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Omaha World Hearld Interview April 2008

**Anthony Carlson**

**Age: 31**

**Hometown: Omaha, NE**

**School: Mid-America Martial Arts**

**Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Judo and conditioning instructor at Mid America Martial Arts**

**I am also a huge supporter of JDRF and Stroke Awareness. If you did not know, I am a stroke survivor.**

Thanks for taking the time with me today Anthony, hows are things going?

**Good I am in the process of daily training for NAGA Wisconsin and the BJJ World Championships in LA. I am also finishing my school semester at UNO so I will have more time to train.**

Tell me about how you got involved in martial arts. When did you first get involved? Where did you go? How did you decide where to go?

**I first got involved with Martial Arts in 2002. I had always heard of Judo being similar to wrestling, so I asked a co worker who trained Taekwondo, where to train Judo. He pointed me to Shin's Academy. I was there until 2003 when I started working out with a group of guys at Creighton doing BJJ and Kickboxing. From there I was pointed to Ed Shobe out past the North Omaha Airport.**

When did you start competing? What did you do, where was it, and what were the results?

**I first competed in 2003 at a Judo tournament in Lincoln where I won first place by submission. I had just learned how to do an armbar the week of the tournament, that is when I shifted my focus to learn BJJ.**

You actively compete in grappling tournaments. Do you do any other fighting as well? Have you ever fought MMA, or do you stick strictly to BJJ and grappling?

**I competed in Omaha Ring Wars II in February of 2008 where I won by TKO. I have since retired from all forms of competitive striking because I am a stroke survivor. I have never fought MMA or think it is a wise option for myself.**

You medaled at the Pan Am Games in 2008. Can you talk briefly about that experience. Describe what it is, how it went, what it meant to you to be involved. How you got there?

**I have placed the last three years at the Pan American Games. The Pan American is the largest International tournament in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. The majority of the competitors are there to win and not just compete. The tournament is single elimination. Plus you also can not cut weight like other competitions. Before his/her first fight, the athlete will check his/her weight with the Gi. There is only one opportunity to check the weight. If the competitor does not make his/her weight, they will be immediately disqualified.**

You fight for Team Rodrigo Vaghi. Can you talk about Vaghi and what he has done for you as a martial artist?

**Rodrigo Vaghi is probably one of the best grappling instructors/coaches in the United States. Rodrigo has taught me more about believing in my skills. He has personally talked to me about also telling myself "I will". I will take you down, I will not let you pass my guard, I will beat you. He can take the most un-athletic person and make them believe they are a champion. I feel I base my instruction on his mentality anymore under the Guidance of Ed Shobe.**

You are a BJJ instructor at Mid America Martial Arts, do you do instruction for gym members as well as the competition team, or how does that work?

**Ed Shobe is the Primary BJJ instructor, I follow his guidance to make sure every member of the gym gets the same amount of time and instruction. A person who would be considered a "Fighter" does the same things as a every other student. This is what makes being an instructor fun for when I teach class. For example Abe Wagner and Drew Dober wear the GI in BJJ class and does the same drills every other student does and they both still wins MMA fights.**

Do you coach/corner MMA fighters from Mid America?

**I am happy to corner anyone at the gym who asks me to be there for them. I leave the main cornering to Arron Cerrone and Ed Shobe.**

Can you talk about the importance of BJJ, or even less specific, the importance of a well-rounded fight game for guys wanting to get into competitive MMA fighting? It seems like gone are the days of the fighter that is single-minded like Chuck Liddell or even Royce Gracie...

**Being very BJJ oriented I believe in the beauty of the submission, yet I know every man has a punchers chance in a fight.**

**I believe being well rounded in MMA means being a martial artist in some type of striking and grappling. I would never say one form of striking or grappling from one Martial Arts is more effective or less. It is up to the individual to determine what skills sets work best for them. I recommend any person wanting to get into MMA, to concentrate on their discipline that makes them stand out and then build from other disciplines to make them the fighter that will be competitive in MMA.**

Can you talk about from a coaches perspective, what you need to see in a fighter before you think he or she is ready to fight competitively?

**From my perspective I would recommend that no one fights in a MMA show at any level without at least a year of training at their gym. The big thing I look for is a person commitment to be a champion, this does not mean winning or losing. I look for someone who represents the gym, so many gyms allow anyone to fight after a few months, then if they lose the person leaves to another gym blaming instruction or just not ready. I also want to see someone compete in a one discipline first such as a striking only or grappling only event to see who the person does under pressure. The results of the competing shows if the person wants to learn and be coached. Losing a MMA fight in your local town is the biggest physiological factor a fighter goes through which is a story in itself. For the big dreamers, I would say to get to the Top level of fighting in MMA which is the UFC, a person will need about 10 years experience in a discipline, with about 3 to 4 years of MMA training fighting anywhere from 5 to 6 times a year.**

Who would you say are Mid America's big "Up-and-Comers" as far as those guys you have out competing?

**For MMA everyone knows who Abe Wagner and Drew Dober are. I believe the Mickells brothers, Brandon Pfannenstiel and Marcus Marquez are fighters to watch locally.**

**For competing in Kickboxing and BJJ, I would tell anyone to come out to Ring Wars in September or Best of the Best in June, because I don't believe any other gym has as many "Competitors" who are willing to put it on the line as the students of Mid-America Martial Arts. It a reflection of the Gym owner Arron Cerrone.**

