Just when you thought the UFC was running out of aces to pull from their sleeve, the news that Mirko “Cro Cop” Filipovic and Quinton “Rampage” Jackson had signed on and were scheduled to fight on this weekend’s UFC 67: All or nothing struck a refreshing chord among mixed martial arts enthusiasts. The pay-per-view is set to take place at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas.

Filipovic, or “Cro Cop” as he’s called since he used to play double duty as part of a special forces police unit in Croatia, is a top-five pound-for-pounder that’s a must-see fight artist. He’s the 2006 PRIDE Open Weight Grand Prix Champion and holds a record of 24 and 4. His striking combined with his kicking ability has made him one of the most exciting M.M.A. stars to ever practice the savage science.

His most defining win came against Brazilian terror Wanderlei Silva who was kicked unconscious by one of Filipovic’s powerful shins. He was also in the ring against the supreme ruler of combat sports in Fedor Emelianenko. He lost a decision in a great bout where he had his moments. Emelianenko showed the damage on his face but ultimately was able to outwork Filipovic.

Filipovic and Jackson were part of the Japanese M.M.A. company Pride FC. Although Pride is a highly regarded organization, it’s safe to say that the big bucks and exposure generated by UFC’s massive pay-per-view buys proved too tempting for both men. They are incredibly popular in Japan and are hoping to conquer U.S. audiences with their unique and fearsome styles.

“Cro Cop” Filipovic will be facing Eddie Sanchez, a rising star in the UFC who’s a powerful right hander with a solid ground game. He’s no stranger to San Diego aficionados that saw him build his 8-0 record on the “Total Combat” shows. “That’s where I got my start. And that’s what brought me to the UFC and this is where I’m staying,” remarked Sanchez after his first UFC win over Mario Neto in September of ‘06.

Sanchez believes that being matched against a supreme talent like Filipovic in only his second UFC match has the potential to be a blessing. “When I got the call from my manager saying that my next opponent is Mirko Crocop I got very excited. It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity and I didn’t even think twice about taking the fight. I have a game plan and I believe in fighting and beating the best in order to be the best.”

Quinton “Rampage” Jackson (25-6) holds the distinction of being the last man to defeat UFC superstar Chuck “The Iceman” Liddell. Liddell is the highly regarded UFC Light Heavyweight champion who stopped Tito Ortiz and Randy Couture twice. The win against Liddell was as decisive as anyone could’ve asked for.

Jackson had the simple formula on how to beat the Californian who’s so adept at striking.

Strike harder and faster. You get to Liddell’s chin as quickly and as many times as you can. Don’t waste your time trying to wrestle him down without softening up his head first.

Liddell was practically out on his back after having been taken down by Jackson and grounded and pounded until the stoppage came about in the second round. Liddell confirmed to TSS that Jackson’s been the proverbial “thorn in his side.”

“I’ve been asking the UFC to make that rematch for two years,” remarked Liddell early this year before his first round devastation of Renato “Babalu” Sobral. Being familiar with how the UFC operates, this rematch should happen within the year. Jackson will face Marvin Eastman who will walk into the ring with a 13 and 6 record.

The main event of the card features Brazilian Anderson “Spider” Silva defending his middleweight crown against The Ultimate Fighter 4 winner Travis Lutter. Silva sports a record of 17 and 4. He’s coming off a devastating win over former world champion Rich Franklin in a fight that earned him the title. Lutter carries a 12 and 3 record and is on a three fight win streak including a defeat over Patrick Cote which won him the right for a shot at Silva. Both men are excellent on the ground with Silva also being incredibly effective on his feet.

Rich Franklin felt Silva’s wrath as numerous Muay Thai knees slammed into Franklin’s face rendering him dizzy and defenseless after every landed knee. The first round knockout was considered a major win for Silva since Franklin was a well regarded titlist.

Also on the card will be Roger Huerta against John Halverson in a lightweight bout and Patrick Cote vs. Scott Smith in a 185 lb. confrontation.

Silva vs. Lutter, “Crocop” Filipovic and “Rampage” Jackson on the same card? That’s my version of must see TV.