

★
BELLATOR MMA™
PRESS KIT
★



★
ABOUT
BELLATOR
MMA
★

Bellator MMA™ was founded in 2008 and is one of the world's largest mixed martial arts (MMA) promotions. Bellator, which is the Latin word for "warrior," has a vision to enhance the fight business and offer the most exciting sporting events for fans and viewers across the globe, while featuring some of the top-athletes in the world. Bellator will uphold the value of the sport and its fighters, while uniting them like no other organization can with the goal of expanding and showcasing the personality and showmanship that makes MMA the most exciting sport in the world.

Bellator is currently available to nearly 1



billion people worldwide in over 160 countries. In the United States, Bellator can be seen on Paramount Network, the combat sports television leader.

In June of 2015 with Scott Coker serving as the company president, "Bellator 149" broke franchise records for ratings, peaking at more than 2.9 million viewers, making it one of the most watched MMA event on cable television in 2015.

2.2 million viewers tuned in for the final fight in Tito Ortiz's storied career, a first round submission victory over Chael Sonnen at Bellator 170. This marks the most watched Bellator fight on Spike since February of 2016 and the most watched MMA fight on television in 2017 thus far.

In June of 2017, Bellator hosted its second pay-per-view at Madison Square Garden in New York, a card that featured Chael Sonnen defeating Wanderlei Silva, Matt Mitrione besting Fedor Emelianenko and Ryan Bader capturing the light heavyweight title from Phil Davis.

In 2018, Bellator held its 200th event, and conducted a yearlong heavyweight grand prix, to crown a new heavyweight champion.

★
ABOUT
SCOTT
COKER
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Hired by Viacom in June of 2014, Scott Coker has stepped up to the task of leading Bellator in the proper direction. With more than 30 years promoting martial arts events, Coker is well known throughout the MMA industry as the founder and former CEO of Strikeforce MMA. His career in combat sports began as a student of acclaimed martial artist and fight choreographer Ernie Reyes Sr. Coker earned a 7th degree Taekwondo black belt and became an original member of Reyes' West Coast Demonstration Team. In March 1985, Coker promoted his first fight card, serving as the San Jose promoter for the Professional Karate Association (PKA), a regulatory body for kickboxing and karate competitions. Coker helped form the International Sports Karate Association (ISKA) in 1986 and served as a director of ISKA and later headed K-1 USA, an extension of the extremely popular Japanese-based K-1 kickboxing promotion. In 1992, Coker founded the kickboxing league, Strikeforce and struck a crucial deal with ESPN to air some of its cards. Strikeforce evolved into a mixed martial league in 2006, and its first MMA event featuring

a fight between Frank Shamrock and Cesar Gracie drew an astounding crowd of over 18,000 at the HP Pavilion in San Jose, which to this day remains a U.S. record for MMA attendance.



Strikeforce became home to the sport's biggest stars including Fabricio Werdum, Daniel Cormier, Ronda Rousey, Robbie Lawler, Luke Rockhold, 'Jacare' Souza, Gilbert Milendez, Frank Shamrock, Cung Le, Nick Diaz, Fedor Emilianenko, Dan Henderson, Alistair Overeem, Clay Guida, Gina Carano, Jason Miller and Nate Marquardt. In April 2008, Coker increased Strikeforce's media presence by striking a deal with NBC to air the half-hour highlight program, "Strikeforce on NBC," hosted by Ken Shamrock and Lon McHeron. In 2009, Coker completed

an agreement with Pro Elite, Inc. to acquire the properties of the defunct Elite XC mixed martial arts company. The deal included its video library and fighter contracts. The purchase included an agreement between Strikeforce, CBS and Showtime Networks to produce several events per year, including the successor of ShoXC: Elite Challenger Series, Strikeforce Challengers. In 2011, Coker sold Strikeforce to Zuffa, the parent company of the UFC.

Coker's presence has provided Bellator with immediate results through his signature tent-pole events. "Bellator 149: Shamrock vs. Gracie" was the third-most watched MMA program on cable television in nearly five years. The event drew an average of 1,964,000 viewers surpassing the company's all-time record by 24%. In addition, to kick off 2017, 2.2 million viewers tuned in for the final fight in Tito Ortiz's storied career, a first round submission victory over Chael Sonnen at Bellator 170. This marks the most watched Bellator fight on Spike since February of 2016 and the most watched MMA fight on television in 2017 thus far.

★
**CURRENT
BROADCAST
PARTNERSHIPS**

★
**163 TERRITORIES
AS OF JUNE 2018**

ANANEY (EGO) | 1

Israel

bTV (RING) | 1

Bulgaria

DMAX | 1

Turkey

DSPORT INDIA | 6

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives

FIGHT CHANNEL CROATIA | 6

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia

FOX SPORTS | 30

Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela

GOL SPAIN | 2

Andorra, Spain

MATCH | 8

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

NC+ | 1

Poland

OSN | 25

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, West Bank

PARAMOUNT/MTV ASIA | 17

Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor (Timor-Leste), Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pacific Islands, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea (military bases only), Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam

PARAMOUNT NETWORK (Flagship) | 3

USA, Canada, American Forces Network, Puerto Rico

SPIKE AUSTRALIA | 1

Australia

SPIKE NETHERLANDS | 3

The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg (Benelux)

RTL SPIKE HUNGARY | 1

Hungary

SPIKE UK (CHANNEL 5) | 5

England, Ireland, N. Ireland, Scotland, Wales

STAR TIMES AFRICA | 52

Angola, Botswana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Reunion, Rwanda, St Helena and Ascension Island, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

TOTAL SPORTS ASIA (KBSN) | 1

South Korea

★
**WHAT THE
MEDIA IS SAYING
ABOUT**
★

BELLATOR

SB NATION | *KARIM ZIDAN*

Bellator produced an entertaining night of fights that certainly brought with it more headlines and media attention than its main competitor, the UFC.

