in addition to all other rights and remedies available to it, **LFA** may immediately terminate this Contract ("**Termination**") upon notice ("Notice" as defined below) to **Fighter**.

b. **LFA** shall have the right, upon Notice to **Fighter**, to accelerate the Term and thereby terminate **LFA**'s promotional and other obligations hereunder and under any Bout Agreement then in effect ("**Acceleration**") and to terminate **Fighter**'s participation in any Bout, with Acceleration effective as of the date of Notice to **Fighter**, and to withdraw recognition from **Fighter** of any Championship Title, Status and Belt, if:

(i) **Fighter** fails for any reason whatsoever (other than medically verified injury or physical disability of **Fighter** or any act of God) to engage in the minimum number of Bouts as offered by **LFA**;

(ii) **Fighter** or any of **Fighter**'s Affiliates breach, violate or are in default of any provision of this Contract or any other contract or agreement hereafter entered into between **Fighter** and **LFA, including but not limited to performing social media obligations as reasonably requested by LFA**;

(iii) **Fighter** is not declared the winner of any Bout (whether promoted by **LFA** or not) by an Athletic Commission or official authority having jurisdiction over that Bout;

(iv) **Fighter** is unable to obtain the necessary documentation, including any work visas, to lawfully permit **Fighter** or **Fighter**'s Affiliates to participate in any Bout as provided for in this Contract;

(v) **Fighter**'s license to participate in any Bout is suspended or revoked by an Athletic Commission;

(vi) Any of the representations or warranties of **Fighter** contained herein were false when made or are no longer true and correct.

Acceleration shall be without further liability or obligation from **LFA** to **Fighter**, except for the payment of any applicable **Fighter** Purse or Win Bonus then due and owing for Bouts that have been completed prior to Acceleration, less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. Acceleration shall not serve to affect or terminate any of the Ancillary Rights, and this Contract shall survive an Acceleration and remain in full force and effect with respect thereto.

2.3 Termination by Fighter. If **LFA** fails or refuses to fully perform any **LFA** obligation under this Contract, or if **LFA** breaches or otherwise violates any **LFA** representation or warranty herein, then, in addition to all other rights and remedies available to her, **Fighter** may immediately terminate this Contract if **LFA** does not within fifteen (15) business days from Notice thereof by **Fighter** perform every actual instance of such failure to perform, and cure every actual instance of such breach or violation. **Fighter** acknowledges and understands that **Fighter** shall in no event be entitled to consequential, incidental or punitive damages of any kind as a result of **Fighter**'s termination hereof. **[Notwithstanding any other provision of this Contract, if Ed Soares and/or Mark Bieri ceases to be an actively involved in the operations, and the final decision makers of**

LFA (or any assignee of this Contract) Fighter may at her election, with thirty (30) days written notice, terminate this Contract.]

3. COMPENSATION.

3.1. Compensation. Compensation to **Fighter** shall be in the form of a "**Fighter Purse**" and, if and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of a Bout by the governing Athletic Commission, a "**Win Bonus**," each in the amounts as set forth below.

a. **Fighter**'s **Purse** for the first Bout shall be (**$1,200.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout by the Athletic Commission, the Win Bonus for the first Bout shall be (**$1,200.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding.

b. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, **Fighter** Purse for the second Bout shall be (**$1,400.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If and only the Fighter is declared the winner of the second Bout, the Win Bonus for the second Bout shall be (**$1,400.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If **Fighter** is not declared the winner of the first Bout (and there is no Acceleration thereafter), **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for **Fighter**'s second Bout shall be the same amount as set forth in subsection (a) above.

c. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout and the second Bout, **Fighter**'s Purse for the third Bout shall be (**$1,600.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout, and the third Bout by the Athletic Commission, the Win Bonus for the third Bout shall be (**$1,600.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If **Fighter** is declared the loser of the first Bout and the second Bout (and there is no Acceleration), **Fighter** Purse and Win Bonus for the third Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (a) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of either the first Bout or the second Bout, but not both (and if there is no Acceleration thereafter), **Fighter Purse** and Win Bonus for the third Bout shall be the same as set for the in subsection (b) above.

d. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout and the third Bout, **Fighter**'s Purse for the fourth Bout shall be (**$1,800.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout, and the third Bout by the Athletic Commission, the Win Bonus for the third Bout shall be (**$1,800.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If **Fighter** is declared the loser of the first Bout, the second Bout and the third Bout (and there is no Acceleration), **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fourth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (a) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only one of the first three Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fourth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (b) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only two of the first three Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fourth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (c) above.

e. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout, the third Bout and the fourth Bout, **Fighter**'s Purse for the fifth Bout shall be (**$2,000.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout, the third Bout and the fourth Bout by the Athletic Commission, the Win Bonus for the third Bout shall be (**$2,000.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If **Fighter** is declared the loser of the first Bout, the second Bout, the third Bout and the fourth Bout (and there is no Acceleration), **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fourth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (a) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only one of the first four Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fifth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (b) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only two of the first four Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fifth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (c) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only three of the first four Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the fifth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (d) above.

f. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout, the third Bout, the fourth Bout and the fifth Bout, **Fighter**'s Purse for the sixth Bout shall be (**$2,200.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If and only if **Fighter** is declared the winner of the first Bout, the second Bout, the third Bout, the fourth Bout and the fifth Bout by the Athletic Commission, the Win Bonus for the sixth Bout shall be (**$2,200.00**), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If **Fighter** is declared the loser of the first Bout, the second Bout, the third Bout, the fourth Bout and the fifth Bout (and there is no Acceleration), **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the sixth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (a) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only one of the first five Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the sixth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (b) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only two of the first five Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the sixth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (c) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only three of the first five Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the sixth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (d) above. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of only four of the first five Bouts (and there is no Acceleration) **Fighter**'s Purse and Win Bonus for the sixth Bout shall be the same as set forth in subsection (e) above.

g. If the Extension Period is triggered, **Fighter**'s compensation will increase from **Fighter**'s most recent **LFA** Fight Purse and potential Win Bonus, as defined under Paragraph 3 of this Contract, as follows:

(i) **Fighter**'s Compensation For Extension Bout 1 shall amount to **Fighter**'s most recent Fight Purse, plus Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00), less all permissible and/or required deduction and withholding. Should **Fighter** be declared the winner of Extension Bout 1, **Fighter** shall also receive **Fighter**'s most recent possible Win Bonus amount, plus Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding.

(ii) **Fighter**'s Compensation For Extension Bout 2, should **Fighter** be declared the winner of Extension Bout 1, shall amount to **Fighter**'s most recent Fight Purse, plus Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00), less all permissible and/or required deduction and withholding. Additionally, if **Fighter** is declared the winner of both Extension Bout 1 and Extension Bout 2, **Fighter** shall also receive **Fighter**'s most recent possible Win Bonus amount, plus Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00), less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding.

(iii) If **Fighter** is not declared the winner of Extension Bout 1, and is also not thereafter cut at the discretion of **LFA**, **Fighter** shall receive as compensation for Extension Bout 2 the exact same Fight Purse compensation as Extension Bout 1, with no monetary increase, less all permissible and/or required deductions and withholding. If **Fighter** is declared the winner of Extension Bout 2, **Fighter** will also receive a Win Bonus equal to **Fighter**'s possible Win Bonus for Extension Bout 1, less all permissible and/or required deduction and withholding.

For each respective Bout, the ***Bout Agreement*** shall be completed as the Parties hereafter agree, and there upon executed by each Party. If any Bout is scheduled to occur in a state, territory or other jurisdiction that lacks a governing Athletic Commission (as that term is defined in the Bout Agreement), the Bout Agreement shall be modified to identify and set forth the rules and regulations of a governing Athletic Commission, and any decision, appeal and other rights of **Fighter**, under which the Bout will be contested and conducted in accordance therewith.

3.2 INCIDENTALS. In addition to the Fighter's Compensation as provided for above, Fighter shall be entitled to transportation, lodging, meals or meal allowances, and a reasonably amount of Bout tickets (collectively, "**Incidentals**") to be identified by LFA in each of Fighter's Bout Agreements..

4. CONDUCT.

4.1 Generally. At all times during the Term, **Fighter** shall act in accordance with accepted standards of decency, social conventions, mores and customs within the United States of America, and shall not commit any act, become involved in any situation or occurrence, or make any statement that will reflect negatively on, or bring disrepute, contempt, scandal, ridicule, or disdain to, **Fighter**, **Fighter** Identity, any of **Fighter**'s Affiliates, **LFA**, or any Indemnity (as that term is defined in each Bout Agreement). In furtherance thereof, no act (or failure to act) by **Fighter** during the Term shall be such as would shock, insult, or offend the United States public or any organized group composed thereof, or to reflect unfavorably upon any current or proposed sponsor of **LFA** or any Bout (or of any such sponsor's advertising agency), or any network or station over which a Bout is to be (or would have otherwise been) telecast or otherwise broadcast.

4.2 Bout-related. Fighter and **Fighter**'s Affiliates shall maintain a high standard of sportsmanship and conduct themselves in a professional manner prior to, during, and following each Bout. Whether **Fighter** and/or **Fighter**'s Affiliates' conduct comports with this requirement shall be determined by **LFA** in its reasonable sole and arbitrary discretion.

4.3 Endorsements / Advertising / Publicity. Fighter shall not authorize or be involved with any advertising or publicity material that is generally considered to be obscene, libelous,

slanderous, or defamatory, and will not violate, infringe upon, or otherwise give right to any adverse claim concerning a common-law, statutory, equitable, or other right of a third party.

4.4 Appearances. During the Term, **Fighter** shall personally appear at and for, and shall cooperate, participate, and assist in, the marketing and sale of **LFA**'s merchandise, any and all media interviews, other Pre-Bout Events, and Post-Bout Events reasonably requested by **LFA**, and the advertising, publicity, and promotion of the Bout(s), other bouts reasonably requested by **LFA**, and any and all telecasts and other broadcasts and re-broadcasts of any of the foregoing (regardless of media format), including on and by way of **Fighter**'s presence and activity on social networking websites. Such appearances are included in **Fighter**'s duties and are part of the consideration for the Compensation. To assist **Fighter** in meeting these duties, **LFA** shall pay for flights, accommodations, and ground transportation for **Fighter**, plus a per diem or meal vouchers. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Contract, Fighter shall not be required to appear at more than four (4) appearances per year without further compensation.

4.5 Marketing of LFA. Without payment to **Fighter** other than the Compensation, **LFA** may place and include on **Fighter** Gear for the Bout, any Pre-Bout Events, and any Post-Bout Events, **LFA**'s logo on **Fighter's** trunks and/or tops with Fighter approval on a case-by-case basis, approval not to be unreasonably withheld, and subject to Fighter's other sponsorship and endorsement agreements. **LFA** may assist **Fighter** in obtaining additional sponsors which **Fighter** may receive additional compensation to **Fighter**. **Fighter** can wear logos of sponsors pending approval by **LFA** at **LFA**'s sole discretion which shall not be unreasonably withheld. **Fighter** shall submit a list of sponsors, and what the logo is and looks like, at least seven (7) days prior to each Bout (unless other arrangements are made with **LFA**). **Fighter** will receive a sponsorship policy guideline document no later than fourteen (14) days before **Fighter**'s first Bout, i.e. excluding hard liquor, pornography, gambling, etc.

4.6 Championship Belt. Any championship belt of **LFA** ("**Championship Belt**") that is ever in **Fighter**'s possession is on loan from **LFA**, and is (and shall remain) **LFA**'s sole personal property. **LFA** is not a mixed martial arts sanctioning body of any kind, and, as such, **Fighter** acknowledges that she has no use right, property right, or other interest of any kind in such Championship Belt. Accordingly, **Fighter** shall return said belt to **LFA** within forty-eight (48) hours of **LFA**'s request for same.

4.7 Licensure. Fighter shall timely obtain and maintain at her own expense and at all material times during the Term all necessary licensure to participate in any Bout.

4.8 Banned or Controlled Substance Use. During the Term, **Fighter** shall not use any banned or controlled substance, including anabolic steroids, marijuana, methamphetamines and cocaine (each a "**Controlled Substance**"). While acknowledging the pre-Bout and post-Bout testing to be provided for in each Bout Agreement, **Fighter** hereby acknowledges and consents that **LFA** and/or the governing Athletic Commission may additionally test **Fighter** for any and all Controlled Substances at any other time during the Term. **Fighter** shall be deemed to be in breach of this Section and this Contract may be terminated by **LFA**, and **Fighter** may be otherwise fined, suspended and/or penalized, if **Fighter** tests positive hereunder for a Controlled Substance during the Term, with such fine, suspension and/or penalty determined by **LFA** their sole and arbitrary discretion. Fines by **LFA** shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of Fighter's Compensation, per breach of contract. **Fighter**

acknowledges that any such fine is separate and apart from any fines, suspensions and/or penalties levied by any governing Athletic Commission for the use of Controlled Substance.

4.9 Lead Up. Except with regard to a Bout, as applicable, **Fighter** shall not fight or otherwise participate in any combat sport anywhere in the universe during the sixty (60) days prior to a Bout.

5. INJURY/RETIREMENT/POSTPONEMENT.

5.1 If at any time **LFA** offers to promote a Bout for **Fighter** and **Fighter** refuses to participate in or attempts to cancel or postpone such Bout for reason of claimed injury or other medical disability, **LFA** shall have the right, but not the obligation, to have **Fighter** examined by a medical doctor of its choice at **LFA**'s expense, and if **LFA** so elects, **Fighter** shall appear for such examination on one (1) days' notice.

5.2 If at any time during the Term, **Fighter** claims to be injured or partially or permanently disabled, **LFA** may for each such injury or disability claimed by **Fighter**, (a) extend the Term for the period of such injury or disability or for a period of (6) months, whichever is longer; or (b) declare that **LFA** has satisfied its obligations to promote one (1) of the Bouts to be promoted by **LFA** hereunder without any compensation due to **Fighter** for said Bout.

5.3 If at any time during the Term, **Fighter** decides to retire from mixed martial arts or other professional fighting competition, then **LFA** may, at its election, (a) suspend the Term for the period of such retirement; (b) declare that **LFA** has satisfied its obligation to promote all future Bouts to be promoted by **LFA** hereunder, without any compensation due to **Fighter** therefor; of (c) elect to provide **Fighter** with Notice of Acceleration.

5.4 If at any time during the Term, **Fighter** becomes pregnant, then **LFA** may, at its election, (a) suspend the Term for the period of such pregnancy and until such time as **Fighter** has been cleared by a medical doctor, to the satisfaction of **LFA**, to compete in Mixed Martial Arts events; or (b) declare that **LFA** has satisfied its obligation to promote all future Bouts to be promoted by **LFA** hereunder, without any compensation due to **Fighter** therefor.

5.5 In the event that a physician licensed or recognized by the Athletic Commission certifies that **Fighter**'s opponent is mentally or physically disabled to such an extent that **Fighter's** opponent cannot participate in the Bout as scheduled or if **Fighter**'s opponent fails to complete and be medically cleared for the medical examination, and a replacement fighter cannot be secured after reasonable efforts by **LFA** to do so; or the Bout is delayed or prevented from occurring on the Bout date by reason of an act of God, fire, flood, war, public disaster, power failure, other calamity, strike or labor difficulties, or any government or Athletic Commission enactment, determination or action, regulation, or order; or the telecast of the Event is delayed, prevented from occurring on the Bout date or cancelled for any reason beyond **LFA**'s control; then **LFA** can, at **LFA**'s sole discretion, reschedule the Bout, postpone the Bout or cancel the Bout, or suspend the Term for the period of such an event or declare that **LFA** has satisfied its obligation to promote all future Bouts to be promoted by **LFA** hereunder, without any compensation due to **Fighter**, however, the terms and conditions of this Promotion Contract shall remain in full force and effect during the period of any such extension, postponement or cancellation of the Bout. Should **LFA** determine to reschedule, postpone or cancel

the Bout, then the Bout Agreement shall terminate and no compensation shall be due to **Fighter** for the Bout until such time in the future, if any, as the Bout occurs.

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION. LFA will not pay for **Fighter**'s visa. **LFA** may assist **Fighter** in obtaining the documentation needed from LFA for **Fighter**'s required travel, work visas and permissions.

7. INSURANCE. LFA may elect to obtain for **LFA**'s own benefit life and/or other insurance upon **Fighter**, including insurance against **Fighter**'s failure to honor this Contract and/or any Bout Agreement. **Fighter** and **Fighter**'s Affiliates shall cooperate and assist **LFA** to obtain and maintain said coverage, if and as elected by **LFA**, including submission to physical and other examinations and provision of that information (including medical records) required by the prospective or existing insurance carrier. The foregoing notwithstanding, neither **Fighter** nor any **Fighter**'s Affiliates shall have any right, title or interest in and/or to any such insurance. This paragraph in no way limits the **Fighter**'s right to obtain additional insurance for **Fighter** sole benefit and at **Fighter**'s sole expense.

8. NO REVENUE SHARING. All payments and monies due **Fighter** hereunder are included in (and as part of) the **Fighter**'s Compensation. Under no circumstances shall **Fighter** be entitled to all or any portion of any of **LFA**'s revenue, whether by way of site fees, live-gate receipts, advertising, endorsement or sponsorship fees, or any money, items, or other compensation received by **LFA** for **Fighter**'s Brand, Pre-Bout Coverage, Bout Coverage, or Post-Bout Coverage licensing.

9. REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES. Fighter hereby represents, warrants, covenants and guarantees to **LFA** that, on the Effective Date and throughout the Term:

9.1 Fighter shall prepare for and honestly compete to the best of **Fighter**'s ability in each and every Bout, and that there are no impairments to **Fighter** doing so;

9.2 Fighter is free to enter into this Contract and has not prior to the Effective Date and will not during the Term enter into any agreement or understanding, contract, or option, whether written or oral, that conflicts with this Contract's provisions or the Granted Rights, or which does or might interfere with **Fighter**'s timely and complete performance hereunder or the free and unimpaired exercise by **LFA** of its rights and privileges under this Contract or any Bout Agreement;

9.3 there are no claims or arbitration, mediation or litigation actions pending or threatened that interfere or could adversely affect **Fighter**'s full and complete performance under this Contract and/or any Bout Agreement, or **LFA**'s unimpaired exercise of the Granted Rights;

9.4 Fighter enters into this Contract of **Fighter**'s own free will, without any requirement from **LFA** that **Fighter** execute this Contract as a condition precedent to participating in any Bout(s), is not subject to duress of any kind, and is not presently under the influence of any Controlled Substance or any disability, whether physical or mental, that would or could prevent **Fighter** from fully and completely performing all of **Fighter**'s obligations under this Contract and every Bout Agreement;

9.5 Fighter is: a citizen of the United States of America ("**United States**") and is not otherwise subject to any backup or other withholding of taxes or compensation applicable to those who are not United States citizens; or is not a citizen of the United States – but has provided **LFA** with

written information sufficient to **LFA**'s certified public accountant to demonstrate compliance with those legal requirements that apply to **Fighter** as a non-citizen of the United States, and understands that thirty percent (30%) of **Fighter**'s Compensation shall be withheld by **LFA** (as required by governing law and the United States Internal Revenue Service), unless an opinion of United States tax counsel and such other assurances as are reasonably required by **LFA** are received and accepted by **LFA** to indicate that, pursuant to a then-binding treaty between the United States and **Fighter**'s country of residence, a reduced rate or exemption indisputably applies to the payment of **Fighter**'s Compensation;

9.6 **Fighter** has obtained, secured and/or retained all required rights, title, interest, clearances and licenses for each and every item of clothing apparel, sportswear, equipment, signage, printed and/or digital material (collectively, "**Gear**") displayed or exhibited by **Fighter** and/or any **Fighter**'s Affiliates during the Bout or pre- or post-Bout event organized, presented, sponsored, telecast, otherwise broadcast, or recorded by **LFA**, including every intellectual property, personal property and other right to each and every creative expression, word, phrase, symbol, picture, design, likeness, voice, and name embodied within, or displayed on (or as part of), the Gear;

9.7 **Fighter** has all necessary power and authority to irrevocably transfer to **LFA** and/or **LFA**'s sponsors, agents, successors, assigns, managers, officers, members, employees, co-promoters, co-producers, and licensees the rights, title, interest, clearances and licenses detailed herein so that none thereof infringe or in any way adversely impact or affect a right of any third party;

9.8 Unless previously approved in a writing signed by an executive officer of **LFA**, **Fighter** and/or **Fighter**'s Affiliates shall not use any of **LFA**'s intellectual property; and

9.9 Unless previously approved in a writing signed by an executive officer of **LFA**, no banner, wording, symbol, picture, design, name or other advertisement or information for any: alcohol, beverage or tobacco product; beverage, tobacco, casino, gaming or media company; company that competes, directly or indirectly, with **LFA** or any sponsor of **LFA** or the Bout; or company that is causing or has caused injury to the reputation of **LFA** or any sponsor of **LFA** or the Bout (or any officer, manager or owner of **LFA** or any such sponsor), shall appear on **Fighter**'s trunks, gloves, robe, shoes, regalia, banner, other Gear, or any other part of the costume or body of **Fighter** or any **Fighter**'s Affiliates (even by way of temporary or henna tattoo) during the Bout and/or at any Pre-Bout Event or Post-Bout Event.

9.10 **Fighter** and any **Fighter**'s Affiliates have acquired the intellectual property rights to all body art, or have obtained, secured and/or retained all required rights, title, interest, clearances, licenses and/or written permission for each and every intellectual property right associated with all of **Fighter** and **Fighter**'s Affiliates body art, including but not limited to tattoos.

10. ASSUMPTION OF RISK. **FIGHTER** UNDERSTANDS, ACKNOWLEDGES AND RECOGNIZES THAT TRAINING FOR AND PARTICIPATING IN MIXED MARTIAL ARTS IS AN INHERENTLY AND ABNORMALLY DANGEROUS ACTIVITY THAT CAN (AND, AT TIMES, DOES) RESULT IN SEVERE AND PERMANENT PHYSICAL INJURY, INCLUDING IRREVERSIBLE NEUROLOGICAL TRAUMA, DISABILITY AND DEATH. **Fighter** has knowingly, intelligently, and deliberately evaluated the inherent risks and dangers of training for and/or participating in the Bout(s) (and the sport of mixed martial arts more generally), and declares that she

is physically, mentally, emotionally, and intellectually ready, willing and able to accept, and does so accept, for herself, and her spouse, heirs, assigns, executors, and administrators, all such risks and dangers clearly, unambiguously and explicitly, as well as all risks associated with participating in the Bout, specifically, and the sport of mixed martial arts more generally, whether presently known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, and shall not look to **LFA** and/or any of **LFA**'s subsidiaries, sponsors, successors, assigns, managers, officers, members, employees, attorneys, representatives, agents, co-promoters, co-producers, and licensees (each an "**Indemnitee**") for payment of or contribution toward or for any injury suffered by **Fighter** during the Bout or the preparation therefor.

11. WAIVER AND RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS. As further consideration for the opportunity to participate in the Bout(s), and with full knowledge of the risks and dangers involved and assumed by **Fighter** hereunder, and to the maximum extent permitted by law, **Fighter**, for herself and **Fighter**'s heirs, assigns, executors, and administrators, hereby voluntarily, completely, and irrevocably releases, discharges, waives and relinquishes each and every past, present, and future claim and cause of action that **Fighter** has or may have against **LFA**, any Indemnitee, and/or any member, manager, director, officer, employee, representative, agent, and/or contractor of **LFA** and/or an Indemnitee (in their respective individual, personal and representative capacity), from and/or for any injury or death that **Fighter** suffers as a result of training for and/or participating in the Bout(s), any Pre-Bout Event, Post-Bout Event, or travel to or from any of the foregoing, including every claim that such injury or death resulted from the negligence of any kind by or on behalf of **LFA**, an Indemnitee, and/or any member, manager, director, officer, employee, representative, agent, and/or contractor of **LFA** and/or an Indemnitee. In furtherance thereof, **Fighter** specifically waives and shall not assert any argument that a claim that would otherwise have been ***waived and released*** under this Section 11 survives merely by virtue of a law similar to **California Civil Code, Section 1542**.

12. INDEMNIFICATION. **Fighter** shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless **LFA**, every Indemnitee, and every member, manager, director, officer, employee, representative, agent, attorney and/or contractor of **LFA** and/or an Indemnitee from and against any and every claim, action, proceeding, expense (including the actual attorneys' fees charged by counsel of the indemnified party's choice, as well as expert witnesses' fees, as and when incurred) and damages arising from or relating to any claimed breach of this Contract or any Bout Agreement by **Fighter** and/or any **Fighter**'s Affiliates, or the inaccuracy of any **Fighter**'s representation, warranty, or covenant contained within this Contract or any Bout Agreement.

13. MEDICAL EXAMINATION REPORT. **Fighter** shall, at **Fighter**'s sole cost and effort, complete a physical medical examination and complete such other evaluations and testing as are required by **LFA** and/or the Governing Athletic Commission, and receive affirmative clearance from a licensed physician that is given no more than fourteen (14) from signing this Contract, and deliver to **LFA** all of the results and reports therefrom no less than fourteen (14) days from signing this Contract, unless LFA instructs Fighter otherwise in a separate writing. Such examination is contingent upon and must comply with the State Commission where each Bout is to be held. If the State Commission where the Bout is to be held does not accept the medicals of the **Fighter**'s place of residence, the **Fighter** is financially responsible for all medicals in compliance with the State Commission where the Bout is to be held. Although **LFA** does not pay for **Fighter**'s medicals, **LFA** will assist **Fighter** with making arrangements for medicals for **Fighter** if **Fighter**'s own medicals are not acceptable to the State Commission where the Bouts are to be held. **Fighter** shall not be permitted to participate in any Bout if the results and/or report from a medical examination restrict or in any way hamper **Fighter**'s ability

to compete in the Bout, or if such results and report are not provided to **LFA** at least fourteen (14) days from the day this Contract is signed.

14. GENERAL PROVISIONS

14.1 Miscellaneous. The above recitals and schedule referenced in this Contract are hereby incorporated herein as though expressly set forth. When used herein, the terms defined when initially capitalized have the ascribed meanings. This Contract may be executed in counterparts, with each deemed an original but all constituting one instrument. Facsimile and photocopied signatures bind the Parties. Either Party's nonperformance shall be excused to the extent rendered impossible by: strike; fire; flood; governmental acts, orders or restrictions; and/or any other similar reason where failure to perform is beyond the control and not caused intentionally or negligently by the nonperforming Party. This Contract's title and headings are for reference only and do not define or limit this Contract's scope. All decisions to be made by a Party hereunder shall be at such Party's sole and arbitrary discretion, except as otherwise provided for herein. This Contract shall be construed fairly with no inference drawn against the drafting Party. Any provision herein that may be reasonably interpreted as intended to survive this Contract's termination or expiration shall do so. All payments required herein are due in United States Dollars from an immediately available source. This Contract's time periods shall be computed by excluding the first day and including the last. Except if otherwise specifically noted, time is of the essence and all periods referencing days shall be measured by calendar days, and, if the last day in a given period falls on a weekend or legal holiday, then the last day thereof shall be the next business day thereafter. Except as may be otherwise specified herein, no action by a Party against another for breach hereof is limited to breach of contract remedies. The term "**including**" means "including, without limitation." Usage of "**and/or**" means both the conjunctive and disjunctive and is intended for expansive interpretation and not to limit the options available to each Party affected thereby.

14.2 Governing Law; Jurisdiction / Venue. This Contract will be exclusively interpreted and enforced in a state court in Dallas County, Texas under Texas law (without reference to its choice of law rules). **THE PARTIES HEREBY CONSENT TO SUCH VENUE, GOVERNING LAW, AND THE JURISDICTION OF SUCH COURT.**

14.3 Confidentiality. This Contract's terms shall not be disclosed by **Fighter** to any other person or entity, except as required: by court order or other legal process; except that **Fighter** may disclose the terms of this Contract to **Fighter**'s professional representatives (manager, agent, attorney, or accountant), each of whom shall be subject to the confidentiality provisions of this Agreement. **Fighter** shall take all precautions to prevent any further disclosure of the protected information by those to whom disclosure is herein permitted. **Fighter** shall provide prompt notice to **LFA** of such court order or other legal process to enable **LFA** to seek a protective order or otherwise prevent or restrict such disclosure. **LFA** may file this Contract with an athletic or fighting commission and/or world sanctioning body, at LFA's discretion.

