

Dana White's Backs Boxing's "The Fighters" All The Way

Written by David A. Avila

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LOS ANGELES-Whether mixed martial arts or pro boxing few others can stir up interest better than UFC's fight mogul Dana White.

Passion almost flies out of his veins when talking about the fight game.

White put his weight behind a reality boxing show called "The Fighters" on Discovery Channel. But when the numbers were tallied from last week's viewership, it failed miserably.

Can it be saved?

"I sure hope so," said White during a sit down lunch meeting with about a dozen members of the press on Monday at Flemings steak restaurant in L.A. Live. "I've always loved boxing."

Most fight fans know that White began as a boxer in the Boston area. When he moved to Las Vegas he then entered into the MMA world and later purchased Ultimate Fighting Championship with the Fertita brothers. The rest is history.

UFC has become the New York Yankees of MMA and White has become the emperor of the sport with George Steinbrenner-kind of control of the airwaves.

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Last Thursday, The Fighters was seen nationwide by less than 400,000 people and that's pretty miserable for any televised show in the U.S.

Failure is not something that White's accustomed to experiencing when it comes to prizefighting. Sure there have been some poor numbers on UFC shows in the past, but nothing as miserable as what the Discovery Channel endured last week.

"It didn't do well...I promoted the s---t out of it," said White, whose UFC is shown on Fox and has good success with pay per view shows as well. "Some of the fights we show on free TV we lose money."

But nothing as dismal as The Fighters experienced.

The television show features some of the old school boxers looking to save their sport in the South Boston area. Most of the boxers who enter the gym come from poor drug-addled areas and fight addiction, poverty and a life of crime on the street.

White grew up in the area and knows the dilemmas the youth face on a daily basis. He was also a boxer who refused to be chased out of the gym. It's in his nature to succeed no matter the cost or sacrifice. Passion is his weapon and he fires it like a spear to the heart.

"You have to tell stories. A fight is more fun but you have to be invested," explains White. "That's when free television comes huge...Nobody does it better than the Olympics."

When it comes to fighting sports White won't back down and eagerly compares it to all other sports.

"It's in our friggin DNA," screams White when challenged by a sportswriter. "I will bury you with

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facts.”

Fighting, whether it's boxing or MMA, is certainly in White's DNA.

“I got to have action all of the time,” White says.

The Fighters airs on Thursday on Discovery Channel at 9 p.m.

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