MMA FIGHTING | *LUKE THOMAS*

Bellator has never been more popular. Spike TV has strong ratings and has an elite MMA organization in house to promote, leverage and maintain.

GRANTLAND | *GEOFF GALLO*

Bellator is putting on consistently good shows with an intriguing format and a growing pool of talent. Ultimately that's good for fighters and the future of the sport. And that's good for fans, too.

MMA JUNKIE | *BEN FOWLKES*

Bellator will be the destination for the stuff we can't deny we want to see.

YAHOO | *KEVIN IOLE*

Bellator MMA is the world's second-best mixed martial arts promotion and it's closing the gap on No. 1. It puts on an outstanding show, and regularly makes terrific fights.

USA TODAY | *SERGIO NON*

Bellator's organizational ability, knack for exciting bouts and unique approach to fighter match-ups made the promotion stand out.

MMA FIGHTING | *MARK RAIMONDI*

Bellator has made signing stud wrestlers a high priority. Ruth, a three-time Division I wrestling champion at Penn State, was signed in May. Pico, who is still only 18 years old, was inked in November. Both are also Olympic hopefuls.

BLEACHER REPORT | *JONATHAN SNOWDEN*

Bellator has become a water-cooler subject.

★
**WHAT THE
MEDIA IS SAYING
ABOUT**
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SCOTT COKER

YAHOO SPORTS | *KEVIN IOLE*

Bellator desperately needed someone not only with a great eye for talent, but also one who was liked and respected throughout the industry. That almost perfectly describes Coker. One would have to search far and wide to find anyone with a bad word to say about the man.

SB NATION | *JOSH SAMAN*

Scott Coker is truly great at what he does. I think the separation between the UFC and Bellator is important, and both parties seem to be doing their best to not be confused with the other. While the UFC continues fighting for legitimacy with uniforms and stringent drug testing, Bellator marches onward into the more experimental, as evidenced by their upcoming kickboxing/MMA hybrid card.

COMBAT PRESS | *MATT QUIGGINS*

Under the regime of company head Scott Coker, Bellator has done an incredible job of bringing back the Pride-esque introductions and walkouts. Coker has really upped the entertainment value while re-introducing fans to the days of old.

THE LONDON TELEGRAPH

GARETH A. DAVIES

Scott Coker is one of the most mercurial characters in MMA. In his 30 plus years in the sport, he has joined up so many people in so many places. In my view, his key to success is that he himself is a true martial artist. The fighters who have worked with him have his absolute trust, as so many of them have told me personally how highly they regard him. In this sport, that counts for so much.

BLOODY ELBOW

JOHN S. NASH

After asking roughly two dozen fighters, managers, and trainers, inside and outside of Bellator, their thoughts on Coker taking the position of President...the response ranged from positive to downright ecstatic.

ESPN | *BRETT OKAMOTO*

Coker has a proven knack for signing talent, something he reminded everyone of during Bellator 131 when he announced the signing of 18-year-old prospect Aaron Pico.

MIDDLEEASY.COM | *DAVE WALSH*

Scott Coker's Bellator can make MMA cool again.

★
2017
HIGHLIGHTS
★

SUBMISSION *of the YEAR*

GOITI YAMAUCHI
defeats ADAM PICCOLOTTI



SUBMISSION: REAR-NAKED CHOKE

ROUND 1 | 3:19

BELLATOR 183

09.23.2017

KNOCKOUT *of the YEAR*

PAUL DALEY
defeats BRENNAN WARD



KNOCKOUT: FLYING KNEE

ROUND 1 | 2:27

BELLATOR 170

01.21.2017

★
**IN THE
PRESS**
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SHERDOG

**Bellator MMA Announces the
Signing of 'Big' John McCarthy as
a Color Commentator**

by: JORDAN BREEN

January 9, 2018

Mixed martial arts' most famous referee is headed to the commentary booth. Bellator MMA announced Tuesday that it had reached an agreement with veteran MMA official "Big" John McCarthy to serve as a color commentator on its broadcasts on the rebranded Paramount Network. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

"With the addition of 'Big' John to our broadcast team, we have put together the premier group of MMA commentators ahead of our Jan. 20 debut on the Paramount Network," said Bellator President Scott Coker in a press release.

Bellator 192, scheduled for Jan. 20 at The Forum in Los Angeles, is headlined by welterweight champion Douglas Lima's title defense against former Ultimate Fighting Championship title challenger Rory MacDonald, and also features a Bellator heavyweight tournament bout between "Rampage" Quinton Jackson and Chael Sonnen. It will be the first Bellator MMA card on Paramount, which was previously Spike under the Viacom umbrella.

Bellator MMA recently parted ways with longtime color commentator Jimmy Smith, who did not agree to the terms of restructured deal with the company.

"They said, 'We want to change the deal around,'" Smith said on the Jan. 2 edition of

Joe Rogan's "JRE MMA Show." "They did make an honest effort to keep me. They really tried, they just, they didn't make me an offer that was worth me coming back. That was the deal."

McCarthy, a former Los Angeles police officer and student of Rorion Gracie, made his refereeing debut at UFC 2 in March 1994 and has gone on to become not only its most visible and famous referee, but a highly influential official and regulator as well. However, it will not be McCarthy's first gig as an analyst, as he previously served in such a capacity for Canadian cable channel The Fight Network in 2007 before returning to officiating.

"It is always so hard to leave something you love, but I have always wanted to step away based on my terms rather than someone else's," McCarthy said in the release. "My goals are to work as hard as I can to meet the expectations everyone will have for me and to hopefully someday exceed them."

