

# DANGEROUS AND UNHEALTHY WEIGHT CUTTING: EXTREME DEHYDRATION- RAPID REHYDRATION

December 17, 2015

**A Stakeholder Summit to determine  
safe and appropriate solutions to  
better protect licensed athletes**

**Hosted and Sponsored by**

**THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**





DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES, AND HOUSING AGENCY • GOVERNOR EDMUND G. BROWN JR.

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December 17, 2015

Dear Friends and leaders of the Combat Sports Community:

On behalf of the California State Athletic Commission, welcome to Los Angeles and to our kick-off Summit regarding weight-cutting and rapid dehydration rehydration and the effects of these activities on the health of our athletes and on the future of combat sports.

We sincerely appreciate your participation in this meeting of stakeholders and look forward to a robust discussion incorporating unique and varying perspectives combined with real experiences concerning this prevalent and often dangerous activity.

Weight-cutting always has and always will be part and parcel of combat competition. Our intent today is not to fear monger or to recycle information already out there for all to see. It is our intent to inspire discussion and debate, to seek ways to educate and to hopefully bring change that will limit and eventually eradicate dangerous weight-cutting practices before they result in more irreparable harm and or catastrophe.

The California State Athletic Commission asks that you join us in a renewed effort to inform ourselves and to provide education, outreach and leadership to the combat community with regard to unsafe and unhealthy weight-cutting practices.

The health and safety of our noble competitors is our clear and primary responsibility. We are committed to taking action and look forward to working together with all of you to bring positive change and make a difference starting here today.

Sincerely,

John Carvelli





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Members of the Commission

John Carvelli, Chair  
Mary Lehman, Vice Chair  
John Frierson  
Martha Shen-Urquidez  
Van Gordon Sauter  
Vernon Williams  
Luis Ayala

# CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION'S DEHYDRATION AND WEIGHT CUTTING SUMMIT AGENDA

**Thursday, December 17, 2015**  
1:00 p.m. - Conclusion of Business

**Location:**

Junipero Serra State Building, Carmel Room  
320 West Fourth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

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## **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Meeting Goals & Objectives, John Carvelli & Andy Foster
3. "The Dangers of Dehydration/Rapid Rehydration Resulting From Weight Cutting,"  
Presented by Edmund Ayoub, M.D., Vice President Association of Ringside Physicians

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

4. Addressing Ideas To Curb Drastic Weight Cutting And Severe Dehydration
5. Weigh-In Modification Options:
  - All Day Weigh-In
  - Fight Weigh-In Two Days Before
  - Increased Time To Weigh-In Athletes The Day Before Competition
  - Second Weigh-In That Would Occur the Day of The Event to Evaluate Weight Gain Where Athletes Would Be Prohibited From Having Added More Than 7.5% In Body Weight Before Incurring A Fine and 10% In Body Weight Before They Would Be Disqualified From Competition

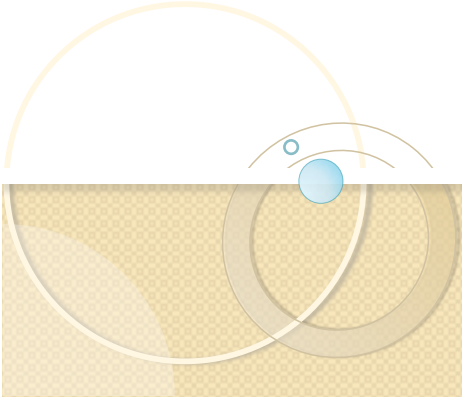


6. The Use Of Specific Gravity Strip Tests To Detect Dehydration
7. Expanding The Number Of Weight Classes Under The Association Of Boxing Commission's Unified Rules For Mixed Martial Arts
8. Implementation of a "Minimum Allowable Competition Weight" Similar To The NCAA Weight Management System Where Each Athlete Is Assigned a Safe Minimum Fighting Weight Based On Body Composition
9. Ways To Further Educate Athletes And Trainers Regarding The Health And Safety Risks Associated With Dehydration/Rapid Rehydration As Well As The Scientific Evidence Demonstrating Decreased Performance
10. Engaging Influential Fighters And Fight Teams To Publicly Support Safe And Reasonable Weight Cutting Methods And Educating Fighters About The Real Health Risks Of Dehydration/Rapid Rehydration
11. Establish Mandatory Weight Class Changes If An Athlete Fails To Make Weight Twice In Any Two-Year Period
12. Banning IV Rehydration In The Unified Rules Of Mixed Martial Arts

