



# MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

IT'S  
HERE  
TO  
STAY!

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Gone are the days of out of shape, untrained brutes fighting in a no-holds barred ring. Those who compete in MMA train unbelievable hours and are toned and fit!

Located about one-half mile from the editorial offices of *TKDT* in Bettendorf, Iowa, is the home of MMA world champions who train at Champions Fitness Center owned by another MMA world champion, Pat Miletich. When *60 Minutes* featured MMA and Miletich last December, its ratings were the highest of the season surpassing broadcasts featuring Tiger Woods and the New York Yankees!



ABOVE, L TO R: Renzo Gracie (red trunks) of the IFL Pitbulls, defeats Pat Miletich, IFL Silverbacks, via a guillotine choke in the first round. Brent Beauporlent (left) IFL Dragons, defeats Raphael Davis, IFL Razorclaws, in the third round. Travis Wiuff (left) IFL Razorclaws defeats Wojtek Kaszowski, a TKD blue-belt, of the IFL Dragons in the third round.



**LEFT:** The Quad-City Silverbacks celebrate Ben Rothwell's KO victory in the first round. Also pictured are Brad Imes, Pat Miletich, Ryan McGivern, Rory Markham and Steve Rusk. **OPPOSITE BELOW:** Josh Odum (left) IFL Razorclaws is defeated by Rob Dencso, IFL



**Dragons, in a third round TKO. Photos taken at the IFL elimination round at the Mark of the Quad Cities last September in Moline, Illinois. The Silverbacks defeated the Pitbulls, and the Dragons topped the Razorclaws and went on to the semi-finals. The Silverback went on to win the IFL World Championship title in Connecticut on December 29.**

There's more than meets the eye with Pat Miletich. In addition to the important roles he fills as a father, husband, business owner, martial artist, and professional fighter, he's also a trainer. Pat has produced 11 MMA World Champions including UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) welterweight champion Matt Hughes; light heavyweight champion Jeremy Horn; and heavyweight champion Tim Sylvia. Pat also trains Jens Pulver, a well-known UFC lightweight champion.

Pat's professional qualifications include black belts in Karate and Jiu-Jitsu; a U.S. Muay Thai kickboxing title; five-time World Professional Mixed Martial Arts Champion; and an undefeated record in pro-boxing. Yet despite the obvious personal and professional successes and ensuing celebrity, Miletich remains a grounded, down-to-earth individual. He greets fans warmly and thanks them for their support at the weigh-in for the IFL elimination match at the Mark of the Quad-Cities.

Miletich has certainly come a long way since the mid 90's, when his mother developed a heart condition and he had to work three jobs to support them both. At that time, he was presented with the opportunity to compete in Chicago's Battle of Champions, which included a \$10,000 prize. Despite the fact that there were no weight classes and Pat weighed in at a mere 175 pounds versus competitors weighing in at 230, he won, and thus began his professional career. Pat notes, "While I wasn't as well-trained in technique as I am today, I knew I needed the money more than

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anyone else to support myself and my mother."

You may be asking yourself how Pat became the admirable athlete he is today and how he trains other athletes from around

the world to achieve peak fitness. To attain maximum condition, Pat developed his highly successful Ulti-Fit® System over eight years ago, with the assistance of Dr. Ed Thomas, Fulbright Scholar and U.S. Army Physical Readiness training expert. Pat utilized Dr. Thomas' extensive library and expertise

**Miletich and Gracie enjoying the crowd's support at the weigh-in held in Davenport, Iowa, the day before a competition. It was a time for fun and good natured rivalry before the hitting the ring.**



# MMA



# Striking

Training at Champions Fitness Center in Bettendorf, IA. FROM LEFT: Kyle Considine kicks a heavy bag. Steve Rusk and Tim Sylvia (right) spar. Miletich demonstrates a move for Tim Sylvia.



to explore an alternative to his weight lifting and wrestling drills, and quickly noticed an improvement in performance. While professional athletes often refuse to disclose their training regimens, Pat agreed to discuss both his program and training methods candidly with TKDT.

