

## MMA HEADLINES

**Yahoo! Sports**, February 17, 2009:

### UFC displays recession resilience

While billion-dollar companies across the United States have been laying off employees and making other budget concessions during a severe economic climate, the Ultimate Fighting Championship continues to resist the downturn. The official numbers recorded with the sanctioning body – a \$4,290,020 gate and attendance of 14,885 – give the UFC a strong start to 2009. Perhaps even more significant than the record attendance and high gross ticket revenue will be the final numbers on the UFC 94 pay-per-view purchases and early indications are UFC 94 should settle somewhere near 1.3 million buys—a peak in the history of the promotion—and would mean more than \$58 million in gross sales. And according to UFC President Dana White the UFC hasn't even gotten off the ground yet. "The crazy thing about this sport is, we haven't even scratched the surface on how big this thing is going to be. It's going to be the biggest sport in the world."

**Yahoo! Sports**, January 30, 2009:

### UFC looms closer to the mainstream

Two of its last three pay-per-view cards surpassed one million in sales. The replay of UFC 91 on Spike TV on Saturday set a record for the largest audience ever for a non-live show on the network when more than 3.3 million people tuned in. This came despite competition from a hot boxing match on HBO and a live Affliction mixed martial arts pay-per-view and the pay-per-view repeat of UFC 93. Dana White fully expects UFC 94 on Saturday at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas to become the best-selling pay-per-view in company history, with more than 1.3 million sales.

**NBC Sports**, January 21, 2009:

### Elevate MMA in the USA? Yes, we can

Tuesday afternoon, as Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States of America, I, like millions of Americans, was unable to watch the proceedings because of work. Unlike millions of Americans, however, I was at a press conference for Saturday night's Affliction show, which is why this relates to MMA – and trust me, it will. I get asked all the time about why more MMA isn't on TV. The answer is simple: because the people in power don't want it there. But that won't last forever. No one is in the seat of power forever, and the next person in the throne is more likely to be part of MMA nation.

**The New York Times**, January 20, 2009:

### Companies Warm to Sponsoring MMA

When the referee raised Rashad Evans's hand after a victory last September, Mr. Evans was not wearing a shirt bearing the logo of one of the sport's niche apparel brands like Sprawl or Tapout. Instead, on his shirt appeared a mug shot of Bill Gates, taken after the future billionaire was arrested for a traffic violation in 1977. Mr. Evans said he wore the shirt as part of a cross-promotional partnership with Microsoft. He has also appeared in a recent Windows commercial that is running in the United States, Britain and Japan. Mixed martial arts has long been considered too risky for corporate America. But with the success of the U.F.C., the sport's premier brand, mainstream advertisers have begun dabbling in sponsorship deals with the U.F.C. and its fighters.

**CNN**, September 18, 2008:

### Mixed Martial Arts Fighting its Way into the Mainstream

Dana White, along with his partners Frank and Lorenzo Fertitta, purchased the fledgling Ultimate Fighting Championship for \$2 million in 2001. White's goal was to establish the UFC as the Super Bowl of the sport. He helped legitimize it by establishing rules and promoting the fighters' skills instead of showcasing the brutality. Forbes estimates the company will make \$250 million this year.

**Sports Illustrated**, May 22, 2007:

### MMA's success is changing the sports landscape

The sport of mixed martial arts (MMA), of which Ultimate Fighting Championship is the most popular enterprise, has penetrated the defense of the mainstream and applied a choke hold to that golden 18-to-34 male demographic. The UFC's weekly reality show, *The Ultimate Fighter*, on Spike TV, often eclipses the television ratings of the NBA and baseball playoffs in that target audience. The names of UFC fighters are some of the most popular entries in Internet search engines come fight time. UFC events do bigger pay-per-view numbers than any pro wrestling event or boxing card this side of Mayweather-De La Hoya. (UFC's 2006 PPV revenues were almost \$223 million, compared with \$177 million for boxing on HBO and \$200 million for WWE.)

**Forbes**, May 5, 2008:

### Ultimate Cash Machine

It's the Ultimate Money Machine. That night before the Super Bowl 10,700 fans packed the arena, paying an average of \$340 for a ticket to witness nine mixed martial arts fights. Another 500,000 fans paid \$45 (\$55 for high definition) to watch five of the nine fights at home. The total haul from the event: \$25 million.

**Variety**, February 29, 2008:

### MMA wins over audiences; May launch next big action star

Once blasted by state commissioners for its brutal bouts, the Ultimate Fighting Championship has won over audiences. Its live events regularly sell out in minutes, ratings for its shows on Spike are surging, and merchandise from brands like Tapout is flying off the shelves. Its athletes, with appellations like Mask, Ice Man and Rampage, have become household names among 18- to 34-year-old males. With that kind of success, it's no surprise Hollywood's come calling.