

The Underdog Is Hardly An Underdog!

THE VALLEY AMATEUR

By Tom Avila and Shelly Slaven / Oct. 11, 2007

The Valley Amateur caught up with Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Casey “The Underdog” Olson recently and asked him about his past fights, his relationship with Ultimate Fighting Champion[ship] (UFC) Chuck “The Iceman” Liddell, and what the future hold for the young, former Fresno State wrestler.

Casey Olson, 27, is a former Clovis High, Fresno City and Fresno State stand-out wrestler. Olson was fortunate enough to meet Liddell through... mutual friends [that] were training together... about eight years ago. Before long, Olson and Liddell struck up a friendship that would prove to be a lasting and beneficial one. Liddell would go to Olson’s college tournaments and encourage the young wrestler, while Olson would go watch Liddell’s fights and cheer him on.

After Olson [left] Fresno State in 2004, he would spend days off from work training with Liddell and his fighters. That’s where Olson learned Jiu-jitsu and stand-up fighting. After several months, Olson was getting anxious to get back into wrestling and try some fighting. He quit his full-time job as a restaurant manager to train full-time for one month with the Champion, Chuck Liddell. What an opportunity for the young MMA fighter! Now, on a wing and a prayer, Casey Olson is finding success in MMA.

This past January, the 5’8” [and] 155 lb. Olson had the [chance] to fight in the Ultimate Fighter 5 Finale in [Las Vegas]. However, a mandatory MRI exam sidelined Olson for about three months. A blood clot was found in his brain. Fortunately, after [extensive] testing, it was determined to not be a life-threatening situation. Olson was able to

get clearance from physicians and UFC officials in March.

Locally, Casey Olson can be found at the Tachi Palace [Hotel and Casino] in Lemoore, where he is a featured MMA fighter in the Palace Fighting Championship (PFC). Since the Tachi Palace... decided to venture into promoting MMA here in the Valley, both the fighters and the fans have all benefited from the exposure. The events are sell-outs every time!

Casey Olson’s record is currently 6-1 with two TKOs. Olson is scheduled to fight again in October and November. One of those fights will be a Central Valley Cage fighting bout at Fresno’s Selland Arena.

When asked about fighting another local favorite, Billy Evangelista, Olson has nothing but respect for his friend and former Fresno City College teammate. Evangelista and Olson both train, from time-to-time, at Pacific Martial Arts in Fresno. If they did agree to a head-to-head match, Olson says that Evangelista’s standup would be the most difficult for him to overcome. Olson called Evangelista “the Valley’s best-kept secret.”

Olson was asked by *The Valley Amateur* what his fighting specialties are. Olson says wrestling is, by far, his strongest style, followed by a ground attack and rampage-style fighting. Olson said you can plan on fighting a fighter a certain way, but that is usually never goes the way you plan.

“You just got to be ready for each athlete,” replied Olson.

Fellow reporter Tom Avila, had the opportunity, first-hand, to see what Casey “The Underdog” Olson had to



offer his opponents. Tom said “I had a chance [to] get in the ring recently with the 155-pounder and asked him to take me down. He didn’t hesitate to trip me up and before I knew it, I was up in the air. He gently slammed me down and easily put me in a Kimura. I was surprised by his strength, because he lifted and kept me in the air for about three seconds, then dropped me. I have no doubt that ‘The Underdog’ will continue to run through opponents on his way to the top.”

Olson recalled the feeling he had in anticipation of his first fight. “I was excited and happy, but after they closed the door on the cage, I knew it was on!” said Olson. “There was no way out!”

Although Olson [has almost] earned a BA degree in recreation administration while at Fresno State, he had dedicated this time of his life to the MMA and [to] what the future may hold for him.

The Valley Amateur wishes Casey Olson the best of luck in his future fights.