
MMA

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Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is a full-contact combat sport that allows striking and grappling, both standing and on the ground, using techniques from various combat sports and martial arts.

Short History

In Ancient Greece, there was a sport called **pankration** (?????????), which featured a combination of grappling and striking skills similar to those found in modern MMA. Pankration was formed by a combination of the already established wrestling and boxing traditions and, in Olympic terms, first featured in the 33rd Olympiad in 648 BC. All strikes and holds were allowed with the exception of biting and gouging, which were banned. The fighters, called pankratiasts, fought until someone could not continue or signaled submission by raising their index finger; there were no rounds.

During the early 20th century, various mixed-style contests took place throughout Japan and in the countries of the Four Asian Tigers. In Brazil, there was the sport of Vale Tudo, in which fighters from various styles fought with little to no rules. The Gracie family was known to promote **Vale Tudo** matches as a way to promote their own **Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu** style. An early high-profile mixed martial arts bout was Masahiko Kimura vs. Hélio Gracie in 1951, fought between judoka Masahiko Kimura and Brazilian jiu jitsu founder Hélio Gracie in Brazil. In the West, the concept of combining elements of multiple martial arts was popularized by Bruce Lee's **Jeet Kune Do** during the late 1960s to early 1970s. A precursor to modern MMA was the 1976 Muhammad Ali vs. Antonio Inoki bout, fought between boxer Muhammad Ali and wrestler Antonio Inoki in Japan, where it later inspired the foundation of Pancrase in 1993 and Pride Fighting Championships in 1997.

In 1993, the Gracie family brought Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, developed in Brazil from the 1920s, to the United States by founding the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) MMA promotion company. The company held an event with almost no rules, mostly due the influence of Art Davie and Rorion Gracie attempting to replicate Vale Tudo fights that existed in Brazil, and would later implement a different set of rules (example: eliminating kicking a grounded opponent), which differed from other leagues which were more in favour of realistic fights.