Sitting down with Miletich at his Bettendorf, Iowa, studio, Champion's Fitness Center, Pat opened up about his philosophy behind the Ulti-Fit® System. "The system's goal is to develop what I call 'functional fitness.' In order for an athlete to compete successfully as a serious fighter and practice advanced technique, they need to build the correct body through aerobic, anaerobic, core and explosive exercises. I also have the fighters avoid traditional weight training, which promotes only linear lifting strength. An effective mixed martial artist has strength in terms of moving bodies and objects. Adhering to these guidelines creates a harmonizing balance of strength and endurance, imperative to a fighter's long-term success."

A typical day for a professional martial artist par-

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ticipating in this program includes one to two hours a day of cardiovascular training and two hours of sparring. New participants must first learn the basics and will not begin sparring until they have done so, more often than not at the purple belt level. In fact, some students choose to never spar at all. Miletich offers the options of only participating in conditioning or participating in both conditioning and sparring exercises, attracting students of all ages and abilities.

Within the system, athletes are encouraged to adhere to a new way of eating. Miletich notes, "The nutritional elements of my plan are a mix between World War I nutritional plans, that were used for bed-ridden soldiers who were losing protein and storing fat, and the catabolic/metabolic formula. The bottom-line is that a person needs to eat healthily every two to three hours to prevent the body from storing fat. I recommend eating until you're full rather than counting calories. For breakfast, I eat six egg whites, oatmeal, and broccoli or spinach. At 10 AM, I have a protein shake and sandwich, which includes lean meat and lettuce. For lunch, I eat lean protein, greens, and some starchy carbohydrates. At 3 PM, I have a sand-

# Grappling



FROM LEFT: Miletich demonstrates a hold. Tim Sylvia and Sherman Pendergast stuffing Sherman's take-down attempt. Sylvia and Pendergast practice grappling.



**FROM LEFT:** World Champion Tim Sylvia and partner spar. Trainer Nate Schroeder (on right), who has a TKD background, instructs Kyle Conside on sparring. **RIGHT:** Ben Uker and Pat Miletich watch the fighters train.



wich, and this sandwich's bread comprises my last starchy carbohydrates for the day. Dinner consists of lean protein and large amounts of broccoli. I also have a snack of a protein shake and salad prior to bed. During the course of the day, I add fruit at times when I begin to feel hungry. With this eating plan, I've found that both my students and I actually eat more than we did prior to beginning the plan, but our bodies become more defined as a result of what and when we are eating."

Pat offers an eclectic and evolutionary martial art he calls "Miletich Fighting Systems," which includes traditional martial arts moves such as power roundhouse kicks, side kicks, and back kicks. Surprisingly, Pat's system even includes spinning back kicks, which are rarely used as a follow-up kick for a missed hook kick. Other inspiration comes from boxing, wrestling and Judo. As you can see, this system varies greatly from the traditional lessons of forms; however, Pat retains many of the customary courtesies

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such as bowing and maintaining good grades.

While school-aged children generally train one to three hours a day, a competitive fighter trains 30 to 40 hours a week.

What makes this possible is their level of fame: as fighters become well known and land contracts and Pay-Per-View matches, they're able to afford to leave their day jobs and train full-time. Miletich believes much of what makes for a successful mixed martial artist is work ethic, determination and drive. Some of the most talented are the ones who give up first, but the fighters with the work ethic are the ones that succeed.

As far as transitioning from martial artist to mixed martial artist or professional fighter, Pat



**Renee Holzhauser (left) spars with Melanie Hess**



**ABOVE:** Steve Rusk and Tim Sylvia grappling and side control. **RIGHT:** Matt Williams and A. J. Jenkins going for a take-down.



**"This isn't like the 'Tough Man' fights of two or three years ago; today's fighters are better athletes."**



**ABOVE, Right and Left: Nate Schroeder Leads conditioning exercises at the close of class.**

gives this sound advice: "First, it's important to obtain a college degree to have something to fall back on because such a small percentage of fighters actually make it to the top. Once that's accomplished, I recommend finding a reputable trainer that has produced fighters and knows what he's doing. It's not wise to even get in the ring unless you've been well trained and know what you're doing."

