

First Bareknuckle Boxing Event Since 1889 Unfolds Friday

Written by The Sweet Science
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It has been nearly 123 years since the last bareknuckle boxing match took place. In 1889 bareknuckle champion John L. Sullivan defeated Jake Kilrain in an epic 75 round marathon fight.

Bareknuckle boxing paved the way for what boxing has evolved into, although nowadays it carries along a false misconception of a barbaric sport.

When people think of bareknuckle fighting, the image of a barroom brawl or a bum fight comes to mind—two untrained combatants throwing hands viciously and carelessly. Safety and skill rarely co-exist in the world of “street fighting”.

But for this first time since 1889, this Friday will make history as former cruiserweight boxing champion Bobby “The Celtic Warrior” Gunn will go to battle with MMA fighter Chris Thompson. The bareknuckle boxing match is a sanctioned bout consisting of 10-90 second rounds and will be fought under London Prize Ring Rules.

“Many people hear the term bareknuckle boxing and immediately think of a vicious street fight or back alley brawl,” said Gunn. “This is a fight between two professionals with referees and doctor’s ringside.”

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Gunn went on to add that bareknuckle boxing reduces the risk of injury more than traditional boxing and mixed martial arts.

“In boxing a fighter can take a lot of punishment over the course of the fight, and even MMA fighters can take a rough beating before the fight is called,” said Gunn. “Since we don’t wear gloves, I pick my shots and use a different approach than I did when I fought with boxing gloves. It’s not about getting in there and wailing on your opponent until he can’t stand; it’s about fighting a strategic match to win.”

Gunn is excited about having the chance to be part of something that can really take off in the world of fight sports.

“The public enjoys watching fights because they want to see two professionals who know what they’re doing stand there and throw hands,” said Gunn. “I believe that following this first match the sport is going to take off and become huge.”

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Bobby “The Celtic Warrior” Gunn has become a recognizable name in the boxing industry due to his heavy hands, relentless drive and ability to put a show on every time he stepped between the ropes.

Heavyweight world champion Tomasz Adamek had the following to say about Gunn in a blog on his website, “*Our fight began a thread of friendship between us. □ He, (Gunn) street killer who fought over 100 street fights bare fisted, is looking for his place in between the ropes of the ring. He promised me a rematch for a lost fight. □ Oh these sparring should be interesting. □ He boasts that he has yet to be put down on the floorboards by anyone and you can see love for the ring in his eyes*”.

“I want to thank all of my team, Dominick Scibetta, Kyle White, Al Ross and Renato Colantoni for always supporting and standing behind me,” said Gunn. “And also a special shout out to Joe McEwing, who I have had the pleasure of knowing for several years; I believe he is one of the smartest minds in the sports industry I’ve ever met.”

The first bareknuckle boxing match will take place Friday, August 5 in Scottsdale, Arizona. It will be available to watch live online at www.ustream.tv .