FACT KIT

THE HISTORY

Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) has a rich history and tradition dating back to the Olympic Games in Athens. About 80 years ago, a Brazilian form of MMA known as Vale Tudo sparked local interest in the sport.

In 1993, the UFC® organization brought MMA to the United States. The goal was to find "the Ultimate Fighting Champion" through a tournament of the best athletes skilled in the various disciplines of martial arts, including karate, jiu-jitsu, boxing, kickboxing, grappling, wrestling, sumo and other sports. The winner of the tournament would be crowned the champion.

The sport became an instant hit, but it drew controversy because it was unregulated and, although its owners enforced their rules, it also used the slogan 'There Are No Rules!' creating concerns for fighter safety.

From its earliest days, the sport of MMA has been popular with its fans, but it took the marketing prowess of Ultimate Fighting Championship to bring the famed "Octagon" and the sport into the mainstream.
Photo by Daniel Berehulak. All rights reserved.

In 1998 after widespread criticism UFC® lost all cable pay per view distribution and was spiraling toward ruin.

In 2001 three fans of the sport saw past their unfortunate record and saw the potential of a real sports league where no one discipline dominated, rather ath-

MMAFACTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

JULIE WOOD
895 BROADWAY, FIFTH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
10003

Phone: 212 260.8813
E-mail: Julie@mmafacts.com

letes would have to cross train in all disciplines to win. Brothers Lorenzo and Frank Fertitta joined with their friend, a boxing manager, Dana White to form Zuffa LLC and buy the Ultimate Fighting Championship® franchise. They were determined to turn MMA into a sanctioned and regulated sport that would protect the safety of the fighters while preserving the integrity of the athleticism that the sport required.

Zuffa's number one goal was cooperation with and operation under the guidelines of the State Athletic Commission to establish UFC® as a legitimate and sanctioned sport that could find its way into the mainstream sports scene. In May 2001, the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board drafted and adopted rules known as the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts under which the sport is now governed.

The rules include: licensing, medical examinations, approved gloves, weight classes, time limits, rounds and mandatory drug testing.

Zuffa secured sanctioning in Nevada in 2001 and shortly thereafter, in September of the same year, UFC® returned nationwide to cable television's pay-per-view.

As a result, the UFC® organization now offers twelve to fourteen live pay-per-view events annually through cable and satellite providers. MMA programming is also distributed internationally, including broadcast on Viewer's Choice in Canada, MAIN EVENT in Australia, Globosat in Brazil and Setanta and Bravo in the United Kingdom.

The biggest of the MMA organizations, UFC® is regulated and recognized by the world's most prestigious sports regulatory bodies including the California, Florida, Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania State Athletic Commissions. The UFC® organization strives for the highest levels of safety and quality in all aspects of the sport.

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