"This isn't like the 'Tough Man' fights of two or three years ago; today's fighters are better athletes, more well-rounded, in incredible shape and are

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constantly fine tuning their training and fight strategies. For example, in my match with Renzo Gracie last fall, I went in with an injured neck and a shredded psoas (lower back) muscle, so I adjusted my approach to reflect that. Knowing I would be helpless on the ground, I planned on walking towards him a lot, forcing him to try to take me down. This would tire him and then I would knock him out. However, once he realized he wasn't going to knock me down, he adjusted his strategy and jumped on top of me. He caught me in a guillotine (choke hold), and after about 90 seconds, my neck gave out. He fought smart and went for the Achilles, and that's what a fighter today has to do."

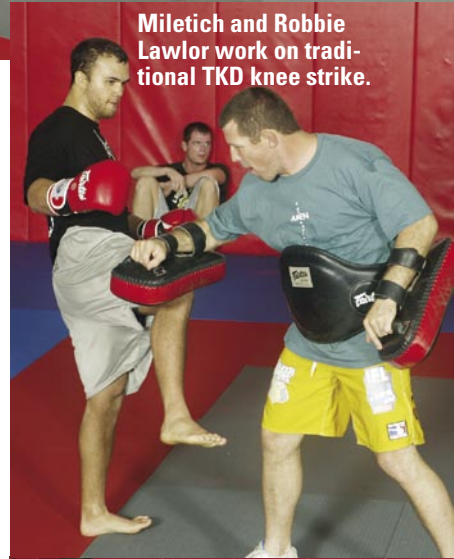
Pat went on to discuss how a background in Tae Kwon Do would aid in transitioning to a mixed martial arts field. "If they're Tae Kwon Do practitioners and they're good at it, that's a great base to start at. Actually, one of our trainers, Nate Schroeder, is a second-degree Tae Kwon Do black belt. Any traditional martial art is a good foundation for those starting in MMA but Tae Kwon Do stands out as one that teaches great speed, flexibility and kicks. Then find someone that can add to that with boxing, Muay Thai, wrestling, and grappling. Mixed martial artists don't focus on one system or art, but rather a well-rounded sampling of many."

**PRIDE, UFC, IFL**

You may be wondering what, if anything, differentiates the major organizations of Mixed Martial Arts today. While Pride and the UFC organizations represent individuals competing for titles, the IFL is set up much like the NFL

or NBA; as an actual sports association. As a league, the IFL tends to place more emphasis on the safety of the competitors, as the league depends on their well being. Also within the IFL, city and team names are in place to build followings and team loyalties. Eventually, a global league with fans rooting for their home city team is envisioned by the IFL. There's a good possibility you may be cheering for your country's mixed martial arts team at the Olympics someday, allowing a few minor adjustments to the rules so a fighter could compete relatively uninjured through an Olympic tournament to the championship.

As MMA continues to evolve, look for Pat Miletich to be in the forefront of this exciting new sport, training fighters, competing, and revolutionizing the sport that he has helped to shape. ●



**Miletich and Robbie Lawlor work on traditional TKD knee strike.**



**Lawlor executes a roundhouse kick.**



**Thai pad conditioning class**

## Exercises for MMA Fighters

- Foot speed and coordination drills
- Ladder drills (similar to those performed by football players)
- Plyometric exercises such as box jumps
- Arm plyometrics
- Rope climbing
- 90 –120 minutes partner medicine ball drills
- Grappling endurance drills
- Running hills requiring 90 seconds to ascend
- Track sprints
- Buddy-carries up stadium stairs
- Two-on-one tag team grappling drills five minutes
- "Shark bait" drills (a fighter is surrounded by six to seven guys whom he must take down)
- One-hour sessions of underwater swimming drills centered on lung capacity
- Bodyweight exercises with weighted vests that include different style pull-ups, push-ups, squats, and dips
- Circular motion exercises with "Indian clubs" (similar to bowling pins)
- 35 – 40 pound kettle bell exercises that teach the students to stand up from a prone (face-down) position without using their hands



**RIGHT:** Spencer Fisher works out with Indian Clubs to increase circular motion. **LEFT:** Exercising with a kettle ball help fighters to stand from a prone position without the use of their hands. **BELOW:** Chris Huffman throws the kettle ball to an waiting Spencer Fisher as Sean Huffman (in safety gear) looks on.



**Children's Judo training. RIGHT:** Gregg Humphries leading the children's Judo class.

