

## "Boxing's Like A Girlfriend, We Broke Up, Now I'm Back With Her"

Written by Raymond Markarian  
Monday, 11 July 2011 13:23

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In 2008, back when the MMA vs. boxing debate was still booming, when Manny Pacquiao knocked out Oscar De la Hoya and Fedor Emelianenko was still "Fedor," Mike "Ortega Time" Ortega made a life changing decision. He was a 1-0 professional boxer that wanted to try his luck in the mixed martial artists.

At the time, Ortega's choice seemed confusing to his peers. The Sacramento native learned boxing when he was 13 years old, was an amateur standout, and desired boxing glory. But roadblocks in getting suitable fights, long training camps that led to no-show opponents and some opponents that pulled out of the bout on the day of the weigh in discouraged the now 25-year-old Ortega.

You see, Mike does not care much for the politics that sometimes prevent events from happening. He just wants to fight. And who could blame him for being frustrated?

So after winning his pro boxing debut, a four round welterweight decision victory in June of 2008, and getting up for training camps only to come crashing down because the other fighters never followed through and showed up to the fight date, Ortega decided to go Bo Jackson. He wanted to see how well he could handle himself in the Octagon. Ortega says, "What I love about the MMA is the physical part. Just to pick somebody up and slam them on their head is fun as well."

For the past two years Ortega went all out MMA, and trained with Urijah Faber as part of his Team Alpha Male Camp. In the MMA, Ortega has a 1-1 professional record. His obvious strength is his standup fighting skills. Yet he has continued to work to improve his grappling ability because he does not want to feel disadvantaged against anyone with a stellar ground attack.

Ortega says that he has what it takes to become successful in both sports or else he wouldn't practice them.

"I want to do both. Boxing has helped my MMA skills. My standup is obviously a strong point for me. I do have what it takes to be successful in boxing and the MMA. With boxing, I have always had that itch. I have been doing it since I can remember. I just want to do both because I know I can."

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At this point in his fighting career, the welterweight Ortega admits that he is a more seasoned boxer. He returned to the squared circle on June 24th, in Fairfield, Ca winning by fourth round KO against Mike Alexander in a four rounder to raise his boxing record to 2-0. Ortega believes that his boxing skills give him an edge in the MMA. But how does his commitment to the MMA help his boxing?

"MMA has helped my vision so much. In the MMA you are looking for the takedown. You pay attention to kicks. You pay attention to punches. In boxing, you only have two hands to worry about. You don't have elbows, knees, and kicks. Not to take away from the difficulty in boxing. I am the first to say that boxing is one of the most difficult sports in the world. But personally it seems like it (MMA) has helped me out. I feel like I could see the (boxing) punches coming from a mile away. I still get hit, but less than before."

In the meantime, Ortega's focus is on boxing. After the bout on June 24th, he plans on jumping back in the ring by the end of the summer. He dreams of becoming the first man to hold a title in the MMA and boxing simultaneously. So don't expect him to close the door on being a two sport athlete just yet.

"It's all a fight. I love to do both. There is no difference to me. I will pursue whatever takes me the furthest. I definitely have a passion and love for boxing. I consider it like a girlfriend; broke up with her for a little bit, but now I am back with her. So I will continue to pursue both sports. And whatever takes me further in the end, I am sticking with it."  
Fight on, Mike Ortega, fight on.

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