

Realistic Combatives Training Part 4

Today we are going to watch modern Mixed Martial Arts fighting. There are a few things that are important to understand. First is that there are now many more rules than in the earliest shows. This happened as an unavoidable result of being a spectator sport. Like all spectator sports the demands of safety and spectator appeal have driven these rule changes. After going over the time slot allotted for the show, the organizers were forced to implement time limits to the fights. With time limits came the need to declare a winner if no one had been submitted or knocked out and therefore judges were necessary. Time limits and judges change the entire nature of the fights. The fighters realized that they no longer had to win outright, but simply be ahead on the judges score cards when time expired. Stalling and using the clock soon became the norm. Of course stalling during ground grappling makes for a very boring show so the next step was to allow the referee to stand the fighters up when the action slowed. Of course this only increased the value of stalling as a tactic, especially for those with limited grappling skill who wanted the fight to be a striking match anyway.

There were several fights where stalling and having the referee stand the fighters up clearly changed the outcome of the fight so, in order to make the fights more exciting and eliminate the appearance of the referee being the deciding factor in the fight, five minute rounds were instituted. This meant that not only would the fighters get a little rest, therefore making for more action paced fights, but if a grappler managed to get his opponent down, he would only have a limited amount of time to finish the fight or the round would end and the next round would start again from the feet.

At the same time, several other rule changes were happening. In the first UFC, several of the fighters suffered broken hands from striking. In order to make striking more prevalent, and at the same time the fights more exiting, four ounce gloves were mandated. Since few American fighters new how to stand in the presence of an opponent, kicking a downed opponent was deemed too dangerous. Likewise, since many fighters didn't know how to defend against them head butts were outlawed.

With all of these rule changes, Mixed Martial Arts competition lost alot of its value as a test bed for effective fighting techniques. One thing, however, became clear. Every successful fighter had to be at least competent in the ground grappling of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, the takedowns and throws from Wrestling and Judo, and the striking skills from Boxing and Muay Thai.

It is important to understand the limitations that Mixed Martial Arts has as a test bed. Gloves protect your hands making striking more effective, the nature of the arena makes ground grappling more effective, and most importantly there are no weapons. But if we understand the limitations, there are still many lessons we can learn. Probably the most important is what sort of techniques people can actually make work with a fully resistant opponent.