14.4 Independent Contractor Status. Neither Party is an agent, partner, or joint venturer with the other, and neither Party has the authority to assume or create any obligation for or on behalf of the other. **Fighter** shall be solely responsible for any and every local, state, federal, and international taxes due on **Fighter**'s Compensation (including those for social security, under the United States' Federal Insurance Contributions Act and Federal Unemployment Tax Act), and for **Fighter**'s own actions and expenses, including the engagement, discharge, benefits, and costs of each and every

Fighter Affiliate, and **Fighter**'s training facilities, equipment, professional memberships, sanctioning fees, and medical expenses. As an independent contractor to **Fighter**, **LFA** has and shall have full authority and right to promote other Fighters, including those in the same weight class as **Fighter**.

14.5 Entire Contract. This Contract sets forth the Parties' entire agreement and understandings relating to the subject matter herein and merges and supersedes all prior contracts, agreements, writings and understandings. This Contract (and any waiver of any rights here from) shall not be amended or modified unless in writing or, to the extent applicable, a Bout Agreement, signed by both Parties.

14.6 Legal Expenses. The prevailing Party in any legal action brought against the other Party (and relating hereto) shall be entitled to, *inter alia*, reimbursement for its expenses, including court costs and reasonable attorneys' and expert witnesses' fees and expenses.

14.7 Benefit. This Contract binds (and inures to the benefit of) the Parties, and the Parties' respective heirs, assigns, successors and legal representatives, subject to any and all assignment restrictions set forth herein. However, this Contract is not a third party beneficiary contract (and no third party shall have any claim or right of action hereunder).

14.8 Severability / Waiver. If a term hereof is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unenforceable, then all of this Contract's remaining terms shall, in sum, remain effective as if the objectionable term was not included (and the invalid or unenforceable term shall be judicially modified and read by the court to be enforceable to the maximum extent possible, if at all). No delay, omission or failure to exercise any right or remedy provided for herein shall be deemed a waiver thereof or an acceptance of the event giving rise to such remedy. Rather, every such right or remedy hereunder may be used as the Party exercising it deems expedient.

14.9 Assignment. Neither this Contract nor the rights and obligations hereunder shall be assigned, transferred or pledged by **Fighter** without **LFA**'s prior express written consent. Any attempt by **Fighter** to do so without such consent will be ineffective. **LFA**, however, may at any time assign any and/or all of its rights and obligations hereunder without **Fighter**'s consent.

14.10 Injunctive Relief. **Fighter**'s exclusive right and remedy if **LFA** breaches this Contract is a suit at law for recovery of damages. In no event shall **Fighter** be entitled to and hereby waives any injunctive (without the requirement of posting a bond) and equitable form of relief or remedy, including but not limited to, termination or rescission of this Contract or enjoinder or restraint upon the use, publication, distribution or exhibition of any work product resulting from (and included within) the Services, or any derivative work thereof, or the use, publication, distribution or exhibition of any advertising or marketing material related thereto. For the avoidance of doubt, if **Fighter** breaches (or threatens to breach) any of **Fighter's** obligations hereunder, **LFA** shall be entitled, without proving actual damage sustained, to a stipulated temporary restraining order against **Fighter**, and shall thereafter be entitled to a preliminary injunction, permanent injunction and/or Order compelling specific performance to prevent that continued or threatened breach. Additionally, **LFA** may pursue other remedies available to it, including the recovery of damages.

14.11 Notice. Any Notice or other communications given or sent pursuant to this Contract, shall be in writing and shall be deemed given when (i) personally delivered; (ii) delivered by confirmed facsimile transmission; (iii) three (3) days following the date of such notice is mailed postage paid by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested; (iv) or five (5) business days after

being sent via first class mail postage prepaid at/to the respective Party's address set forth below (or at/to such other address as a Party may provide by Notice to the other Party from time to time); OR (v) delivered by confirmed electronic means (electronic mail, or "e-mail") to the respective addresses indicated below or any address subsequently provided to **LFA**.

If to **LFA**: **Attention:** Mark Bieri FAX: 702-317-3473 E-mail: mbieri@LFAfighting.com	If to **Fighter**: Tel.: FAX: E-mail:
With a Copy to: Attention: FAX: E-mail:	With a Copy to: Tel.: FAX: E-mail:

14.12 INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION. EACH PARTY HAS: INDEPENDENTLY EVALUATED THE DESIRABILITY OF ENTERING INTO THIS CONTRACT AND IS NOT RELYING ON ANY REPRESENTATION, GUARANTEE OR STATEMENT NOT SET FORTH HEREIN; AND HAS BEEN AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK LEGAL COUNSEL WITH REGARD TO ITS RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS AND HAS CONSULTED OR REFUSED SUCH COUNSEL, AND ACCORDINGLY NEGOTIATED THIS CONTRACT.

14.13 Execution. The Parties have each executed this Contract by duly authorized representative and each Party hereby acknowledges that it understands and is bound by this Contract.

LEGACY FIGHTING ALLIANCE, LLC

Date : Aug 06 2022

Mark Bieri

By: Mark Bieri

Its: Director of Talent Relations

FIGHTER

Date : Aug 06 2022

Rafael Do Nascimento

Audit Trail

Document Details

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Document Signed	Document Signed by Mark Bieri (mbieri@lfa.com) IP: 216.198.172.100	Aug 06 2022 01:06AM UTC
Document Completed	This document has been completed. Fingerprint: c3622cbb05cf4cd291611db0d28e7ac2	Aug 06 2022 01:06AM UTC

April 20, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Edward Soares, and I am a long-standing executive in the field of professional mixed martial arts (MMA), currently serving as the CEO of Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), the #1 developmental organization in the sport.

Over the course of my career, I have worked extensively in the identification, development, and promotion of elite-level fighters, including athletes who have gone on to compete at the highest levels of the sport, particularly in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). My professional experience has given me a comprehensive understanding of the standards that distinguish top-tier athletes from the broader competitive field.

I am writing in strong support of Rafael Nascimento, whom I have had the opportunity to observe and evaluate within the context of high-level professional MMA competition. Based on my experience and direct knowledge of the sport, I can

state that Mr. Nascimento demonstrates a level of skill, performance, and competitive distinction that places him among the most promising and accomplished athletes competing at this level.

Mr. Nascimento has competed in LFA, an organization widely recognized within the United States and internationally as a primary feeder league to the UFC. LFA consistently attracts highly skilled fighters from diverse national and international backgrounds, many of whom are actively recruited into the UFC roster. As such, athletes competing in LFA are evaluated within a deeply competitive environment that reflects the upper tier of professional MMA outside of the UFC itself.

Within this context, Mr. Nascimento has distinguished himself through both performance and technical ability. Notably, he achieved recognition for executing a rare and highly technical submission maneuver, commonly referred to as a “calf slicer,” in an LFA bout. This technique is widely regarded within the MMA community as complex and difficult to execute successfully, particularly against a trained and competitive opponent at the professional level.

Submissions at this level are not recognized arbitrarily; they are evaluated through a competitive selection process conducted by LFA leadership and technical staff, including matchmakers, executives, and professionals with extensive experience in high-level MMA. The award for “Submission of the Year” is granted after reviewing all submission victories across LFA events within a given period, taking into account specific criteria such as technical difficulty, execution under elite competitive conditions, effectiveness against a qualified opponent, and overall impact within the event and broader MMA audience.

Because LFA operates as a nationally recognized promotion in the United States and serves as a primary developmental platform for athletes advancing to the UFC,

performances distinguished within this organization are evaluated within a highly competitive pool of professional fighters from diverse national and international backgrounds. As such, receiving a distinction of this nature reflects not only excellence in a single bout, but superiority when compared to numerous other high-level performances across the organization's roster.

In this context, Mr. Nascimento's recognition represents a level of achievement that stands out among a large field of professional athletes competing at an internationally relevant level, reinforcing that his performance exceeded the standard expected within one of the most competitive feeder organizations in the sport.

Beyond this specific achievement, Mr. Nascimento has consistently demonstrated the attributes that define elite fighters, including technical versatility, strategic intelligence, and the ability to perform under pressure against high-caliber opponents. His career trajectory reflects sustained success and continued progression within increasingly competitive environments, which is a key indicator of long-term distinction in professional MMA.

Based on my professional experience evaluating fighters and my familiarity with the competitive landscape of the sport, I consider Mr. Nascimento to be among a select group of athletes who possess the potential and demonstrated ability to succeed at the highest levels of MMA. His performances to date reflect not only individual excellence but also a level of distinction that is recognized within the professional community.

For these reasons, I strongly support Mr. Nascimento's petition and believe that his record of achievement, combined with his standing within a highly competitive and internationally relevant field, reflects a level of accomplishment consistent with individuals who have risen to the top of their profession.

Sincerely,

Edward Soares

Legacy Fighting Alliance, CEO

Email: esoares@lfa.com

Cell: 310-951-0825

Exhibit D: Published material about the beneficiary in professional or major trade publications or other major media, relating to the beneficiary’s work in the field for which the classification is sought

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Former gold miner Rafael Mulisha plans to sign a contract with the UFC: "I deserve it."

Brazilian fighter will be in the co-main event of LFA 147 this Friday: "I want to prove that I am a top athlete"; Mulisha worked in mining to keep his dream of becoming a fighter alive.

By **Nathalia Movilla*** — Rio de Janeiro
18/11/2022 12:47 Updated3 years ago

Originally from Apiacás, a municipality in the far north of Mato Grosso, Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento will have his second fight in the LFA this Friday against American Justin Wetzell, in the bantamweight category (up to 61kg). The Brazilian, who has seven wins and one loss on his record, dreams of a UFC contract.

> "After this guy, I want a contract with the UFC, because I've proven I deserve it. I accepted the figh at the last minute. I deserve a contract with the biggest organization in the world," Mulisha said in an interview with **Combate.com** .

Former gold miner, Brazilian Rafael Mulisha dreams of UFC — Photo: Press Release

Passionate about MMA, Rafael Mulisha didn't have the opportunity in the city where he lived because there was no gym. In 2012, the fighter went to Minas Gerais, where he began training, and a year later he debuted in the sport against Junior Pereira, whom he submitted in the first round of the fight.

It was love at first sight. When I stepped into the octagon, I said: this is what I want for my life. I want to do more fights.

Born and raised in a gold mining area, Mulisha remained steadfast in his dream of becoming a top athlete thanks to his work as a gold miner and diver. During an interview with **Combate** , Rafael explained that he would spend time in his hometown to save money and return to the major centers, where he would train and prepare for fights.

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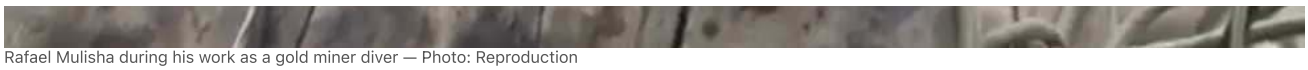


Rafael Mulisha during his work as a gold miner diver — Photo: Reproduction

UFC: Jennifer Maia says Maryna Moroz is a good fight to get back to winning.

The Brazilian strung together four consecutive submission victories in different competitions. In November 2018, Rafael fought Wilker Pereira and suffered the first and only defeat of his career. The fight, however, ended in disqualification after an illegal kick.

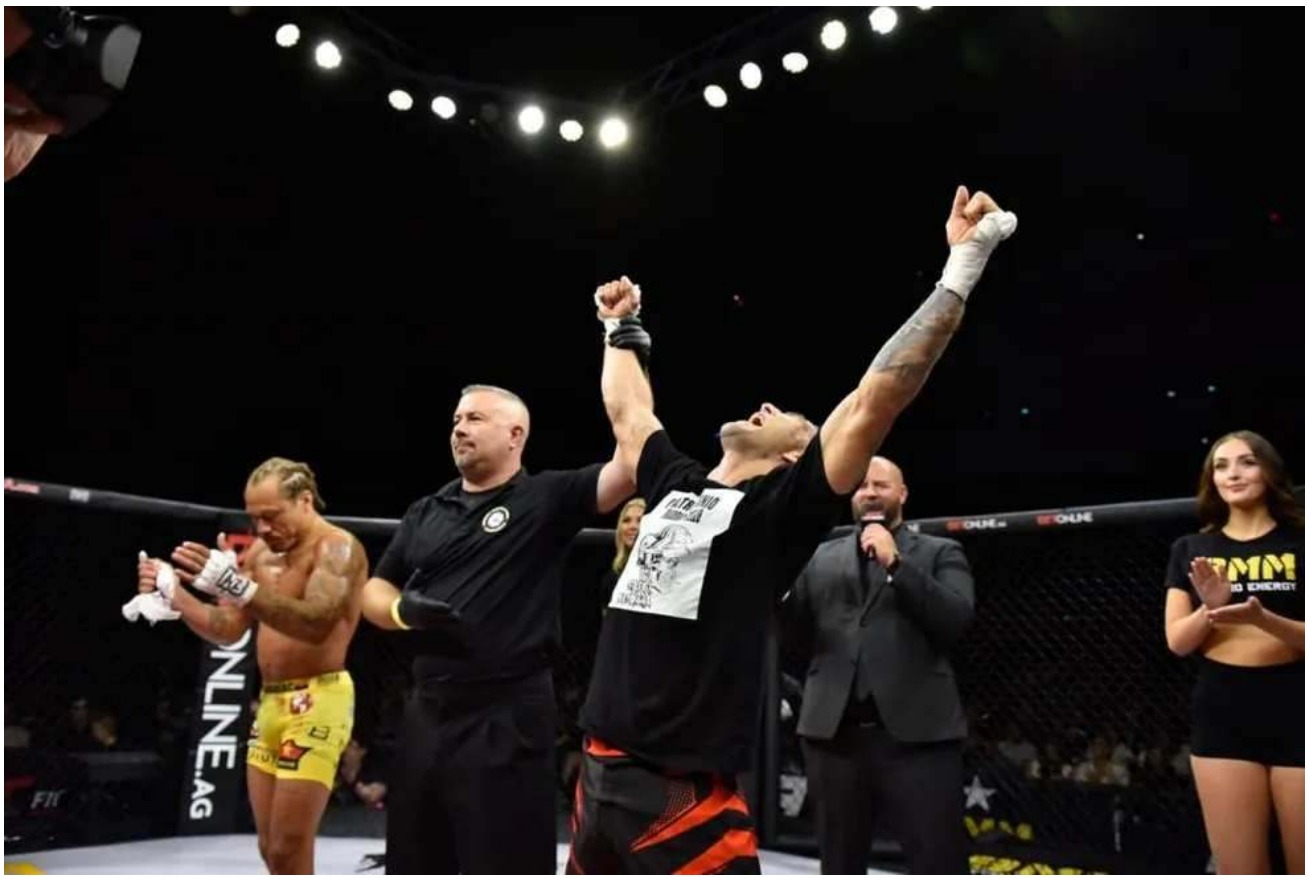
"It was really bad. I was very upset during the fight because I had trained a lot and they disqualified me unfairly. But life goes on, I looked ahead and started my career again. And I'm managing to earn my place," he recalled.

Robert Whittaker is "shocked" by Alex Poatan's size: "Who let him in?"

Mulisha returned to the octagon 11 months later and added two more victories, one by submission and the other by judges' decision. In his last fight of 2019, the kickboxing black belt fractured his facial bone and was unable to train for 180 days, forcing him to return to Mato Grosso. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the fighter did not have the financial means to return to Rio de Janeiro. Thus, he spent two years without fighting or training, only working.

- In November 2021, my barge caught fire and I lost it completely. I ended up losing all my machinery. When I saw that everything was burned, I said: "I think my career here in mining is over." God touched my heart and told me to follow my dream again. In January, I was already in Rio de Janeiro training - said Rafael Mulisha.

After two months of training, Mulisha obtained his visa and moved to Los Angeles, in the United States - where he made his LFA debut. Facing the then-knockout artist and undefeated Marcus McGhee, the fighter from Mato Grosso won the fight in the first round with a rear-naked choke.



Rafael Mulisha will face Justin Wetzell at LFA 147 — Photo: Press Release

Israel Adesanya receives police summons to explain in court the possession of brass knuckles.

Now, against Justin Wetzell, a fight he accepted 18 days before the event, Mulisha expects a tough duel and believes it will be a turning point in his career.

- This is a fight that could completely change my career. He's a very tough opponent, ranked number one in his state, a complete fighte a striker with quality wrestling. I accepted this fight because I think I have the tools to beat him; I have jiu-jitsu, I can overcome his wrestling, and I have striking too.

"My expectation for LFA 147 is to prove that I'm a top athlete, and since they gave me a top athlete, I have to prove that I'm better than him. And they can be sure it's going to be a show. I'm prepared to fight on the ground, standing up, wherever he wants to fight, we'll fight. And in the end, no matter what happens, my arm will be raised," he concluded.

LFA 147 Service

Combate will broadcast the event starting at 11 PM (Brasilia time). The first two fights will also be available on sportv3.

LFA 147

November 18, 2022, in Iowa (USA)

MAIN CARD

Lightweight: Júnior Melo vs. Melquizael Costa

Bantamweight: Justin Wetzell vs. Rafael Mulisha

Bantamweight: Askar Askar vs. Rickey Furar

Flyweight: Helen Peralta vs. Aline Pereira Welterweight

: Haris Talundzic vs. Omoyele Gonzalez

Welterweight: Ryan Leininger vs. Jeremias Curtright

PRELIMINARY CARD

Lightweight: Ben Halder vs. William Starks

Strawweight: Leslie Hernandez vs. Jasmim Saltitante

Strawweight: Jasmin Montoya vs. Amanda Macioce

** Intern, under the supervision of Raphael Marinho*

Heavyweight duel invades the Combate screen!

+COMBAT

Combate.com: Check out the latest MMA news

See the full UFC schedule for 2022.

Subscribe to Combate Play and get access to all live events and a special archive (exclusive to subscribers).

See also

Meet Rafael Mulisha, a former prospector who fights in the UFC's lower divisions in the United States.

uol.com.br/esporte/futebol/ultimas-noticias/lancepress/2022/09/26/conheca-rafael-mulisha-ex-garimpeiro-que-luta-nas-divisoes-de-acesso-do-ufc-nos-estados-unidos.htm

September 26, 2022, 4:51 PM

For every young **martial arts** enthusiast , living abroad and fighting on the world's biggest stages is a dream. The path is arduous, but it can be even more difficult when your "home" is far from major centers. Such was the journey of Rafael "Mulisha" Nascimento, a 30-year-old fighter from Apiacás, a city of less than 10,000 inhabitants in the far north of Mato Grosso.

- I came from a very small town where everyone knows each other, and mining has always been the occupation of most of the population there. It was no different for me. I come from a family of miners, and that's always been my background. As a child, the kids liked to play with balls, but I always liked sports and more extreme games," Rafael said.

Opening a gym in Rafael's hometown channeled this passion and transformed the Mato Grosso native's life.

"That's when a very small gym opened in my town. I was 12 years old and there was only karate there, but today, looking back, it's as if from the first contact I already knew what path I wanted to take," he recounted.

The story, however, contained a lot of hard work between the means and the ends, before becoming an example of success. "Mulisha" toured back and forth between mining and fighting until 2019.

"There were many facets to this dream. I always saw mining as my sponsor. Something I had to do to finance my goals. Whenever I managed to save enough money, I'd go to Rio de Janeiro, train, and fight with the best in the country. The money would run out, and I'd have to go back even if I wanted to stay," the fighter recalled.

A tragic incident determined Rafael's future, and at 29, he decided to leave his profession and pursue what he'd always wanted.

"That year, a fire accident happened, and I lost all my machinery and my raft. At the time, it was terrible, but today I see that all the signs that brought me here led me to where I should

have gone long before," Rafael said.

Today, living in Los Angeles and competing at a high level in the world's biggest MMA centers, Rafael says he's ready and motivated to continue climbing the ladder and gaining ground on the scene.

"My life has changed. I live for fighting and dedicate my body and mind to the success of my career. I know the obstacles are great, but I'm prepared and ready for anything," commented the fighter.

A black belt in kickboxing and a purple belt in jiu-jitsu, "Mulisha" debuted in the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA) bantamweight division in July of this year at an event held in Phoenix, Arizona. He won with a rear naked choke submission against the top-ranked fighter in the entire state. His record totals seven official fights, with six wins and only one loss, including a triumph at Jungle Fight 99 in Rio de Janeiro. Awaiting confirmation, Rafael is eager to return to the octagon in October or November to gain valuable positions in the league's rankings.

Jungle Fight on DAZN 99 returns to Rio de Janeiro with a title fight between Brazil and Argentina in the main event

tatame.com.br/jungle-fight-no-dazn-99-volta-ao-rio-de-janeiro-com-disputa-de-cinturao-entre-brasil-e-argentina-na-luta-principal

Mateus Machado November 27, 2019

One of Latin America's biggest MMA events returns to Rio de Janeiro. One week after a major edition in Belo Horizonte, Jungle Fight on DAZN is hosting its 99th show at the Professor Manoel José Gomes Tubino Olympic Village in Jacarepaguá.

In the main event, the rivalry between Brazil and Argentina will be the highlight of the evening. In a fight for the lightweight title (up to 70kg), undefeated Lucas Almeida will face Argentine up-and-comer Nicolas Cocuccio. Jungle Fight President Wallid Ismail is excited about another event in the Marvelous City and is betting that the main event will be one of the biggest MMA fights of the year.

"I'm thrilled to be here at the 99th edition here in Rio de Janeiro. I'm sure the fans will pack the Olympic Village gymnasium. Once again, we'll showcase the strength of Latin American MMA. We'll see the biggest revelation in Argentine MMA, Nicolas Cocuccio, who has seven wins in the sport and a spectacular victory in Jungle Fight, against Lucas Almeida, one of the great prospects in Brazilian MMA. Lucas has ten fights and ten wins, six by knockout and four by submission. He's already won three fights in Jungle Fight, always putting on a show. And an athlete who puts on a show is guaranteed a place in the jungle. This event will be spectacular."

Tickets for the event will begin to be distributed this Wednesday (27), at the Olympic Village. The weigh-in is scheduled for Friday (29), at the same location. Jungle Fight 99 will be broadcast exclusively on DAZN and you can guarantee your subscription **by clicking here** . The first month, it's worth remembering, is free!

Anyone who subscribes to DAZN by accessing the link above **https://prf.hn/click/camref:1100l7Tb9/adref:armadura** will receive a Jungle Fight shirt with their first payment.

FULL CARD:

Jungle Fight on DAZN 99
Professor Manoel José Gomes Tubino Olympic Village, in Jacarepaguá (RJ)
Saturday, November 30, 2019

Nicolas Cocuccio (RD Champions – Argentina) x Lucas Almeida (Team Kioshi) – 70kg
Romário Augusto Superman (CT Patriota) x Vanilto Antunes (RMT) – 77kg
Adriano Silva "Coiote" (Nocaute Team / Macapá) x Tony Fox (Team Nogueira) – 66kg
Altamiro de Jesus Pereira (TFT) x Felipe Pereira (MPBJJ / NU Manaus) – 57kg
Paulo Henrique Laia (RD Champion-RJ) x Lucas Barros (TEAM Kioshi) – 70kg
Lucas Barros (TEAM Kioshi) x Ivan Carvalho (Rizzo RVT-LB) – 70kg
Jaqueline Ferreira (RD Champion) x Day Monstera (TFT) – 61kg
Jair Leonel "Palito" (TFT / BF Team) x Leonardo Ivo (Team Nogueira) – 57kg
Jairo Pacheco (TFT) x Wdison Costa (PRVT) – 70kg
Rafael Almeida (Team Águia) vs. Lucas Almeida (First Fight Center) – 61kg
Vanilto Antunes (RMT) vs. Jackson Velasco (CT Brunocila) – 77kg
Victor Dias (TFT) vs. Matheus da Silva Severino (Chute Boxe Bauru) – 57kg
Denilson Flores Morales (RD Champions) vs. Cristiano Araujo França (TFT) – 70kg
Patrício "Pitbull" Lima (TFT) vs. Wily Pereira (Team Fuzion) – 61kg
Yana Gadelha (MP BJJ) vs. Lorrany Santos (RMT) – 66kg
Joseph Vieira (RD Champion-RJ) vs. Adionai de Lima Marciel (DGT De Assis) – 57kg
Victor "Buldoguinho" Perciliano (Beto Padilha Team) vs. Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento (Team Nogueira) – 61kg
Marcos "Vuvuzela"Paulo (MTB) x Fabrício Santana Barbosa (Hugo Duarte Team) – 57kg

Matthew Machado

A journalist passionate about fighting and soccer. Working for TATAME since 2015, I've had the honor and privilege of covering major MMA, Jiu-Jitsu, and other martial arts events over the past few years, as well as interviewing some of the biggest names in the fighting world. Obsessed with information, I'm always eager to tell new stories and witness memorable moments.

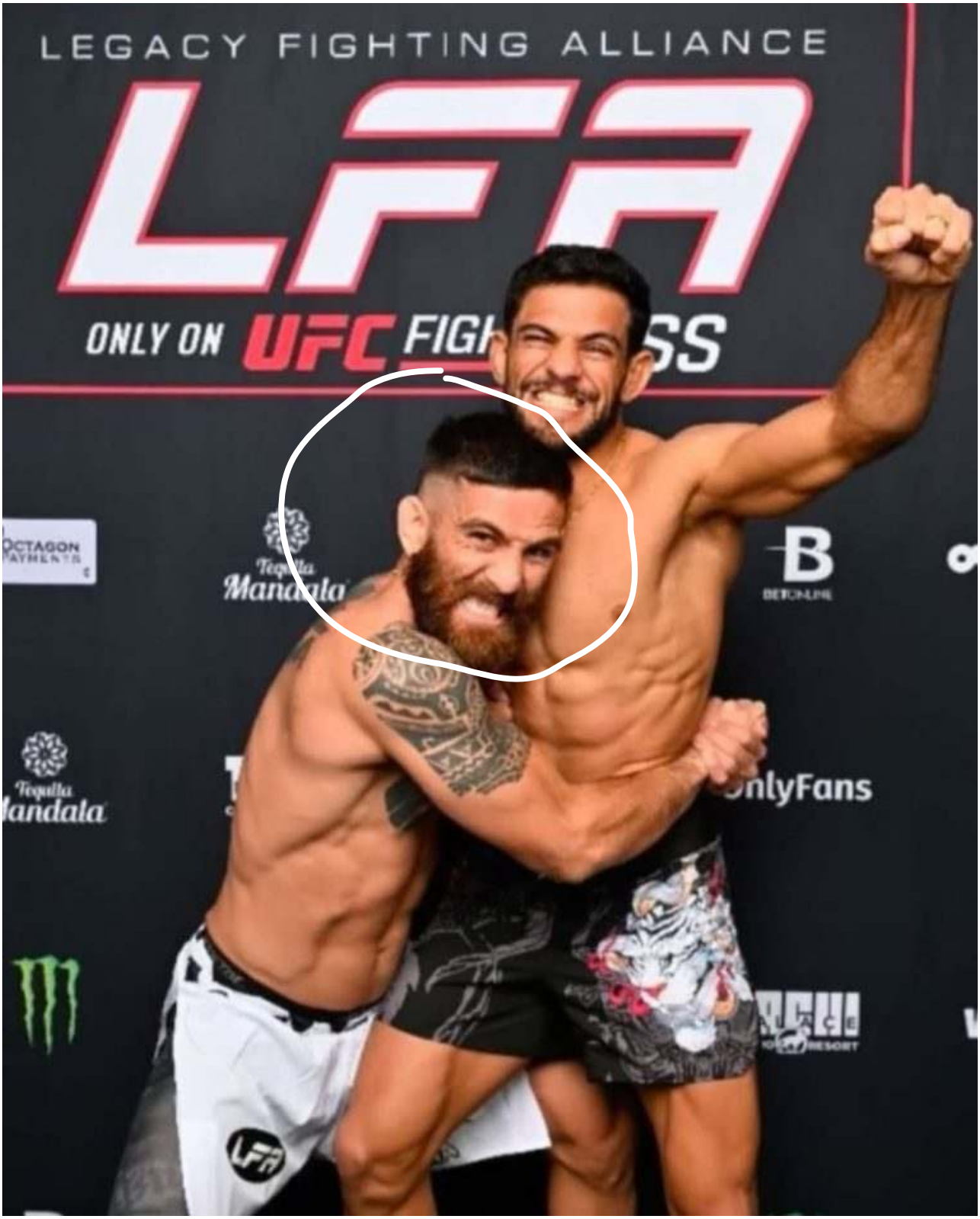
Mato Grosso residents are highlights at LFA 199 held in California

mtesporte.com.br/esporte/mato-grossenses-sao-destaques-no-lfa-199-realizado-na-california

Nilson Aranha January 11, 2025

Mato Grosso residents are featured at LFA 199 held in California

By: Nilson Aranha
Date: January 11, 2025



Writing with Sonoticias

Mato Grosso natives Erick Visconde and Rafael Mulisha shone in the early hours of this Saturday (11) at LFA 199 held in Leemore, California (USA). Both fought on the main card of the event, considered one of the most renowned MMA events in the world.

