Former champion Rashad Evans meets Brazil's venerable Thiago Silva in a non-title belt that can lead to a return match with the current champ, but first things first.

Evans (15-1-1) and Silva (14-1) meet in Ultimate Fighting Championship 108 in a light heavyweight bout on Saturday Jan. 2, at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. A win by either fighter could result in a world title bid. The fight card is being shown on pay-per-view television.

Events can change quickly in the Octagon and anybody can beat anybody in the 205-pound weight division. Just ask Silva or Evans.

Silva and Evans are both experienced and can vouch firsthand about the capriciousness of fighting in MMA and especially as a light heavyweight. On one day this man can beat that man and on another day, that man can beat this man. It can make you absolutely daffy.

Evans, 30, is the former UFC light heavyweight world champion who only defended his title on one occasion and lost by vicious knockout to current champion Lyoto Machida of Brazil. It's the only defeat on his record.

Silva, 27, is a well-rounded MMA fighter from Sao Paolo, Brazil who is versed in jujitsu, Muy Thai and boxing. He can end a fight quickly in a choke hold just as easily as with a kick or a punch. His only loss came to who else: Machida.

Evans and Silva know a win can push open the door to a rematch with current UFC light heavyweight champion Machida.

"A win against Rashad would put me in the track against Lyoto," said Silva, in a telephone conference call. "That's what – what I want to do."

When Silva fought Machida the two Brazilians were both undefeated and feared in the MMA world. The fight took place in Las Vegas and with one second remaining in the first round a perfectly timed punch knocked Silva unconscious.

"I was humbled big time, man," says Silva who fought Machida in January 2009. "I learned a lot from that fight. I think I can correct the mistakes from that fight, not overlooking anything else right now, but just I want to get the chance to fight him again."

For Evans it was a different circumstance. The upstate New Yorker held the UFC title and was defending it after stopping then champion Forrest Griffin by knockout. Still, many felt Machida was far too technically versed. Evans was stopped brutally in the second round.

"I've made it a point to not – to not get distracted on what I want to do, because you know

Thiago (Silva) is a very hungry fighter," said Evans who has not fought since losing the title to Machida last May. "My focus is just on Thiago so much. You know I don't want to overlook him, you know, not even a little bit."

Dana White, president of UFC, says the winner of this fight could conceivably fight Machida in the near future. Evans and especially Silva are motivated by the open window.

"I learned a lot from that fight. I think I can correct the mistakes from that fight," says Silva. "Not overlooking anything else right now, but I just want to get the chance to fight him again."

What a prize. The winner gets to face the man who beat him: Machida.