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## Area MMA Athletes Battle in Big Show

JUNE 02ND 2013 BY STAFF WRITER

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**Josh Faries and Frank Cortez Win Big**

**Brittany Dugas Wins Cage of Honor Title**

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**Scott City, Missouri** - Saturday night was filled with fireworks and exciting MMA cage action as B & L Promotions held to the old adage, "The Show Must Go On"! A unique outdoor event, the tents were set up on the parking lot of Minor's Harley Davidson in Scott City and prepared for a great lineup of athletes to show their talent and toughness inside "the cage".

The storm weather brought about worries and concerns all week for Brad Wick Sr, owner of B & L Promotions. Wick has been instrumental in providing MMA entertainment and venues throughout Southern Missouri.

One of the exciting fights last night was a special event that involved two young athletes from the Kennett, Missouri area. Without a high school wrestling program, Britt Harris and Johnnie Brooks opened the program with a grappling match. Grappling would be considered more of an American wrestling style with no kicking or punching allowed.

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An event that provides a little less contact, the exhibition match did not

lack for any action as both young men displayed incredible athleticism and quickness inside the cage. All grappling events do not determine a winner or loser but end in a draw. Fortunately, Harris and Brooks were evenly matched and provided a great opening entertainment for the MMA fans.

With twelve other matches on the scorecard, several fighters were from the Dexter area and train locally. These athletes come from Dexter, Clarkton, Bloomfield, Jackson and Poplar Bluff, committing many hours to the preparation and training for the time in the spotlight. Being in shape and athletic, these men and women must be physical and emotionally tough.

A feature fight Saturday night that was particularly important for the Dark Horse MMA crowd was Josh Faries. The Dark Horse MMA fans and teammates led Josh to the ring dressed in their red team shirts and building the excitement for the match.

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Josh fights in the Cage of Honor Heavyweight class and his opponent was Robert Gloyd. All expectations were for a lengthy match as both Gloyd and Faries looked to be equal in size. But as the defending champion with an 8-10-1 record, all predictions were in favor of Faries to be the winner of this featured event.

Faries thrilled the crowd with a quick match that ended early in the first round. Josh was announced the winner only 3:36 into the match and retained his title as the champion of the Cage of Honor heavyweight class.

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Frank Cortez was the first of the local fighters. Frank is from

Clarkton but trains at the gym in Dexter. He is a member of the Dark Horse MMA team in Dexter. In the heavyweight 205 lbs class, Cortez is undefeated in the MMA Cage of Honor events.

In a hard fought brutal match, Cortez was able carry the match through three rounds and retain his belt by decision. You could visually see the brutality of the ring after the match in visiting with Cortez.

"It was a crazy fight against Dalton," said Cortez. "I still can't believe it all happened and

I'm really happy."

If you want to see true action, the Cage of Honor had two female matches that really brought the MMA crowd to their feet. One might think that the girl's action would be a little dull, but that would be completely untrue. The ladies tend to be a little more quick and definitely become more aggressive when they face adversity in the ring.

Local MMA fighter, Michelle Ray, </images/2012 Article Pics/Sports/MMA Mid5.jpg> was the first female match on the schedule as she was Shawna Tyler. In the initial rounds, Ray was powerful and in control. However, midway through round two, the scales began to change leading into a final round that was filled with hard fought action for the win.

The match went the full three rounds and Shawna was able to edge out Ray by only a few points for the win. Proving the quality of this match, the Cage of Honor referee lifted both arms of the fighters initially showing honor to both fighters. His next move did show Shawna Tyler as the winner of the 125 lb weight class.

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By design, the "Main Event" is always designed to be one of the best matches of the night. Saturday's Cage of Honor event did not disappoint anyone with Brittany Dugas of Poplar Bluff, Missouri pitted against the current Cage of Honor Champion, Jessie Laubacker of Memphis, Tennessee.

An incredible three round match was on tap for the crowd and delivered from all levels. A large following of Poplar Bluff fan for Dugas were on hand to help keep the excitement going on both sides of the cage, supporting Brittany with chants of motivation.

Dugas offered the champion Laubacker all the battle needed in the opening rounds. Laubacker, a Memphis Police officer, was determined and quick to offer a challenge back to her opponent. In the final round, Dugas was able to deliver some point gathering moves that ultimately led to an armbar win at 3:27 in the final round. Brittany Dugas was awarded the Cage of Honor East 125 lb Women's title and belt.

"We really appreciate everyone for being at the show," noted Brad Wick Sr. "Our goal is to continue to expand the sport in our area and bring bigger and better things for local MMA. We have some huge things in the works for the future."

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