"I cannot think of anyone I would rather be working with than Scott Coker. Scott has always been a person I admire because of his honesty, loyalty and love for the martial arts. I want to thank everyone from Bellator and Viacom for the trust you are bestowing upon me to keep the commentating of Bellator MMA at the highest levels of the sport." ★

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**IN THE
PRESS**
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SHERDOG

**Jay Glazer Joins Bellator
MMA Broadcast Team, Debuts
Saturday at Bellator 192**

by: JORDAN BREEN

January 16, 2018

The shakeup continues in the world of mixed martial arts broadcast commentary.

On Tuesday, Bellator MMA announced that Jay Glazer has joined its broadcast team and will make his debut for the company this Saturday for coverage of Bellator 192, which airs live on the rebranded Paramount Network, formerly Spike.

Bellator 192 takes place at The Forum in Inglewood, Calif., and features a welterweight title bout between champion Douglas Lima and challenger Rory MacDonald, as well as a Bellator heavyweight tournament quarterfinal between “Rampage” Quinton Jackson and Chael Sonnen.

“I have always had a tremendous passion for MMA, where the relationships you develop are unlike any other sport,” Glazer said in a press release. “And I am very fortunate to be able to continue these relationships with an incredible organization like Bellator. I’ve been friends with [Bellator MMA CEO] Scott [Coker] for many years, and am ecstatic that he brought me into the Bellator family.”

Glazer previously served as a desk anchor on Ultimate Fighting Championship broadcasts,

crossing over from his regular insider role for Fox’s National Football League coverage. In addition to being named Sports Illustrated’s 2007 “Media Person of the Year,” the 48-year-old is an MMA veteran himself, posting a 1-1 pro record under the Reality Fighting banner in 2003.

Glazer is also the owner of the Unbreakable Performance Center in West Hollywood and has garnered attention for training a slew of NFL standouts and celebrities, from Aaron Rodgers and Clay Matthews to Chris Pratt and Wiz Khalifa.

The Glazer announcement is just one of many in a recent run of notable changes in the MMA broadcast landscape. Last week, Bellator announced that longtime MMA referee and official “Big” John McCarthy was joining its broadcast team. The news came just a week after the promotion confirmed it had parted ways with its longtime color commentator Jimmy Smith, who promptly signed with the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

Last year, Bellator added the UFC’s longtime play-by-play man Mike Goldberg, as well as preeminent combat sports voice Mauro Ranallo, to its broadcast roster. ★

★
**IN THE
PRESS**
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FORBES

**Bellator Signs Mauro Ranallo
and Mike Goldberg, Both Will Call
Bellator NYC**

by: *BRIAN MAZIQUE*

June 13, 2017

Bellator added another layer of legitimacy to their rapidly growing MMA product on Tuesday.

Former UFC blow-by-blow announcer Mike Goldberg, and former Strikeforce and WWE play-by-play legend Mauro Ranallo have been inked by the promotion and will call the Bellator NYC pay-per-view on Saturday, June 24.

Goldberg and Ranallo join an esteemed Bellator announce team that already includes Jimmy Smith, Jenn Brown and Chael Sonnen. Former play-by-play man Sean Grande stepped down from his position, which created the opportunity for Goldberg and Ranallo.

Both men have their share of legendary calls in the world of MMA and their presence instantly upgrades the feel of any combat sports event. The timing of the signing couldn't be more appropriate. Bellator is heading into its biggest event in history, and the card takes place at Madison Square Garden. That's not just big by Bellator standards, that's a huge deal no matter what promotion is putting on the show.

In addition to Bellator NYC, which will be headlined by a grudge match between Sonnen and Wanderlei Silva and Fedor Emelianenko vs. Matt Mitrione, there will also be the Bellator 180 show taking place at MSG earlier in the day.

That segment of the show will be headlined by a light heavyweight title fight between

champion Phil Davis and the newly signed Ryan Bader, and it will air on Spike. In total, there will be three world title fights.

Bellator President Scott Coker is bringing in the two biggest available names in MMA broadcasting to call this show and future Bellator events.

"Mike Goldberg and Mauro Ranallo are two of the best in our business and I couldn't be happier about them joining the Bellator family," said Coker. "In addition to June 24, we look forward to working together to make future Spike broadcasts even more exciting for our fans as we add further depth to an already-exceptional broadcast team."

Spike Senior Vice President of Sports and Specials Jon Slusser also commented on Ranallo and Goldberg's additions.

"The addition of highly-regarded announcers Mauro and Mike to our fantastic lineup of broadcasters, and our first-rate production led by Scott Fishman, further demonstrates our commitment MMA fans and expanding the global Bellator brand."

It's unclear at this point whether Goldberg and Ranallo will be working only pay-per-view events, which have been a rarity with Bellator, or all televised shows. In either case, both men should deliver a nice balance between entertainment and industry expertise. ★

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**IN THE
PRESS**
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MMA FIGHTING

Roy Nelson Signs With Bellator

by: ARIEL HELWANI

May 26, 2017

“Big Country” is off to Bellator.

Roy Nelson (22-14) has signed an exclusive, multi-fight contract with Bellator MMA, MMA Fighting has confirmed with multiple sources. The promotion is expected to officially announce the signing in the coming days.

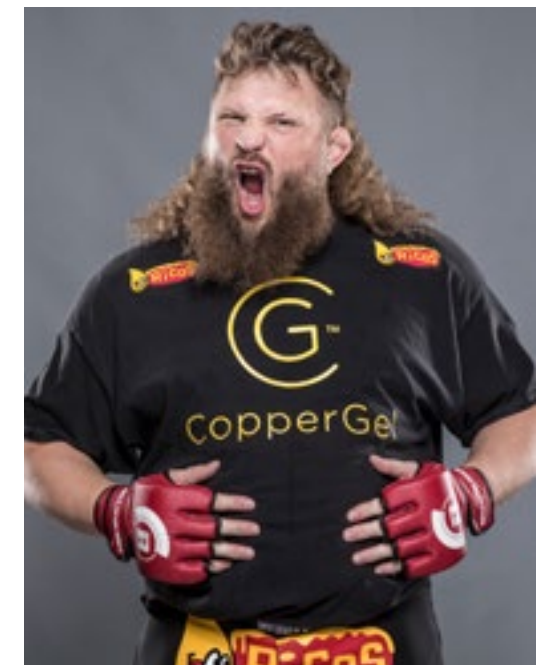
Nelson’s UFC contract expired following his unanimous decision loss to Alexander Volkov in April. While his Bellator debut has yet to be finalized, the early plan is for him to fight in the fall.