The first to enter the cage was fighter Rafael Mulisha, who represents Apiacás (487 km from Sinop). In a featherweight duel against American Brandon Altomare, Mulisha won by submission at 2 minutes and 6 seconds of the first round with a calf lock. With the victory, he reached 10 career victories.

According to Mulisha, Mato Grosso is very well represented in the LFA

In the main event of the evening, Sinop representative Erick Visconde delivered a brutal knockout with a spinning elbow just over a minute into the second round against his compatriot Ary Farias, in the featherweight division. It was Erick's second consecutive victory in the LFA. Last October, he debuted in the organization with a victory over Kyrgyzstan's Busurmankul Abdibait.

Rafael Mulisha won with the best finish of the night at LFA 199

Nilson Aranha

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Mato Grosso fighter faces American for LFA belt

mtesporte.com.br/esporte/14558

Nilson Aranha July 12, 2024

Fighter from Mato Grosso faces American for the LFA belt

By: Nilson Aranha
Date: July 12, 2024

***Mulisha** accepted the challenge, even with American fighter John Sweeney out of weight.*

Born in the municipality of Apiacas, in the far north of the state of Mato Grosso, MMA fighter Rafael "Mulisha" Nascimento, 32, will soon compete for the bantamweight title on the main card of the LFA – Legacy Fighting Alliance, one of the world's leading MMA leagues. The event will take place in Chandler, Arizona (USA).

The Brazilian is on a strong run in his recent LFA fights. His LFA record includes 9 fights, 2 losses, and no draws.

The Mato Grosso fighter's opponent will be American John Sweeney, the current bantamweight titleholder who is on a winning streak. His record includes 13 fights, 3 losses, and no draws.

Nascimento has the opportunity to regain the belt in the category that belonged to Brazilian Allan Begosso, who lost it to American John Sweeney in June 2023.

Even though his opponent was out of weight, Mulisha didn't let the fight fall through and accepted the challenge, having to move up a weight class. He moved up from the 61-kilogram weight class and will now fight in the 66-kilogram weight class, the same weight as his opponent. "We're going to go after that belt, though. I've trained hard for this moment, and I hope I can count on the support and support of all Brazilians."

After competing in several MMA leagues in Brazil, Rafael "Mulisha" Nascimento currently resides in Los Angeles, USA, where he competes against the world's greatest fighters. If he wins his upcoming fight, Mato Grosso native Rafael Mulisha will take an important step toward joining the world's premier MMA league, the UFC – Ultimate Fight Championship.

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Rafael Nascimento and Erik Visconde fight at LFA 199, the world's biggest MMA event

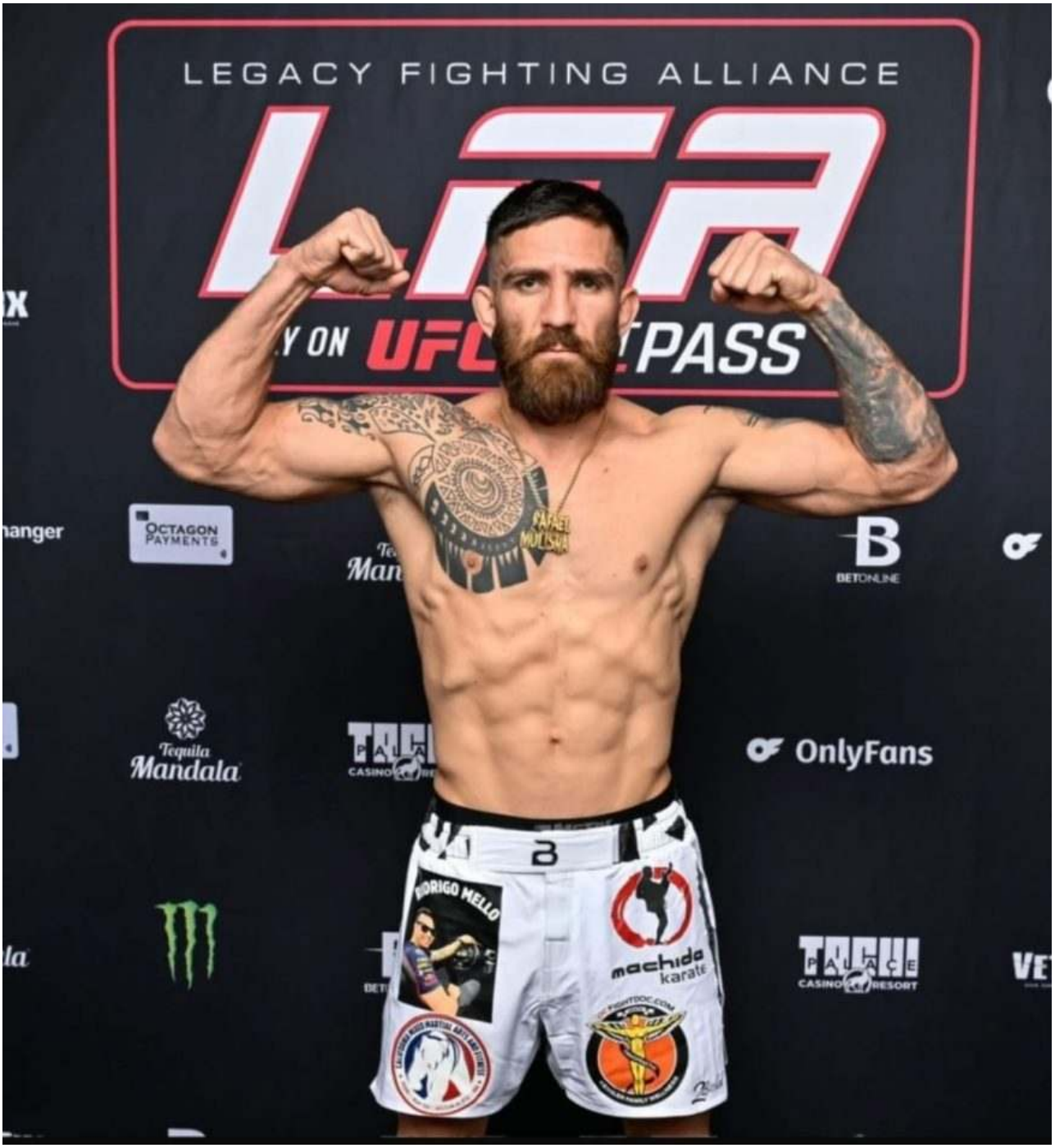
mtesporte.com.br/esporte/rafael-nascimento-e-erik-visconde-lutam-no-lfa-199-nessa-sexta

Nilson Aranha January 10, 2025

By: Nilson Aranha
Date: January 9, 2025

Two fighters from Mato Grosso will fight for the LFA this Friday (10) in Lemoore, a city located in the American state of California, in Kings County. Fighters Rafael Mulisha of Apiacás and Erick Visconde of Sinop are representing Mato Grosso in the event. This will be the 199th edition of the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), the first of the year, and is one of the most renowned MMA events in the world.

The last official fight of the Apiacaense fighter, the gold digger, was in July of last year in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, for the bantamweight belt at LFA 184.



Rafael Nascimento faces Brandon Altomare, a veteran of the American army

Nascimento said he has overcome losing his belt and is ready to begin a new phase of his career. "Learn from your failures, get up, and move forward with greater determination, because each day is a new opportunity to be the best version of yourself. Motivation is like a muscle: the more you exercise it, the stronger it becomes." The Mato Grosso prospector faces American Brandon Altomare, a U.S. Army veteran on a four-fight winning streak and making his LFA debut.

Sinopense Erick Visconde faces Ary Farias from Manaus

The main event of the evening will be between two Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belts. Sinop native Erick Visconde, a LFA veteran with 14 wins, will face his compatriot Ary Farias, a seven-time jiu-jitsu world champion. This bout will be the last of the evening.

The main fight of LFA 199 takes place this Friday, January 10th and will be broadcast on ufcfightpass starting at midnight

Nilson Aranha

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(Supporting evidence of major media - Globo Group)

Globo.com launches new campaign.

Globo's portal celebrates content diversity and leading access rates in the country.

27/10/2023 12:03 Updated2 years ago

Globo.com , the most accessed website in Brazil, launched a special campaign last Wednesday (October 25th) celebrating diversity and engagement. The portal, **launched in 2000** , now brings together a portfolio of more than 40 brands from Grupo Globo and is the leader in website traffic in the country. It receives more than 171 million visits per month – more than 16 per user, on average – according to data released in September by Comscore, a company specializing in internet traffic metrics and audience analysis.

The new campaign 'Globo.com: it's everything you want' will feature three 30-second films, distributed on TV and digital platforms, depicting how the website offers the full range of content from Globo brands and, in 23 years, has become a benchmark for innovation and information. **The first two are already available** on YouTube, on the official Globoplay channel.

At an event for the advertising market last month, Globo's president, Paulo Marinho, spoke about the company's current success and provided current figures: "Globo reaches 140 million people weekly, across linear and digital channels. In a single day, according to Kantar data, Globo's combined channels and platforms reach 41% of the Brazilian population. In a week, 70%; in a month 87%," he stated.

UOL had 103.6 million unique users in April.

07/06/2019

UOL, the largest Brazilian company for content, technology, services, and digital payment methods, broke its access record in April, reaching **103.6 million* unique users and 86% reach on the Brazilian internet** , securing its leadership in audience share among content producers in the country. The data comes from ComScore's* Multiplatform ranking, where UOL came in third place, behind only Facebook and Google.

Before April, UOL registered a record number of historical accesses in October 2018, with 101.8 million unique visitors during its election coverage.

"The milestone reached in April shows that UOL continues to grow in audience and reach," comments Murilo Garavello, UOL's Content Director. "It's a clear sign that our content production is a benchmark for Brazilians, and at the same time a vote of confidence that we will reciprocate by investing more and more in innovative editorial formats."

Among the initiatives for the month of April, UOL announced its sponsorship of the 2019 Path Festival, bringing the TAB channel on board for the first time as the master sponsor of the programming in the "Presents" category. Considered the largest innovation and creativity festival in Brazil, the event took place in the Avenida Paulista region on June 1st and 2nd, and featured extensive coverage from UOL, with daily posts on TAB and across all social media platforms, as well as the production of live streams and special videos during the festival.

In the content area, UOL also announced new programs on UOL TV and the addition of Leo Dias to its team of bloggers.

There was also the premiere of the weekly show "Juca Explica," produced by UOL TV and presented by sports journalist Juca Kfouri, who is a UOL blogger and has worked in the main newsrooms in Brazil during his more than 40-year career.

For those interested in sports, UOL also announced a new partnership with FutParódias, which now airs a bi-weekly program on UOL TV and on the UOL Esporte YouTube channel, featuring its popular creative parodies and lyrics that poke fun at national and international soccer clubs and players.

Also among the new features, UOL TV launched the column "Descomplique" (Simplify), with the finance expert YouTuber Júlia Mendonça, who is currently also one of the participants in the reality show "O Aprendiz" (The Apprentice).

The new programming also features the segment "The Most Bizarre Report I've Ever Done," with humorous testimonials about the most memorable reports by UOL reporters, in addition to the recently launched "UOL Sees the Internet," a spin-off of the well-known "UOL Sees TV," which focuses on online behavior and internet

trends.

"We continue to invest in creating new channels, platforms, and special projects with the goal of offering content in increasingly creative and diverse formats," comments Raphael Farias, marketing director at UOL. "The expansion of our audience reflects UOL's relentless pursuit of producing content that increasingly meets the current needs of our audience," he adds.

For André Vinicius, Executive Director of Advertising, in addition to credibility with the public, the record further highlights its strength as a communication vehicle. "UOL continues to innovate and grow, bringing complete marketing solutions that add quality and reach, with the production of original and relevant content for all interests," he explains. "We offer the opportunity to impact almost 90% of people who access the digital environment, with branded content, video, display, and native ad formats in a safe, transparent environment, with viewability and engagement rates far exceeding the market average," concludes André Vinicius.

**Source: ComScore Multiplatform Ranking* (ref. Apr/2019)*

Best Sites For MMA/UFC Statistics | Top MMA Stats Websites

POSTED ON DECEMBER 3, 2025 BY TOBY @ PUNTER2PRO

For mixed martial arts (MMA) and Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) enthusiasts and passionate bettors, staying informed about the latest statistics and insights is crucial. Fortunately, there are several dedicated websites that cater to MMA/UFC fans, providing up-to-date information, comprehensive fight records, and detailed statistical breakdowns. Whether you're interested in fighter profiles, event coverage, or rankings, these go-to sources are the perfect destinations for all your MMA/UFC statistical needs.

Article Contents

1. Fight Matrix
2. Tapology
3. PFL MMA
4. UFC.com
5. Sherdog
Best Bookmakers for MMA/UFC
Important MMA/UFC Stats for Betting Analysis

1. Fight Matrix

FightMatrix.com is a website that specialises in providing comprehensive MMA and UFC statistics and rankings. It offers objective rankings based on factors like wins, losses, opponent strength, and recent performance. The site features historical data, fighter profiles, event coverage, and in-depth analysis. It serves as a valuable resource for fans and analysts seeking detailed and data-driven information about the MMA and UFC landscape.

2. Tapology

Tapology.com is a website that focuses on providing MMA statistics and information. It offers detailed fighter profiles, including records and statistical breakdowns. The site features rankings, allows users to make fight predictions, and provides event coverage with statistical breakdowns. Tapology.com also fosters a community aspect where fans can engage in discussions and share opinions. It serves as a valuable resource for MMA enthusiasts seeking statistical information and community engagement.

3. PFL MMA

The Professional Fighters League (PFL) is a unique MMA organisation that runs a sport-season format. The official PFL website features schedules, standings, results, and detailed fighter profiles. These profiles include various statistics, such as maximum punch speed, arm/leg/ground strikes, takedowns, and inner/outer zone percentages, offering fans in-depth insights into fighters' performance and strategies.

4. UFC.com

UFC.com is the official website of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), offering news, event coverage, rankings, fighter profiles, and promotional content. For detailed fight metrics and statistical breakdowns — such as significant strikes, takedown accuracy, and control time — the UFC also operates a separate platform: UFCStats.com. Both sites are official but serve different purposes, with UFC.com focused on general content and UFCStats.com dedicated to in-depth fight statistics.

5. Sherdog

Sherdog.com is a well-known and reputable website that provides comprehensive information and statistics about mixed martial arts (MMA). It features a fighter database, fight finder, rankings, event coverage, and news articles. Users can access fighter profiles, fight histories, event results, and live updates. Sherdog.com is a valuable resource for MMA fans and analysts seeking accurate and up-to-date statistics and news.

(Evidence of the nature of professional publication - intended audience and good reputation)

TATAME launches new portal: focus on the consumer and an English version are among the new features; check it out.

With nearly 27 years in the combat sports industry, TATAME launches its new website, which, in addition to an English version, will feature a new visual identity, a more user-friendly navigation architecture, improved response times, and new sections such as TATAME Play and TATAME Store.

E's new website has an English version and other new features for readers (Photo: Reproduction)

Lance!
Rio de Janeiro (RJ)

February 24, 2021 • 08:20

To share

Favorite Lance! on Google

Matter More News

For almost 27 years, we've been working in the combat sports segment. When it was founded in 1994, TATAME Magazine was certain that the market would develop. The fighters, brands, event and content producers, media outlets—in short, the entire system presented enormous potential for growth, although at the time concrete initiatives related to the sport were scarce and inconsistent. Today, we see a growing market, with MMA, in particular, consolidating itself as a mass sport, the presence of major multinational brands, strong players, and athletes becoming celebrities. Combat sports are no longer marginalized; they are present in soap operas, advertisements, major media outlets, and licensed products, but it wasn't always like this.

"We bet on this market when everyone was skeptical. We had the vision to perceive the enormous potential that combat sports had as content, sport, and product, and we were at the forefront in launching TATAME, at that time, in 1994, in magazine format," recalled Alexandre Esteves, founding partner of TATAME. "We have always believed in this segment, and once again we are innovating by launching our new portal, with an ever-increasing focus on the consumer and now also in an English version," added the businessman.

In addition to the English version, the site will gain a new visual identity, with a more user-friendly navigation architecture, improved response times, and new sections such as TATAME Play and TATAME Store.

"What led TATAME to seek these new challenges was basically looking at the consumer, whether it's our end user or the advertising market," stated Daniel Quiroga, Esteves' partner in the new venture. "We identified a relevant audience on our platform that came from outside the Brazilian market, mainly the USA and Portugal, we decided to investigate and realized opportunities in these countries."

Besides improving the user experience, TATAME's positioning is also to serve the advertising market more efficiently. "We created new properties, new formats, modular combos to serve brands in a customized way, with initiatives conceived and created together with our commercial partners to have increasingly effective and regular deliveries," said Alexandre Esteves.

Areas like TATAME Play, which promises to be the project's video platform, and TATAME Store, an upsell area and link for sales traffic of products, gyms, and accessories, are also part of the plan. - We will serve the English-speaking market and the demands of Portugal. Starting in 2021, TATAME will have this international arm led by Daniel Quiroga, former Combate channel executive and long-time work partner - he concluded

Exhibit E: Display of the Petitioner’s work in the field in Public Exhibitions – athletic and artistic nature (claimed as comparable evidence)

Representative evidence of many ocasions on which Mr. Nascimento publicly exhibited his work in artistic in nature events.

Detailed Fight History (2013–2025)

August 22, 2025 – Defeated *Arnold Jimenez* via **Ninja Choke** (Round 1, 1:08) at *LFA 215*.[1]

Arnold Jimenez vs. Rafael do Nascimento

MAIN CARD | CATCHWEIGHT · 140 LBS | PRO MMA

Event: LFA 215: Miranda vs. Barzilay
Date: Friday 08.22.2025 at 08:30 PM ET
Referee: Vladimir Matyushenko
Venue: San Miguel Hall
Enclosure: Cage
Location: Ventura, California, United States
Bout Billing: Main Card (fight 4 of 9)
Pro/Am: Professional
Weight: 140 lbs (63.5 kg)
TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Gilbert Melendez
Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card
Post-Fight Interviewer: Gilbert Melendez
Jimenez Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Event Links:

[1] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/1030145-lfa-215-arnold-jimenez-vs-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento

January 10, 2025 – Defeated *Brandon Altomare* via **Calf Slicer** (Round 1, 2:06) at *LFA*. This performance led to a **Submission of the Year** nomination and made Rafael the **second athlete in the world** to finish a professional MMA bout with a calf slicer, after Charles "Do Bronx" Oliveira in the UFC.[2]

Rafael do Nascimento vs. Brandon Altomare

MAIN CARD | FEATHERWEIGHT · 145 LBS | PRO MMA

Event: LFA 199: Farias vs. Visconde
Date: Friday 01.10.2025 at 10:00 PM ET
Referee: Daniel Monriques
Venue: Tachi Palace Casino Resort
Enclosure: Cage
Location: Lemoore, California, United States
Bout Billing: Main Card (fight 8 of 12)
Pro/Am: Professional
Weight: 145 lbs (65.8 kg)
TV Commentary: Gilbert Melendez, Ron Kruck
Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card
Post-Fight Interviewer: Gilbert Melendez
do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Altomare Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Event Links:

[2] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/952049-lfa-199-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento-vs-brandon-altomore

July 12, 2024 – Faced *John Sweeney* at *LFA 188*; lost via **unanimous decision** after three competitive rounds.[3]

John Sweeney vs. Rafael do Nascimento

MAIN EVENT | LFA BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP | 135 LBS

Event: LFA 188: Sweeney vs. Do Nascimento

Date: Friday 07.12.2024 at 10:00 PM ET

Referee: Ryan Brueggeman

Venue: Gila River Resorts & Casinos – Wild Horse Pass

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Chandler, Arizona

Bout Billing: Main Event (fight 13 of 13)

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)

TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Alan Jouban

Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card

Post-Fight Interviewer: Alan Jouban

Sweeney Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Title on Line: LFA Bantamweight Championship

Belt Status Before Fight: Held by Sweeney

Event Links:

[3] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/879113-lfa-188-john-hollywood-sweeney-vs-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento

June 23, 2023 – Defeated *Jordan Winski* by **unanimous decision** at *LFA 161*, showcasing superior striking and cage control.[4]

Rafael do Nascimento vs. Jordan Winski

CO-MAIN EVENT | BANTAMWEIGHT · 135 LBS | PRO MMA

Event: LFA 161: Davis vs. Siqueira
Date: Friday 06.23.2023 at 10:00 PM ET
Referee: Frank Trigg
Venue: The Commerce Casino & Hotel
Enclosure: Cage
Location: Commerce, California, United States
Bout Billing: Co-Main Event (fight 5 of 6)
Pro/Am: Professional
Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)
TV Commentary:
Broadcast:
Post-Fight Interviewer:
do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Winski Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Event Links:

[4] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/766128-lfa-161-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento-vs-jordan-i-m-gonna-winski

March 24, 2023 – Headlined *LFA 155* versus *Jerrell Hodge*; lost by **unanimous decision** in a closely contested bout.[5]

Rafael do Nascimento vs. Jerrell Hodge

MAIN EVENT | LFA INTERIM BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP | 135 LBS

Event: LFA 155: Do Nascimento vs. Hodge
Date: Friday 03.24.2023 at 09:00 PM ET
Referee: David Bruce
Venue: Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino
Enclosure: Cage
Location: Niagara Falls, New York
Bout Billing: Main Event (fight 8 of 8)
Pro/Am: Professional
Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)
TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Gilbert Melendez
Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card
Post-Fight Interviewer:
do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Hodge Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Title on Line: LFA Interim Bantamweight Championship
Belt Status Before Fight: Vacant
Event Links:

[5] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/730032-lfa-155-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento-vs-jerrell-thunderkat-hodge

November 18, 2022 – Defeated *Justin Wetzell* via **TKO** (Right Cross, Round 2, 0:26) at *LFA 147*.[6]

Justin Wetzell vs. Rafael do Nascimento

CO-MAIN EVENT | BANTAMWEIGHT · 135 LBS | PRO MMA

Event: LFA 147: Melo vs. Costa

Date: Friday 11.18.2022 at 09:00 PM ET

Referee: Rob Hinds

Venue: WinnaVegas Casino Resort

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Sloan, Iowa, United States

Bout Billing: Co-Main Event (fight 8 of 9)

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)

TV Commentary:

Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card

Post-Fight Interviewer:

Wetzell Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Event Links:

[6] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/703743-lfa-147-justin-wetzell-vs-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento

July 8, 2022 – Defeated *Marcus McGhee* via **Rear Naked Choke** (Round 1, 3:12) at *LFA 135*, marking a dominant U.S. debut.[7]

Marcus McGhee vs. Rafael do Nascimento

MAIN CARD | BANTAMWEIGHT - 135 LBS | PRO MMA

Event: LFA 135: Leyva vs. Reis
Date: Friday 07.08.2022 at 11:00 PM ET
Referee: Ryan Brueggeman
Venue: Arizona Federal Theatre
Enclosure: Cage
Location: Phoenix, Arizona, United States
Bout Billing: Main Card (fight 7 of 12)
Pro/Am: Professional
Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)
TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Gilbert Melendez
Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card
Post-Fight Interviewer: Gilbert Melendez
McGhee Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed
Event Links:

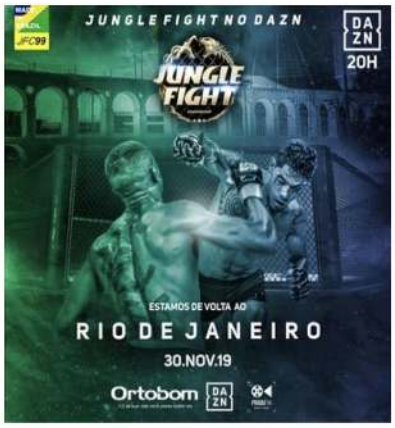
[7] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/664250-lfa-135-marcus-the-maniac-mcghee-vs-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento

March 20, 2022 – Won first place at a fight at **NAGA (North American Grappling Association).**

November 30, 2019 – Defeated *Victor Perciliano* via **Split Decision** at *Jungle Fight 99* in Brazil.[8]

Rafael do Nascimento vs. Victor Perciliano

MAIN CARD | BANTAMWEIGHT · 134 LBS | PRO MMA



Event: Jungle Fight 99

Date: Saturday 11.30.2019 at 06:00 PM ET

Referee: Lucas Aires

Venue: Vila Olímpica Professor Manoel José Gomes Tubino

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Bout Billing: Main Card (fight 1 of 15)

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight: 134 lbs (61.0 kg)

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Perciliano Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Event Links:

[8] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/471197-jungle-fight-99-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento-vs-victor-bulldoguinho-perciliano

October 26, 2019 – Defeated *Diones da Silva* via **Rear Naked Choke** (Round 1, 3:50) at *Lucas FC 1*.[9]

Diones da Silva vs. Rafael do Nascimento

MAIN CARD | PRO MMA

Event: Lucas FC 1

Date: Saturday 10.26.2019

Referee:

Venue: Idoso de Bem Com A Vida Club

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Lucas do Rio Verde, Mato Grosso, Brazil

Bout Billing: Main Card

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight:

da Silva Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

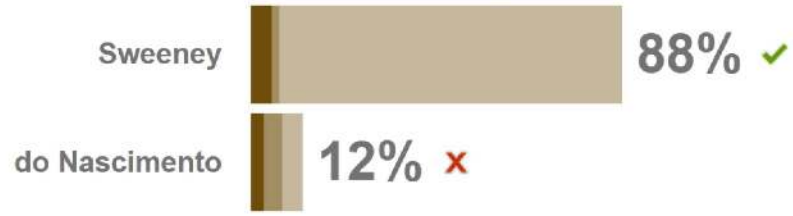
Event Links:

[9] https://www.tapology.com/fightcenter/bouts/507184-lucas-fc-rafael-mulisha-do-nascimento-vs-diones-pitbull-da-silva

Representative evidence of many ocasions on which Mr. Nascimento publicly exhibited his work in artistic in nature

SWEENEY VS. DO NASCIMENTO FIGHT PREDICTIONS

Tapology Community Picks: 491 — KO/TKO — Submission — Decision



BOUT INFORMATION

John Sweeney vs. Rafael do Nascimento

MAIN EVENT | LFA BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP | 135 LBS

Event: LFA 188: Sweeney vs. Do Nascimento

Date: Friday 07.12.2024 at 10:00 PM ET

Referee: Ryan Brueggeman

Venue: Gila River Resorts & Casinos – Wild Horse Pass

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Chandler, Arizona

Bout Billing: Main Event (fight 13 of 13)

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)

TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Alan Jouban

Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card

Post-Fight Interviewer: Alan Jouban

Sweeney Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Title on Line: LFA Bantamweight Championship

Belt Status Before Fight: Held by Sweeney

Event Links:

Event Discussion

LFA 188: SWEENEY VS. DO NASCIMENTO
"The official Tapology discussion thread for the event!" (1 year ago) — 119 REPLIES

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Jake vs. Joshua	in 1 week
KSW 113	in 1 week
PFL Africa 4	in 1 week
Inoue vs. Picasso	in 2 weeks

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3	Eddie Alvarez vs. Justin Gaethje
4	Khabib Nurmagomedov vs. Conor McGregor
5	Justin Gaethje vs. Max Holloway
6	Justin Gaethje vs. Michael Chandler
7	Max Holloway vs. Dustin Poirier II
8	Clay Guida vs. Diego Sanchez

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Dispute Fight Result
Sweeney vs. do Nascimento
Submit a dispute for this result of this fight.

Fighter Birthdays

Hodge 9% ✔

do Nascimento 91% ✘

BOUT INFORMATION

Rafael do Nascimento vs. Jerrell Hodge

MAIN EVENT | LFA INTERIM BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP | 135 LBS

Event: LFA 155: Do Nascimento vs. Hodge

Date: Friday 03.24.2023 at 09:00 PM ET

Referee: David Bruce

Venue: Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Niagara Falls, New York

Bout Billing: Main Event (fight 8 of 8)

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)

TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Gilbert Melendez

Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card

Post-Fight Interviewer:

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Hodge Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Title on Line: LFA Interim Bantamweight Championship

Belt Status Before Fight: Vacant

Event Links:

Event Discussion

LFA 155: DO NASCIMENTO VS. HODGE
"The official Tapology discussion thread for the event!" (2 years ago) 39 REPLIES

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2 Frankie Edgar vs. Gray Maynard II
3 Eddie Alvarez vs. Justin Gaethje
4 Khabib Nurmagomedov vs. Conor McGregor
5 Justin Gaethje vs. Max Holloway
6 Justin Gaethje vs. Michael Chandler
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do Nascimento vs. Hodge
Submit a dispute for this result of this fight.

