



The Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas is the home to this evening's Ultimate Fighting Championship event. UFC 126 has the star power to make this one of the best fight cards that we have seen in some time. There are three fights that could easily be a main event. One title fight, four former champions, and a few guys that will be champions in the near future.

When the WEC and UFC merged into one, I saw the biggest benefit being deeper pay per view cards and other events that wouldn't be watered down with some talent that probably doesn't deserve to fight where the elite fight. Tonight's card is evidence that this will be the case.

In the main event you have the longest reigning title holder, Anderson Silva, taking on a former champion in Vitor Belfort. This fight is going to be off the charts. I watched the weigh in yesterday and got goose bumps and was wishing I didn't have to wait for them to step into the octagon.

Anderson Silva, while on a long winning streak, has looked unimpressive at times. He has cleaned out the 185 pound weight class and many observers think he might have gotten bored with some of the competition he was facing. That won't be the case tonight, Vitor Belfort is a

true treat to the title.

Both fighters are very dangerous in the standup game. If this turns into a battle on the feet, we might be in for fight of the year. Silva has the better kicks and more discipline when he strikes but Belfort has lightning quick hands, something Silva probably hasn't seen for a few years. As a fan, I don't want to see this fight go to the ground at all.

I think we will see a new champion tonight. Belfort is hungry and has a lot to prove. Even though Silva had dominated and won 13 fights in a row, it has been some time since he has fought the caliber of Belfort. This fight on its own is worth the price of a ticket or the pay per view.

The fight billed as the co-feature has two of the most entertaining fighters the sport has ever seen. Former champions Rich "Ace" Franklin and Forrest Griffin have crowd pleasing styles, great attitudes, and are just wonderful for the sport of mixed martial arts.

This is another bout that I wouldn't expect a lot of takedown attempts. Both fighters have solid standup and even better chins. This will be a nonstop action packed fight for the entire fifteen minutes. This is a tossup fight that i'm going to just sit back and enjoy. If you like wrestling and fights on the ground, I don't think this one will be for you.

Another contest that could easily be a main event has two of the youngest brightest stars in the light heavyweight division going toe to toe. Jon "Bones" Jones looks to keep his hype train running as he will take on Ryan "Darth" Bader.

Jones might be the most hyped up fighter right now and rightfully so. He has a unique style, knocks people out, and gets better every time he steps into the cage. He will have his hands full with the undefeated All American wrestler in Bader.

The submission games of these two young studs might be the difference tonight. We haven't seen a lot from either guy when it comes to forcing their competition to tap. Bader will look to use his wrestling and get to the ground. Jones will want to stand so if it hits the mat, the fight could take a very interesting turn one way or another.

Both of these guys are future stars in my opinion. They have the "it" factor that is hard to find. Even though one of them will taste defeat tonight, they will have a bright future ahead of them. The winner will be on the fast track to a title shot and superstardom.

Guys to watch making their UFC debuts tonight include Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone who takes on Paul Kelly. Chad Mendes, a Team Alpha Male up and comer will scrap with Michihiro Omigawa. Cerrone and Mendes were standouts in the WEC. Also making his first trip into the octagon is Japanese sensation Norifumi "Kid" Yamamoto. With a few wins, Yamamoto will be in the title picture in the 135 pound division.

MAIN CARD (Pay-per-view)

Champ Anderson Silva vs. Vitor Belfort (for middleweight title)

Forrest Griffin vs. Rich Franklin

Jake Ellenberger vs. Carlos Eduardo Rocha

Ryan Bader vs. Jon Jones

Antonio Banuelos vs. Miguel Torres

PRELIMINARY CARD (Spike TV)

Paul Kelly vs. Donald Cerrone

Chad Mendes vs. Michihiro Omigawa

PRELIMINARY CARD (Facebook)

Demetrious Johnson vs. Norifumi "Kid" Yamamoto

PRELIMINARY CARD (Untelevised)

Gabe Ruediger vs. Paul Taylor

Kyle Kingsbury vs. Ricardo Romero

Mike Pierce vs. Kenny Robertson

Wow. It doesn't get much better than that. I don't expect a deeper fight card this year and I hope I'm wrong on that. This slate of fights is unreal, off the charts good. 2011 is going to be a great year for the sport of mixed martial arts, fight fans everywhere, and the Ultimate Fighting Championship. A huge part of that will be because of UFC 126. Tune in tonight.