The 13-year veteran debuted with the UFC in 2009 after winning the tenth season of “The Ultimate Fighter.” He leaves the promotion with a 9-10 record inside the Octagon. His most notable wins came against Stefan Struve, Mirko Cro Cop, Matt Mitrione, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira, Antonio Silva, and of course, his “TUF” exhibition win over Kimbo Slice, which remains the most-watched fight in the history of the reality series.

Nelson, 40, butted heads with UFC president Dana White from the beginning of his UFC run

but remained a fan favorite throughout and was always featured in big fights.

He becomes the latest familiar UFC face to sign with Bellator, joining the likes of Phil Davis, Matt Mitrione, Benson Henderson, and Rory MacDonald, among others, who recently made the jump. ★



★
**IN THE
PRESS**
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SHERDOG

Frank Mir Signs Contract with Bellator MMA, Says He's Getting Paid More Than He Did in UFC

by: TRISTEN CRITCHFIELD

August 15, 2017

Former Ultimate Fighting Championship heavyweight titlist Frank Mir has signed a multi-fight contract with Bellator MMA.

Mir announced the deal on the "Phone Booth Fighting" podcast on Tuesday, and Sherdog.com subsequently confirmed the signing with a source close to the situation. While Mir will join the Bellator MMA roster, the



terms of his deal allow him to compete for other organizations with the California-based promotion's permission.

"Out of all the organizations that came forward, it came down to two that were going to allow me to have my desire of not being locked into one organizations. I did that with the UFC for almost 16 years...It was coming down to Bellator and [Absolute Championship

Berkut] who were both seeming to be very understanding of that fact, unless I was their champion," Mir said on the podcast.

"It came down to the financial aspect, obviously, who pays the most, and Bellator, with Viacom supporting them obviously, I'm getting paid more than I made with the UFC," he continued. "I'm extremely excited to be part of the Bellator roster with Scott Coker. They have some very legitimate heavyweights over there. First and foremost on my mind is to fight Fedor [Emelianenko]. Hopefully that will work out. But it doesn't close the door now that I could still go and fight now with ACB, who I have a contract with for commentary work."

Mir last competed at UFC Fight Night 85 on March 19, 2016, when he suffered a first-round knockout loss to Mark Hunt. He later received a two-year suspension from USADA for testing positive for dehydrochloromethyltestosterone (DHCMT), a sanction that is retroactive to April 8, 2016.

All but two of Mir's 29 career bouts have taken place in the Octagon. He owns an 18-11 career mark that includes notable wins over the likes of Antonio Silva, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira, Roy Nelson, Mirko Filipovic, Brock Lesnar and Tim Sylvia. The 38-year-old Las Vegas resident has lost six of his last eight bouts, although each of those defeats came against top competition. ★

★
**IN THE
PRESS**
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MMA JUNKIE

**Gegard Mousasi Enjoying Added
Freedom with Bellator after
'Hard Road' with UFC**

by: *MIKE BOHN*

October 12, 2017

Gegard Mousasi hasn't even stepped in the cage for his first Bellator fight, but already he appears much happier with the status of his career than any point in his four-year UFC run.

Mousasi (42-6-2 MMA, 0-0 BMMA) became one of several notable names to sign with Bellator through free agency this year when he inked a multi-fight deal in July. He makes his promotional debut on Oct. 20 when he meets Alexander Shlemenko (56-9 MMA, 12-3 BMMA) in Bellator 185's middleweight headliner, which takes place at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn., and airs on Spike following prelims on MMAjunkie.

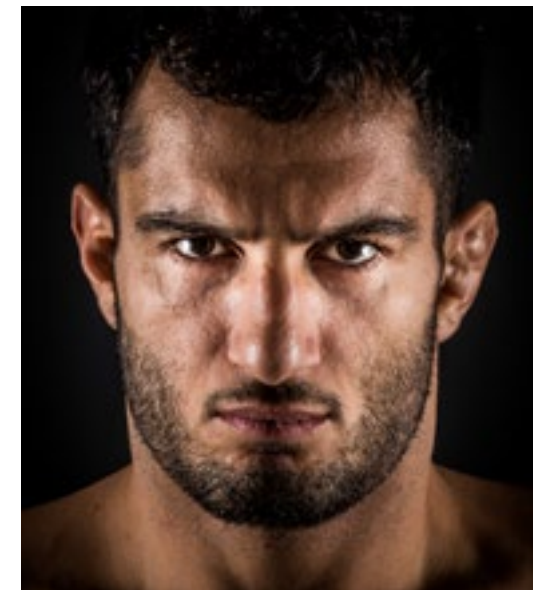
Over the course of his more than 14-year, 50-fight career, Mousasi has competed in 20 different organizations. He said he didn't hate his time with the UFC relative to others, but in just a few months of being part of the Bellator roster, he said he's already feeling right at home.

"Life is easier," Mousasi told MMAjunkie. "I was able to bring my friends also into Bellator. The treatment that I'm getting is great. I feel Bellator has space to grow, not only with me, but also as a company.

