

FACT KIT

THE SPORT

Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) was originally launched in the United States by the “first family of Jiu-Jitsu.” They brought together the very best martial artists from the various disciplines to compete against each other on a level playing field. The goal was to determine which of the disciplines was best. Could a boxer beat a wrestler? Could a kung fu champion beat a karate master?

The first Ultimate Fighting Championship® event was held at McNichols Arena in Denver, Colorado in 1993. The undersized Royce Gracie beat bigger, stronger, and faster opponents with his Gracie Jiu-Jitsu to win the tournament. The fledgling sport became an overnight sensation.



Mixed Martial Arts has its roots in a wide variety of ancient martial arts, including judo.
Photo by Philip Lee Harvey.. All rights reserved.

MMAFACTS

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The shows became must see TV for fans, but in the early years, the lack of state regulation and significant set of rules led to the show being taken off cable television. After a series of relatively dark years, the Las Vegas based Zuffa LLC took over the company in 2001. They implemented a set of unified mixed martial arts rules, and suddenly MMA was no longer a spectacle, but a legitimate sport.

As the sport has evolved, so have the athletes, and they well know that one par-

ticular style will not work in competition on a consistent basis. This means Mixed Martial Artists must learn a variety of martial arts including boxing, wrestling, kickboxing, and jiu-jitsu to effectively spar with their opponents.

Under the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts, athletes compete for three five-minute rounds, with championship matches waged over five five-minute rounds. Scoring, like boxing, is done on a ten-point system, with the winner of the round receiving ten points and the loser nine points or less. Unlike boxing, MMA matches are scored not only for effective striking attacks, but for ground fighting effectiveness, submission and takedown attempts and defense, as well as ring generalship.

Bouts end via knockout, referee, corner or doctor stoppage, or submission. When a bout ends by submission, the fighter either verbally or physically “taps out,” signaling that he has had enough.

Mixed martial arts athletes are experts in virtually every discipline – from Tae Kwon Do, Judo and Kung Fu to Bruce Lee’s Jeet Kune Do and Sambo – employed in the sport. For an athlete to truly be successful he needs to have a base in the following:

Boxing

An Olympic sport since 1920, boxing is the sport of fighting with the fists.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has its roots in Judo and was created in the 1920’s in Brazil by MMA pioneer Carlos Gracie. Gracie modified the practice of judo with moves that require less strength and are more effective against larger opponents.

Freestyle Wrestling

An Olympic sport since 1904, contestants struggle hand to hand in an attempt to throw or take down their opponent without striking blows.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

An Olympic sport since 1896, Greco-Roman wrestling is similar to Freestyle wrestling, the only difference being that Greco-Roman wrestling rules forbid attacks below the waist.

Jiu Jitsu

An ancient Japanese martial art that encompasses throwing, joint locks, striking, and weapons training.

Judo

An Olympic Sport since 1964, Judo is a Japanese martial art founded in 1882 by Jigoro Kano. Derived from Jujutsu, Judo emphasizes throws and forbids striking in competition.

Karate

Karate is the name used to identify many Japanese and Okinawan martial arts known for powerful, linear techniques. Practitioners are trained in striking, grappling, locks, restraints and throws.

Kickboxing

Kickboxing is a martial art combining boxing punches and martial arts kicks.

Tae Kwon Do

An Olympic sport since 2000, Tae Kwon Do is a Korean style martial art known for its flashy kicking techniques. It is one of the most practiced martial arts in the world.

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