***NOTICE: At this informational and open discussion meeting, there may be a quorum of the members of the California Athletic Commission, however, there will be no action taken by the Commission at this meeting. The meeting is accessible to the physically disabled. A person who needs disability-related accommodation or modification in order to participate in the meeting may make a request by contacting Heather Jackson at (916) 263-2195 or email [heather.jackson@dca.ca.gov](mailto:heather.jackson@dca.ca.gov) or sending a written request to the California State Athletic Commission, 2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 2010, Sacramento, CA 95815. Providing your request at least five (5) days before the meeting will help ensure availability of the requested accommodation. Requests for further information should be directed to Heather Jackson at the same address and telephone number.***

*Meetings of the California State Athletic Commission are open to the public except when specifically noticed otherwise in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The audience will be given appropriate opportunities to comment on any issue presented.*

**\* Please see above note.**



# Weight Fluctuation

Dangers of Dehydration and Rapid Weight Gain  
in Professional Combat Sports

Edmund Ayoub, Jr., M.D., John Stiller, M.D., Nicholas Rizzo, M.D.

Rev. 11/17/15

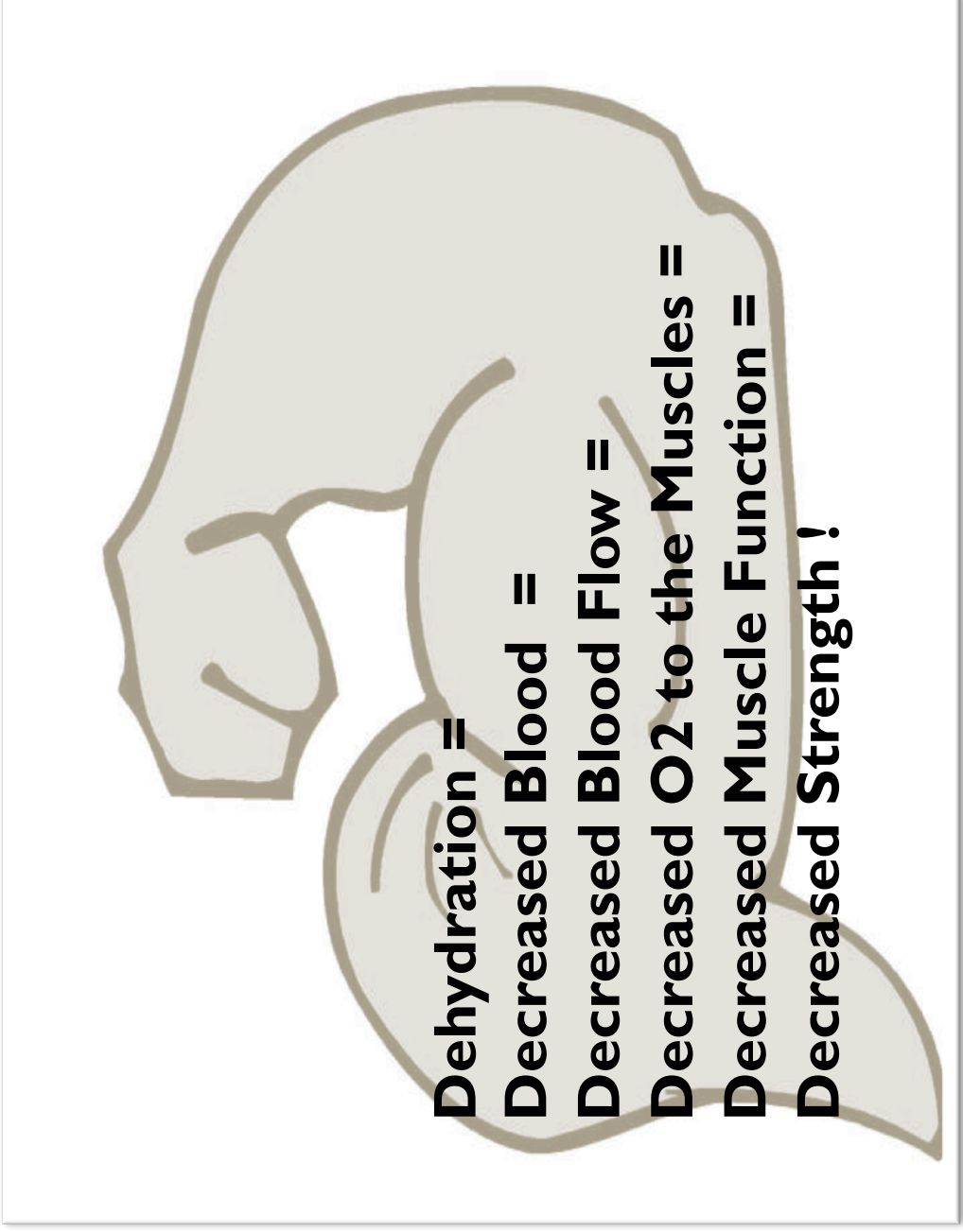


# Introduction

- Unhealthy and sometimes dangerous weight loss practices continue to be a significant problem in amateur and professional combat sports.
- This lecture will briefly cover some of these dangers.
- The ARP recommends that regulatory bodies adopt standardized weigh-in policies in conjunction with year-round weight management and educational programs.



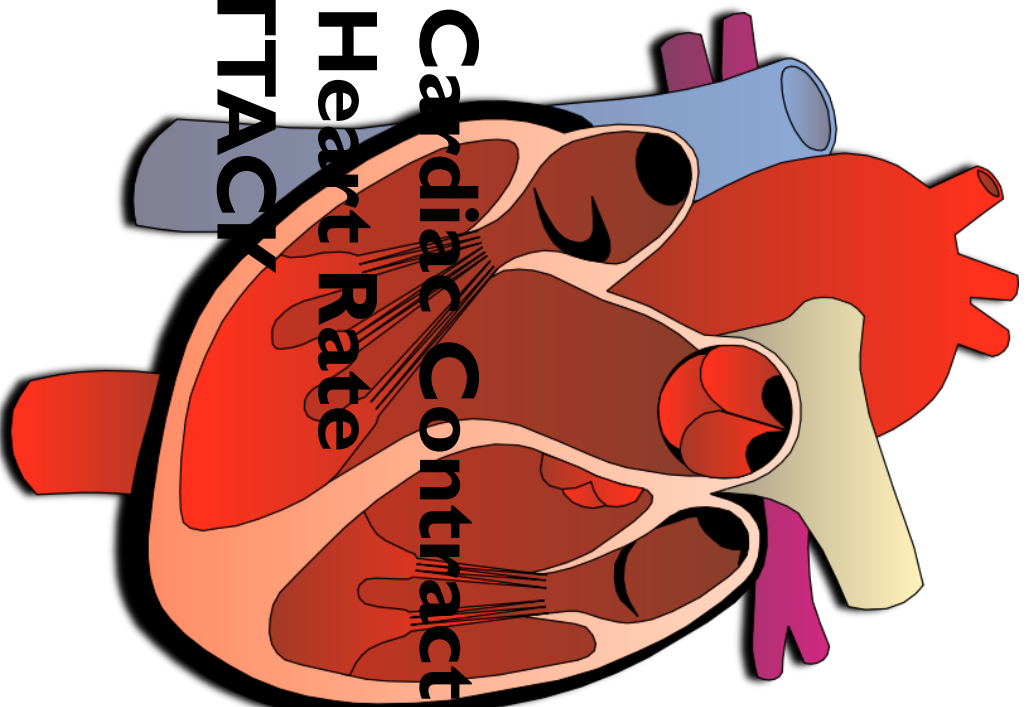
# Decreased Muscle Strength and Endurance !







