

Preview: UFC 97

Written by {ga=fightdr}

Thursday, April 16 2009 7:00 PM -

After nearly a month and a half since the UFC came to Columbus, the latest pay per view event is finally here. The fans in Montreal, Canada are in for a treat, and so are all the UFC fans worldwide. Two of the biggest names in mixed martial arts history will be stepping back into the octagon and both have a lot to prove. My cousin previews UFC 97.



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Anderson Silva is considered the best pound for pound fighter in mma today. His striking ability is second to none and the killer instinct he possesses is downright scary. Thales Leites is next in line to try and solve the riddle that is "The Spider."

June of 2006 was the first time UFC fans witnessed Anderson Silva inside the octagon. He has been more dominant than any fighter in the world since then. However, the last time Silva fought, he wasn't his normal self. Back at UFC 90 Silva was in with Patrick Cote and Silva only got the victory due to a Cote injury. Silva danced around and showboated more than he fought. If not for a torn up knee, Cote had a legitimate chance to take Silva's middleweight title. I had a feeling that Leites will not be as lucky.

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Thales Leites, on paper, has earned a title shot. He has rattled off five wins in a row in the UFC after suffering a loss in his debut. His victory over Nate Marquardt to me wasn't justified. Points were deducted from Marquardt that shouldn't have been and Leites didn't do enough in my opinion to get his hand raised.

Leites is known for his ground game and that will be the only way he can beat Silva. His striking attack is good but nowhere near the level of Silva. The fact that Anderson Silva is coming off of a lackluster performance does not bode well for the Brazilian Leites. I expect a blowout in the main event and another impressive win for the best fighter in the world.

The co-main event to me is must see. Two of the biggest names in the history of mixed martial arts will step in with one another. Both fighters, Chuck Liddell and Mauricio "Shogun" Rua, have a ton to prove and everyone should be tuned in to find out what happens.

Chuck Liddell is the most well known fighter ever. He was the face of the UFC for years, and still very well could be. The long time light heavyweight champion has fought a who's who in the sport. After a seven fight win streak, "The Iceman" has dropped three out of his last four fights. Two of those losses have come via very violent knockouts. There are many people that believe Chuck Liddell should retire.

Shogun Rua made his name in the PRIDE organization and was easily one of the most feared fighters in the world. Since coming to the UFC in 2007, he has had two fight and both were very shaky performances. His debut was against Forrest Griffin and he gassed out midway thru the first round and ended up choked out in the third. Back in January, we saw the fatigue again, this time against Hall of Famer Mark Coleman. Shogun barely escaped with a TKO win that was questionable at best.

Two very hungry top level fighters with everything on the line adds up to be

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potentially one of the biggest fights of the year. The winner of this one gets their name back into title contention. The loser drops way down the ladder and might have to reconsider where their career is headed. I cannot wait for this battle of superstars.

My sleeper fight of the night is Jason MacDonald versus Nate Quarry. Both of these guys bring everything they have every time out. Each guy has the heart of a champion but can't seem to get over the hump or win the bigger fights they are in. I expect an all out war with the loser looking for a new employer because the UFC might give them the pink slip.

Full fight card:

Middleweight champ Anderson Silva vs. Thales Leites

Chuck Liddell vs. Mauricio "Shogun" Rua

Krzysztof Soszynski vs. Brian Stann

Cheick Kongo vs. Antoni Hardonk

Luis Cane vs. Steve Cantwell

Vinicius Magalhaes vs. Eliot Marshall

Xavier Foupa-Pokam vs. Denis Kang

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Jason MacDonald vs. Nate Quarry

Ed Herman vs. David Loiseau

David Bielkheden vs. Mark Bocek

Ryo Chonan vs. T.J. Grant

Sam Stout vs. Matt Wiman

The UFC is finally back, it seems like it has been months since there was a huge event. I think fight fans are getting spoiled and want a card every weekend. As they say, the best things come to those who wait. Tonight's card is sick in my opinion. I love every fight and cannot wait for that cage door to close. This is one I wouldn't miss. Tune in and thank me later.