

No Longer in Hibernation: Olson Coaching, Teaching and Training

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About a year ago, if you asked Casey “The Underdog” Olson what would become of his fight career over the next 12 months, he might not have responded with a hint of pessimism. “I am both excited and nervous, at the same time,” Olson wrote in his personal journal [on] January 11, 2007, [while] on a plane ride to Las Vegas.

After signing on for a fight with World Extreme Cagefighting in Las Vegas and an undefeated record in tow, Olson (5-0) was headed to the city of lights to face stiffer opposition, full of optimism. “This could be the start of the next part of my career,” Olson wrote before landing to take part in pre-fight physicals. “Fight is cancelled,” read the journal the very next day, on January 12. “Could this be the end of my career?” Olson pondered.

A year later, after a blood clot was discovered near his brain, along with a surgically repaired two-inch tear in his ankle tendon, Olson is still positive. All of that, on top of a split decision loss on April 7 to Isaiah Hill in Stockton, the first in his career, made for a rough 2007 in the Underdog camp.

When asked if the knowledge of either injury lingers in his mind during training, and heading into the upcoming fight Olson responded, “I know my body better than anyone, and coming into this fight I feel comfortable. Nothing in life is guaranteed.”

“[The physicians] didn’t know how serious it was at the time,” said Olson, referring to the cancellation of the fight and the concern surrounding his condition. “They found out that clot has been there [for sometime]. It doesn’t cause my body any harm, and the blood seems to flow around it.” Swearing that

the only time he thinks about the condition is when someone asks about it, Olson is perfectly comfortable discussing his sinus condition just days before [an] MMA fight.

More recently, Olson fought in PFC 3: Step Up against opponent Brandon Jinnies (2-6) [on] July 19th, and had to deal with yet another setback... “[The] morning of the fight, my ankle started swelling up out of nowhere. There was no way I could cancel another fight,” said Olson. After a lackluster win over Jinnies, Olson went to have the ankle scoped out to remove bone chips, and ended up having a two-inch tear repaired on his ankle tendon.

Facing nearly five months in rehab, Olson started to make some changes in his life. “I had met Coach Campbell during the summer when he came and interviewed for the job and we really hit it off,” said Olson about his first encounter with the [new] Buchanan head coach C.T. Campbell last summer. “The guy was given the program in August, without anyone to help him out. I told him I’d help. The guy’s old school. Wrestling is what I love, and I’m just glad to have it back as a part of my life.”

With a team ranked fourth in the state, Olson has to be loving the situation in the wrestling room at Buchanan. Justin Arredondo (130 lbs.) is ranked atop in the state, Stephen West (160 lbs.) is currently ranked 3rd and Andrew Balch is currently ranked 6th. “This does a couple of things for me,” said Olson about working with the young wrestling talent every day. “I think about helping them, and for me to push them, I have to push myself. For me to tell them to, I have to show them, and for me to get into their heads about pushing themselves, I have to do it myself.”



A MAN OF EXPERIENCE: Former Bulldog[s] wrestler Casey “The Underdog” Olson [shaking Justin Arredondo’s hand] is an assistant wrestling coach at Buchanan.

The pushing seems to be working with the likes of Arredondo, West and Balch. All three Buchanan stand-outs walked away from the Doc Buchanan tourney with gold medals and cowboy hats, so something must be getting through. “These guys are going to be good anyway. They’re slick, smooth, strong and quick. I just want to make them smarter, and for them to push themselves in every match, no matter who their opponent is,” added Olson.

Sounds like sound advice from a wrestling veteran, who has just spent the most difficult year in his life... As for the near future, Olson is ready to face-off with newcomer Scott Brommage (1-2) in an 18-fight card that features former UFC combatant Diego Sariaiva. Obvious questions will loom as how ready the Olson ankle will be for the action, to which Olson simply responds, “It will be a good fight at home again, and he had better be ready, because I hate losing in front of people I know.”