

PREDICTION PAGE: James Toney-Randy Couture

Written by Michael Woods
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As with any freak show, a person finds himself excited to see the spectacle, while a portion of their conscience stands apart, mildly appalled by the slightly disturbing nature of the scene.

James Toney, the 42 year old master pugilist a decade past his prime, takes on the John Wayne of mixed martial arts, 47 year old Randy Couture at UFC 118 in Boston tonight. The Toney-Couture bout isnt even the main event; that honor goes to the BJ Penn-Frankie Edgar rematch. But the boxer vs MMA storyline has had people chattering at the water cooler, which is good news for UFC chief Dana White, who initially said he would resist such a novelty match, which he first derided as a freak show. But Toney, who maintains that he has been avoided by the Brothers K, and needed to do something shocking to force the Ukrainians, or titlist David Haye, to give him another title crack, forced Whites hand.

Of course, it really isnt possible to truly have a boxing vs MMA showdown, not unless someone puts together a bout in which the rules flip flop from boxing, to MMA, to boxing, and so forth, during the bout. And even then, what if in round one, the boxer kayoes the MMAer, who finds himself at a loss to defend himself without being able to use wrestling or jiu jitsu techniques?

Regardless, Toney finds himself in the position of being defender, and representative, of the sport. Public and pundit opinion seems stacked against him. Most folks tend to give the future Hall of Famer a shot at besting Couture, but believe hell have to land something akin to a lucky shot to do the trick. Couture told TSS that unless he gets sloppy, careless, and finds himself standing and trading with Toney, he should be able to utilize his wrestling ability to neutralize the MMA newbie.

Personally, I dont see the bout getting out of the first round. That opinion cemented itself when I learned Toney will weigh 237-plus pounds in Boston. Thats not going to aid him if and when he needs to sprawl, to defend an inevitable Couture double-leg takedown. Perhaps we will assess his physique tonight, and see that the weight comes via added muscles. But on a 5-10 man, 237 pounds, be it from muscles or flab, is too much.

Toney can probably weather a decent amount of strikes from Couture, whose punching effectiveness is decent, but not fearsome. One could see the boxer getting taken down, and then turtling up, as hes not accustomed to battling off his back, and then being choked out by the mixed martial artist.

Thats what I see going down, but as always, I hope for the best, that being a back and forth, dramatic tussle.

How about you? What do you see going down? Have too many of us dissed Toney? Do you think his six-plus month immersion in the sport has been enough for him to counter what Couture does best, and allow him to get off the sort of combos the UFCer has never had to contend with?

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Fire away.

Who wins Toney-Couture, and how?