

Mike Coughlin on MMA overload

â€œThe Half-Guarded Truthâ€•

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â€œMMA to the left of me, UFC to the right, and weâ€™re all stuck in the middleâ€•

Well, itâ€™s finally come to an end. The UFCâ€™s non-stop cavalcade of shows has taken a breather. Starting on May 26th, the UFC ran (deep breath here, folks): three pay per views (UFC 71: Liddell v. Jackson, UFC 72: Franklin v. Okami, and UFC 73: Ortiz v. Evans); one Fight Night (Fisher v. Stout); multiple episodes of The Ultimate Fighter; TUF 5 series finale (Penn v. Pulver); several Countdown specials for the PPVs; and the occasional All Access (with everyoneâ€™s favorite lay and pray expert, Sean Sherk; when you look noticeably more exciting hitting a punching bag laying on the ground than you do while fighting an actual human being, youâ€™ve got problems).

But, the UFC isnâ€™t all of MMA, is it? Oh, no, it isnâ€™t. MMA fans also had the opportunity to watch K-1 Dynamite!! USA and the EXC/Strikeforce show headlined by Frank Shamrock and Phil Baroni. Oh, and lest I forget, prior to the K-1 show, EXC held a one hour Showtime special. That same network also aired many hype shows for both the Dynamite!! and Strikeforce shows. Iâ€™m sure there were some other things in there that Iâ€™ve erased from my memory (the Kimbo Slice PPV, unfortunately, does come to mind).

At least we can all take a break now, right? UFC fans can, but MMA fans are in for more fun. This weekend, there are THREE shows: a Cage Rage event headlined by, uh, umm, well, you see, the thing is â€¦ I know Herb Dean is fighting and thatâ€™s good enough for me; HEROâ€™s has a middleweight tournament commencing (UFC fans might mistake this as meaning a 185 lb get together, PRIDE fans might think this means 205 lbers duking it out, but, alas, in HEROâ€™s middleweight = 154 lbs); and because they wouldnâ€™t want to pass up a golden opportunity to solidify their claim as, â€œPromotion Most Likely To Always Lose Money,â€• bodogFIGHT is even putting on a show, one where Yves Edwards is probably the most well-known fighter. Cha-Ching!

But then, well, let me tell ya, then we get a break with a capital â€œbâ€• (unlike bodogFIGHT)!!! Why, weâ€™ll get some two-and-a-half weeks till the next show â€“ a Zuffa produced WEC highlighted by the North American debut of Paulo Filho. Then, less than three weeks after that is Randy Coutureâ€™s return to the cage, defending his newly won UFC Heavyweight Championship against Gabriel Gonzaga (wait, who?). Thankfully, itâ€™ll be less than two weeks after that show till we get more MMA, as once again Zuffa will give bread to the obese with a WEC, this one headlined by Urijah Faber. Not to be outdone by itself, Zuffa then comes back three days later (albeit half-way around the world) for a UFC show that might be on PPV (who can tell these days), one with Quinton Jackson and Dan Henderson creating the first ever unified 205 lb champion (light-heavy-middle weight?). A week after that, EXC comes roaring to the forefront for the few hundred thousand people that watch Showtime (is â€œThe L Wordâ€• really worth having a monthly subscription?). Five days later, Zuffa/UFC are back (is back?) with a Fight Night, one that will probably kick off the beginning of the sixth season of The Ultimate Fighter. Two days after that Zuffa/UFC present another PPV, one that may or may not have Chuck Liddell fighting.

And Iâ€™m sure the IFL has a bunch of money-burning sessions, err, shows scheduled in there too. Gary Shaw is threatening to run some smaller MMA events this summer. Oh, and bodogFIGHT also airs their weekly TV show from a location (and on a channel) more secret than Dick Cheneyâ€™s underground â€“ well, you get the joke.

Oh, crap, I forgot about Oxygen's Fight Girls! When I'm forgetting about half-naked hot chicks that give one another massages when they're not kicking each other's asses, you know there's a lot to watch!

Then we start October.

To all you long-time fans, the ones that suffered through the dark years of shows in Iowa (Iowaans know I love them)(kind of) and Louisiana (no love), and to those that somehow avoided PRIDE spoilers for days, weeks, months, and years on end, who sat through coverage from websites as objective as a dog judging meat (I'm horrible at trash-talking " and don't ask me what that was supposed to mean, cause I really don't know): sit back and enjoy, cause this is as good as it gets. I don't know if we'll ever see this much MMA in the States, and a bubble this big is bound to eventually pop.

And to call you new fans: historically, this isn't normal. You're not supposed to get this much MMA. You're supposed to buy third generation tapes from Brazil that sometimes make you feel a bit uneasy that you may have indirectly supported such a sleazy looking operation. You're certainly not supposed to just leave your TV any random channel, wait 15 minutes, and see professional fighting. You won't know how good you have it till it gets ripped from you like meat from that same biased dog (I'm still confused by that one).

By the way, did you hear that USA Network wants Raw to go to three hours?

Mike Coughlin hosts Five Star Radio, a weekly MMA radio (duh) show found exclusively at f4wonline.com.
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