Fighter Birthdays
Kendall Carnahan is 33 today!

Representative evidence of many ocasions on which Mr. Nascimento publicly exhibited his work in artistic in nature

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LFA

COMPLETED MMA BOUT
LFA 155: Do Nascimento vs. Hodge

MARCH 24, 2023
Niagara Falls, New York

Hodge defeats do Nascimento

Decision, Unanimous

5 Rounds, 25:00 Total

VS.

Decision
5 Rounds
Unanimous

Jerrell Hodge
"Thunderkat"

Rafael do Nascimento
"Mulisha"

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TAPOLOGY

9-3-0	PRO RECORD AT FIGHT	8-1-0
Climbed to 10-3	RECORD AFTER FIGHT	Fell to 8-2
+105 (Near Even)	BETTING ODDS	-135 (Slight Favorite)
Vacant	TITLE	Vacant
United States	NATIONALITY	Brazil
Cleveland, Ohio, United States	FIGHTING OUT OF	Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
33 years, 4 months	AGE AT FIGHT	31 years, 4 months, 1 week, 2 days
135.0 lbs (61.2 kgs)	WEIGH-IN RESULT	134.8 lbs (61.1 kgs)
5'6" (168cm)	HEIGHT	5'6" (168cm)
70.0" (178cm)	REACH	70.0" (178cm)
Ares Combat Sports Academy (Primary) Next Level Martial Arts Academy (Other)	GYM	XGym

DO NASCIMENTO VS. HODGE FIGHT PREDICTIONS

Tapology Community Picks: 398 KO/TKO Submission Decision

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LFA 155 Quick Results

Jerrell Hodge def R. do Nascimento	Unanimous Dec
Mairon Santos def Rafael Barbosa	Unanimous Dec
Joe Taylor def Ben Parrish	Unanimous Dec
Cody Davis def Joseph Camacho	Sub, 2:22 R1
Rodney Kealohi def Alvaro Prado	Unanimous Dec
S. Magomedov def K. Scribner	Sub, 4:38 R1
Jay Manning def Bruce Xavier	KO/TKO, 2:10 R2
Alonzo Turner def Austin Ross	Sub, 1:36 R2

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UAE Warriors 66	in 19 hours
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UFC Fight Night	in 3 days
Tsutsumi vs. Donaire	in 6 days
Jake vs. Joshua	in 1 week
KSW 113	in 1 week
PFL Africa 4	in 1 week
Inoue vs. Picasso	in 2 weeks

Hodge 9% ✔

do Nascimento 91% ✘

BOUT INFORMATION

Rafael do Nascimento vs. Jerrell Hodge

MAIN EVENT | LFA INTERIM BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP | 135 LBS

Event: LFA 155: Do Nascimento vs. Hodge

Date: Friday 03.24.2023 at 09:00 PM ET

Referee: David Bruce

Venue: Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino

Enclosure: Cage

Location: Niagara Falls, New York

Bout Billing: Main Event (fight 8 of 8)

Pro/Am: Professional

Weight: 135 lbs (61.2 kg)

TV Commentary: Ron Kruck, Gilbert Melendez

Broadcast: Aired Live on Main Card

Post-Fight Interviewer:

do Nascimento Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Hodge Total Disclosed Pay: None Disclosed

Title on Line: LFA Interim Bantamweight Championship

Belt Status Before Fight: Vacant

Event Links:

Event Discussion

LFA 155: DO NASCIMENTO VS. HODGE
"The official Tapology discussion thread for the event!" (2 years ago) 39 REPLIES

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Exhibit F: The person's original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field (8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(v)).

INSPIRIT JIU JITSU ACADEMY

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To the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

SUBJECT: LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR RAFAEL "MULISHA" DO NASCIMENTO

To the Honorable Immigration Officer,

My name is Rodrigo Freitas, and I am the Founder and Head Instructor of Inspirit Jiu Jitsu Academy in Redondo Beach, California. I am a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu World Champion (IBJJF, 2014) and a 4th Degree Black Belt, with more than twenty years dedicated to high level competition, instruction, and athlete development in Brazil and the United States.

My role as a head instructor places me in daily contact with athletes at every stage of development. Over the course of my career, I have coached hundreds of competitors and have been directly responsible for preparing professional fighters for national and international events. This background allows me to evaluate an athlete not only by results, but by technical structure, decision making, and the potential for their methods to be integrated into elite-level training.

From this technical perspective, Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento stands apart from the vast majority of professional fighters. His grappling is not based on strength or athleticism alone, but on layered systems, precise timing, and advanced positional awareness. He consistently demonstrates the ability to identify high risk, low percentage situations and convert them into controlled finishing sequences, a technical proficiency that is noteworthy in professional MMA.

In my professional assessment, Mr. Nascimento has developed a methodology that represents a significant technical refinement within the sport: the systematization of the calf slicer submission for MMA. While the calf slicer is a known technique in traditional Jiu-Jitsu, its successful application in professional MMA is statistically rare due to the difficulty of maintaining control while accounting for strikes and dynamic movement.

Mr. Nascimento's work appears to go beyond mere execution; he has articulated a specific framework for this technique, including defined entries, control points, and transition pathways adapted for the MMA environment. By establishing a logical sequence of adjustments and timing, he has contributed to making a complex and infrequent technique more applicable and teachable within a high-performance context. This type of technical development is highly valued as it provides a roadmap for other athletes to follow.

A verifiable indicator of Mr. Nascimento's technical effectiveness is his 73% submission finishing rate in professional bouts. While finishing rates often fluctuate as the

level of opposition increases, Mr. Nascimento has maintained a high level of efficiency. A prominent example of this was his calf slicer victory at LFA 199 (January 2025). This performance serves as objective evidence of the viability of his technical system, as he is one of the very few athletes in the documented history of the sport to have successfully implemented this specific technique in a major professional organization.

Outside of competition, Mr. Nascimento exhibits the characteristics of a top-tier professional: discipline, consistency, respect for coaching structure, and a genuine commitment to technical growth. In training environments, he raises the overall standard and serves as a reference point for other athletes. Importantly, his ability to articulate and transfer complex grappling systems—such as his MMA-adapted calf slicer methodology—demonstrates value that extends beyond his own performance and contributes to the technical evolution of the sport.

Based on my experience as a world-class competitor and instructor, it is my professional opinion that Rafael do Nascimento possesses a specialized technical skill set that is uncommon in mixed martial arts. His continued work in the United States is expected to contribute to the quality and technical advancement of American training programs.

Respectfully,

01/15/26

Rodrigo Freitas
Owner & Head Instructor – Inspirit Jiu Jitsu Academy
IBJJF World Champion (2014)
4th Degree Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Black Belt

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Rodrigo Freitas

Head Coach

Rodrigo Freitas is a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu black belt, seasoned competitor, and founder of Inspirit Jiu Jitsu. Originally from Belo Horizonte, Brazil, Rodrigo began training in 1997 and earned his black belt under the legendary Master Aldo "Caveirinha" Januário in 2007. After moving to the U.S. to help expand Gracie Barra, Rodrigo went on to build his own academy in 2015. Today, he leads Inspirit Jiu Jitsu in Redondo Beach, focusing on world-class training, strong community, and a family-first culture on and off the mats.

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November 27, 2025

To the USCIS Officer,

My name is Melsik Baghdasaryan, and I am a professional MMA fighter and UFC featherweight athlete. I have been competing professionally since 2013, including on some of the most competitive striking and MMA stages in the world, and have won the Wu Lin Feng International title and challenged for the K-1 Welterweight belt. Over this period, I became used to evaluating, in daily training and fight preparation, the technical level, consistency, and professionalism of other high-performance athletes.

Within these settings, I had the opportunity to train with Rafael do Nascimento several times and to observe his conduct on the mats, his development as a fighter, and the concrete impact he has on the quality of our sessions. He stands out as one of the most complete athletes I have worked with, combining solid striking and grappling skills that are essential in modern MMA.

During my UFC fight camps, when every detail can influence performance in the octagon, I frequently rely on Rafael do Nascimento as one of my main training partners. I trust his technical level, his discipline, and the intensity he brings to every session. In sparring and specific drills, he shows refined technique, with precise and powerful strikes, strong distance management, and perfect timing on offense and defense. These qualities directly raise my level of preparation, as they require constant adaptation and focus. In grappling, he delivers controlled, stable, and technically sound work that meets the standards of high-level athletes.

Beyond his day-to-day impact in training, Rafael do Nascimento has a documented record of results that places him in a very competitive position both in Brazil and in the United States. In Brazil, he built his career through recognized national promotions such as WOCS, NCE, and Jungle Fight, earning important victories and Fight of the Night honors. His win at Jungle Fight 99 in Rio de Janeiro, combined with earlier results such as his title bout at NCE 23 and his professional run starting in 2013, shows that he has been competing for years in environments known for producing high-level athletes. In parallel, he also achieved success in grappling, including a first-place finish at the NAGA Los Angeles Grappling Championship in 2022, which confirms his technical level on the ground in one of North America's most competitive grappling circuits.

Internationally, Rafael has established himself as a prominent athlete in Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), one of the world's leading MMA organizations and a recognized gateway to the UFC. Since signing with LFA in 2022, he has had multiple main card and main event appearances, with notable wins over Marcus McGhee, Justin Wetzell, Jordan Winski, Brandon Altomare, and Arnold Jimenez. These performances led to important recognition, including five LFA award nominations in 2023 for Fighter of the Year, Submission of the Year, Fight of the Year, Knockout of the Year, and Best Photo of the Year, as well as a new Submission of the Year nomination in 2025 after his rare calf slicer finish, a technique that has only been successfully used to end a professional MMA bout by him and UFC champion Charles “Do Bronx” Oliveira. In current professional rankings, he is ranked among the top featherweights in North America and California, reflecting his position at the top of an intense, competitive field.

November 27, 2025

For these reasons, Rafael do Nascimento truly helps elevate the technical level and intensity of the MMA training environment in which he is part. His presence adds real value, as he consistently offers high-quality sparring, a professional mindset, and discipline aligned with international competition standards. Based on this direct experience, I am confident in his ability to continue distinguishing himself and to generate a positive impact in mixed martial arts in the United States.

I strongly support this application and will provide additional information if necessary.

Sincerely,

Melsik "The Gun" Baghdasaryan
UFC Featherweight Fighter
Professional Kickboxer and Boxer
Melsikufc@gmail.com
(830) 444 4449

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MELSIK BAGHDASARYAN
"The Gun"

UNITED STATES
GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

AGE	33 / JAN 28, 1992
HEIGHT	5'8" / 172.72 CM
WEIGHT	145 LBS / 65.77 KG
ASSOCIATION	GLENDALE FIGHTING CLUB
CLASS	FEATHERWEIGHT

	WINS 8	LOSSES 3
KO / TKO	5 / 63%	1 / 33%
SUBMISSIONS	0 / 0%	2 / 67%
DECISIONS	3 / 38%	0 / 0%

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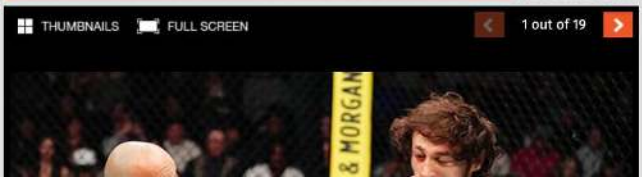
FIGHT HISTORY - PRO

RESULT	FIGHTER	EVENT	METHOD/REFEREE	R	TIME
LOSS	Jean Silva	UFC Fight Night 252 - Cejudo vs. Song Feb / 22 / 2025	TKO (Punches and Elbows) Kevin MacDonald VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	1	4:15
WIN	Tucker Lutz	UFC on ESPN 49 - Holm vs. Bueno Silva Jul / 15 / 2023	Decision (Unanimous) Jacob Montalvo VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	3	5:00
LOSS	Joshua Culibao	UFC 284 - Makhachev vs. Volkanovski Feb / 11 / 2023	Submission (Rear-Naked Choke) Peter Hickmott VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	2	2:02
WIN	Bruno Souza	UFC 268 - Usman vs. Covington 2 Nov / 06 / 2021	Decision (Unanimous) Todd Anderson VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	3	5:00
WIN	Collin Anglin	UFC on ESPN 28 - Hall vs. Strickland Jul / 31 / 2021	KO (Head Kick and Punches) Mark Smith VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	2	1:50
WIN	Dennis Buzukja	Dana White's Contender Series - Contender Series 2020: Week 5 Sep / 01 / 2020	Decision (Unanimous) Mark Smith VIEW PLAY-BY-PLAY	3	5:00
WIN	Art Hernandez	LXF 3 - Lights Out Xtreme Fighting 3 Sep / 21 / 2019	KO (Punch) Milan Ayers	1	0:07
WIN	Jay White	Gladiator Challenge - Berry vs. Baseman Jun / 01 / 2019	TKO (Punches) Franklin Aguirre	1	0:09
WIN	Mauricio Diaz	LXF 1 - Lights Out Xtreme Fighting 1 May / 11 / 2019	TKO (Punches) Larry Landless	1	0:32
WIN	Jason Gouvion	Gladiator Challenge - MMA World Championships Mar / 23 / 2019	TKO (Punches) Greg Guiffreda	1	0:14
LOSS	Jay Bogan	LOP - Chaos at the Casino 4 Apr / 12 / 2014	Submission (Armbar) John McCarthy	1	1:26

PICTURES



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- Brunno Ferreira Expects 'Great War' in Rematch Against Gregory Rodrigues
- Islam Makhachev Believes Daniel Cormier Beats Jon Jones in Wrestling
- Daniel Cormier on Arman Tsarukyan's Title Snub: 'They Know More Than We Do'
- Ben Askren Shares Brutally Honest Opinion on Nate Diaz

MELSIK BAGHDASARYAN RELATED NEWS

Sherdog's 2025 Mr. All-Violence

As we bring back our annual tribute to the sublimely violent, there could be only one man to usher in the new era.

YEAR-END AWARDS · JAY PETTRY · DEC 29, 2025 · 0 COMMENTS

UFC Vegas 112 'Royval vs. Kape' Play-by-Play, Results & Round Scoring

Sherdog's live UFC Vegas 112 coverage will begin Saturday at 7 p.m. ET. The event is also known as UFC on ESPN 73.

UFC · JAY PETTRY · DEC 13, 2025 · 1 COMMENT

UFC Vegas 112 Prelims: Yaroslav Amosov Anaconda Choke Dismisses Neil Magny

Yaroslav Amosov made a smooth transition to the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

UFC · BRIAN KNAPP · DEC 13, 2025 · 1 COMMENT

UFC Vegas 112 Update: Octagon Newcomer Steps in on Short Notice

The UFC Vegas 112 has undergone a last-minute change to the fight card.

UFC · TRISTEN CRITCHFIELD · DEC 11, 2025 · 1 COMMENT

EVENTS / FIGHTS

UFC | PFL | MORE

- Jan 24 2026 — UFC 324 Gaethje vs. Pimblett
- Jan 31 2026 — UFC 325 Volkanovski vs. Lopes 2
- Feb 07 2026 — UFC FIGHT NIGHT 266 Bautista vs. Oliveira
- Feb 21 2026 — UFC FIGHT NIGHT 267 Strickland vs. Hernandez
- Feb 28 2026 — UFC FIGHT NIGHT 268 Moreno vs. Almabayev

+ MORE UFC FIGHTS

FIGHT FINDER

SEARCH FIGHTERS, NICKNAMES, EVENTS

FIGHTER OF THE WEEK

DENISE KIELHOLTZ

TOP TRENDING FIGHTERS

Paddy Pimblett

Dakota Ditcheva

Amanda Nunes

Alfie Davis

MORE FIGHTERS...

Sean O'Malley | Shamil Musaev | Kayla Harrison | Magomed Umalatov | Derrick Lewis | Pouya Rahmani | Fedor Emelianenko

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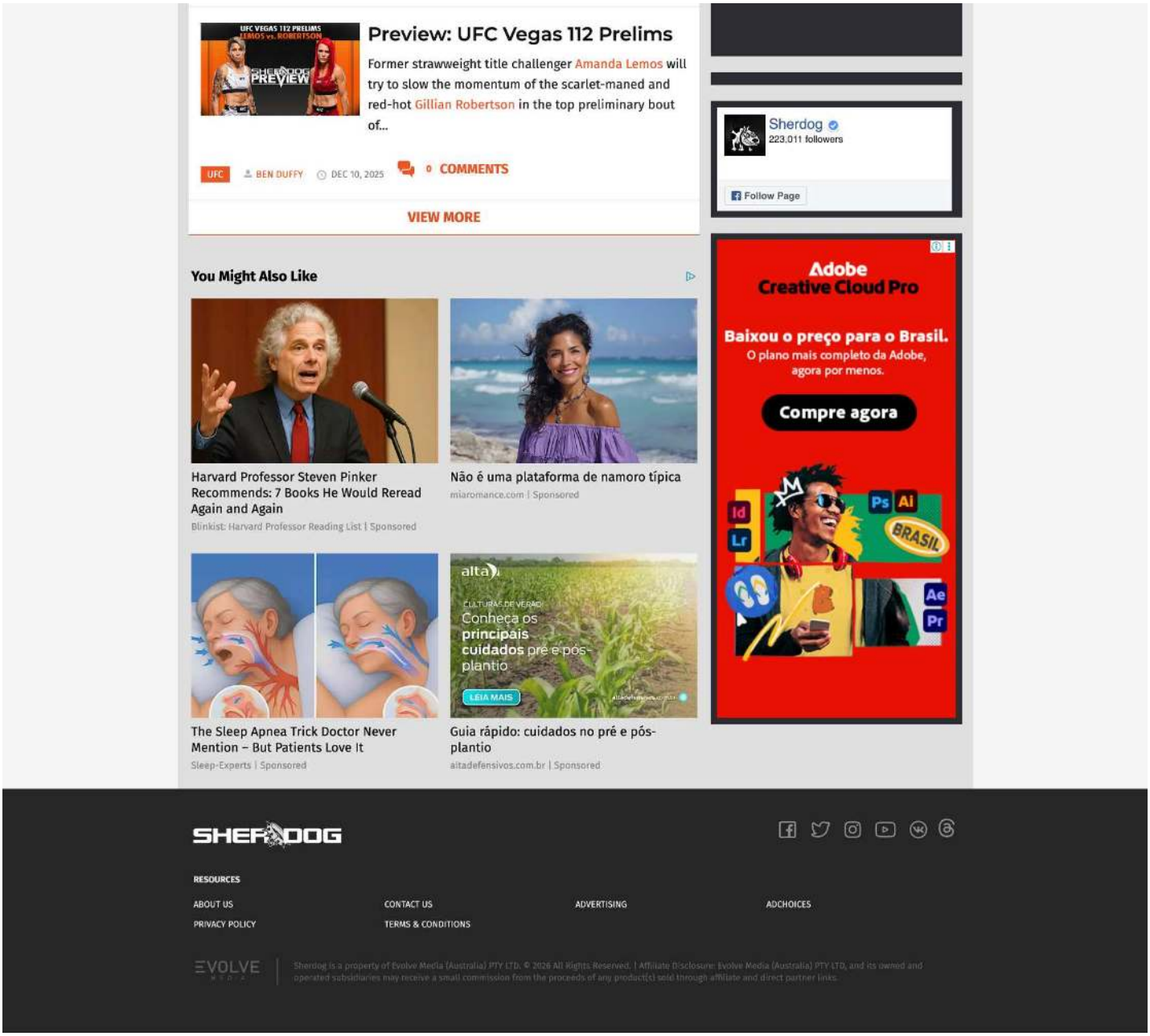
Preview: UFC Vegas 112 Prelims
Former strawweight title challenger Amanda Lemos will try to slow the momentum of the scarlet-maned and red-hot Gillian Robertson in the top preliminary bout of...
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January 8th, 2026

To: USCIS
From: Joshua Lawrence Barnett
RE: Letter of Support for Rafael “Mulisha” do Nascimento

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Joshua Lawrence Barnett, known internationally as Josh “The Warmaster” Barnett**,** and I am writing this letter to provide my strongest endorsement regarding the professional standing of Rafael “Mulisha” do Nascimento. As a former UFC Heavyweight Champion (2002), PRIDE Grand Prix Champion (2006), and a veteran of elite international mixed martial arts (MMA) for over 25 years (1997–Present), I have spent my life at the pinnacle of this sport. My career, which includes a professional record of 35 wins and 8 losses, has been defined by competing against and training with the world’s most elite athletes. This extensive experience provides me with a specialized and authoritative vantage point to identify talent that is truly "extraordinary" and of a caliber that significantly impacts the professional athletic landscape.

In my professional opinion, Rafael do Nascimento is an athlete of exceptional caliber who has reached the top of his field.

Mr. Nascimento’s standing in the sport is not merely a matter of opinion; it is backed by rigorous data and rankings. He currently holds elite professional rankings, including being ranked #8 among all Featherweights in California and #25 in North America—a region that contains the highest density of world-class MMA talent on the planet. To be ranked in the top 1% of nearly 1,000 professional fighters in North America is a clear indicator of sustained national and international acclaim. What distinguishes Mr. Nascimento from his peers is his technical mastery and innovation.

In January 2025, Mr. Nascimento executed a calf slicer submission at LFA 199. To provide context for the importance of this feat: Mr. Nascimento is only the second athlete in the history of professional MMA to finish a bout with this specific technique, following only the legendary UFC Champion Charles Oliveira.

This is a contribution of major significance to the sport. It demonstrates a level of technical sophistication that is virtually unparalleled. His subsequent nominations for LFA Fighter of the Year and Submission of the Year further validate that his peers and the industry’s leading organizations recognize him as a leading figure in the sport.

Mr. Nascimento is a cornerstone athlete for the Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), which is widely regarded as the premier "feeder" organization to the UFC. His participation in multiple Main Events and Co-Main Events—including a high-stakes bout for the LFA Bantamweight Championship—proves that he is sought after by the most distinguished organizations to headline their most important productions. His presence on these platforms, broadcast globally on UFC Fight Pass, brings significant prestige to the American MMA circuit.

Beyond his competitive record, Mr. Nascimento's presence in the U.S. is a benefit to our athletic culture. As a dual Black Belt in both Kickboxing and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, he possesses a rare "hybrid" expertise. He is currently an integral part of the high-performance ecosystem in Los Angeles, where he trains alongside UFC veterans and helps elevate the standard of American martial arts through his technical contributions and mentorship.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed only a small number of athletes who consistently operate at this elite standard. The continuation of Mr. Nascimento's professional career in the United States serves an important role within elite American MMA competition. His presence contributes directly to maintaining the level of international competitiveness expected of U.S.-based promotions and athletes. Fighters of his caliber are essential reference points in high-level professional ecosystems, where excellence is defined by proven performance under global scrutiny.

Should you require any additional information regarding Mr. Nascimento's technical standing or his impact on the sport, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lawrence Barnett
Former UFC Heavyweight Champion
PRIDE Grand Prix Champion

Contact Information

Josh@joshbarnett.tv

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FIGHTCENTER RANKINGS FORUM NEWS SEARCH

SEARCH

FIGHTERS EVENTS BOUTS

MMAFighting.com: PFL Dubai full card revealed with Usman Nurmagomedov vs. Alfie Davis in main event Bad Left Hook: Nao

FIGHTCENTER FIGHTERS "THE WARMASTER" JOSH BARNETT TAPOLOGY PRIVACY POLICY

"THE WARMASTER"

Josh Barnett

PRO MMA RECORD
35-8-0

News Update / Claim Page

Photo Source: MMA WEEKLY

Fighter Details

Given Name: Joshua Lawrence Barnett
Nickname: The Warmaster
Pro MMA Record: 35-8-0 (Win-Loss-Draw)
Current MMA Streak: 1 Win
Age: 48 | **Date of Birth:** 1977 Nov 10
Height: 6'3" (191cm) | **Reach:** 78.0" (196cm)
Weight Class: Heavyweight | **Last Weigh-In:** 277.6 lbs
Affiliation: UWF USA
Last Fight: February 24, 2024 in KSW
Career Disclosed Earnings: $1,940,000 USD
Born: Seattle, Washington, United States
Fighting out of: Seattle, Washington
Resource Links:
Personal Links:

UWF USA

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Worldwide MMA Rankings

Rankings FAQ

#46 Greatest MMA Grappler of All Time
#54 Top Fan Favorite MMA Fighter

Regional MMA Rankings

Rankings FAQ

Josh Barnett is ineligible for Tapology's regional MMA rankings due to inactivity.
Fighters must have at least one completed MMA bout in the past two years to be ranked.