# Decreased Heart and Cardiovascular Function !

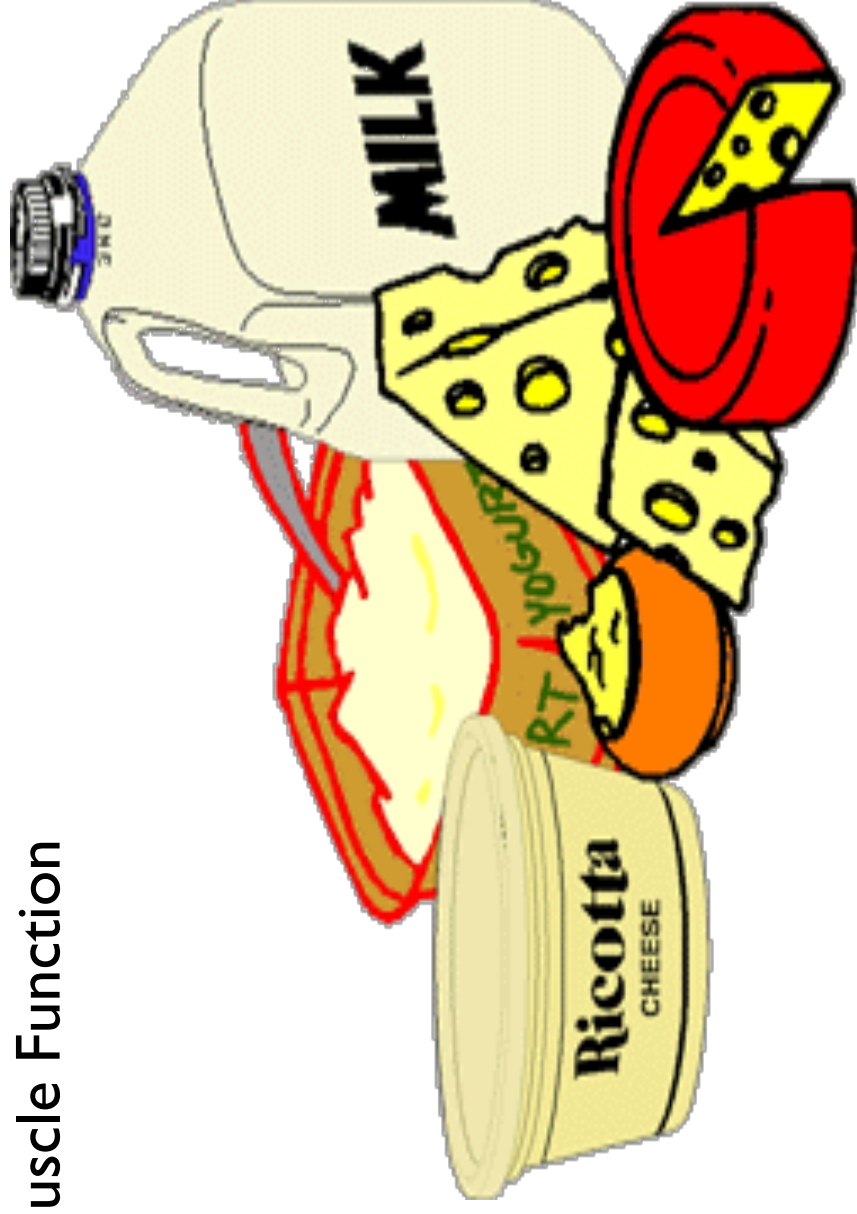


**Increased Cardiac Contractile Force**  
**Increased Heart Rate**  
**HEART ATTACK**



# Reduced Energy Utilization, Nutrient Exchange and Acidosis !

Blood Carries Nutrients  
Decreased Flow Results in Lactic Acidosis  
Decreased Muscle Function





