

## Preview: UFC 73

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UFC 73: Stacked takes place tonight, live from the Arco Arena in Sacramento, California ... and the event is aptly named. The card is loaded with big fights, four of which could be main events by my cousin's count. Two title fights, the return of a UFC legend, and one of Pride's greatest fighters stepping into the octagon. The Spoon Man previews tonight's UFC pay-per-view event.



UFC 73 Stacked will be live from the Arco Arena in Sacramento. It has to be the most perfectly named event in the history of sports. The fight card is simply out of this world. There are four fights taking place that could easily be main events. Two title fights, a UFC legend, and a former Pride champion all in one. Stacked pretty much sums it up.

The fight that is actually billed as the main event has Anderson "The Spider" Silva taking on Nate "The Great" Marquardt for the Middleweight Championship. Both fighters are very well rounded but their strengths are opposite.

Silva might be the best striker in all of mixed martial arts. He has dynamite in both hands as well as both feet. He is 3-0 since coming to the UFC and the beating he put on Rich Franklin to take his belt was as brutal as it gets. If he can keep the fight standing, he will be leaving the octagon early and with his belt still around his waist.

Nate Marquardt is just as skilled as Silva, the only difference is the fact he wants to take the fight to the ground. He possesses one of the best ground games in the Middleweight division. His 4-0 record in the UFC is excellent, three of those wins have been by decision. If he can get Silva down and work for a submission, he has a very good chance to pull the upset. Marquardt isn't the striker Anderson

Silva is and needs to look to get takedowns early and often.

Silva in my view is just too dangerous for just about everyone in the division. He will get the win and set up a rematch against former champ Rich Franklin.

The second title bout of the evening is going to be something special I believe. Lightweight title holder Sean &quot;The Muscle Shark&quot; Sherk is putting his crown on the line versus Hermes Franca. The 4th of July just passed but this has fireworks written all over it.

Sean Sherk is one of the most dominant wrestlers to come into the UFC in a long time. The fact that this guys weighs 155 pounds is just crazy. He is simply a physical specimen. His power is off the charts and that is what he uses in the cage to dominate his opponents. Ground and pound is his best asset and he uses it often. When Sherk gets fighters to the ground, they are going to have a hard time getting up.

Hermes Franca is a lightweight that hits like a heavyweight. He has great hands and is going to need them if he wants UFC gold. Franca's ground game is also solid and has won two of his last three fights by way of submission. The way he will win this fight is by getting Sherk to stand with him and by stuffing the takedowns that everyone knows is coming.

I look for the UFC to crown a new Lightweight Champion tonight. Franca has the standup edge and to me that is going to be the difference. This match on paper is easily one of the most evenly matched fights this year.

Another great fight on the card is &quot;The Huntington Beach Bad Boy&quot; Tito Ortiz taking on Rashad &quot;Sugar&quot; Evans. Ortiz is the former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion and Evans won the Season 2 Finale of the Ultimate Fighter Reality show.

Both fighters have a similar style. They love to ground and pound and come from wrestling backgrounds. I am looking at this fight as the old veteran taking on the new up and comer. This fight could have huge long term effects for both guys.

If Ortiz is able to beat the undefeated Evans, he will still be in title contention. On the other hand, if he was to lose, a lot of fight fans are going to say the sport has passed him by and his style just won't cut it anymore.

Rashad Evans is almost in a win-win situation tonight. With a win, he would be the one getting closer to a title fight. If he is defeated, he will get much needed big fight experience and his level of competition would have increased dramatically.

Tito Ortiz is my favorite fighter and has been for years. He needs this win in a very bad way. I don't see him being denied and his ground and pound along with his conditioning are going to be the deciding factors in this fight. Rashad is a good young fighter, but he is in Ortiz's way.

In the last few months, the UFC has brought in a lot of talent from Pride. Another one of those big names will make his octagon debut.

Antonio "Minotauro" Nogueira facing off with Heath Herring also known as "The Crazy Horse." Nogueira is a heavyweight that has the feet of a lightweight. His overall skill level is going to be too much for Herring to handle and I look for this one to end with Minotauro with his hand raised in probably the first round.

## **Full fight card:**

UFC Middleweight Championship:  
Anderson Silva vs. Nate Marquardt

UFC Lightweight Championship:  
Sean Sherk vs. Hermes Franca

Tito Ortiz vs. Rashad Evans  
Kenny Florian vs. Alvin Robinson  
Heath Herring vs. Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira  
Stephan Bonnar vs. Mike Nickels  
Diego Saraiva vs. Jorge Gurgel  
Drew Fickett vs. Chris Lytle  
Mark Bocek vs. Frankie Edgar

When I look at all the fights tonight, I get the chills. It has the makings of one of the best lineups in UFC history. Every single matchup is top notch and could go either way.