PRO MMA STATISTICS

Record: 35-8-0

KO/TKO	8 wins, 2 losses	W	23% of wins
		L	25% of losses
Submission	21 wins, 3 losses	W	60% of wins
		L	38% of losses
Decision	6 wins, 3 losses	W	17% of wins
		L	38% of losses

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EVENT	START TIME
ACA 198	in 1 day
ACA 199	in 1 week
LFA 224	in 1 week
OKTAGON 82	in 1 week
KSW 114	in 1 week
Zuffa Boxing	in 2 weeks
ONE Fight Night 39	in 2 weeks
LFA 225	in 2 weeks

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ALL-TIME GREATEST EVENTS | EDIT

1	UFC 100
2	UFC 217
3	UFC 189
4	UFC 300
5	UFC 229
6	UFC 205
7	UFC 202
8	The Ultimate Fighter 1 Finale

MMA RECORD BY PROMOTION

2000 to 2018	UFC	7 win	3 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	3	43%	KO/TKO	67%	2
						3	43%	SUB	33%	1
						1	14%	DECISION		
								DQ		
2004 to 2008	PRIDE FC	5 win	4 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	4	80%	KO/TKO	50%	2
						1	20%	SUB	50%	2
								DECISION		
								DQ		
2011 to 2013	Strikeforce	3 win	1 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	3	100%	KO/TKO	100%	1
								SUB		
								DECISION		
								DQ		
2008 to 2009	Affliction	2 win	0 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	1	50%	KO/TKO		
						1	50%	SUB		
								DECISION		
								DQ		

JOSH BARNETT MMA FIGHT RECORD

VIEW MODE: Basic | Odds | Expand All Details | Cancelled: Shown

Sport Filters: MMA | Grapple | Custom | BK Box | Kickbox

D DEC	Phil De Fries Modified Rules Grappling	Draw · Decision · Time Limit KSW Epic: Khalidov vs. Acamex	2024 Feb 24	KSW	+
W TKO	Shoma Shibisai Custom Rules	Ground & Pound · 2:20 · R1 INOKI BOM-BA-YE × Ganryujima in Ryogoku	2022 Dec 28		+
W TKO	Marcin Różalski Boxing (Bare Knuckle)	Retirement · 3:00 · R2 Genesis 1: Różal vs. Barnett	2020 Oct 23	KSW	+
C	Ronny Markes	Cancelled Bout	2020 Mar 13	B	+
C	Ronny Markes	Cancelled Bout	2019 Dec 20	B	+
C	Yuri Simoes Grappling	Cancelled Bout	2019 Feb 22	TEN	+

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C	Rustam Chsiev Grappling	Cancelled Bout	2019 Feb 22	TEN	+
L SUB	Gordon Ryan Grappling	Triangle Choke · 2:09 · R1 QUINTET 3	2018 Oct 5	QUINTET	+
D	Gregor Gracie Grappling	Draw · Time Limit · 4:00 · R1 QUINTET 1	2018 Apr 11	QUINTET	+
W SUB	Andrei Arlovski 34-8 25-12 +9	Rear Naked Choke · 2:53 · R3 UFC Fight Night 93	2016 Sep 3	UFC	+
L SUB	Ben Rothwell 34-7 33-8 +5	Front Choke · 3:48 · R2 UFC on FOX 18	2016 Jan 30	UFC	+
W DEC	Roy Nelson 33-7 20-11 +10	Decision · Unanimous UFC Fight Night 75	2015 Sep 26	UFC	+
W SUB	Ryron Gracie Grappling	Toe Hold · R1 Metamoris 6	2015 May 9		+
W SUB	Dean Lister Grappling	Neck Crank · 19:48 · R1 Metamoris 4	2014 Aug 9		+
L TKO	Travis Browne 33-8 15-1-1 +8	Elbows · 1:00 · R1 UFC 168: Weidman vs. Silva 2	2013 Dec 28	UFC	+
W TKO	Frank Mir 32-6 16-7 +7	Knee & Punches · 1:56 · R1 UFC 164: Henderson vs. Pettis 2	2013 Aug 31	UFC	+
W SUB	Nandor Guelmino 31-8 11-3-1	Arm Triangle Choke · 2:11 · R1 Strikeforce	2013 Jan 12	Strikeforce	+
L DEC	Daniel Cormier 31-5 9-0	Decision · Unanimous Strikeforce	2012 May 19	Strikeforce	+

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W SUB	Sergei Kharitonov 30-5 19-5	Arm Triangle Choke · 4:28 · R1 Strikeforce	2011 Sep 10	Strikeforce	+
W SUB	Brett Rogers 29-5 11-2	Arm Triangle Choke · 1:17 · R2 Strikeforce	2011 Jun 18	Strikeforce	+
W TKO	Gerônimo dos Santos 28-5 18-11	Punches · 2:35 · R1 Impact FC 1	2010 Jul 10		+
W SUB	Siala Siliga 27-5 3-1	Kimura · 4:41 · R1 Dream 13	2010 Mar 22		+
W	Bruno Paulista Grappling	Win 2009 IBJJF World Jiu Jitsu No-Gi Championship	2009 Nov 7	IBJJF	+

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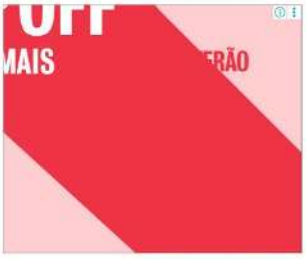

C		Fedor Emelianenko		Cancelled Bout	2009 Aug 1	
W	SUB	Gilbert Yvel 26-8	36-12-1	Punches · 3:05 · R3 Affliction 2	2009 Jan 24	
W	TKO	Pedro Rizzo 25-5	16-7	Punch · 1:44 · R2 Affliction 1	2008 Jul 19	
W	DEC	Jeff Monson 24-5	25-7	Decision · Unanimous Sengoku 2	2008 May 18	
W	SUB	Hidehiko Yoshida 23-5	7-5-1	Heel Hook · 3:23 · R3 Sengoku 1	2008 Mar 5	
W	SUB	Hikaru Sato Grappling		Rear Naked Choke · 4:27 · R1 Pancrase 184	2007 Dec 22	
L	DEC	Antônio Rodrigo Nogueira 23-4	28-4-1	Decision · Unanimous Pride Shockwave 2006	2006 Dec 31	

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W	SUB	Pawel Nastula 22-4	1-2	Toe Hold · 3:04 · R2 Pride 32: The Real Deal	2006 Oct 21	
L	SUB	Mirko Filipović 22-3	20-4-2	Strikes · 5:32 · R1 Pride Final Conflict Absolute	2006 Sep 10	
W	DEC	Antônio Rodrigo Nogueira 21-3	28-3-1	Decision · Split Pride Final Conflict Absolute	2006 Sep 10	
W	SUB	Mark Hunt 20-3	5-1	Kimura · 2:02 · R1 Pride Critical Countdown Absolute	2006 Jul 1	
W	SUB	Aleksander Emelianenko 19-3	8-1	Keylock · 1:57 · R2 Pride Total Elimination Absolute	2006 May 5	
W	SUB	Kazuhiro Nakamura 18-3	8-4	Rear Naked Choke · 8:10 · R1 Pride 31: Unbreakable	2006 Feb 26	
L	DEC	Mirko Filipović 18-2	16-3-2	Decision · Unanimous Pride 30: Fully Loaded	2005 Oct 23	
L	SUB	Mirko Filipović 18-1	12-2-2	Shoulder Injury · 0:46 · R1 Pride 28: High Octane	2004 Oct 31	
C		Ron Waterman		Cancelled Bout	2004 Jul 17	
W	TKO	Rene Rooze 17-1	5-3	Punches · 2:15 · R1 K-1: Romanex 2004	2004 May 22	K-1
W	SUB	Semmy Schilt 16-1	22-12-1	Armbar · 4:48 · R3 Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2003	2003 Dec 31	
W	SUB	Kazuo Takahashi 15-1	26-16-3	Triangle Armbar · 2:52 · R2 NJPW: Ultimate Crush 2	2003 Oct 13	
C		Gary Goodridge		Cancelled Bout	2003 Sep 13	
W	SUB	Yuki Kondo 14-1	38-12-5	Rear Naked Choke · 3:26 · R3 Pancrase 124	2003 Aug 31	
W	TKO	Jimmy Ambriz 13-1	8-0	Knee, Punches · 3:05 · R1 NJPW: Ultimate Crush 1	2003 May 2	
W	TKO	Randy Couture 12-1	10-3	Punches · 4:35 · R2 UFC 36: Worlds Collide	2002 Mar 22	UFC
?		Bob Sapp Grappling		Result Unknown UFCF: Storm 2001	2001 Dec 8	
W	SUB	Bobby Hoffman 11-1	28-4-1	Punches · 4:25 · R2 UFC 34: High Voltage	2001 Nov 2	UFC
W	SUB	Semmy Schilt 10-1	19-9-1	Armbar · 4:21 · R1 UFC 32: Showdown in the Meadowlands	2001 Jun 29	UFC
L	TKO	Pedro Rizzo 10-0	10-1	Punch · 4:21 · R2 UFC 30: Battle on the Boardwalk	2001 Feb 23	UFC
W	TKO	Gan McGee 9-0	7-0	Punches · 4:34 · R2 UFC 28: High Stakes	2000 Nov 17	UFC
W	TKO	Gary Marshall Kickboxing		KO/TKO · 1:41 · R2 UFCF: Return Of The Gladiators 2	2000 Jul 29	
L		Ricardo Almeida Grappling		Loss 2000 ADCC Championships	2000 Mar 1	
W	SUB	Dan Severn 8-0	35-3-3	Armbar · 1:21 · R4 Superbrawl 16	2000 Feb 8	
W	DEC	Bobby Hoffman 7-0	10-1	Decision · Unanimous Superbrawl 13	1999 Sep 7	
W	SUB	John Marsh 6-0	6-0	Kimura · 4:23 · R1 Superbrawl 13	1999 Sep 7	
W	SUB	Juha Tuhkasaari 5-0	0-0	Armbar · 3:32 · R1 Superbrawl 13	1999 Sep 7	
L	DEC	Garth Taylor Grappling		Decision · Points 1999 ADCC World Championships	1999 Feb 24	
W	SUB	Pedro Duarte Grappling		Submission · 1:19 · R1 1999 ADCC World Championships	1999 Feb 24	

L DEC		Grappling	1999 ADCC World Championships	Feb 24	
W DEC	Travis Fulton	Grappling	Decision · Points 1999 ADCC World Championships	1999 Feb 24	
W SUB	Trevor Howard 4-0	0-0	Armbar · R1 UFCF: Night Of Champions 2	1998 Sep 19	
W DEC	Bob Gilstrap 3-0	5-2	Decision · Unanimous UFCF: Night Of Champions 1	1998 Mar 14	
W TKO	Chris Munsen 2-0	2-3	Punches · 3:00 · R1 UFCF: Road To The Championships 2	1997 Sep 6	
W DEC	Bob Gilstrap 1-0	3-0	Decision · Unanimous UFCF: Road To The Championships 1	1997 Jul 7	
W SUB	Chris Charnos 0-0	2-1	Rear Naked Choke · 2:41 · R1 UFCF: Clash Of The Titans	1997 Jan 11	

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JOSH BARNETT NEWS

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Josh Barnett gives his thoughts on the UFC in this video interview with Fight! Magazine.

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INSANE CALF SLICER FROM RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO #LFA199

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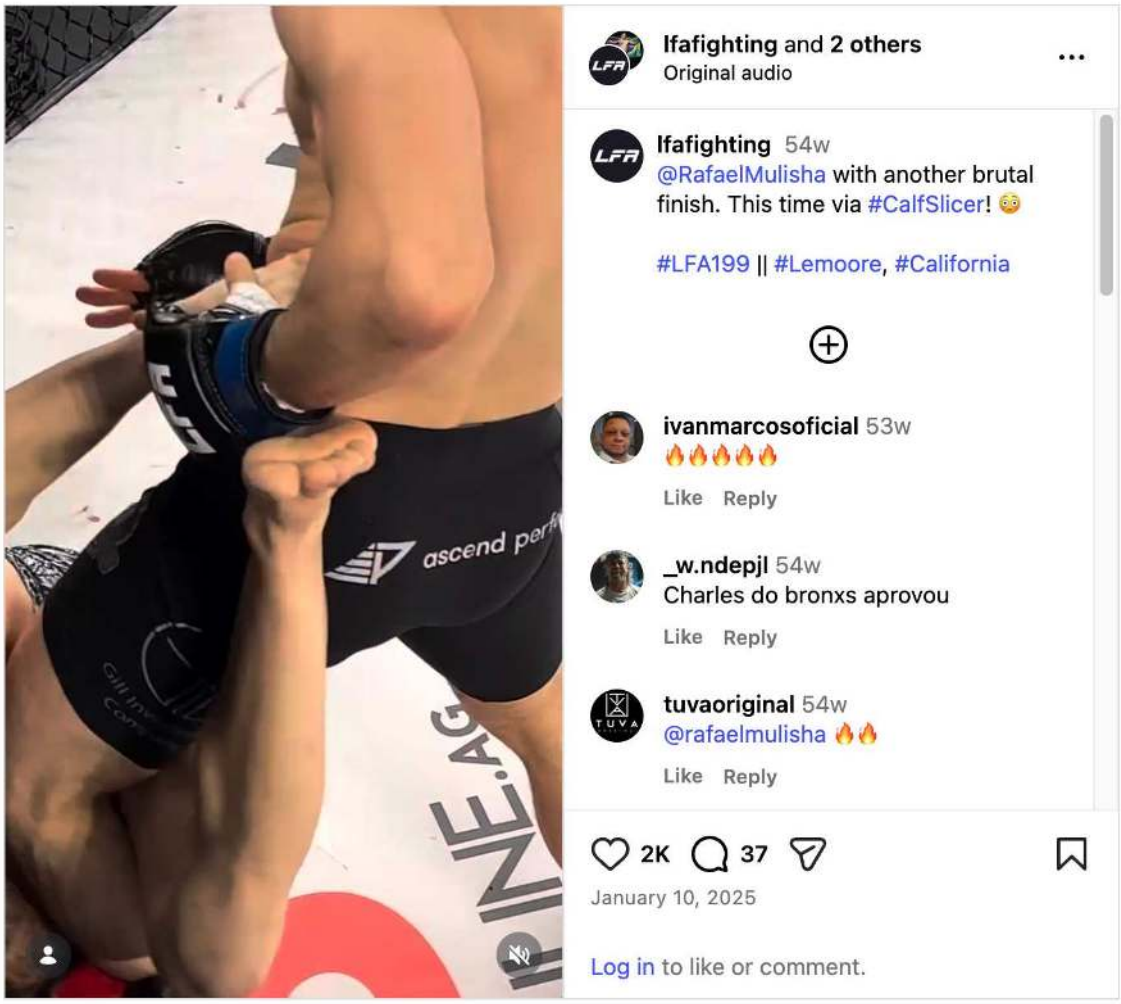

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Exhibit G: Final Merits Determination

CITY COUNCIL OF APIACÁS

STATE OF MATO GROSSO

Av. Ludovico da Riva Neto, No. 206 ZIP Code: 78 595-000, Phone (66) 3593-1504

MOTION No. 005/2022

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION

The undersigned councilwoman, a member of this Council, in the exercise of her official duties, respectfully requests that, with the approval of the Sovereign Plenary, a **CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION** be granted to athlete **RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO**, **a fighter from Apiacás who has achieved important victories in the bantamweight category, becoming world champion in 2022 at Naga Fight, the world's largest Grappling event.**

CITY COUNCIL OF APIACÁS
Approved in a single discussion and vote during the Extraordinary Session held on August 10, 2022.
-----// signature //-----
President
-----// signature //-----
Secretary

JUSTIFICATION

Born on November 15, 1991, Rafael Nascimento has been competing professionally since 2013, with a total of 8 fights, 7 victories, and only one loss.

This commendation is not only meant to honor him, but also to recognize all the achievements and awards this athlete has earned. Beyond his accomplishments, he proudly represents the name of Apiacás, and the entire community celebrates having such a distinguished representative in sports.

City Council of Apiacás, State of Mato Grosso, August 9, 2022.

-----// signature //-----
CAROLINE ALVES COSTA TORRES
Councilwoman

CITY COUNCIL OF APIACÁS

STATE OF MATO GROSSO

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION No. 005/2022

Author: ***Caroline Alvares Costa Torres***

The undersigned Councilwoman, in the exercise of her official duties, grants this ***CERTIFICATE O COMMENDATION*** *to the MMA athlete:*

RAFAEL NASCIMENTO

The undersigned councilwoman, a member of this Council, in the exercise of her official duties, respectfully requests that, with the approval of the Sovereign Plenary, a **CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION** be granted to athlete **RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO**, **a fighter from Apiacás who has achieved important victories in the bantamweight category, becoming world champion in 2022 at Naga Fight, the world's largest Grappling event.**

Born on November 15, 1991, Rafael Nascimento has been competing professionally since 2013, with a total of 8 fights, 7 victories, and only one loss.

This commendation is not only meant to honor him, but also to recognize all the achievements and awards this athlete has earned. Beyond his accomplishments, he proudly represents the name of Apiacás, and the entire community celebrates having such a distinguished representative in sports.

Apiacás-MT, August 10, 2022.

-----// signature //-----
CAROLINE ALVES COSTA TORRES
Councilwoman

I, Raphael Michels Fantinato de Moura, telephone number 415 425-2508, mailing address P.O. Box 90487, San Diego, CA 92169, certify that the professional translation of this document from Portuguese to English has been performed by myself, a qualified translator fluent in both languages, and that the following is an accurate and complete translation of the document.

Raphael Michels Fantinato de Moura. **Date: June 24, 2025.**

CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE APIACÁS

ESTADO DE MATO GROSSO

Av. Ludovico da Riva Neto, Nº 206 CEP: 78 595-000, Fone (66) 3593-1504

MOÇÃO Nº 005/2022

MOÇÃO DE APLAUSOS

A vereadora abaixo assinado, com assento nesta Casa, no uso de suas atribuições regimentais, requerem da Mesa, ouvido o Soberano Plenário, que seja concedida **MOÇÃO DE APLAUSOS** ao esportista **RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO, lutador Apiacaense que conquistou importantes vitórias na categoria peso galo, se consagrando campeão mundial em 2022 na Naga Figth o maior evento de lutas de Grappling do mundo.**

CAMARA MUNICIPAL DE APIACÁS
Aprovado em Única discussão e votação em Sessão Extraordinária de 10 / Agosto / 2022
Presidente
Secretário

JUSTIFICATIVA

Nascido em 15 de Novembro do ano de 1991, Rafael Nascimento luta no profissional desde o ano de 2013, tendo ao total de 8 lutas, 7 vitórias e apenas uma derrota.

Essa moção não é apenas para homenageá-lo, más também por todas as conquistas e premiações já alcançadas por esse esportista. Além das premiações ele leva o nome de Apiacás, e que todos ficam feliz por ter um representante assim no esporte.

Câmara Municipal de Apiacás, Estado de Mato Grosso, em 09 de Agosto de 2022.

Caroline Alves Costa Torres

CAROLINE ALVES COSTA TORRES
Vereadora

CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE APIACÁS

ESTADO DE MATO GROSSO

MOÇÃO DE APLAUSOS Nº 005/2022

Autoria: ***Caroline Alvares Costa Torres***

A Vereadora que o presente subscreve, no uso de suas atribuições regimentais concede ***MOÇÃO DE APLAUSOS*** *ao Esportista lutador de MMA:*

RAFAEL NASCIMENTO

A vereadora abaixo assinado, com assento nesta Casa, no uso de suas atribuições regimentais, requerem da Mesa, ouvido o Soberano Plenário, que seja concedida **MOÇÃO DE APLAUSOS** ao esportista **RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO, lutador Apiacaense que conquistou importantes vitórias na categoria peso galo, se consagrando campeão mundial em 2022 na Naga Figth o maior evento de lutas de Grappling do mundo.**

Nascido em 15 de Novembro do ano de 1991, Rafael Nascimento luta no profissional desde o ano de 2013, tendo ao total de 8 lutas, 7 vitórias e apenas uma derrota.

Essa moção não é apenas para homenageá-lo, más também por todas as conquistas e premiações já alcançadas por esse esportista. Além das premiações ele leva o nome de Apiacás, e que todos ficam feliz por ter um representante assim no esporte.

Apiacás-MT, 10 de Agosto de 2022.

Caroline Alvares Costa Torres.

CAROLINE ALVES COSTA TORRES

Vereadora

Certificate of Commendation

In accordance with Article 185-A
of the Internal Rules of this Legislative Body,
I request that the Board of Directors, having consulted
the Sovereign Plenary, record this in the official annals
of this House of Laws, as follows:

State Representative **DILMAR DAL BOSCO**,
by means of this Certificate of Commendation, approved by the
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF MATO GROSSO,
Hereby expresses enthusiastic CONGRATULATIONS and public
recognition to Mr.

RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO

A fighter who achieved significant victories in the bantamweight category, becoming World Champion in 2022 at Naga Fight, the largest Grappling event in the world.

Plenary of Deliberations Deputy René Barbour, July 5, 2023.

ALMT
Legislative Assembly

-----// signature //-----
DILMAR DAL BOSCO
State Representative

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DILMAR DAL BOSCO

I, Raphael Michels Fantinato de Moura, telephone number 415 425-2508, mailing address P.O. Box 90487, San Diego, CA 92169, certify that the professional translation of this document from Portuguese to English has been performed by myself, a qualified translator fluent in both languages, and that the following is an accurate and complete translation of the document.

Raphael Michels Fantinato de Moura. **Date: June 24, 2025.**

Moção de Aplausos

Com fulcro no Art. 185-A, do Regimento Interno desta Casa de Leis, requeiro à Mesa Diretora, ouvido o Soberano Plenário, que registre nos anais desta Casa de Leis, vazada na seguinte forma:

O Deputado Estadual **DILMAR DAL BOSCO**, por meio desta Moção de Aplausos, aprovada pela ASSEMBLEIA LEGISLATIVA DO ESTADO DE MATO GROSSO, Vem manifestar efusivos APLAUSOS e reconhecimento público ao Senhor

RAFAEL DO NASCIMENTO

Lutador que conquistou importantes vitórias na categoria peso galo, se consagrando Campeão Mundial em 2022 na Naga Figth, o maior evento de lutas Grappling do mundo.

Plenário das Deliberações Deputado Renê Barbour, em 05 de julho 2023.

DILMAR DAL BOSCO
Deputado Estadual

ALMT
Assembleia Legislativa

DEPUTADO ESTADUAL
DILMAR
DAL BOSCO

Mato Grosso Kickboxing Federation
Culture and Martial Arts
FMKCAM

Affiliated with the Brazilian Confederation of Culture and Martial Arts
Founded on March 25, 1999 – CNPJ No. 03.018.955/0001-64

Rafael do Nascimento

Name

016/2016

Registration No.

Black Belt 1st Degree

GRADE

FMKCAM

State Entity

Valid until: 12/31/2016

Mato Grosso Kickboxing Federation
Culture and Martial Arts
FMKCAM

Culture and Martial Arts

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President

Mato Grosso Kickboxing Federation

Avenida Ludovico da Riva Neto, No. 2098 – ZIP 78580-000 – Alta Floresta – Mato Grosso

I, Carolina Favero da Silva, telephone number 415 425-2508, mailing address P.O. Box 90487, San Diego, CA 92169, certify that the professional translation of this document from Portuguese to English has been performed by myself, a qualified translator fluent in both languages, and that the following is an accurate and complete translation of the document.

_____ Date: June 24, 2025.

Federação Matogrossense de Kickboxing
Cultura e Artes Marciais
FMKCAM

Filiada à Confederação Brasileira de Cultura e Artes Marciais
Fundada em 25 de março de 1999 - CNPJ nº 03.018.955/0001-64

Rafael do Nascimento
Nome

016/2016
Nº DE REGISTRO

Faixa Preta 1° Grau
GRADUAÇÃO

FMKCAM
Entidade Estadual

Validade: 31/12/2016

Federação Matogrossense de Kickboxing
Cultura e Artes Marciais
FMKCAM

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Presidente

Av. Ludovico da Riva Neto, nº 2098 - CEP 78580-000 - Alta Floresta - Mato Grosso

LFA
EXIT

VENUM
TUVA

VENUM
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CALIFORNIA
BLACK HOUSE

December 2, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Chad "Savage" George, and I am the head coach and owner of California Mixed Martial Arts (CMMA), located in Gardena, California. I am a former professional MMA fighter and have built my career around high-level competition and the technical and physical development of elite athletes. In this role, I work directly with Rafael Mulisha and personally supervise his training and day-to-day performance on the mats and in our team environment.

I first met Rafael Mulisha in March 2022, when he came to Los Angeles and joined CMMA to train with our coaching staff. From the very beginning, it was clear that Mr. Mulisha stood out among the athletes who arrived at our gym. He is an aggressive yet highly disciplined competitor who brings a world-class jiu-jitsu skill set combined with exceptional kickboxing and karate abilities. This blend of grappling and striking makes Mr. Mulisha an extraordinarily versatile and formidable fighter in every range of combat, and this versatility translates directly into his results in competition.

Over time, I have been coaching Mr. Mulisha, and he has established himself as one of the best athletes I currently train. In our sessions, he consistently shows a champion's mindset, highly focused, and fully committed to improving specific technical details in every practice. His grappling is very efficient, his striking is accurate, and his experience across different martial arts styles allows him to make wise tactical decisions under pressure. Together, we have already secured several victories, which confirm in actual competition what I see from him every day at our center: extraordinary skills, outstanding conditioning, and true competitive maturity.

Based on my own experience as a former professional MMA fighter and the head coach of CMMA, I am confident in stating that Mr. Mulisha is among the best fighters in the world. His contribution to MMA is exemplary, not only through his technical skill but also through his professional approach to training, preparation, and competition. Mr. Mulisha is fully prepared to pursue international recognition, compete in high-level events, and participate in serious career development programs in the United States.

I strongly support this application and will provide additional information if necessary.

Sincerely,

Chad "Savage" George
Head Coach and Owner, California Mixed Martial Arts, CMMA
Phone: +1 310 621 0525
Email: chad@cmmafitness.com

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MMA Junkie: Eric Nicksick to corner Sean Strickland's UFC return after resolution MMAFighting.com: Steelers coach Mike T

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"SAVAGE"

Chad George

PRO MMA RECORD
18-8-0

News Update / Claim Page

Photo Source: MMA WEEKLY

Fighter Details

Name: Chad George	**Nickname:** Savage
Pro MMA Record: 18-8-0 (Win-Loss-Draw)	**Current MMA Streak:** 4 Wins
Age: 43 | **Date of Birth:** 1982 Apr 30	**Height:** 5'6" (168cm) | **Reach:** 68.5" (174cm)
Weight Class: Bantamweight | **Last Weigh-In:** 136.0 lbs	**Affiliation:** California Mixed Martial Arts
Last Fight: January 18, 2020 in FTW	**Career Disclosed Earnings:** $17,000 USD
Born: United States	**Fighting out of:** Sacramento, California
College: N/A	**Foundation Style:** Jiu Jitsu
Head Coach: Josh Barnett	**Other Coaches:** Sean Choi
Resource Links:	**Personal Links:**

California Mixed Martial Arts

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Regional MMA Rankings

Rankings FAQ

Chad George is ineligible for Tapology's regional MMA rankings due to inactivity.
Fighters must have at least one completed MMA bout in the past two years to be ranked.

PRO MMA STATISTICS

Record: 18-8-0

KO/TKO	W	28% of wins	5 wins, 0 losses
	L		
Submission	W	61% of wins	11 wins, 6 losses
	L	75% of losses	
Decision	W	11% of wins	2 wins, 2 losses
	L	25% of losses	

MMA RECORD BY PROMOTION

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ACA 199	in 1 week
LFA 224	in 1 week
OKTAGON 82	in 1 week
KSW 114	in 1 week
Zuffa Boxing	in 2 weeks
ONE Fight Night 39	in 2 weeks
LFA 225	in 2 weeks

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ALL-TIME BIGGEST UPSETS | EDIT

1. Matt Serra vs. Georges St-Pierre I
2. Israel Adesanya vs. Sean Strickland
3. Ronda Rousey vs. Holly Holm
4. Kamaru Usman vs. Leon Edwards II
5. Amanda Nunes vs. Julianna Peña
6. Luke Rockhold vs. Michael Bisping II
7. Conor McGregor vs. Nate Diaz
8. Anderson Silva vs. Chris Weidman

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2009 to 2010	WEC	1 win	2 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	- - 1	- - 100%	KO/TKO SUB DECISION DQ - - 50% 50% - - 1 1 - -
2015 to 2018	B	2 win	0 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	1 1 - -	50% 50% - -	KO/TKO SUB DECISION DQ - - - - - -

CHAD GEORGE MMA FIGHT RECORD

VIEW MODE: Basic | Odds | Expand All Details | Cancelled: Shown

Sport Filters: MMA | Grapple

W	SUB	Manny Moreno Grappling		Heel Hook Fight 2 Win 135	2020 Jan 18	
W	SUB	Héctor Valenzuela 17-8	6-11	Arm Triangle Choke · 4:01 · R2 LXF 2	2019 Jul 6	
C		Geovanny Martinez Grappling		Cancelled Bout	2019 May 26	
W	TKO	James Barnes 16-8	9-2	Doctor Stoppage · 5:00 · R2 Bellator 192	2018 Jan 20	
C		Alex Perez		Cancelled Bout	2017 Aug 3	
W	SUB	Mark Vorgeas 15-8	5-2-1	Von Flue Choke · 3:37 · R1 Bellator 136	2015 Apr 10	

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W	SUB	Sam Rodriguez 14-8	4-4	Rear Naked Choke · 1:57 · R1 NFA Valley Invasion 4	2014 Aug 8	
L	SUB	Cody Gibson 14-7	9-3	Guillotine Choke · 4:39 · R1 TWC 18: Halloween Havoc 3	2013 Oct 25	
C		Ara Muradyan		Cancelled Bout	2013 Oct 5	
L	SUB	Joe Soto 14-6	11-2	Rear Naked Choke · 2:01 · R2 Tachi PF 13	2012 May 10	
W	SUB	Shad Smith 13-6	12-14-2	Arm Triangle Choke · 1:56 · R1 BAMMA Badbeat 5	2012 Mar 16	
W	TKO	Kai Kara-France 12-6	1-0	Win New Zealand Regional	2011 Dec 2	
W	SUB	Bobby Sanchez 11-6	7-13	Arm Triangle Choke · 2:32 · R1 BAMMA Badbeat 2	2011 Jun 11	
L	DEC	Antonio Banuelos 11-5	17-8	Decision · Unanimous WEC 51: Aldo vs. Gamburyan	2010 Sep 30	
L	SUB	Scott Jorgensen 11-4	8-3	Guillotine Choke · 0:31 · R1 WEC 47: Bowles vs Cruz	2010 Mar 6	
W	DEC	John Hosman 10-4	16-5-1	Decision · Unanimous WEC 45: Cerrone vs Ratcliff	2009 Dec 19	
W	DEC	Alvin Cacdac 9-4	6-5	Win California Regional	2009 May 16	
W	TKO	Lonnie Wright 8-4	4-3	Injury · 1:26 · R3 Fist Series	2008 Nov 23	

W	SUB	Dan Sullivan 7-4	12-5	Win Freestyle Cage Fighting	2008 Oct 4	
W	SUB	Rick Screeton 6-4	10-13	Win California Regional	2008 Mar 7	
W	TKO	Rick Screeton 5-4	10-12	Win Tuff-N-Uff	2008 Feb 1	
L	DEC	Matt Troyer 5-3	1-1	Loss HOOKnSHOOT	2007 Nov 24	
W	SUB	Pete Sabala 4-3	3-3	Win Battle in the Ballroom	2007 Oct 31	
L	SUB	Matteus Lahdesmaki 4-2	4-2-3	Loss Bodog Fight	2007 Aug 25	
L	SUB	Todd Guimond 4-1	1-2	Loss Total Fighting Alliance	2007 Apr 28	
W	SUB	Todd Guimond 3-1	1-1	Win Total Fighting Alliance	2007 Feb 24	
L	SUB	Todd Guimond 3-0	0-1	Loss Total Fighting Alliance	2006 Nov 3	
W		Maurice Eazel		Win	2006	

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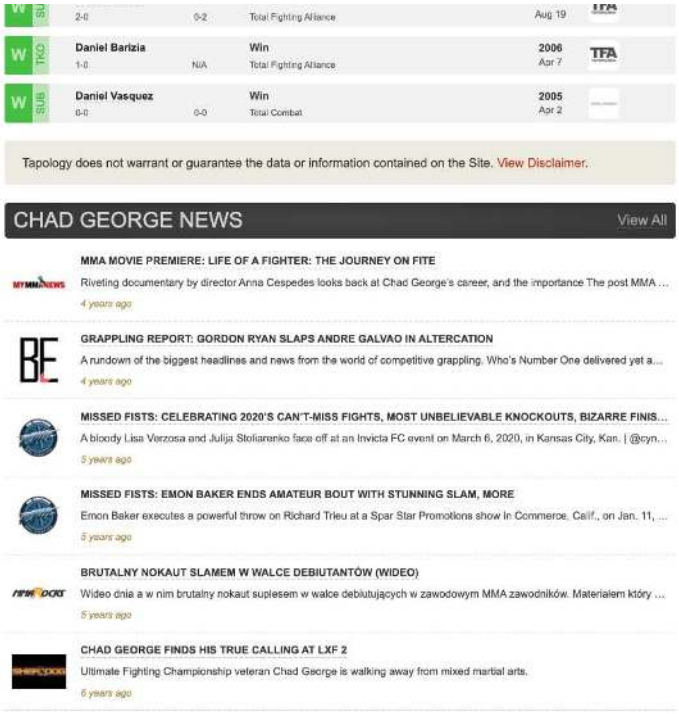

W	SUB	2-0	0-2	Total Fighting Alliance	Aug 19	TFA
W	TKO	Daniel Barizia 1-0	N/A	Win Total Fighting Alliance	2006 Apr 7	TFA
W	SUB	Daniel Vasquez 0-0	0-0	Win Total Combat	2005 Apr 2	

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CHAD GEORGE NEWS

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Ultimate Fighting Championship veteran Chad George is walking away from mixed martial arts.
6 years ago

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November 27, 2025

To USCIS,

My name is Victor Westley Henry, and I am a professional MMA athlete and UFC fighter, competing in the bantamweight division, known for having athletes who combine speed, cardio, and technical precision, resulting in fast-paced, highly skilled fights. I have a consolidated an international career and long-standing experience in high-performance centers and in training world-class fighters. In this capacity, I provide my statement regarding the work of Rafael “Mulisha” do Nascimento, based directly on our time together and the training did in professional settings.