# Heat Illness !

Heat Cramps

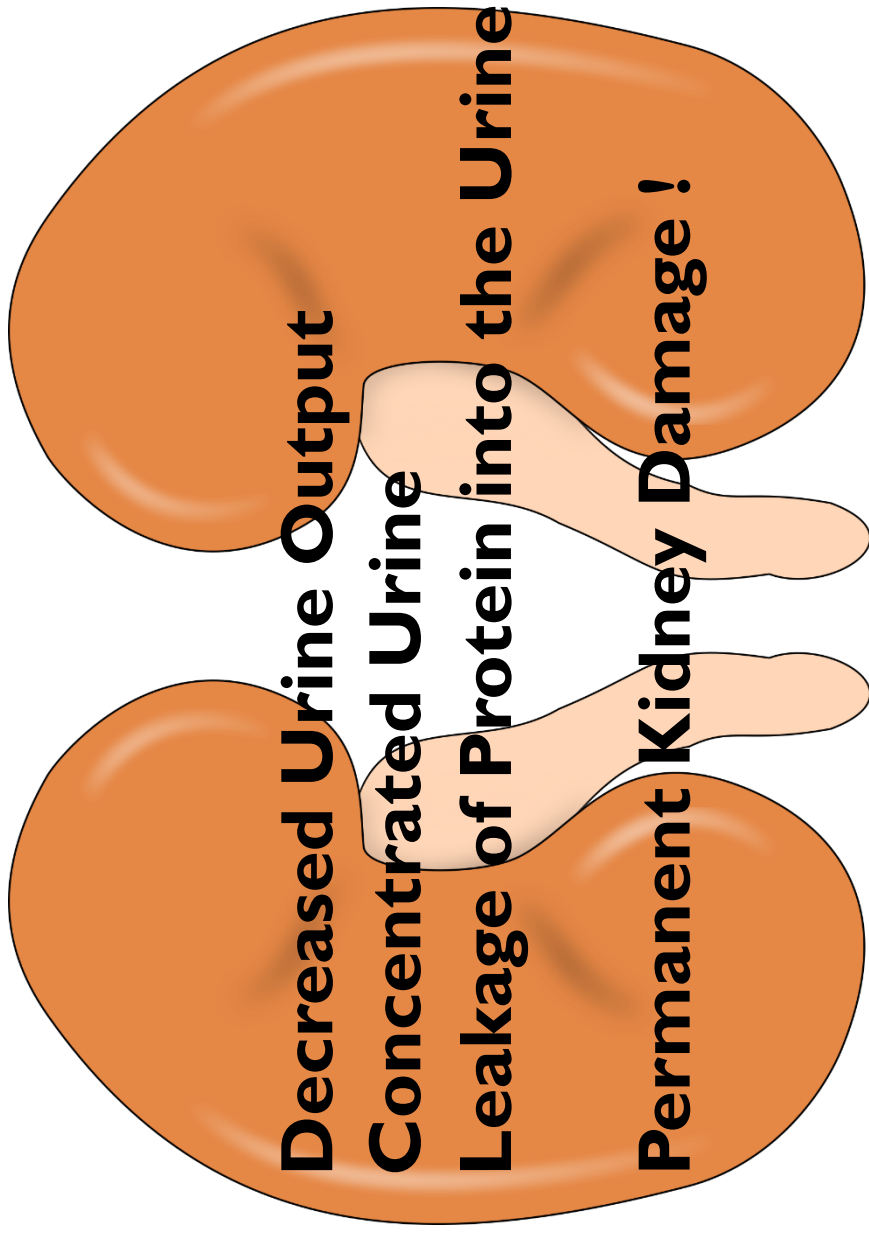
Heat Exhaustion

Heat Stroke

DEATH !



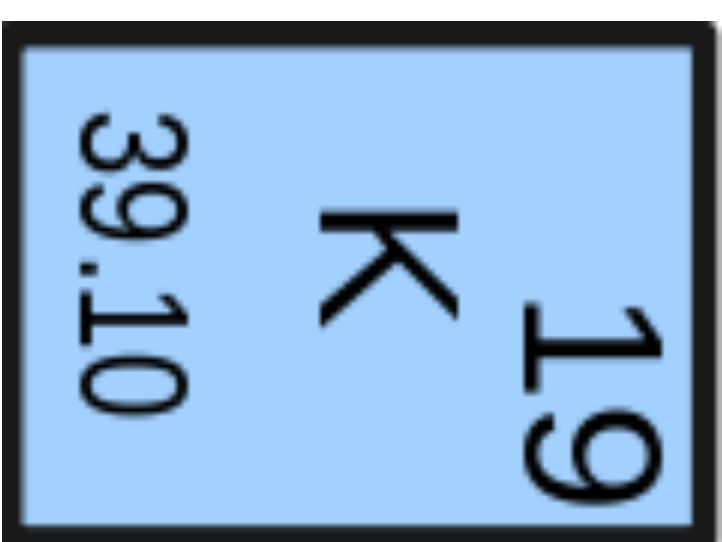
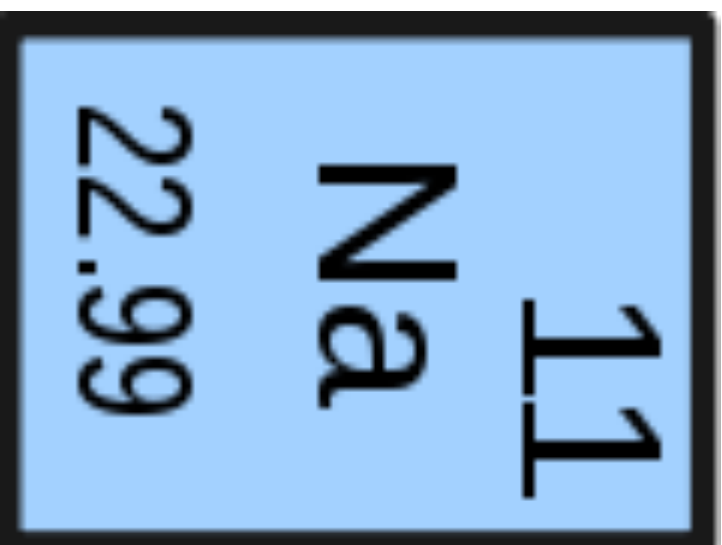
# Decreased Kidney Function !







