

Three Queens going for the Gold



The first tournament event in the UCC series has been a success for the Queens of the Cage. Three stable members came back as winners from the tournaments they competed in, and earned the possibility of fighting for a belt in the upcoming event. The Argentinian sensation Belén Rodríguez extended her incredible winning streak by wiping out the competition in the welterweight mini dress tournament. She started out with a first-round KO by means of punches against the Korean Hee Young Park. After getting warmed up by using her hands, it was with her feet that she destroyed the competition, first knocking out Melissa Benoist with a head kick, and then breaking the ribs of Kayslee Collins and Hannah Simone with her deadly middle kicks. With seven wins in a row under her belt, Belén is now awaited by the biggest challenge in

her career so far: a fight for the welterweight belt. She is going to meet with Vixens' Lily James, who has the same score as her in the UCC. We are all impatient to see how Belén will respond to this challenge. "I am so excited about this opportunity", says the Argentinian. "I did not expect to rise so quickly to this level", she adds. "Lily has some more experience than me in the cage and has been impressive so far, so I know this will be a tough fight, but I am training hard and will give all myself in the cage". According to the information in our possession, Belén is training really hard for the most important fight of her career so far. A lot of help during training is coming from her sister Cecilia, who did not compete in the last tournament. "Belén is very focused on this fight", says Cecilia, "and I do my best to help her prepare". "Fighting in the same weight class we can help each other a lot", she adds, "even if this has the disadvantage that we may be fighting for the same title in the future". This, however, is a different story. For now, it is Belén who has the opportunity to grab that title, while Cecilia must focus for her upcoming fight, that will be against the Vixen Bonnie Wright.

In the middleweight swimsuit tournament it was Russia's Darya Klishina who claimed the gold. Darya outboxed Allison Stokke, her stable mate Lauren Gottlieb and Rebecca Romijn, and then finished Sabine Jemeljanova with her furious ground and pound. With a spotless 7-0 record in the UCC following her almost perfect 7-1 in the

UMMA, Darya is definitely one of the most talented girls out there. Will it be enough to beat Strikeforce's Gigi Hadid in the upcoming title fight? We'll soon see. "I look forward to this fight", says Darya. "Our styles are very similar, so I expect a brawl". "Fighting for a title has been my goal since I started in the UMMA, so I am excited that this opportunity has now materialized in the UCC. I am going there to give a show". Lauren Gottlieb, the Queens of the Cage fighter that was defeated by Darya in a fight between stable mates, confirms that Darya is ready for anyone. "She is incredibly focused and determined, and she hits hard", Lauren says. "You can trust me if I tell you that Darya has all it takes to get the title".

Just like Belén and Darya, the heavyweight Gabrielle Reece is also set for the most important fight of her career. Thanks to her triumph in the evening gown tournament, Gabrielle will fight the sensational Tatyana Chernova for the heavyweight title. During the tournament, Gabrielle has shown the world what her kicks are capable of, by knocking out Shannen Doherty, Megan Gale and Taylor Swift and forcing Adrienne Palicki to retire from the fight with an eye injury. Gabrielle's record is now 6-1, with her only loss coming from Jessica Ashley, who did not take part in the last tournament. In her title fight against Chernova, Gabrielle will have to be at her best. Chernova, the winner of the workout tournament, has been perhaps the most devastating fighter in the entire league so far. During the last tournament, she has put an end to the unbeaten status of two other Queens of the Cage of the caliber of Yelena Isinbayeva and Blanka Vlasic. This should be enough to prove what a formidable challenge Chernova will be to Gabrielle. "I am totally aware that Tatyana is a real fighting machine", says Gabrielle. "She is unbeaten in the UCC, and her only defeat in the UMMA came from none less than Laila Ali". "Her boxing is extremely dangerous, and has more fighting experience than me, but I have a bigger body size and I hit hard too, so we'll see what happens", adds the statuesque American, who looks confident that she can prove a challenge for the Russian KO artist. Yelena Isinbayeva and Blanka Vlasic, who have just lost against Chernova, may give Gabrielle precious information during training sessions. "They are helping me a lot," confirms Reece, "but in the end I know that when the cage door closes there will only be me and Tatyana, and I can only count on myself".





Action shots



A moment of the fight between Belén Rodríguez and Melissa Benoist.



Darya Klishina setting up her ground and pound during the tournament's final against Sabine Jemeljanova.



Gabrielle Reece entering the cage for the tournament final against Taylor Swift.