Rafael arrived in Los Angeles to join the CMMA (California Mixed Martial Arts) team in Gardena, California in 2022. From the moment he joined the team, we began training together on a regular basis, in a routine that includes structured technical sessions, fight-preparation camps, and intense grappling and sparring focused on high-level competitive performance. This direct interaction in a professional setting has allowed me to closely observe his technical level, his attitude, and the consistency of his performance.

Rafael is an athlete of extraordinary high technical level, disciplined, competitive, and with a professional mindset that matches the standard of the best fighters I have worked with. In the specific area of grappling, I can state, based on my own high-level experience, that he is among the best training partners I have had. His jiu-jitsu is sharp, efficient, and strategic, which translates into precise decision-making under pressure, solid positional control, and the ability to neutralize opponents with very different styles. He masters complex positions, executes fast transitions in dynamic training scenarios, and has a repertoire of rare submissions that requires refined technical knowledge and an advanced understanding of fighting.

This combination of advanced technical repertoire, practical application in high-level training, and consistency in performance makes Rafael a valuable training partner in any professional camp. Throughout our time together at CMMA, he has directly assisted me in several fight preparation camps, taking an active role in grappling and sparring sessions that simulate real fight situations. In these contexts, the presence of an athlete like Rafael has a great impact on the quality of training, helping to raise the overall technical standard and improve the competitive readiness of the fighters involved.

Among his most impressive career achievements are a national silver medal at the Brazilian Kickboxing Championship and multiple professional victories in premier Brazilian MMA events such as Jungle Fight, where he earned “Fight of the Night” honors. His career includes high-level training with world-renowned athletes such as UFC veterans Erick Silva, the Nogueira brothers, Ronaldo “Jacaré,” and Walid Smail, and participation in major national events including WOCS 53 and NCE 23.

In 2022, he advanced to one of the most competitive stages of global MMA when he was contracted by Legacy Fighting Alliance (LFA), a leading U.S. organization widely recognized as a gateway to the UFC. Within the LFA, he has already completed six professional bouts, securing four victories and earning multiple nominations for Fighter of the Year, Submission of the Year, Knockout of the Year, and Fight of the Year.

Recently, Rafael achieved a rare and distinguished milestone: he became only the second athlete in MMA history to successfully apply a highly uncommon submission technique previously executed at the UFC level by Charles "Do Bronx," further demonstrating his technical innovation and mastery. That same year, he earned his black belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, marking a significant achievement in grappling excellence.

He now trains and competes in Los Angeles, California, as part of the CMMA team and the Machida Academy, working daily alongside world-class athletes such as Josh Barnett, Chad George, and Chinzo Machida.

Based on his competitive record, technical accomplishments, elite training pedigree, and sustained success in internationally recognized organizations, I firmly establish Rafael "Mulisha" do Nascimento as an extraordinary athlete whose career trajectory places him among the leading talents in professional mixed martial arts in the world and positioned to continue contribuiting meaningful to the new generation of martial arts athletes in the United States.

Sincerely,

Victor Westley Henry
UFC professional fighter, bantamweight division
Coach and athlete at CMMA, Gardena, California

TAPOLOGY

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FIGHTERS EVENTS BOUTS

MMAFighting.com: Alexa Grasso vs. Maycee Barber 2 in the works for UFC Seattle | MMA Junkie: Loopy Godinez vs. Tatiana

FIGHTCENTER › FIGHTERS › VICTOR "LA MANGOSTA" HENRY TAPOLOGY PRIVACY POLICY

"LA MANGOSTA"

Victor Henry

PRO MMA RECORD
25-7-0

News Update / Claim Page

Fighter Details

Given Name: Victor Westley Henry	**Nickname:** La Mangosta
Pro MMA Record: 25-7-0, 1 NC (Win-Loss-Draw)	**Current MMA Streak:** 1 Win
Age: 38 | **Date of Birth:** 1987 May 04	**Height:** 5'7" (170cm) | **Reach:** 68.0" (173cm)
Weight Class: Bantamweight | **Last Weigh-In:** 135.5 lbs	**Affiliation:** UWF USA
Last Fight: April 05, 2025 in UFC	**Career Disclosed Earnings:** $40,000 USD
Born: South Gate, California, United States	**Fighting out of:** Los Angeles, California, United States
College: N/A	**Foundation Style:** Catch Wrestling
Head Coach: Josh Barnett	**Other Coaches:** Uchenna Anyikam
Resource Links:	**Personal Links:**

UWF USA

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UFC RANKING

4-2, 1 NC

#24 of 78 at Bantamweight. View All »

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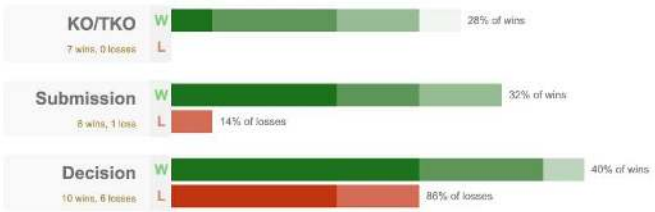
PRO MMA STATISTICS

Record: 25-7-0, 1 NC



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ONE Fight Night 39	in 2 weeks
LFA 225	in 2 weeks

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ALL-TIME GREATEST STRIKERS | EDIT

1	Anderson "The Spider" Silva
2	Max "Blessed" Holloway
3	Israel "The Last Stylebender" Adesanya
4	"The Notorious" Conor McGregor
5	Ilia "El Matador" Topuria
6	José Aldo "Junior"
7	Alexander "The Great" Volkanovski
8	Stephen "Wonderboy" Thompson

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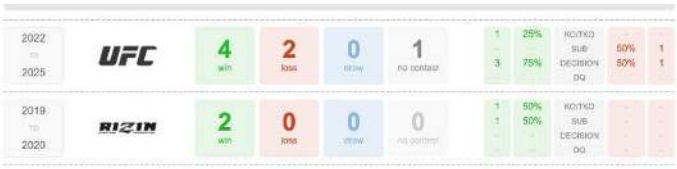

2022 to 2025	UFC	4 win	2 loss	0 draw	1 no contest	1 –	25% –	KO/TKO –	– –	– –
						3	75%	SUB	50%	1
						–	–	DECISION	50%	1
						–	–	DQ	–	–
2019 to 2020	RIZIN	2 win	0 loss	0 draw	0 no contest	1 –	50% –	KO/TKO –	– –	– –
						1	50%	SUB	–	–
						–	–	DECISION	–	–
						–	–	DQ	–	–

VICTOR HENRY MMA FIGHT RECORD

VIEW MODE: Basic | Odds | Expand All Details | Cancelled: Shown

Sport Filters: MMA | Grapple

PROFESSIONAL BOUTS

W DEC	Pedro Falcão 24-7 16-4 +75	Decision · Unanimous UFC Fight Night	2025 Apr 5	UFC	
L SUB	Charles Jourdain 24-8 15-8-1 +32	Guillotine Choke · 3:43 · R2 UFC Fight Night	2024 Nov 2	UFC	
W TKO	Rani Yahya 23-6 28-11-1 +46	Punches (Standing TKO) · 2:36 · R3 UFC Fight Night	2024 Apr 27	UFC	
NC	Javid Basharat 23-6 14-6 +36	No Contest · 0:15 · R2 UFC 294: Makhachev vs. Volkanovski 2	2023 Oct 21	UFC	
C	Javid Basharat	Cancelled Bout	2023 Sep 23	UFC	
W DEC	Tony Gravely 22-6 23-8 +39	Decision · Split UFC Fight Night	2023 Mar 11	UFC	
L DEC	Raphael Assunção 22-5 26-9 +44	Decision · Unanimous UFC Fight Night	2022 Oct 15	UFC	
W DEC	Raoni Barcelos 21-5 16-7 +29	Decision · Unanimous UFC 270: M'Gannou vs. Gane	2022 Jan 22	UFC	
C	Raoni Barcelos	Cancelled Bout	2021 Dec 18	UFC	
W SUB	Albert Morales 20-5 10-7-1	Rear Naked Choke · 1:46 · R2 LXF 6	2021 Oct 30		
L DEC	Denis Lavrentyev 20-4 9-2	Decision · Unanimous Parus FC	2020 Nov 7		
W TKO	Masanori Kanehara 19-4 27-13-5	Right Straight · 0:45 · R2 RIZIN 21	2020 Feb 22	RIZIN	
W SUB	Trent Girdham 18-4 11-2	Reverse Triangle Choke · 2:14 · R3 RIZIN 18	2019 Aug 18	RIZIN	
W TKO	Nikita Chistyakov 17-4 13-4-1	Punches · 4:50 · R1 RCC 6	2019 May 4	RCC	
W DEC	Yuki Motoya 16-4 23-6	Decision DEEP 88 Impact	2019 Mar 9		
W DEC	Denis Lavrentyev 15-4 6-1	Decision · Unanimous RCC MMA 5: Shlemenko vs. Bilstein	2018 Dec 15	RCC	
W DEC	Kyler Phillips 14-4 5-0	Decision · Split CXF 15: Rage in the Cage	2018 Oct 20		
W TKO	Takafumi Otsuka 13-4 25-13-1	Right Front Body Kick · 1:36 · R3 DEEP 85 Impact	2018 Aug 26		
L SUB	Masanori Kanehara Grappling	Straight Foot Lock · 7:11 · R1 Quintet Fight Night in Tokyo	2018 Jun 9		
W TKO	Anderson dos Santos 12-4 17-5	Punches · 5:00 · R2 KOTC: Energetic Pursuit	2018 Feb 24		
L DEC	Masakatsu Ueda 12-3 23-5-2	Decision · Unanimous Pancrase 285	2017 Mar 12		
L DEC	Rafael Silva 12-2 27-5	Decision · Split Pancrase 282	2016 Nov 13		
W DEC	Alan Yoshihiro Yamaniha 11-2 14-4-4	Decision · Unanimous Pancrase 277	2016 Apr 24		
L DEC	Shintaro Ishiwatari 11-1 19-6-4	Decision · Unanimous Pancrase 273	2015 Dec 13		
W SUB	Hidekazu Fukushima 10-1 10-2-1	Guillotine Choke · 4:32 · R1 Pancrase 270	2015 Oct 4		
W DEC	Taichi Nakajima 9-1 8-3-1	Decision · Split Pancrase 267	2015 May 31		

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Vlacheslav Borshchev is 34 today!

W SUB	Masakatsu Ueda 8-1	18-3-2	Kneebar · 3:22 · R3 GRANDSLAM 2	2015 Feb 8	
W SUB	Cory Vom Baur 7-1	7-3	Armbar · 4:43 · R1 CageSport 32	2014 Oct 4	
W TKO	Hideo Tokoro 6-1	32-26-2	Punches · 1:52 · R2 GRANDSLAM 1	2014 Jul 13	
L DEC	Joe Murphy 6-0	6-1	Decision · Split Fight Club OC	2014 Apr 17	

W SUB	Jeff Martin 5-0	10-5	Armbar · 4:22 · R1 BAMMA Badbeat 10	2013 Aug 9	
W DEC	Kevin Michel 4-0	5-5	Decision · Unanimous KOTC: Validation	2013 Jul 11	
C	Ara Muradyan		Cancelled Bout	2013 May 18	
W DEC	Bronson Casarez 3-0	4-0	Decision · Unanimous Fight Club OC	2013 May 16	
W SUB	Bobby Sanchez 2-0	8-19	Win Respect In the Cage	2012 Jan 21	
W TKO	Gary Michaels 1-0	0-0	Win Respect In the Cage	2010 Oct 8	
W SUB	Dillion Croushorn 0-0	0-4	Win Respect In the Cage	2010 Aug 21	

AMATEUR BOUTS

L SUB	Jerry Shapiro 0-1	3-0	Loss Tuff-N-Uff	2010 Mar 26	
L DEC	Gor Mnatsakanyan 0-0	3-0	Loss Tuff-N-Uff	2009 Sep 18	

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November 12, 2025

To whom it may concern,

My name is Weberson Almeida da Conceição, and I work as a professional martial arts fighter, a Pan-American kickboxing champion sanctioned by WAKO. I am currently an athlete with Karate Combat and train at Machida Academy in Lomita, California. I am also the author of the book Benie's Adventure Around The World, in which I share part of my journey in the world of combat sports. I am writing this letter to present my direct testimony regarding the work and career of Rafael do Nascimento, with whom I maintain a close and ongoing professional relationship in the mixed martial arts scene.

I met Rafael do Nascimento in 2014 during regional MMA events in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil, when we were still competing on the local circuit and seeking to build our professional careers. From that early period, by closely following his fights and training, it became clear to me that he possessed a rare combination of technical talent, discipline, and competitive ambition.

It is noteworthy that in September 2014, the III TFC Championship – The Fighting Championship took place, an event that featured preliminary fights in kickboxing, Muay Thai, and MMA, culminating in a main MMA fight. Rafael was featured on the official promotional poster and competed in the main event that night, winning the event's MMA title by defeating Maciel Souza via submission. Although TFC is a regional show, the fact that it has a professional structure, a card featuring multiple disciplines, and a championship belt at stake makes this title especially relevant to the trajectory of a rising athlete. Winning a main event fight for a championship belt by submission, under this level of exposure, demonstrates that even at that stage of his career, Rafael was already capable of delivering championship-level performances under pressure, within an organized setting and with the responsibility of attracting an audience and representing the event.

In 2017, we made an important decision together for our careers and moved to Rio de Janeiro with the goal of dedicating ourselves fully to high-performance training and the pursuit of significant results in professional MMA. Throughout that period, Rafael competed in several professional fights, consistently maintaining a high level of performance, and I was by his side, assisting with his training camps, both in the daily training routine and in the specific strategy for each fight.

In 2019, when I signed a contract with Bellator MMA and moved to the United States, our professional relationship took on a new dimension. Even at different stages of our careers, Rafael remained present as an important part of my training structure. In 2022, he came to the United States to directly join one of my Bellator training camps, demonstrating through actions his loyalty, commitment, and professionalism. During this preparation, he acted not only as a training partner but also as someone I trusted to simulate real fight situations, test tactical adjustments, and contribute his technical insight. This level of involvement demonstrates that Rafael is not only a strong athlete, but also a professional capable of adding direct value to the routine of an internationally high-level fighter.

From a technical standpoint, Rafael do Nascimento is one of the most well-rounded athletes I have ever trained with. His grappling is of the highest level, which is reflected in his positional control, rapid transitions, and ability to neutralize opponents in a variety of situations.

His striking is technical and refined, with strong distance management and precision in his strikes. In addition, he possesses unique submission techniques, some of which are rarely seen in MMA, making his game particularly dangerous and unpredictable. Over the years, he has been not only my training partner, but also my coach and cornerman in important fights, contributing to strategy development, opponent analysis, and real-time adjustments during fights. This combination of applied technical knowledge, practical experience, and the ability to guide another athlete in high-level competitions is a clear indicator of Rafael's professional maturity in the sport.

Based on everything I have witnessed throughout this journey, I consider Rafael to be the best bantamweight fighter, in the 61 kg division, with whom I have ever trained. His daily discipline, constant dedication, and technical excellence place Rafael at a standout level among elite athletes. In a competitive environment such as mixed martial arts, where the difference between winning and losing lies in the details of preparation, focus, and quality of execution, the presence of a professional with Rafael's profile is a true differentiator. In addition, the fact that he has repeatedly served as my cornerman and coach at decisive moments in my career illustrates the level of trust I place in his technical ability and ethical work.

On a personal level, Rafael do Nascimento is someone of solid character, truly humble, and with deep respect for teammates, coaches, and opponents. These qualities, combined with a high level of athletic performance, are, in my view, what define a true champion. Over the years in which we have worked together professionally, I have seen Rafael maintain the same serious and responsible conduct, regardless of the setting, whether at regional events in Brazil or during more advanced stages of our careers abroad.

In light of this solid record of collaboration, results, and professionalism, I consider Rafael do Nascimento to be a world-class professional athlete, fully deserving of recognition at the highest international level. I reiterate my support and remain available for any further clarification.

Sincerely,

Weberson Almeida da Conceicao
Professional Martial Arts Fighter
Karate Combat Athlete / Former Bellator MMA Fighter
Pan-American Kickboxing Champion sanctioned by WAKO
Author of the book Benie's Adventure Around The World
Email: weberdealmeida@gmail.com
Telephone: +1 310 746 8705

----//signature//----

I, André Vinícius Inacio Penna Mello, telephone number 415 425-2508, mailing address P.O. Box 90487, San Diego, CA 92169, certify that the professional translation of this document from Portuguese to English has been performed by myself, a qualified translator fluent in both languages, and that the following is an accurate and complete translation of the document.

Date: January 27, 2026.

12 de novembro de 2025

A quem interessar possa,

Meu nome é Weberson Almeida da Conceição e atuo como lutador profissional de artes marciais, campeão pan-americano de kickboxing pela WAKO. Atualmente sou atleta do Karate Combat e treino na Machida Academy, em Lomita, Califórnia. Também sou autor do livro As Aventuras de Benie, no qual compartilho parte da minha trajetória no mundo das lutas. Escrevo esta carta para apresentar meu testemunho direto sobre o trabalho e a carreira de Rafael do Nascimento, com quem mantenho uma relação profissional próxima e contínua no cenário das artes marciais mistas.

Conheci Rafael do Nascimento em 2014, durante eventos regionais de MMA no estado de Mato Grosso, no Brasil, quando ainda atuávamos no circuito local e buscávamos construir nossas carreiras profissionais. Desde aquele período inicial, acompanhando suas lutas e treinos de perto, ficou claro para mim que ele tinha uma combinação rara de talento técnico, disciplina e ambição esportiva.

É notável que em setembro de 2014, ocorreu o III Campeonato de Lutas TFC – The Fighting Championship, evento que reuniu lutas preliminares de kickboxing, muay thai e MMA, culminando em uma luta principal de MMA. Rafael foi destaque no pôster oficial de divulgação e atuou exatamente na luta principal dessa noite, conquistando o cinturão de MMA do evento ao derrotar Maciel Souza por finalização. Embora o TFC seja um show regional, o fato de ter uma estrutura profissional, card com múltiplas modalidades e cinturão em disputa torna esse título especialmente relevante para a trajetória de um atleta em ascensão. Vencer uma luta principal valendo cinturão, por meio de finalização, sob esse tipo de exposição, demonstra que já naquela fase da carreira Rafael conseguia entregar performance de campeão sob pressão, em cenário organizado e com responsabilidade de atrair público e representar o evento.

Em 2017, tomamos juntos uma decisão importante para nossas carreiras e nos mudamos para o Rio de Janeiro com o objetivo de nos dedicarmos integralmente aos treinamentos de alto rendimento e à busca de resultados expressivos no MMA profissional. Ao longo desse período, Rafael realizou diversas lutas profissionais, sempre mantendo a consistência de desempenho, e eu estive ao lado dele, ajudando em seus camps de preparação, tanto na rotina diária de treinos quanto na estratégia específica para cada combate.

Em 2019, quando assinei contrato com o Bellator MMA e me mudei para os Estados Unidos, nossa relação profissional adquiriu uma nova dimensão. Mesmo em diferentes fases da carreira, Rafael permaneceu presente como parte importante da minha estrutura de treinamento. Em 2022, ele veio aos Estados Unidos para integrar diretamente um dos meus camps para o Bellator, mostrando com fatos a sua lealdade, comprometimento e profissionalismo. Nesta preparação, ele atuou não apenas como parceiro de treino, mas também como alguém em quem eu confiava para simular situações reais de luta, testar ajustes táticos e contribuir com seu olhar técnico. Esse envolvimento demonstra que Rafael não é apenas um atleta forte, mas também um profissional capaz de agregar valor direto à rotina de um lutador de alto nível internacional.

Do ponto de vista técnico, Rafael do Nascimento é um dos atletas mais completos com quem já treinei. Seu grappling é de altíssimo nível, o que se reflete no controle de posição, nas transições rápidas e na habilidade de neutralizar adversários em diferentes situações.

Seu striking é técnico e refinado, com boa leitura de distância e precisão nos golpes. Além disso, ele possui finalizações únicas, algumas raramente vistas no MMA, o que torna seu jogo especialmente perigoso e imprevisível. Ao longo dos anos, ele foi não apenas meu companheiro de treinos, mas também meu treinador e cornerman em lutas importantes, contribuindo para a definição de estratégia, a leitura dos oponentes e os ajustes em tempo real durante os combates. Essa combinação de conhecimento técnico aplicado, experiência prática e capacidade de orientar outro atleta em competições de alto nível é um claro indicador da maturidade profissional de Rafael no esporte.

Com base em tudo o que presenciei ao longo dessa trajetória, considero que Rafael é hoje o melhor lutador peso-galo, na categoria de 61 kg, com quem já compartilhei treinos. A disciplina diária, a dedicação constante e a excelência técnica que ele demonstra colocam Rafael em um patamar de destaque entre os atletas de elite. Em um ambiente competitivo como o das artes marciais mistas, em que a diferença entre vencer e perder está nos detalhes de preparação, foco e qualidade de execução, a presença de um profissional com o perfil de Rafael é um diferencial real. Além disso, o fato de ele ter atuado repetidamente como meu cornerman e treinador em momentos decisivos de minha carreira ilustra o grau de confiança que deposito em sua capacidade técnica e em seu trabalho ético.

No aspecto pessoal, Rafael do Nascimento é alguém de caráter sólido, humildade verdadeira e profundo respeito pelos colegas, treinadores e adversários. Essas qualidades, aliadas ao alto nível de desempenho esportivo, são, na minha visão, o que define um verdadeiro campeão. Ao longo dos anos em que convivemos profissionalmente, vi Rafael manter a mesma conduta séria e responsável, independentemente do cenário, seja em eventos regionais no Brasil, seja em fases mais avançadas de nossas carreiras no exterior.

Diante desse histórico concreto de colaboração, resultados e profissionalismo, considero Rafael do Nascimento um atleta profissional de classe mundial, plenamente merecedor de reconhecimento no mais alto nível internacional. Reitero meu apoio e permaneço à disposição para esclarecimentos.

Atenciosamente,

Weberson Almeida da Conceicao
Lutador Profissional de Artes Marciais
Atleta do Karate Combat / ex-lutador do Bellator MMA
Campeão Pan-Americano de Kickboxing pela WAKO
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Weberson A. da Conceição

Get to know Bellator 214's Weber Almeida ahead of tonight's fight in California

mmajunkie.usatoday.com/story/sports/bellator/2019/01/26/bellator-214-weber-almeida-get-to-know-qa-brazil/82106888007

Christian Stein

BELLATOR

Christian Stein

USA TODAY Sports

Jan. 26, 2019, 1:00 p.m. ET

A newcomer makes his Bellator debut tonight – and fights for the first time in more than three years.

Brazil's Weber Almeida (1-0 MMA, 0-0 BMMA) will make his promotional debut tonight at Bellator 214 against another newcomer, Odan Chinchilla (1-0 MMA, 0-0 BMMA).

Bellator 214 takes place at The Forum in Inglewood, Calif. The main card airs on Paramount and streams on DAZN following prelims on MMAjunkie.

Ahead of the card, get to know bantamweight Almeida.

Full name: Weberson Almeida da Conceicao

Nickname: People just call me "Weber" since it's easier. I'm still looking for a fighter nickname. I move similar to a gorilla. I thought about "Silverback" or something similar. Or maybe "Black Jaguar." I'm not sure yet. I'm mostly focused on fighting. I think the nickname will appear eventually. People will associate the way I move with a new cool nickname. I'm open to suggestions.

DOB: 12.01.87

Birthplace: I was born in Cuiaba, state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. Today I live in Los Angeles.

Height/Weight: 5-foot-7, 135 pounds (though Almeida missed weight for the fight)

Team: Machida Academy in Los Angeles. I also train at and represent Black House.

How did you get into professional MMA?

I decided to become a fighter due to my father. My father was my first sensei in martial arts. When I was 5, I would ask to train karate. He'd say I wasn't ready to train at an academy yet, so he started teaching me at home. Then, at age 9, I enrolled at a karate dojo and started my career. That's 21 years in this profession.

My first MMA bout took place in 2015. It was an incredible experience. I had already been winning at various karate tournaments. By that point, I had been the Brazilian karate champion on six occasions. I was also a kickboxing champion. I decided I needed new challenges. I joined the Coliseu team under master Luiz Timao. He gave me this opportunity. I trained with him for a long time before migrating to MMA. Around that time, in Brazil, Globo did a report about my life. They talked about the fact that I'm also a musician and that I worked as an apartment sales manager. I supervised a team of about 40 brokers in Cuiaba. They reported on my work life, as well as the fact that I was starting out as an MMA fighter. That's how my MMA career got started.

You have one pro bout, but there were three cancellations after that. What happened?

My first canceled bout didn't take place because I couldn't afford to travel, due to a lack or sponsorships. Then, after some time, I moved to Rio de Janeiro. And that bout was canceled because my opponent wasn't going to make weight. We agreed to fight at bantamweight and he decided he couldn't do it by fight week. Actually, my last two bouts were canceled for this reason.

How's your preparation going?

We didn't find too much information about my opponent. But my training has been very intense. I'm feeling excellent for this bout. I'm highly confident. My head coach is Chinzo Machida. He deals with all strategy and tactics. I have the same physical trainer as Lyoto Machida's. This is my U.S. debut. I'm highly motivated to put on a show. I want to show the world what I'm able to do. And I want people to see what the new generation brings.

What are your long-term goals?

My goal is for my work to be recognized, so someone can invest in me, so I can go even further.

Final thoughts?

I'm thankful to everyone who's brought me to this point. I went through a lot of things. I traveled to China. Then I lived at my friend's academy in Sao Paulo for some time. Then I trained in Rio de Janeiro. It's been a crazy life. I've been a musician, real estate sales manager, and now a professional MMA fighter. I'm starting my career in the U.S. on the right foot. All those who watch me fight will see something special. I'm off to battle!