"I was a small fish in the UFC. I'm a big fish in Bellator. That's why I want to do my part to grow with Bellator. There's a connection that I don't have with UFC. It's a company, like a

factory. With Bellator, it's more that I'm part of the family, and I'm doing the best I can to grow with the family."

Mousasi said his goal isn't to trash the UFC, because ultimately he feels he was given a solid platform. He was either the main or co-main event in 12 of his 13 appearances with the organization. Despite that prominent



positioning, though, Mousasi said he never felt like he was truly given a push. He never got to fight for a championship and said he never even felt like he was considered despite a five-fight winning streak, which included a TKO of former champion Chris Weidman in his final octagon appearance at UFC 210 in April.

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PRESS**
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There have been many instances in which the UFC has made decisions in a proper and logical manner, but more recently the rhyme and reason behind awarding title shots has become less clear. Mousasi, No. 6 in the latest USA TODAY Sports/MMAjunkie MMA middleweight rankings, felt he was somewhat a victim of that shift, and he admits it was a frustrating position.

"I was treated well in the UFC because I got the opportunity to get where I am now," Mousasi said. "But, if I was to criticize them, I think the fairness of payment or the fairness of getting a title shot, it's too much about the name of the fighter and who they feel they can build as a star as opposed to who is the best fighter. There are issues. Before the belt I'd have to fight probably Luke Rockhold, I would have fought Yoel Romero because (Robert) Whittaker is next. It would have made my road so difficult to get to the top. Some get an easy road.

"They give the fighters they like matchups suited for them so they can keep winning. They'll probably do (Conor) McGregor vs. Nate Diaz 3. Why? Because McGregor has a good shot of winning. They're not going to make a fight with Khabib (Nurmagomedov) or Tony (Ferguson) because it's bad for the promotion. Those things, you feel as a fighter. I'm not making things up. It's frustrating. I had to take the hard road. That's what I feel."
Joining Bellator also gives Mousasi the freedom to pursue his own sponsorship opportunities.

Under the UFC banner, he was tied to the Reebok Athlete Outfitting Policy, which paid him \$10,000 for his most recent fight. Mousasi said he believes the Reebok deal has badly damaged the sponsorship market as a whole, but between the limited opportunities he was able to get for himself and the additional purse money guaranteed within his Bellator contract, he said he's coming out ahead.



"Sponsorship is not that important for me because I feel like I'm getting paid well," Mousasi said. "I don't need a lot of sponsorship. But sponsorship is also not that great because UFC has killed it with the Reebok deal. A lot of companies that used to be there are not anymore. It's a little bit tougher to get sponsorship. But I don't really need sponsors.

"People don't care about me that much because I'm not a U.S. citizen. In Holland, there's not that big support for me here. For me, it's little bit different. Sometimes it makes a difference where you're from. If you're an American fighter

or Canadian fighter or Brazilian fighter you get certain opportunities a Dutch fighter doesn't get. The sponsors my manager got paid for the extra guys coming with me (to Bellator 185). Just to pay the bills; it's allowance money."

Regardless of his thoughts on the UFC's business practices, Mousasi said he's excited to begin a new chapter of his career with Bellator. He has a relationship with Bellator President Scott Coker from his days under the now-defunct Strikeforce banner, and Mousasi said he's happy to fight for Coker once again.

Mousasi, 32, said he believes he will be heard and accommodated much more in a budding promotion like Bellator than he would have otherwise, and that makes him motivated to put on his best performance. He said he expects to get a stoppage win over Shlemenko then move on to challenge for Bellator's 185-pound title. After that? There's a potential to chase big-name fights, switch up weight classes, dabble in kickboxing or do anything else his heart desires.

"That's one of the great things about Bellator is I have the freedom to decide and do whatever I feel," Mousasi said. "I have more freedom. It's a lot more easy-going. Scott bringing me into Bellator, I want to have a good impression. I don't want to let anyone down. I've come to get the belt. I have to beat (Shlemenko)m and I have to beat him decisively. I have to make a statement." ★

★
**IN THE
PRESS**
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ROLLING STONE

**Bellator: Number Two MMA
Promotion Eyes UFC's Top Spot**

by: *MIKE BOHN*

June 23, 2017

As the sport of MMA continues to blossom, the presence of Bellator in the market is growing stronger. Founded in 2008, the world's second most prominent organization still has considerable ground to cover before becoming an equal to the UFC, but it takes a seminal step forward on Saturday with a fight card unlike other in its more than eight-year history.



Bellator NYC takes place at Madison Square Garden in New York City. The pay-per-view offering is headlined by a Light Heavyweight grudge match between Chael Sonnen and Wanderlei Silva and features a supporting cast which includes legendary Heavyweight Fedor Emelianenko, two championship fights and the debut of a promising Lightweight prospect.

Unlike the UFC, which has been a pay-per-view model from the beginning, Bellator to this point has been almost exclusively a television product. With the exception of a May 2014 pay-per-view card, every event in the Viacom-owned organization's history has aired on some form of television, with its current partner broadcast being Spike.

The decision to move from television to pay-per-view and ask fans to pay \$49.95 for something that has historically been available through the cost of a cable bill is bold. A special attraction is needed to persuade fans to fork over their money, and Bellator President Scott Coker says plans went in motion when the headlining bouts of Sonnen squaring up against Silva and Emelianenko vs. Matt Mitrione were locked in.

"It all started out with the fighters that we wanted to put in there being available," Coker tells Rolling Stone. "We wanted to have a fight card that wasn't just one main event. We thought we had to provide two main events. Coming to New York City, it will be our first time on pay-per-view since I've been [president of Bellator], and we wanted a fight card that from top to bottom, we provide something for everyone. I think it's the best fight card put together in mixed martial arts in 2017."

