

Realistic Combatives Training Part 1

Pre-fight

Why is Bruce Lee Famous? Was he a great fighter? Is he famous because he was a great martial arts teacher or because he founded Jeet Kun Do? While many of these things are undoubtedly true, none of them explain why his name is a household word. The truth is that Bruce Lee is famous because he was a movie star. If he had never starred in a movie, most people would never have heard of him, no matter how great a martial artist and teacher he was, no matter how great a fighter. In America we have chosen our martial arts icons not by their fighting ability, but by their entertainment ability. Is Steven Seagal a great fighter, or Jean Claude VanDamm, Patrick Swayze? He looked pretty tough in "Road House".

Compare those names to Royce Gracie, Randy Couture or Tito Ortiz, all of whom are famous for their actual fighting abilities in Mixed Martial Arts competition. That is not to even mention the thousands of Soldiers who have fought in life or death situations who will never be famous.

Helio Gracie began fighting challenge fights at 17, defeating a boxer named Antonio Portugal in only thirty seconds. At only 135lbs, he reigned as the no holds bared fighting champion of Brazil until he was 47 years old. During this time he lost only twice, once to the twelve time open weight Judo champion of Japan Masahiko Kimura, and once in a three hour and forty minute battle to his former student Waldemar Santana, both of whom outweighed him by over eighty pounds.

Other members of the Gracie family carried the tradition of challenge matches forward and as they did, the techniques of their system were shaped by the demands of arena fighting.

In 1989 an article entitled *Bad*¹ was published in Playboy Magazine That essentially told the world about the Gracie family history of fighting challenge matches and about Helio Gracie, his oldest son Rorion and how he had issued a challenge "to fight anyone in the United States, winner take all, for \$100,000". Rorion had made somewhat of a name for himself around the martial arts community by selling videotapes, titled *Gracies in Action*, of his family and some of their students fighting against practitioners of various other martial arts. Eventually Rorion teamed with a promoter and created the first "Ultimate Fighting Championship".

The idea behind the first few UFCs was to pit practitioners of various martial arts against each other, with as few rules as possible, in order to see which arts were the most effective.

Today, as you watch the first UFC, I want you to think about how many of the people involved had any idea what was going to happen when the fights started. Don't look only at the fighters, but also at the referee, the announcers, etc. Decide for yourself what they really knew about fighting.

Post-fight

¹ **Bad**, Playboy article, vol. 36, no. 9 - September 1989 By Pat Jordan

Before the fight I asked you to decide for your selves how many of the people involved had any idea what was going to actually happen. Now, how many of the fighters do you think had realistic training for this type of event? Obviously Royce did, but whom else? Gerard Depardieu had realistic standup fighting skills but when the fight went to the ground he was clueless. Ken Shamrock had pretty realistic skills but in pancrase, which is where he got his training, chokes were not allowed. This unreality in his training became operant against Royce. We can actually rate how realistic the fighter's training was by the results in the arena.

This is the real lesson of the early UFCs. Not that ground grappling is a superior form of fighting, not that Royce was the toughest man on the planet, simply that if you want to have realistic abilities, you must train realistically. The more realistic the training, the more realistic will be the results.