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Dated:**May 18, 2026**
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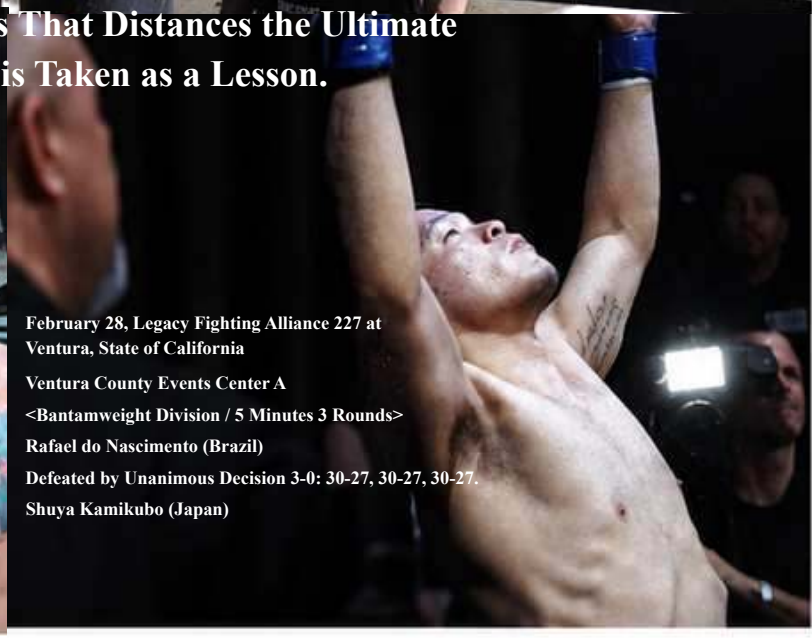
Philippe Rates
Comm# HH531347
Expires: 5/27/2028
STATE OF FLORIDA

Notary Public Signature

Defeat by Decision in the Third Match of the Legacy Fighting Alliance. A Loss That Distances the Ultimate Fighting Championship is Taken as a Lesson.



February 28, Legacy Fighting Alliance 227 at Ventura, State of California

Ventura County Events Center A

<Bantamweight Division / 5 Minutes 3 Rounds>

Rafael do Nascimento (Brazil)

Defeated by Unanimous Decision 3-0: 30-27, 30-27, 30-27.

Shuya Kamikubo (Japan)

MMA with Stable Standards And, the Unchanging Shuya Kamikubo

{In a situation of contest where we bring forth everything we have worked for, my core was wavering}

On February 28, at Legacy Fighting Alliance 227 held in Ventura, State of California.
In the main event, Shuya Kamikubo, who competed against Rafael do Nascimento, also known as Murisha, suffered a defeat by decision.
Since joining the Legacy Fighting Alliance in February of last year, Kamikubo had achieved consecutive victories by submission with a twister and a rear naked choke, making this a painful defeat.
He lost the second round, and there was an incomprehensible break in the third round.
This is also related to the evolution of Mixed Martial Arts.
In an environment that emphasizes damage, Kamikubo, who is not the type to win by striking but has secured victories by gradually wearing down his opponents, reflected on his defeat after two consecutive finish victories, stating, "I had lost my core."

Shuya Kamikubo
Born on April 12, 1993, in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture.
Height: 165.1 centimeters, Weight: 61.2 kilograms.
2016 Active, Affiliated with Itadaki Jiu-Jitsu / TRY H Studio

Reported, Written, and Photographed by Manabu Takashima text & photo - Manabu Takashima

Photo by Gen Isono, MMAPLANET
Photo - Gen Isono, MMAPLANET

— Three weeks have passed since the match; you returned home after receiving medical treatment at a hospital in Ventura, where the wound was closed with eight surgical staples. How is the condition of the wound now?

Kamikubo: When I received the treatment, there was still some bleeding, so gauze was applied and wrapped with bandages. However, by the time I returned home, the bleeding had almost stopped. I was just worried about bacteria entering the wound while on the airplane with the bandages on, but other than that, there was no pain at the site of the cut.

— Was it a cut that large, with no pain?

Kamikubo: (Mr. Isono, representative of Itadaki Jiu-Jitsu) He says it's strange that he feels no pain. (Laughs) Upon returning to Japan, I had a doctor in Japan check it.

— Was it decided that it would be bett to have it re-stitched depending on the situation?

Kamikubo: Yes. But the diagnosis was, "It will be fine as it is if you keep it clean and wash it," so I had the staples removed after about 10 to 12 days.

— On that day, immediately after returning from the hospital to the hotel, I did not hear any negative words; you were already focused on what was next. How do you view the defeat now that you have returned home and some time has passed?

Kamikubo: I think it was a fight I could have won. Looking back at the footage many times, there are many things I did that were wasteful. Even in situations where I was broken up in the third round, or in recent fights and training where I thought "this way is better," it changed

The areas that could have been improved are clear. Prior to the match, the Chief Executive Officer of the Legacy Fighting Alliance, Ed Soares, stated that the Legacy Fighting Alliance is a place for both winning and learning, and because of that, I must learn from this defeat. Although I had achieved three consecutive victories in the Legacy Fighting Alliance, this defeat served as a lesson. While I was able to recover and gain confidence, there were aspects where I could not fully commit to the contest, and I was able to reaffirm the significance of that.

— You mentioned that you identified points requiring adjustment. In other words, you felt that the manner in which you received strikes and the visual perception of the match were unfavorable. It is regrettable when there is no actual damage, is it not?

Kamikubo: My manner of receiving strikes is not optimal. It is related to my hip joint surgery. Even now, the underlying issues remain, and my balance while standing is not stable. It also does not present well. I believe I was able to dominate the space by positioning my back against the cage. I intended to engage in grappling, and my opponent also sought to compete through grappling. I had anticipated that, and after we engaged, he was the one who initiated.

Looking back, perhaps I was overly cautious; I had the capacity to secure a dominant position and advance after the takedown, a realization I had even during the contest.

— That is a challenging situation, is it not? Was it possible that you were overly cautious?

Kamikubo: That may indeed be the case. I was cautious, and there were aspects I could have executed more effectively this time. I was overly defensive regarding my offensive grappling. It is a fact that I was unable to capitalize on my wrestling skills. I was uncertain whether I was in a winning position or if I was being baited, so I exercised excessive caution, which resulted in missed opportunities.

— Murisha is a fighter who actively pursues finishes, as evidenced by his past contests. Was that not a contributing factor?

Kamikubo: He is a fighter who aggressively seeks the clinch, even when countering. This is reflected in his record, which includes nine victories by way of finish. I anticipated that he would initiate the offense, but perhaps I overestimated him, or perhaps I lacked sufficient self-belief. Regarding that, I have no regrets; however, rather than attempting to recover my position while on the bottom, the focus was on placing my elbow on his head, rather than inflicting damage

Without even being able to hold the clothes he had when he entered the venue, he was put into an ambulance along with his second, Mr. Isono, and headed to the hospital.

To think that there was a cut of this magnitude...

it gave the impression of trying to score points. My head position was lower than usual. You were taking elbows. What was the reason for placing your head in that position?

Kamikubo: In my past matches, I remembered Murisha using armlocks, guillotines, and ninja chokes. Therefore, I thought it would be safer to keep my feet closer than to raise my head. Looking back at the footage, I realized that instead of keeping my head up and posture good, I had collapsed my legs. I thought it was a better position. At the same time, even in practice, I should have been getting back up after pinning him once, but I was slow to do so.

— It seems you were too cautious about his attacks, is that the point?

Kamikubo: It's not that the Jiu-Jitsu I've learned in my regular training—like how to armlock—is ineffective. I was already able to respond to his counter-attacks.

— You also took some strikes. How did you plan to recover in the second round?

Kamikubo: I thought about changing my head position and taking points by getting to his back. I planned to get around to his back and strike from there.

— Kamikubo-san's punches landed, and he was quite exhausted. However, he used elbows frequently from underneath, and it didn't scramble. Consequently, the judges didn't evaluate the second round as a setup for either fighter, and I felt it was quite strict as an MMA match, but perhaps that kind of commitment is necessary.

Kamikubo: At the venue, Mr. Isono told me, "It's a close call, but there is a distinct possibility that you dropped the round. You need to go on the offensive in the third round."

— Mr. Isono, you are truly able to view the match calmly. Did you think he had lost the second round?

Kamikubo: I believe the striking on the feet was even. However, I aimed for a takedown, engaged in a drive, and pushed him into the wire mesh with my head

— Even when you were on the cage side, it did not seem as though your strikes were landing. Therefore, you were cut by the grazing strikes and received elbows. In that regard, perhaps it created a poor impression?

Kamikubo: Even after that, I was able to secure a stable position. However, because of the blood, I slipped and could not pin him down completely, and he was able to kick up and gain points

1R

It is not that a knockdown occurred, but the balance was compromised to this extent. It is unavoidable that the impression becomes unfavorable. Murisha targets a takedown from a single-leg and attempts a ninja choke, but Kamikubo responds firmly. He targets a takedown and attempts to wear him down from the top, but he dropped the first round.

Ah, that is true. Even though I was touching/controlling [the opponent], the blood made it slippery and I couldn't get a grip. This was completely different from training. The way sweat slips is different from the way blood slips. I had never experienced this before, so I didn't know what to do...

— Do you need to create something similar to a gel?

Kamikubo: Perhaps we need to use something like a gel or Vaseline (bitter smile). It is very slippery, so I wonder what I should do against that. Regarding that, my range of offensive options was limited.

— On the verge of standing up, there was a development where you took his back.

Kamikubo: He was already trying to stand up. I felt that if I could dominate him on the ground and inflict damage from the bottom, I could take the round regardless of what happened. I passed his guard, took mount, and struck him. So, I did take the round, and I also took his back.

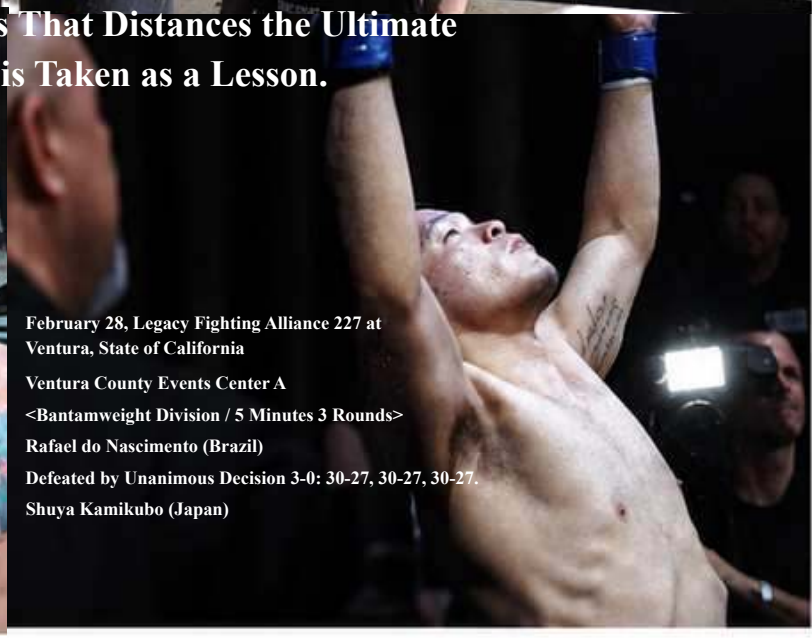
— But you lost the round on points.

Kamikubo: Honestly, regarding the "damage" aspect, I felt that I had dominated for more than five minutes and secured position. Honestly, when I look back at the footage, I feel it was a round I could have taken. However, when it is pointed out that the cut was caused by the opponent's attack, I feel it is difficult... It felt like I was attacked, and I wonder what that was. I wonder if that was the damage that made me lose my memory.

— Ah, so you had that kind of feeling, that you lost your memory.

Kamikubo: While I am fighting, even if I feel I have dominated, that flow—where I thought I had taken the damage and was cut by an elbow..

Defeat by Decision in the Third Match of the Legacy Fighting Alliance. A Loss That Distances the Ultimate Fighting Championship is Taken as a Lesson.



February 28, Legacy Fighting Alliance 227 at Ventura, State of California

Ventura County Events Center A

<Bantamweight Division / 5 Minutes 3 Rounds>

Rafael do Nascimento (Brazil)

Defeated by Unanimous Decision 3-0: 30-27, 30-27, 30-27.

Shuya Kamikubo (Japan)

MMA with Stable Standards And, the Unchanging Shuya Kamikubo

{In a situation of contest where we bring forth everything we have worked for, my core was wavering}

On February 28, at Legacy Fighting Alliance 227 held in Ventura, State of California.
In the main event, Shuya Kamikubo, who competed against Rafael do Nascimento, also known as Murisha, suffered a defeat by decision.
Since joining the Legacy Fighting Alliance in February of last year, Kamikubo had achieved consecutive victories by submission with a twister and a rear naked choke, making this a painful defeat.
He lost the second round, and there was an incomprehensible break in the third round.
This is also related to the evolution of Mixed Martial Arts.
In an environment that emphasizes damage, Kamikubo, who is not the type to win by striking but has secured victories by gradually wearing down his opponents, reflected on his defeat after two consecutive finish victories, stating, "I had lost my core."

Shuya Kamikubo
Born on April 12, 1993, in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture.
Height: 165.1 centimeters, Weight: 61.2 kilograms.
2016 Active, Affiliated with Itadaki Jiu-Jitsu / TRY H Studio

Reported, Written, and Photographed by Manabu Takashima text & photo - Manabu Takashima

Photo by Gen Isono, MMAPLANET
Photo - Gen Isono, MMAPLANET

— Three weeks have passed since the match; you returned home after receiving medical treatment at a hospital in Ventura, where the wound was closed with eight surgical staples. How is the condition of the wound now?

Kamikubo: When I received the treatment, there was still some bleeding, so gauze was applied and wrapped with bandages. However, by the time I returned home, the bleeding had almost stopped. I was just worried about bacteria entering the wound while on the airplane with the bandages on, but other than that, there was no pain at the site of the cut.

— Was it a cut that large, with no pain?

Kamikubo: (Mr. Isono, representative of Itadaki Jiu-Jitsu) He says it's strange that he feels no pain. (Laughs) Upon returning to Japan, I had a doctor in Japan check it.

— Was it decided that it would be bett to have it re-stitched depending on the situation?

Kamikubo: Yes. But the diagnosis was, "It will be fine as it is if you keep it clean and wash it," so I had the staples removed after about 10 to 12 days.

— On that day, immediately after returning from the hospital to the hotel, I did not hear any negative words; you were already focused on what was next. How do you view the defeat now that you have returned home and some time has passed?

Kamikubo: I think it was a fight I could have won. Looking back at the footage many times, there are many things I did that were wasteful. Even in situations where I was broken up in the third round, or in recent fights and training where I thought "this way is better," it changed

Even if people misunderstand, well, that's how it is. Because I was taking elbows, I thought that going for a kind of back take—which I have built up a high win rate with—was higher in priority for my MMA than it had been before. Even though it wasn't something that would automatically lead to taking the back. Taking the back is a fundamental aspect of MMA, so I have to rethink that. That is an area that needs reconsideration.

— In your first LFA match, you won by twister, and in your second, you won by rear-naked choke from a body triangle for consecutive submission victories, but...

Kamikubo: Mr. Isono says that I have a certain way of winning, and there are expectations from those around me, and fighters can feel bound by the words spoken in interviews. Therefore, one must not be bound by that. To be evaluated as a "finisher" and to be "pulled along" by expectations—that is something I have always been told not to do. The fact that it manifested in the most critical moment is probably because I was "pulled along" by it.

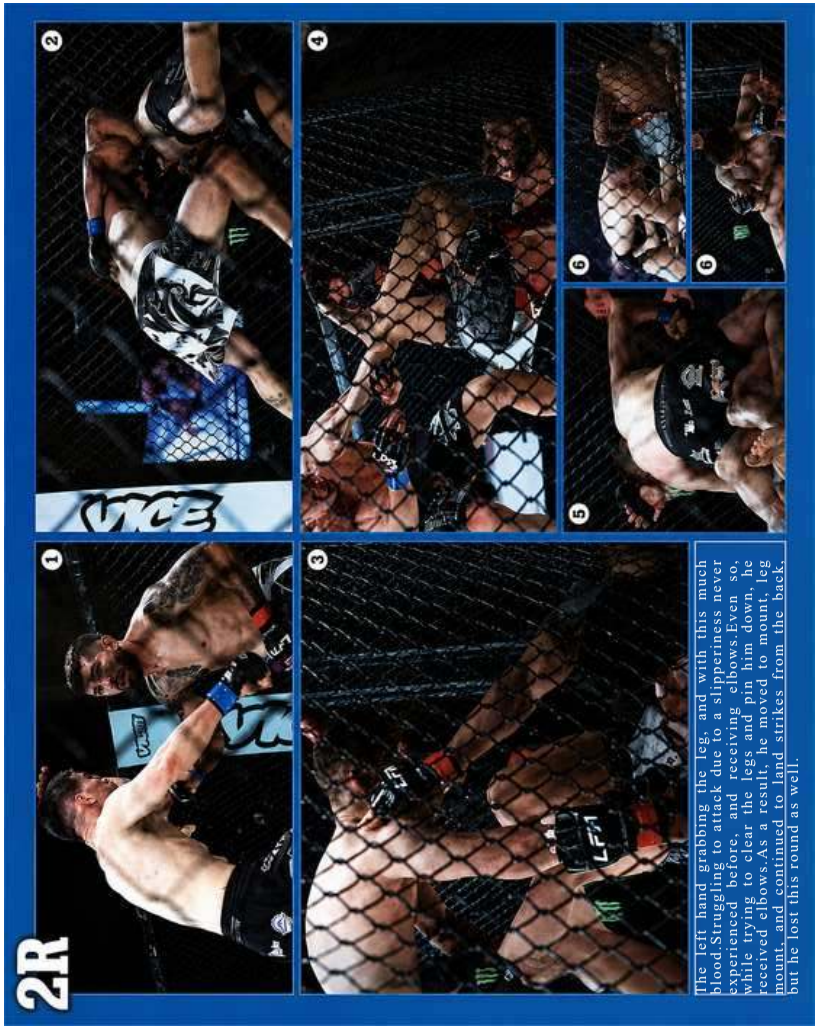
— Is it true that the break in the third round was due to you having his back? Also, is it true that Murisha wasn't moving?

Kamikubo: That was my third match, and it wasn't my second match either. I think it was a reaction from my opponent. With three minutes remaining, I knew that in that state, because of the blood, it would be slippery, so I didn't go for the hook on the outside immediately... I attempted it once. It didn't lead to a position where I could aim for an RNC due to the blood being slippery. Even when considering developments from that position, it was slippery due to the blood, so I thought I would adjust and wear him down.

— Resistance from Murisha, who allowed the back take.

Kamikubo: Yes. It became a grip fight. If I could win the grip fight, I could have secured the choke. However, it was just too slippery (bitter smile). Because of the blood, I couldn't get into a good position.

"If I lose my axis, it doesn't lead to a finish. If it doesn't lead to a finish, it doesn't lead to victory. The finish exists within the process of working toward victory."



Even so, it doesn't close with the same grip. So, rather than grabbing the shoulder and stopping, I enter the RNC grip in one motion, pulling with a palm-to-palm grip. It cannot be finished just by squeezing. Because there was no time left, I was in a situation where it wouldn't be easy to get.

— What about the choice of [not finishing]?

Kamikubo: I intended to deal damage by striking, and if I could, I would take the twister. If I couldn't, I thought I could secure the arm. If I was striking and either of those became available, I would take it, but the break was called.

— That break was sudden. It seems like it wasn't seen as control or damage. Well, I'm not convinced, but...

Kamikubo: In the first place, during the rules meeting, it was said that "basically, breaks are not called." If you are going to call one, you should give a verbal warning, "Action," to encourage movement before calling it.

— When you heard the voice saying "Action," was that from the referee?

Kamikubo: I don't think it was called while I was fighting. I don't think so. There were some comments suggesting that [the referee] might have explained it during the interval, but that was just during the interval. Even if "Action" was called in that situation, I don't think it was. If it had been called, I wasn't in a position to judge against my opponent. Regardless, I thought, "Why?" when the break was called. If I had switched my mindset immediately there, those doubts would have been superfluous emotions.

— Well, looking at it again, was that break that dramatic? And also, the quality of Kamikubo's back control suddenly dropped like that. That's why I think, "There shouldn't have been an abrupt break." At the same time, I'm thinking about what to do for the future, and if it's important to be a finisher, isn't it important to finish from the top or back instead of just punching?

Kamikubo: I am a finisher myself, I pride myself on that. But in that situation, I was pulled into a break, wasn't I? At the same time, if I had gone for a finish immediately after taking the top position, perhaps I wouldn't have been broken. Looking at the footage, "Taking the top position and finishing" is a very correct thing for a match. (Bitter smile). If you are going to fight in RIZIN, you have to fight Danny Sabatello, and if you are in the UFC, you have to be a finisher, not just a fighter. However, even if you aren't in the UFC, you have to be a finisher.

I must keep that in mind. The goal of a fighter is not just to win; if you don't aim for a finish, you might not get a call from the UFC.

Kamikubo: Hmm. But, in the end, that's what it is. I am expected to put on a good-looking fight that leads to a win, but I also end up shifting the axis of how I fight. If I skip the process of positioning and go straight for the finish, I lose my strength as a fighter. However, in this match, the route I took to get the finish was to attack from the top. I had polished that, and I was responding to what Mr. Isono asked of me. I thought that going for the finish was the clean way to end the fight, but I was "pulled along" into the break. The method I was asked to use was not to attack from the top to get a submission, but to pound him out. Whether that was the right route depended on the situation, but the reason I couldn't secure the win was because I lacked preparation. My grip on the technique wasn't clear, and my approach became half-hearted.

— If the route becomes clear, can you also take other means?

Kamikubo: I think so. My own axis was shaky. The UFC expects me to be a finisher, and the LFA also expects me to get results. But, "to do what I have been seeking and produce results" is

Engaged, dived under the armpits, and took the back. Used the cage. Brought it into a submission grappling situation. Prevented Murisha's attempts to lock up the legs. Took the back and struck. Kamikubo, having secured a body triangle with his foot hooked on the outside rather than on the inside, looked like he was doing everything right and seemed on the verge of a comeback victory, but He shifted his hips and rained down heavy punches on the motionless Murisha. After the match, Murisha stated, "I wasn't tired. I was staying still and waiting for my chance." That chance arrived via the referee's break. It is understandable that [Kamikubo] could not immediately switch his mind and focus; that was the kind of break it was.

and I think that is what I regret the least.

— It is not about the finishes that were evaluated in the past two matches, but a different way of finishing. What did Kamikubo gain from this defeat?

Kamikubo: If I lose my axis, it doesn't lead to a finish. If it doesn't lead to a finish, it doesn't lead to victory. The finish exists within the process of working toward victory. I fought in a way that would allow me to win on points, and against the [The opponent] offered me an opportunity for a finish. Even though I went for it, it was off from what I had done before. My own stamina was drained, and the opponent's stamina was also being depleted, and I was in a situation where I could have taken the back by jumping into it when he was compromised [in his joints/movements].

I went for the back in a situation where we were battling it out, but my axis was shaking. This is what I learned from a match that went this far, Kamikubo said.

That is indeed the truth. But in reality, moving in a direction that spoils the essence of MMA is absolute.

Kamikubo: Fighters who can skip steps and take finishes cleanly are amazing. But to be a fighter with talent that surpasses mine, it is essential to win against powerful opponents and make them reach a finish. The process of creating that situation is what's important. It's where the truly skilled people stand out. However, since the audience demands that, I think that is what it has become.

— The people watching are living stressful daily lives, and they are watching MMA to liberate themselves. There is no need for them to get close to the essence of the fight or the fighter's state of mind, right?

Kamikubo: That is the case. Fighters who excel at striking are attractive, and for me, being a fighter who can secure a position and pound them out is something I do not even think about. But, they are attractive because there are fighters like that [who can finish]. Even if I am not that kind of fighter, I need to be a fighter who is needed. First, I have to keep being needed by the LFA. It is the first time in my career that a promotion has thought of me this way.

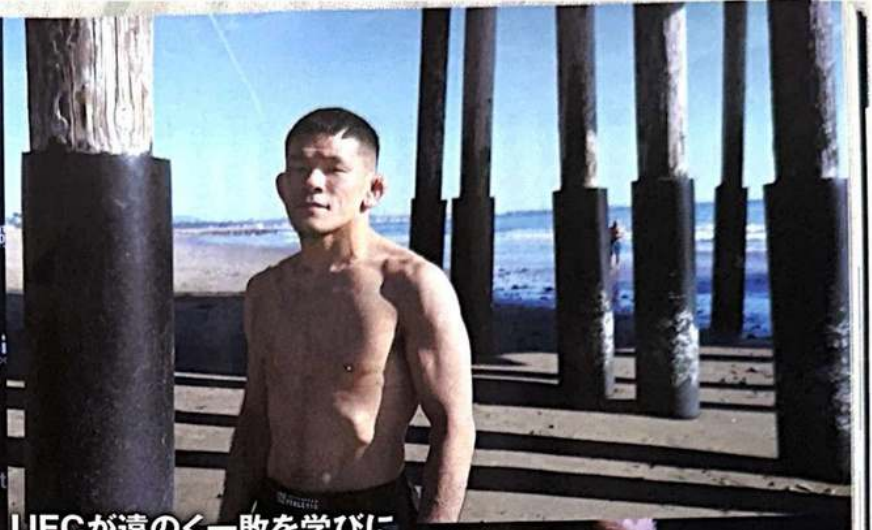
— Indeed, that is correct (laughs).

Kamikubo: I haven't been fighting for just one promotion in Japan, and after I lost at ROAD TO UFC, I didn't know where to build my career in Japan. I had nowhere to return to. That was the way I was building my career, but Ed Soares always evaluated my match content. It feels like I finally have a home base, so I want to do my best at LFA.

— With that mindset, how are you thinking about your next steps?

Kamikubo: Regarding this last match, the conditioning went well, but I felt I could improve things like the meals on-site. So, I would like to have two more matches by the summer of this year. There are many roster changes in LFA. Therefore, there are many rankings fluctuations. I think I can return to a position of two or three consecutive wins or better from here without losing, so I want to fight as much as possible.

This interview once again made it clear just how calm Mr. Gen Isono is and how keen his eye for competition really is. He is a master of tremendous tactical insight. And then there is Kamikubo's deep trust in Mr. Isono. Prioritizing control, prioritizing the finish—in the business of MMA, this flow is unavoidable. Meanwhile, amid the backdrop of a fight where boos arise, in order to win the match—in order to conquer the opponent—what was Kamikubo thinking, and how did he fight? I would like you to keep even a little of what Kamikubo said in your heart. Here, the truth of MMA and the way of life of an MMA fighter exist.