With the UFC having somewhat of a down year so far due to the absence of stars such as Conor McGregor, Nate Diaz, Ronda Rousey, Jon Jones and more, the opportunity for Bellator to increase its profile is the combat sports space is there for the taking. Bellator NYC will be the most widely distributed event in company history, with the card available in 166 countries across the globe.

"Bellator is awesome and they're on the rise," Sonnen says. "This sport has never been bigger."

★
**IN THE
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Every single weekend someone is fighting somewhere and there's title and there's main events and contendership matches. Bellator is in a great spot."

Timing is one of important aspects of event booking, and Coker says the fight card assembled for Bellator NYC made it worthy of the pay-per-view platform. Sonnen has been part of some of the biggest events in UFC history, so it was natural to have him atop the lineup. The chance to finally settle the more than seven-year-old rivalry with Silva only compounded the logic. Each fighter is 40 and might be past his prime, but the pure, unrelenting hatred between the two sides makes it a must-see affair.

Add in the fact Emelianenko, who many consider to be the greatest Heavyweight of all-time, is fighting Mitrione, and that's a strong starting point. Bellator wanted to go all out, though, which is why they added a Welterweight title fight between champ Douglas Lima and Lorenz Larkin, a scrap for Lightweight gold between Michael Chandler and Brent Primus, as well as the debut of 20-year-old super-prospect Aaron Pico.

With all that, it's hard to argue Bellator NYC's pay-per-view validity, especially because it

provides a different appeal from a traditional UFC pay-per-view.

The number of units sold will determine whether the event is considered a success, but with record live gate numbers expected, there's potential for the card to reach a number which surpasses any non-UFC pay-per-view event for MMA.

"Bellator has done its part," Sonnen says. "You bring something new to the marketplace and bring in the best athletes at the biggest events and hype it as best as you can to get the word out so people know. Then you leave it in their hands. Do the fans want this or not? What we're seeing in droves is that they do." He continues, "The entire industry is in a really fun place right now. When I was a young man I never knew it would be this. These opportunities didn't exist. Bellator doesn't leave any stone unturned, and they're gamblers. It's a bet. They're making a bet on this and based on ticket sales and attention, it shows they made a good bet."

Getting people to be aware and buy the pay-per-view is a challenge in and of itself. However, ensuring consumers don't have buyers remorse and convincing them to come back for more in the future is a much more difficult task. Bellator NYC has set the bar for what the product can be with its best foot forward, and now that the

bar been set, fans should only expect equal or better quality in the future.

"This is something we have to build off," Coker knows, "We're not going to be in the (monthly) pay-per-view business; we're going to be in it when the fights are built properly and prepared and simmered and built up for a nice pay-per-view show. It's more the boxing model. Next year we're talking about maybe doing a couple shows and then maybe three the following year and we'll go from there. We're not going to do fights just do to fights on pay-per-view."

Although metrics such as gate, attendance and pay-per-view will be the primary determining factors of success, producing quality action is the responsibility of the athletes. Sonnen doesn't anticipated a dull moment in his headlining bout with Silva, and while it's on fans to decide whether they want to purchase Bellator NYC, Sonnen says those who don't will miss out on a special night of fights.

"If you're a fight fan and you don't want to be left in the dark at the water cooler on Monday morning, then you've got to tune in," Sonnen says. "You earned your money, but we're doing our part. Title fights, the most anticipated debut of a prospect in MMA history with Aaron Pico and you got some of the legends." ★

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BUSINESS INSIDER

**Scott Coker Explains Why
Bellator is Ready to Top UFC
as the Biggest Company in
Cage Fighting**

by: ALAN DAWSON

June 23, 2017

One of the biggest fights in combat sports is being fought in boardrooms rather than cages. It features executives in suits, multi-million dollar contracts, and media conglomerates.

This is not about the \$500 million dollar circus between Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor but the landscape of a mixed martial arts (MMA) industry that is worth billions.

In one corner is market-leading UFC, bought for \$4 billion by Hollywood agency William Morris Endeavour (WME) in 2016. In the other: Bellator, which is bankrolled by US media giant Viacom.

Bellator is the underdog, but one with no shortage of ambition. Here, Bellator president Scott Coker and his fighters tells Business Insider why it's looking to cause an upset and KO its rival at the top of MMA.

Scott Coker is one of the most powerful figures in mixed martial arts. A former fighter himself, Coker is a 5th degree black belt in taekwondo but is more widely known for his promotional skills that have spanned three decades.

In 1985, the South Korean-born American founded kickboxing organisation Strikeforce. In 2006, he turned Strikeforce into an MMA promotion and, within five years, Coker's baby had grown into a hulking adult — it was the second-biggest MMA business in the world. UFC acquired Strikeforce in 2011 and Coker had

a quiet few years. But then, in 2014, he returned to the fight game. This time, he succeeded former lawyer Bjorn Rebney as president of Bellator, a company he described as "a small little show in some small venues."

So why did diminutive Bellator appeal? "I had never worked in corporate America before," Coker told Business Insider backstage at Bellator 179, a London show televised on Viacom-owned British broadcaster Channel 5 in May.

"But I met [Spike TV president] Kevin Kay and the things he was saying really resonated with me. 'Hey, we're Viacom, we want to be number one.' So I explained what they needed to do and he was on board."

For Coker, joining a business under the Viacom umbrella was a complete change of scenery. Considering Strikeforce was his own company, Bellator was the first time he had ever applied for a job since he was in junior high school when he worked in a pizza parlour.

But Coker and Kay bonded over that vision of becoming number one, of disrupting the MMA industry and outmuscling UFC, which has led the market since it's first pay-per-view, UFC 1, in 1993. He is now, once again, presiding over MMA's second-biggest live event company.

He tells us that Bellator's rise has been down to six key factors. Here they are:

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1. Poaching and cherishing fighters

Getting into the MMA business is "simple" according to Coker. "You either write a \$4 billion cheque [like WME did to acquire UFC] or you spend hundreds of millions of dollars on fighters [like Viacom and Bellator]. That's the key."

