It's been a tumultuous few months for former Elite XC Lightweight champion K.J. Noons. Having been stripped of his title by the powers that be at Elite XC for refusing to defend the belt against Nick Diaz, Noons has taken a beating from the Mixed Martial arts media as well.

One of the more popular websites, Sherdog.com, went so far as to question Noon's courage stating that Noons was doing a great imitation of a coward for not agreeing to face Diaz. Noons had previously stopped Diaz via cuts in the first round of their first meeting to win the title. He defended once against Yves Edwards with an impressive stoppage and then was ordered by Elite XC to defend against Diaz. Noons refused.

Noons cited a disparity in purses as the reason he wouldn't fight Diaz. He calls the notion of him being scared as just plain ridiculous. "Both Nick and myself are professional fighters. Fighters at our level don't fear anyone," Noons said. "This was about me making one third the money that Diaz was making even though I was the defending champion."

Noon's refusal to defend led to a very public dispute with his promoters at Elite XC. The company eventually stripped Noons of his belt which will now be up for grabs as Diaz and Eddie Alvarez clash for the vacant title.

At this point, the twenty five year old's future as a mixed martial artist is uncertain. "I'm a free agent right now for both boxing and MMA," Noons said. "Right now I'm going to focus more on my boxing. I have a fight scheduled in L.A. so we'll see how that turns out."

He was originally signed to both an MMA and a boxing contract with Elite XC and their partner Gary Shaw until their recent spat. "I never left boxing," Noons said. "My intention was to box under Gary's company but I never got the chance."

Noons (7-1, 5 KOs as a pro boxer) will be campaigning as a 154 pounder on November 13th at the Expo Center in El Monte, California against Alejandro Bogarin. He's excited to get back in the ring. "I'm training at City Boxing with Pepe Morales. It's all about getting back to the fundamentals and getting back in shape," Noons said. "Boxing is so different than MMA. The whole goal is to get to the form that made me an MMA champion."

Noons is seeking to become the first successful mixed martial artist that crosses over to big time boxing. "My goal is to hold world titles in both boxing and MMA," Noons said. "I plan to put in the work and slowly climb my way to a title shot. I know it's going to take time."

Having grown up as the son of Karl Noons, a professional kick boxer, K.J. eventually realized that fighting was his future. "Since my father was a fighter, martial arts were brought to my attention early in life. I worked at it all through high school," Noons said. "When it came time for college, I already had all this experience in the fight game. So why go study for a long period of time? I had been working at my profession since I was a kid. When it was time for college, I

already had a PHD in fighting. It was always my intention to fight or coach or own a gym."

Noons was born in Hawaii but now trains out of "America's Finest City" San Diego, California. He was once deemed as MMA's "Golden Boy". The one whose marketable looks and talent was supposed to help Elite XC climb successfully into the MMA promotional octagon against companies like the UFC and the now defunct IFL.

Maybe Noon's debut on Showtime should've been an ominous sign of future things to come for Elite XC, which is rumored to be struggling after Kimbo Slice's career was derailed in 14 seconds. Noons was matched against one Charles "Krazy Horse" Bennett. Bennett is a brawler with a brutal punch who was considered dangerous but inconsistent and under-achieving.

Less than a round later, Noons' big time debut had come to a crashing halt after Bennett landed a perfect right that sent him crumbling to the canvas. "Losing my first televised fight by knockout was a huge disappointment," Noons recalled. "There were a lot of expectations coming into the event. But I kept my head up after the loss and I learned a great lesson. Everybody falls. Just because you fall flat on your face doesn't mean you can't come roaring back."

Noons welcomes the change back to boxing. He says he's determined to leave his mark on both sports. "I've been doing this before I ever got paid, so money isn't the motivation," Noons said. "It's about trying to accomplish something no one has done. To hold a boxing and an MMA world title. I also thrive on proving people wrong."

As far as his rivalry with Stockton's Nick Diaz is concerned. "It's real. It's very real," assured Noons. "I'd fight him in a pro boxing match. Whether it's boxing or MMA. The fight will eventually happen."

Diaz had stated earlier in an interview with TSS that he'd love to fight Noons in the boxing ring and that he "would beat the (pee) out of him."

Diaz has never hidden his dislike for Noons, whom he sees as a phony. Or a "poser" as Diaz would say. He was angry that his first fight against Noons had been stopped on cuts against his wishes. He became even angrier after a scuffle between the Diaz and Noons camps broke out after Noons' first defense of his title in Hawaii.

Noons blamed Diaz for the blow up. Diaz blamed Noons. Noons then went on "Inside MMA" where he poked fun by having the camera man zoom in on a picture of a badly cut Diaz and calling his work a masterpiece. "They should call me the artist," he said as he pointed to the picture. "Because this right here is a masterpiece and I created it."

It incensed Diaz.

Noons says that the bit on "Inside MMA" was done just for fun. "It was just some trash talk. Sometimes this stuff gets under my skin and I feel like venting," Noons said. "I came up with that and you know sometimes there's room in MMA for a little trash talk. I would hope that no

one took that seriously."

Diaz sure took it seriously. According to our last conversation with him, it made his blood boil just a little bit more. He wants to pound Noons the first chance he gets.

"People have their opinions and sometimes my words are taken out of context," Noons said. "But I'm a good person and a simple guy just trying to make it like everybody else. Whether it's boxing or MMA, my intention is to rise to the top and eventually make history. As far as Nick Diaz is concerned, I know we'll meet up again. I just don't know when or if it'll be as a boxer or a mixed martial artist."