LFA 3戦目で判定負け。UFCが遠のく一敗を学びに

2月28日　LFA227 @カリフォルニア州ベンチュラ
ベンチュラ・カントリー・イベンツセンター
<バンタム級／5分3R>
ハファエル・ド・ナシメント（ブラジル）
Def.3-0: 30-27,30-27,30-27,
上久保周哉（日本）

変わる裁定基準とMMA そして、不変の上久保周哉

「やってきたことを出し合う勝負の状況で、僕の軸はブレていた」

2月28日、カリフォルニア州ベンチュラで開催されたLFA227。そのメインではムリシャことハファエル・ド・ナシメントと対戦した上久保周哉が、判定負けを喫した。昨年2月のLFA参戦以来、ツイスター、RNCと連続一本勝ちをしてきた上久保が喫した手痛い一敗。2Rを落とし、3Rには不可解なブレイクがあった。それもMMAの変化が関係している。ダメージ重視というなかで、打撃で勝つタイプでなく、じっくりと相手を削ることで勝利を得てきた上久保は、2試合連続のフィニッシュ勝利で、「自分の軸を失っていた」と敗北を振り返った。

取材・文・撮影＿高島 学
text&photo=Manabu Takashima

写真＿磯野 元　MMAPLANET
Photo=Gen Isono, MMAPLANET

Shuya Kamikubo

1993年4月12日、神奈川県横浜市出身
身長165.1cm、体重61.2kg
戦績 20戦16勝3敗1分
頂柔術/TRY H Studio所属

――試合から3週間、ベンチュラの病院で治療を受け医療用ホッチキスで8針縫った状態で帰国となりました。今、傷の具合はいかがですか。

上久保　治療を受けた時は出血が残っていたのでガーゼを当てて包帯でグルグル巻きになっていましたけど、帰国する時にはほぼ血は止まっていました。ばい菌が入るのが怖かったので包帯を巻いたまま飛行機に乗っただけで、カットした箇所の痛みはなかったです。

――あれだけの大きなカットで、痛みがないモノなのですか？

上久保　磯野（元。頂柔術代表）さんからは、痛みを感じないのはおかしいと言われています（笑）。

――帰国して、日本のお医者さんに診てもらいましたか。

上久保　ハイ。場合によっては日本で縫合し直した方が良いのかとも思ったので。でも『このままで大丈夫』ということでした。しっかりと頭を洗って、清潔さを保って10日から2週間で針を抜くという診断でした。結果、2週間ぐらいで抜いてもらいました。

――あの日、病院からホテルに戻ってきた直後も全くモチベーションが下がることはなく、次に向けてポジティブな言葉が聞かれました。改めて今回の敗北に関して、帰国して時間が経った状態でどのように捉えていますか。

上久保　勝てた試合だったとは、映像を何度も見返して思っています。それだけに勿体ないことをしてしまったなというのはありますね。できたことがいっぱいあるし、3Rにブレイクされた場面であっても、最近の自分の試合や練習で「こうした方が良い」と思っていた部分でも、変

会場入りした時の服すら手に持つことなく、セコンドの磯野氏とともに救急車に乗せられ、病院に向かった。

これだけのカットがあったとは……。

えていった方が良いところはあります。試合前に、それができていればなと……。エド・ソアレス（LFAのCEO）から「LFAは勝ちと負けでなく、勝ちと学びの場所だ」と言ってもらったので、僕はコレを学びにしないといけないです。LFA三戦目で敗北を経験しましたけど、これを学びにすれば次から二連勝、三連勝と急いで巻き返すことができる。結果としては負けたけど、逆に自信をつけることができた部分もあるし、外に出て勝負をしにいくことの意味が改めて確認できました。

――変えて行った方が良い点。つまりは修正すべき点が見つかったということかと思いますが、試合の撮影をしていて打撃の受け方、その見た目の印象が悪いと感じました。ダメージはないのに勿体ないと。

上久保　僕の受け方は良くないですね。それは股関節の手術をしても、今も残る悪い部分が関係しています。立ち方のバランスが安定していない。それにしても見栄えは良くない。相手にケージを背負合わせるという部分では空間は支配できていたと思うんですけど、ドライブする幅であったり、課題は残りました。それと今回は対戦相手も組みで勝負してくると思っていたので、向こうから組んでくるという想定もしていました。僕が組んだ後に、向こうから仕掛けてくるとか。今から思うと、そこを必要以上に警戒し過ぎたのかと。テイクダウンをしてから余裕をもってポジションを取りに行けるだけの力の差は試合中も感じていたのに。

――難しいですよね。警戒してないと、ダメだったかもしれないですし。

上久保　そうなんですよ。警戒するから上手くいく部分もあるので。ただ、今回に関しては警戒し過ぎました。練習なら攻めている部分でも、行かなかった。それは勿体なかったです。組み技で優っているという確信が持てなかったのも事実で。勝っているのか、誘われているのか。その判断がつかなかったので、警戒し過ぎてしまいました。

――ムリシャは過去の試合で、積極的に一本を取りに行くファイターだったので致し方ないかと。

上久保　もっと積極的に組んでいるし、カウンターでも取りに行っている。それは11勝のうち9度のフィニッシュというレコードに表れているから、勝負に来ると思っていました。相手を大きく見過ぎていたのか。もしくは自分を信じ切れていなかったのか。そこに関しては、後悔が残っています。

――ムリシャは下になっても、立ちあがったり、ポジションを取り返したりということではなく、背中をつけてヒジを頭に入れることでダメージを与えるという印象点を取りに来ていました。頭の位置がいつもより低く、ヒジを受けてしまったように見えました。どのような理由で、低めに頭を置いていたのですか。

上久保　過去の試合で見たムリシャのアームロックが頭に残っていて。それこそギロチン、ニンジャ、ダースを極めていました。ですので、まずは足を封じた方が安全だと思って。頭を高くするよりも、足を崩した方が楽だという風に考えてしまっていました。映像を見返すと、頭を上げた方が良いポジションを取れていたと思います。同時に練習でも、足を束ねて一度抑えてから上がっていたのに、本来はやらないといけないことをするのが遅れました。

――相手の仕掛けを警戒し過ぎたというのが、そこですね。

上久保　普段の練習でアームロックなんて極められることはないのに。僕が磯野さんに習ってきた柔術はそういうものではない。後手に回った相手のカウンターの仕掛けには、対応できるようになっていたのに。

――打撃を受けたこともあり1Rは落としました。2Rはどのように挽回しようと考えていましたか。

上久保　頭の位置を変えて、高い位置で抑える。バックに回って殴り、明確にポイントを取ることでした。

――上久保選手のパンチが当たり、相手は相当にバテていました。ただ、あの下からのエルボーを多用してスクランブルしない。結果的にジャッジは3者とも2Rをムリシャとした。立ちあがらず、仕掛けもない選手のエルボーが評価されるなら、なかなかMMAとして厳しいと感じました。が、ここも割り切りが必要なのかもしれないですね。

1R

①ダウンをしているわけでなくて、ここまでバランスを崩す。印象が悪くなるのも致し方ない。②シングルからテイクダウン狙いに、ムリシャがニンジャチョークを仕掛けるが上久保はしっかりと対処。③テイクダウンを奪い、トップから削っていたが初回は落とした。

上久保　現場では磯野さんから「多分……微妙ではあるけど、落としている可能性は全然あるから。ここも取られたと思って、3Rは攻めて行こう」と言われていました。

――磯野さんは本当に、冷静に試合を見ることができるのですね。2Rを取られたと思えるとは……。

上久保　スタンドの打撃に関しては五分五分だったと思います。でもテイクダウンを狙って、組んでドライブしたなかで頭から金網に突っ込んでカットしました。

――カットはケージサイドにいても、いつだったか分からなかったです。だから打撃が擦れてカットしたのかと。そこにエルボーを受けるわけで、印象点が悪くなったといえばそうなのかもしれないですね。

上久保　あの後もポジショニングに関しては、安定して取れていました。ただ血で滑って抑え込みきれなくて、蹴り上げで印象点を持っていかれたかというのはあります。

――あぁ、確かに。蹴り上げを顔面に受けていました。

上久保　足を触っていても、血で滑って捌けない。ここはもう練習のしようがなかったですね。汗の滑りと、血の滑りは全く別物でした。ぬめりが違うというか。経験したことがないので、どうしたら良いかと……。

――ジェルで近いモノを創る必要があるかもしれないですね（苦笑）。

上久保　ジェルとか、ワセリンをめちゃくちゃ塗ってもらうとか。滑るモノに対してどうすれば良いのか。そこに関して、自分の攻撃手段は幅が少なかったです。

――立ちあがり際にバックという展開に持ち込めなかったですね。

上久保　もう向こうは立つことを捨てていましたね。下からダメージ点を取れば、どれだけ寝技で圧倒されていてもラウンドは取れる。そういう感覚だったのだと思います。

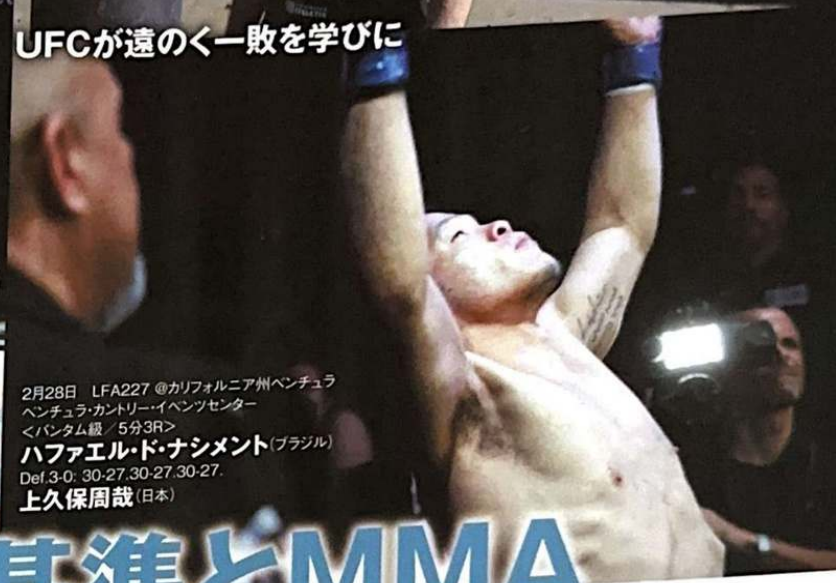
――パスをして、マウントを取り、バックも取った。そして殴った。でも、ポイントは落とした。

上久保　正直、ダメージという部分に関して五分か五分以上、ポジションも取ったし攻め込んだ。正直、映像を見返すと感覚として2Rは取ったかと思います。これで取れないのは厳しいなぁって。ただ指摘されたように、あのカットが相手の攻撃だと思われると……。僕自身、相手の攻撃だけど、何だったんだろうって感じだったので。それが貰ったダメージで、記憶が飛んだのかと。

――あぁ、そういう気持ちになってしまうのですね。

上久保　僕自身、戦っている時はポジショニングは圧倒しても、あの流血でダメージを取られたと思っていました。エルボーでカットしたとジ

LFA 3戦目で判定負け。UFCが遠のく一敗を学びに



2月28日　LFA227 @カリフォルニア州ベンチュラ
ベンチュラ・カントリー・イベンツセンター
<バンタム級／5分3R>
ハファエル・ド・ナシメント（ブラジル）
Def.3-0: 30-27,30-27,30-27.
上久保周哉（日本）

変わる裁定基準とMMA そして、不変の上久保周哉

「やってきたことを出し合う勝負の状況で、僕の軸はブレていた」

2月28日、カリフォルニア州ベンチュラで開催されたLFA227。そのメインではムリシャことハファエル・ド・ナシメントと対戦した上久保周哉が、判定負けを喫した。昨年2月のLFA参戦以来、ツイスター、RNCと連続一本勝ちをしてきた上久保が喫した手痛い一敗。2Rを落とし、3Rには不可解なブレイクがあった。それもMMAの変化が関係している。ダメージ重視というなかで、打撃で勝つタイプでなく、じっくりと相手を削ることで勝利を得てきた上久保は、2試合連続のフィニッシュ勝利で、「自分の軸を失っていた」と敗北を振り返った。

取材・文・撮影＿高島 学
text&photo=Manabu Takashima

写真＿磯野 元　MMAPLANET
Photo=Gen Isono, MMAPLANET

Shuya Kamikubo

1993年4月12日、神奈川県横浜市出身
身長165.1cm、体重61.2kg
戦績 20戦16勝3敗1分
頂柔術/TRY H Studio所属

――試合から3週間、ベンチュラの病院で治療を受け医療用ホッチキスで8針縫った状態で帰国となりました。今、傷の具合はいかがですか。

上久保　治療を受けた時は出血が残っていたのでガーゼを当てて包帯でグルグル巻きになっていましたけど、帰国する時にはほぼ血は止まっていました。ばい菌が入るのが怖かったので包帯を巻いたまま飛行機に乗っただけで、カットした箇所の痛みはなかったです。

――あれだけの大きなカットで、痛みがないモノなのですか？

上久保　磯野（元。頂柔術代表）さんからは、痛みを感じないのはおかしいと言われています（笑）。

――帰国して、日本のお医者さんに診てもらいましたか。

上久保　ハイ。場合によっては日本で縫合し直した方が良いのかとも思ったので。でも『このままで大丈夫』ということでした。しっかりと頭を洗って、清潔さを保って10日から2週間で針を抜くという診断でした。結果、2週間ぐらいで抜いてもらいました。

――あの日、病院からホテルに戻ってきた直後も全くモチベーションが下がることはなく、次に向けてポジティブな言葉が聞かれました。改めて今回の敗北に関して、帰国して時間が経った状態でどのように捉えていますか。

上久保　勝てた試合だったとは、映像を何度も見返して思っています。それだけに勿体ないことをしてしまったなというのはありますね。できたことがいっぱいあるし、3Rにブレイクされた場面であっても、最近の自分の試合や練習で「こうした方が良い」と思っていた部分でも、変

ヤツジが勘違いしても、まぁしょうがないですよね。そう思われるほど、僕はエルボーを貰っていたので。それよりも、ある種バックを取りに行った方が、勝率が高いと思っていた。僕がこれまで積み上げてきたMMAは、それほどバックの優先順位は高くなかったのに。バックは取れたら取るモノで、取りに行くモノじゃない。それが僕のなかのMMAの基本でした。それなのにバックを取ろうとしていた。そこは考え直さないといけない部分です。

――LFAの初戦は、オタツからのツイスター。そして第2戦はボディトライアングルからのRNCで連続一本勝ちでしたが……。

上久保 磯野さんから「この2試合の勝ち方があるし、周りの期待もある。その期待に対し、インタビューで口にした言葉に選手は縛られてしまうことがある。だから、そこに縛られてはいけない。フィニッシャーだと評価され、期待されている部分に無意識化で引っ張られる」ということは、常に言われていたことなんです。僕もそうならないようにしていたのに、一番大切なところで出たということは、やっぱり引っ張られていたんだろうなって。

――それが3Rにブレイクが掛かったバックポジションだということですか？　ムリシャは動かず、ブレイク待ちだったのも確かですね。これが初戦でもなく、2戦目でもない。3戦目の対戦相手の反応なのかと思いました。

上久保 しっかりと研究はしていたのでしょうね。あの状態になった時で、残り3分を切っていました。ここも血で滑るから、いきなりオタツロックに行かずに外側へのフックには、リストを取るということでした。

上久保 ハイ。グリップファイトになっていました。グリップファイトに勝てればチョークが取れる。でも、いかんせん滑りました（苦笑）。血で滑るから良い位置が取れない。ワンハンドにしても、同じで取り切れない。だから一度肩を掴んで止めてからクラッチを組むのではなくて、一度の動作でRNグリップに入る。それかバームトゥバームで引っ張り切らないと絞めることできない。でも、そんな風に簡単には取れないし。

――時間がなくなってくるなかでの選択というのは？

上久保 殴ってダメージを与え、集中力をグリップファイトから削ぐことでした。なので外フックのまま、バウンドで削ろうと。焦れて正面を向いてきたらツイスター。取れなくても、腕を潜ることができればトップが取れる。そのどちらかと思って殴っていたら、ブレイクが掛かってしまいました。

――あのブレイクは唖然としたのですが、コントロールでダメージとして見なされてない点もあったようです。まぁ、納得できないですが。

上久保 そもそもルールミーティングの時に「基本的にブレイクは掛けない」と言っていて。掛けるとすれば、その前にアクションと声を掛けて、動くことを促すと。

――「アクション」という声は、レフェリーは掛けていなかったかと思います。

上久保 戦っている時は、その声は聞いていないです。映像で見ても、多分言っていないですよね。

――インターバルの時に、そのようなことがあると説明をしているのではないかという意見もありました。

上久保 いやインターバルの時に、レフェリーがそういうことは言っていないです。仮にあの場面で「アクション」が掛かっても、それは僕が言われているのか。相手に対してなのか、あの時は判断できていなかったと思います。ともあれ、いきなりブレイクが掛かって「なんで？」と思ってしまった。あそこで、すぐに気持ちと頭を切り替えていれば……と。あの疑問は、余分な感情でしたね。

――いやぁ、改めてMMAとはそこまで壮絶なのかと。そして、あのブレイクが上久保選手の質量は一気に落ちたように見えました。だからこそ、「いきなりのブレイクはない」と今でも思っています。と同時に結果論と、今後のことを考えるとバックを膠着とされるなら、トップに切りかえて殴ることが大切なのかと。

上久保 僕自身、自認はフィニッシャーではないから。でもフィニッシュに引っ張られていましたね。同時にあの状況でブレイクが掛かるなら、トップをすぐに取りに行ってバウンドを落としていれば、フィニッシュに至ったかもしれない。映像を見返して、「ここでトップを取っておけば」というのは凄く思います（苦笑）。

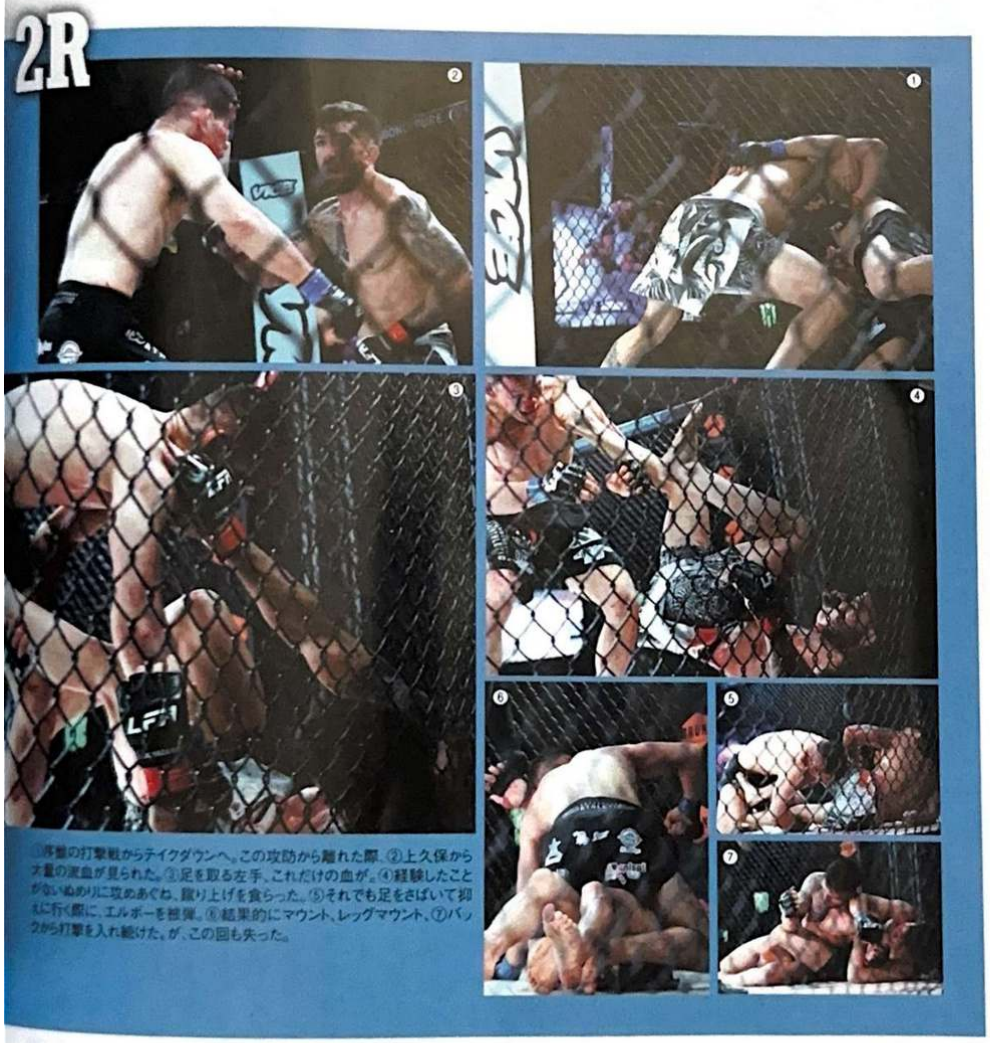
――一つ一つの試合に勝つ。それは本当に正しいことです。上久保選手がRIZINでダニー・サバテロと戦うだとか、UFCと契約しているなら。ただし、UFCに引っかからないといけないのであれば、フィニッシャーでなくても、フィニッシュ

「軸をぶらしてしまうとフィニッシュにつながらない。フィニッシュに繋がらないことは勝利にもつながらない。勝ちに行く過程の中にフィニッシュが存在している」

一旦はしました。血で滑ってRNCを狙う位置にならない。オタツロックからの展開を考えても、血で滑るだろうと思って。修正しながら、削っていこうと。

――バックを許したムリシャの抵抗

2R



①序盤の打撃戦からテイクダウンへ。この攻防から離れた際、②上久保から大量の流血が見られた。③足を取る左手、これだけの血が。④経験したことがないぬめりに攻めあぐね、膝り上げを食らった。⑤それでも足をさばいて抑えに行く際に、エルボーを被弾。⑥結果的にマウント、レッグマウント、⑦バックから打撃を入れ続けた、が、この回も失った。

は頭に入れないといけない。ストライカーになるわけではなく、上久保周哉の寝技の到達点はフィニッシュとしないと。勝ってもUFCから声が掛からないかもしれないです。

上久保　う〜ん。でも、やっぱり勝たないと。フィニッシュは求められるし、見栄えの良い試合を求められるのでしょうけど。僕の戦い方の軸をずらしてしまっては、勝利につながらなくなる。ポジショニングの概念、途中経過を飛ばして一気に取りに行くべきなのか。僕がそれをしてしまうと、選手としての強みがなくなるし。ただし、今回の試合のようになった時、あの局面で僕がフィニッシュを取りに行くルートは、バックじゃないんですよ。トップから攻めるべき。やっぱり、そこを磨いていくことを僕は磯野さんに求められて、応えてきたのに。ここ最近の綺麗に取りに行けていたことはラッキーであって、僕自身の試合じゃないと思っていたけど……。でも無意識に引っ張られていった形が、レフェリーにブレイクされた。僕が取るべき手段は、バックではなく磯野さんと求めてきたトップからの攻めだった。それがサブミッションなのか、バウンドアウトなのかは状況次第だけど。勝ちに行くルートを定めきれていなかったのは、僕自身の準備不足。取り組みが足らなかったです。

――ルートが明確になると、別にルートを離れる手段も取れる？　明確でないから、中途半端になる？

上久保　そうなると思います。僕自身の軸がぶれていた。UFCに行くためにはフィニッシュが求められ、LFAも僕をフィニッシャーだと思っている。でも、僕が求めてきたことを迷いなく実行して成果を出すことと。それが一番後悔しないことだと思います。

――過去2戦の評価されたフィニッシュではなく。違うフィニッシュの仕方が上久保周哉にはあると。

上久保　今回の敗北で得られたことは、軸をぶらしてしまうとフィニッシュにつながらない。フィニッシュにつながらないことは、勝利にもつながらない。しっかり勝ちに行く過程の中に、フィニッシュが存在している。判定勝ちできる戦いをし、相手がフィニッシュの機会を差し出してくれる。それなのに相手が差し出す前に、取りに行った。これまでやって来たこととズレていました。自分も相手もスタミナが削られて、足関節で誤魔化された時、本来はトップを取れる状態だったのに、一足飛びでバックに行った。やってきたことを出し合う勝負の状況で、僕の軸はブレていた。そういうことを学ぶことができた試合になりました。

――ここまで上久保選手が話してくれたことこそが、MMAの真実で。でも実際には、そのMMAの本質をスポイルする方向に今のMMAが向かっているのは絶対です。

上久保　手順を飛ばしてスパッと取れる選手は凄いです。でも僕のような秀でた才能のない選手が、自分より実力のある選手たちに勝つには、相手がフィニッシュさせてくれるように差し出す。その状況にする過程が大切で。そこに尽きます。でも秀でた人が目立つから、皆がそれを求めるようになっていると思います。

――見ている人は日々ストレスのある生活をしていて、自分を解放するためにMMAを見る。何も戦いの本質とか、戦う選手の心情に寄りそう必要はないわけですしね。

上久保　そういうことですよね。打撃に秀でた選手は魅力的だし。僕からするとポジションをしっかりとって、思い切りバウンドアウトできる選手や思いもしないところから一本が取れる選手も魅力的です。でも、彼らが魅力的なのは僕のような選手がいるからで。一番に求められる選手でなくても、必要とされる選手。まずはLFAに必要とされる選手であり続けないといけないです。僕のキャリアで、団体が大事に思ってくれるのは初めてなので。

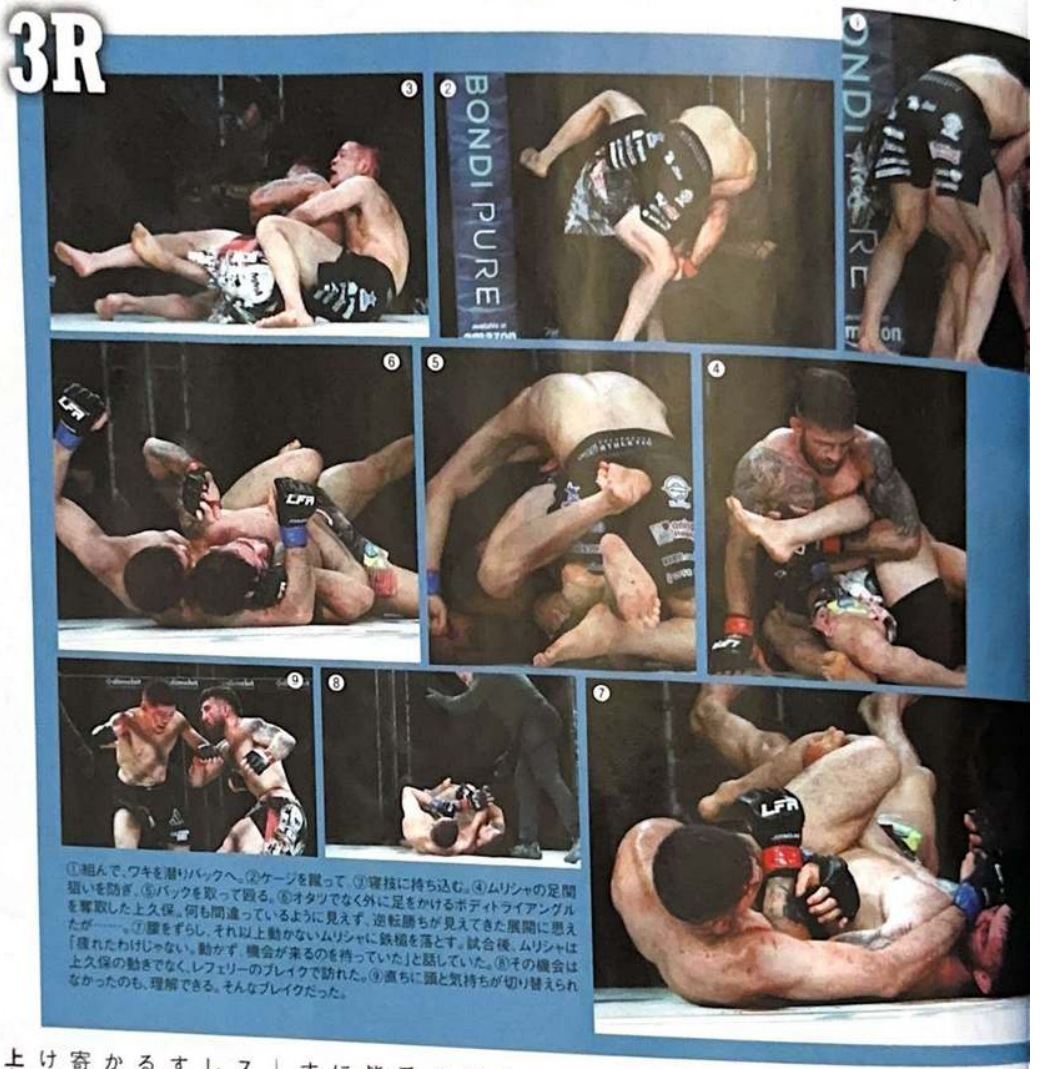
――まさに、その通りかと（笑）。

上久保　僕は日本でも一つのプロモーションで戦い続けていたわけじゃないし、ROAD TO UFCで負けた後、日本のどこでキャリアを積み直せば良いのか分からなかったです。帰る場所がなかった。それが僕のキャリアの積み方だったけど、エド・ソアレスはいつも僕の試合内容を評価してくれます。初めてホームができた感じで、しっかりとLFAで頑張ろうと思います。

――そのような気持ちのなかで、次はどのように考えていますか。

上久保　今回の試合に関して、コンディション創りは上手く行きましたけど、現地での食事面なんかはもっと改善できるように感じました。そこを改善して、今年のうちに2連勝をする。ですので夏までに1試合、戦いたいと思います。ここで1度こけたけど、LFAは選手の入れ替わりが多い。だからランキングがないここから2連勝、3連勝すれば負ける前まで、それ以上の位置に戻ってこられるのでガンガン試合をしたいと思います。

3R



①組んで、ワキを潜りバックへ。②ケージを背って、③寝技に持ち込む。④ムリシャの足関狙いを防ぎ、⑤バックを取って回る。⑥オタツでなく外に足をかけるボディトライアングルを奪取した上久保。何も間違っているように見えず、逆転勝ちが見えてきた展開に思え「痛たわけじゃない。動かず、機会が来るのを待っていた」と話していた。⑧その機会は上久保の動きでなく、レフェリーのブレイクで訪れた。⑨直ちに頭と気持ちが切り替えられなかったのも、理解できる。そんなブレイクだった。

今回のインタビュー、改めて磯野元氏がいかに冷静で、勝負を見る目を持っているのかが理解できた。凄まじい戦術眼の持ち主だ。そして上久保の磯野氏への信頼感。コントール軽視、フィニッシュ至上。MMAをビジネスとするためにこの流れは抑えられない。その一方で、ブーイングが起こる展開のなかで、試合に勝つために――。対戦相手を倒すために――。上久保が何を考え、どのように戦ってきたのか。上久保が話したことを少しでも心に留めて欲しい。ここにMMAの真実、MMAファイターの生き様が存在している。

Miscellaneous pictures of Mr. Nascimento's LFA 227 victory - February 2026

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