The Bellator brand gained significant credibility when it began signing high-calibre athletes like Benson Henderson, Ryan Bader, Fedor Emelianenko, Lorenz Larkin, Chael Sonnen, Wanderlei Silva, and Rory MacDonald.

While Emelianenko is considered the greatest MMA heavyweight of all time, it is the acquisition of fighters like MacDonald who are the most interesting.

This is because Emelianenko, 40, is in the twilight of his career, while MacDonald is 27 and a peak athlete. The fact he left UFC to join Bellator also suggests there is something positive happening in and around UFC's biggest rival.

The Bellator approach to its athletes may explain why fighters are leaving UFC in favour of Coker's company. The ethos is simple: "It's about putting fighters first," Coker told BI.

"I grew up as a martial artist and I'm still a martial artist at heart. At the end of the day, I'm a fan of these athletes. The sport is artistic, it's beautiful, and at every show I have the best seat in the house.

"Yes it's combat but it's self-defence at the very highest level. All my fighters know I'm a fan of theirs. They know I think of them as the stars and that we will facilitate in the building of their stock."

2. Blue-chip sponsors

Bellator is sponsored by a number of brands like sports bar franchise Dave & Buster's and beer firm Miller Lite. But it is its relationship with energy drinks company Monster Energy that could really boost the company's growth.

This is because Monster is active in bringing the Bellator brand to NASCAR, a giant US sport, which is attended by tens of thousands of fans every week and watched by millions on TV.

In May, Monster built a Bellator cage in the car park outside Charlotte Motor Speedway so NASCAR racing fans could watch MMA fights before the All-Star Race weekend got underway.

"The beauty of the Monster relationship is there is a financial commitment and an activation commitment," Coker says, as he scrolled through photos of the construction of the Monster cage on his smart phone.

"There's a DJ booth, motorcycle riding, and other attractions. Fans can come here for a few hours, experience this Monster branding, watch a few fights, then go into the race."

Local fighters are novice-level athletes but are enticed to do well as Monster Energy winners receive a professional Bellator contract where they can fight for pay. "Monster love Bellator," Coker says.

Bellator must also love Monster as it effectively partners them up with NASCAR, where races are typically watched by 4.6 million people. To put that in perspective, that's almost three times as many viewers as UFC's best-selling PPV of

all-time, when 1.65 million people tuned in for Conor McGregor and Nate Diaz's rematch at UFC 202 in 2016.

3. Development of talent

Coker says talent-development is a fundamental aspect of growing a successful live event business. "Look at the stars of MMA today," he says. "Ronda Rousey, Tyron Woodley, and Daniel Cormier all came from Strikeforce."

Coker effectively gave this trio their big breaks. And though Bellator is yet to develop a superstar of its own, it is not shy of candidates. Michael Page, AJ McKee, and Aaron Pico have all been identified by Bellator ambassador Royce Gracie as potential superstars and Coker thinks Pico could be the future of the business.

"When I first came to Bellator I wanted to take it back to what we accomplished at Strikeforce and look at the next generation," Coker says. "So we signed the Aaron Pico's of the world and put them in our development programme to nurture them."

He added: "We are really good star identifiers and star builders. Let's say you are a 17-year-old prospect on the judo or wrestling Olympic team. We'd sign you on a contract and support you on your Olympic bid.

"If you are successful in that bid then you go to the Olympics and come into MMA, with us, after the Games. Regardless of whether you are a judoka or a boxer we would then recommend camps to build on other aspects of MMA, such as jiu-jitsu. We also provide you with a monthly wage to get you going and support yourself."

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How much can a fighter make? "It depends on the athlete, their history, and what potential we think they have. We also help athletes get sponsorship deals. Then once they are ready, we organise an MMA fight.

"Pico's first MMA fight is on Saturday in New York City and I can tell you this: He will be a big, big star."

4. Exploiting the "free agent business"

When Coker became Bellator boss in 2014, he says the roster was "not great." To change that, Coker wanted to "get into the free agent business."

He says: "We told camps that, when it came down to it, to think of us. When [former UFC lightweight champion] Benson Henderson came over, the floodgates opened. [Former UFC middleweight contender] Chael Sonnen, [former PRIDE middleweight champion] Wanderlei Silva, and [former PRIDE heavyweight champion] Fedor Emelianenko all signed."

Sonnen, the self-styled 'American Gangster', has been dubbed one of the most gifted talkers since Muhammad Ali. He is therefore a promoter's dream as he generates interest all by himself. His rivalry with Silva would not be half as exciting if it were not for his incessant headline-grabbing trash-talking.

So how does Coker approach the process of signing a free agent?

"Usually we get a call from a fighter's management and they say 'so and so is free.' They'll ask if we're interested in a deal. If they're a top-top name, we would, of course, be

interested. Why wouldn't we be? We pay what an athlete is worth but what I really want to know is this: 1) Do they like Bellator? And 2) Do they want to fight in Bellator?

"Between legends like Fedor, free agents like Chael, big names like Rory MacDonald, and prospects like Pico, we have a very solid base."

With an increasingly burgeoning roster in place, organising edge-of-the-seat fights becomes an easier process.

5. Producing TV-friendly fights

"Great fights means great TV ratings," Coker says simply. Under his watch, viewing figures have only gone one way.

Business Insider obtained Spike TV figures that show Bellator had an average of 762,000 TV viewers for its shows in 2014. By 2017, this had grown 20% to an average of 922,000 TV viewers.

"By the end of 2017 our ratings will be even bigger. Every main event will be between 1 million and 2 million viewers and I'll tell you why: People understand our vision and can see that we deliver huge events."

The next test for Coker will be how well his Saturday show, Bellator 180, performs. Not only is it Bellator's first show at Madison Square Garden in New York City, but it is also its first pay-per-view event. If it performs well, Bellator may have hit the big time.

Coker is confident. "We have the best welterweight division in any league in any roster [including UFC]. Douglas Lima is a killer. Rory

MacDonald is a killer. Andrey Koreshkov, Michael 'Venom' Page, and Lorenz Larkin — killers!"

6. Happy fighters

The best people to talk to about how fighters are treated are the fighters themselves.

Former UFC fighter Rory MacDonald left UFC for Bellator in 2016 and told BI that "the way Scott handles business and the attitude he has is much different than [UFC promoter] Dana White."

How? "Scott is respectful, gentler, and humble. He has a quiet approach. I have great communication with him and the company in general. Scott has done martial arts so maybe that comes into it. Martial arts gives you respect. Scott has that."

Business Insider asked MacDonald if there is a notable difference in UFC and Bellator pay. "Absolutely there is and Bellator pays considerably more."

At UFC, fighters have a mandatory Reebok uniform to wear. This limits their earning potential as they are unable to negotiate commercial contracts with companies like Under Armour, Nike, or Adidas. At Bellator, though, fighters are free to arrange their own sponsorship deals.

Daily Telegraph combat sports journalist Gareth Davies told BI: "Fighters always talk about how good it is to deal with Scott Coker. Fighters take a Bellator payment and can even keep their sponsors in the fighting arena. They can't get that at the UFC, where they have to be a part of the UFC's deal with Reebok."

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Coker says competition is healthy for the business.

"I feel like I let fighters down in Strikeforce and I'll tell you why. When I left, prices for fighters dropped by 25 percent," he explains.

"When there's only one buyer [UFC] in the marketplace, prices go down. But now there are two main buyers [UFC and Bellator] and fighters are happy we are back."

So what next?

"Bellator is Strikeforce 2.0," Coker says. "We're going to make it bigger and better." Coker then elaborated how. Here's the masterplan:

- Continue to expand internationally with more broadcast deals and more local fighters
- Sign up more legends and free agents
- Develop its home-grown stars for the future
- Attract more blue-chip sponsors through Viacom's sales department
- Organize two/three PPV shows a year

So can Bellator close the gap on UFC?

"If we keep doing what we're doing right, it will keep closing," Coker says. "Fighters are jumping ship and people notice that as fighters are popular. It's also good for the industry.

"There's no incentive for fighters to be paid what they deserve when there's only one show in town, but when you have another bidder it [UFC] has to stay sharper and on their toes, but so do

we. Ultimately it's the fighters who win and the industry also stays healthy."

Former UFC fighter Royce Gracie, who is now Bellator ambassador, is more bullish. "The gap between Bellator and UFC is far shorter than what people think. Look at the way UFC fighters move to Bellator."

MacDonald adds: "There's a lot of positive things happening in Bellator while there are a lot of negatives in the way UFC shows are run and the way UFC fighters are treated."

The Telegraph's Davies agrees that progress is being made, particularly on attracting big fighters. "Bellator is still ambitious to sign even more people. Bellator is bridging that divide," he says.

Bellator 180 is the company's first pay-per-view show and it's first show in New York City. It all kicks off on Saturday. "Stay tuned," Coker says. "I promise you this: 2017 and 2018 will be huge, huge years. We will keep digging this beast as Bellator is on the rise." ★

★
**WORLD TITLE
CHAMPIONS**
★

FLYWEIGHT (W)

ILIMA-LEI
'THE ILIMANATOR'
MACFARLANE



RECORD: 7 - 0

BORN: 04 - 02 - 1990

HEIGHT: 5' 5"

FIGHTING OUT OF:
San Diego, California, USA

WEIGHT CLASS: 125 lb

BANTAMWEIGHT

DARRION
'THE WOLF'
CALDWELL



RECORD: 11 - 1

BORN: 12 - 19 - 1987

HEIGHT: 5' 10"

FIGHTING OUT OF:
Rahway, New Jersey, USA

WEIGHT CLASS: 135 lb

FEATHERWEIGHT

PATRICIO
'PITBULL'
FREIRE



RECORD: 26 - 4

BORN: 07 - 07 - 1987

HEIGHT: 5' 8"

FIGHTING OUT OF: Natal,
Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil

WEIGHT CLASS: 145 lb

FEATHERWEIGHT (W)

JULIA
'THE JEWEL'
BUDD



RECORD: 10 - 2

BORN: 07 - 04 - 1983

HEIGHT: 5' 8"

FIGHTING OUT OF: Port Moody,
British Columbia, Canada

WEIGHT CLASS: 145 lb

★
**WORLD TITLE
CHAMPIONS**
★

LIGHTWEIGHT

**BRENT
PRIMUS**



RECORD: 8 - 0

BORN: 04 - 12 - 1985

HEIGHT: 5' 10"

FIGHTING OUT OF:
Portland, Oregon, USA

WEIGHT CLASS: 155 lb

WELTERWEIGHT

**RORY
'RED KING'
MacDONALD**



RECORD: 20 - 4

BORN: 07 - 22 - 1989

HEIGHT: 5' 11"

FIGHTING OUT OF:
Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

WEIGHT CLASS: 170 lb

MIDDLEWEIGHT

**EGARD
'THE DREAMCATCHER'
MOUSASI**



RECORD: 44 - 6 - 2

BORN: 08 - 01 - 1985

HEIGHT: 6' 1"

FIGHTING OUT OF:
Leiden, South Holland, Netherlands

WEIGHT CLASS: 185 lb

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

**RYAN
'DARTH'
BADER**



RECORD: 10 - 2

BORN: 06 - 07 - 1983

HEIGHT: 6' 2"

FIGHTING OUT OF:
Tempe, Arizona, USA

WEIGHT CLASS: 205 lb