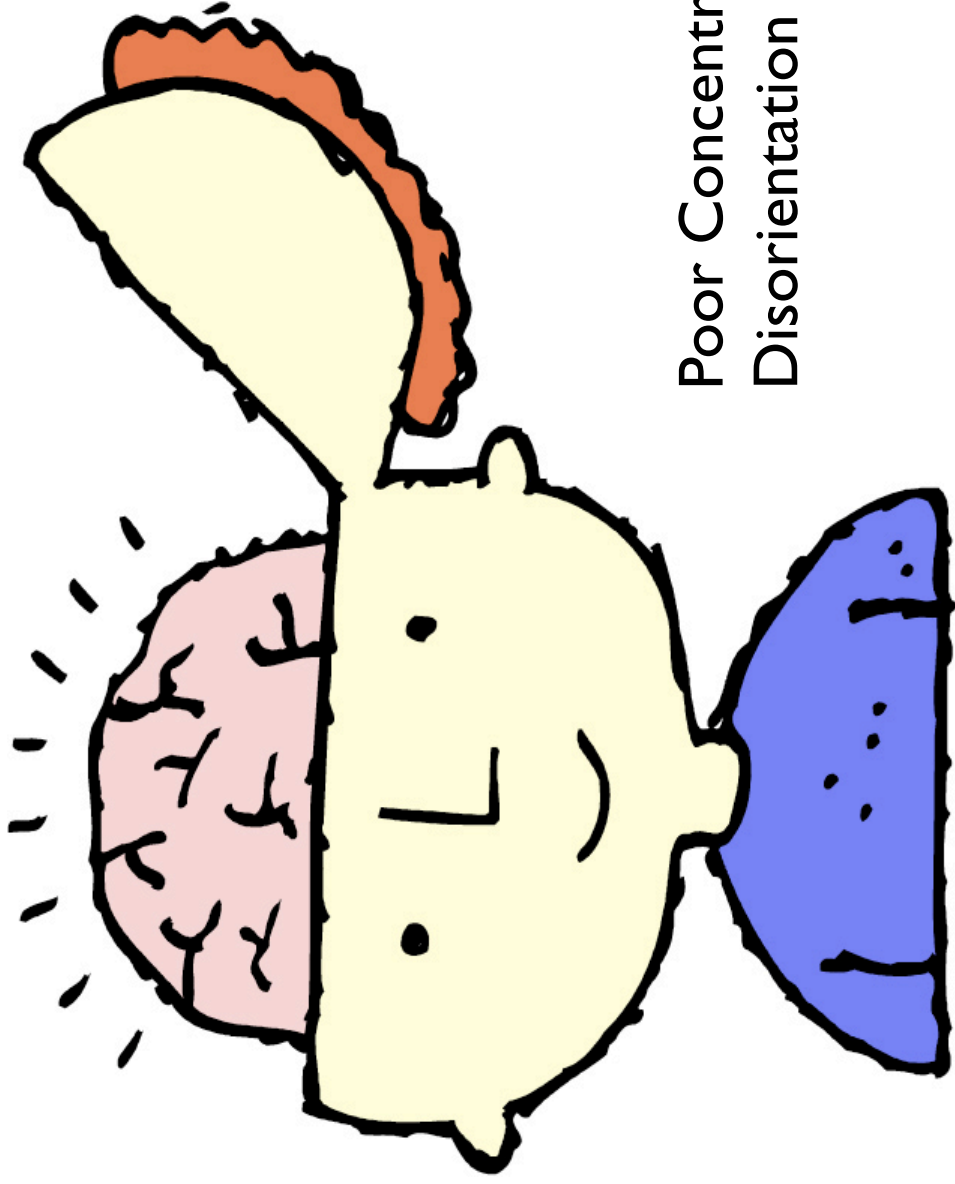
# Electrolyte Problems !



Heart Attack



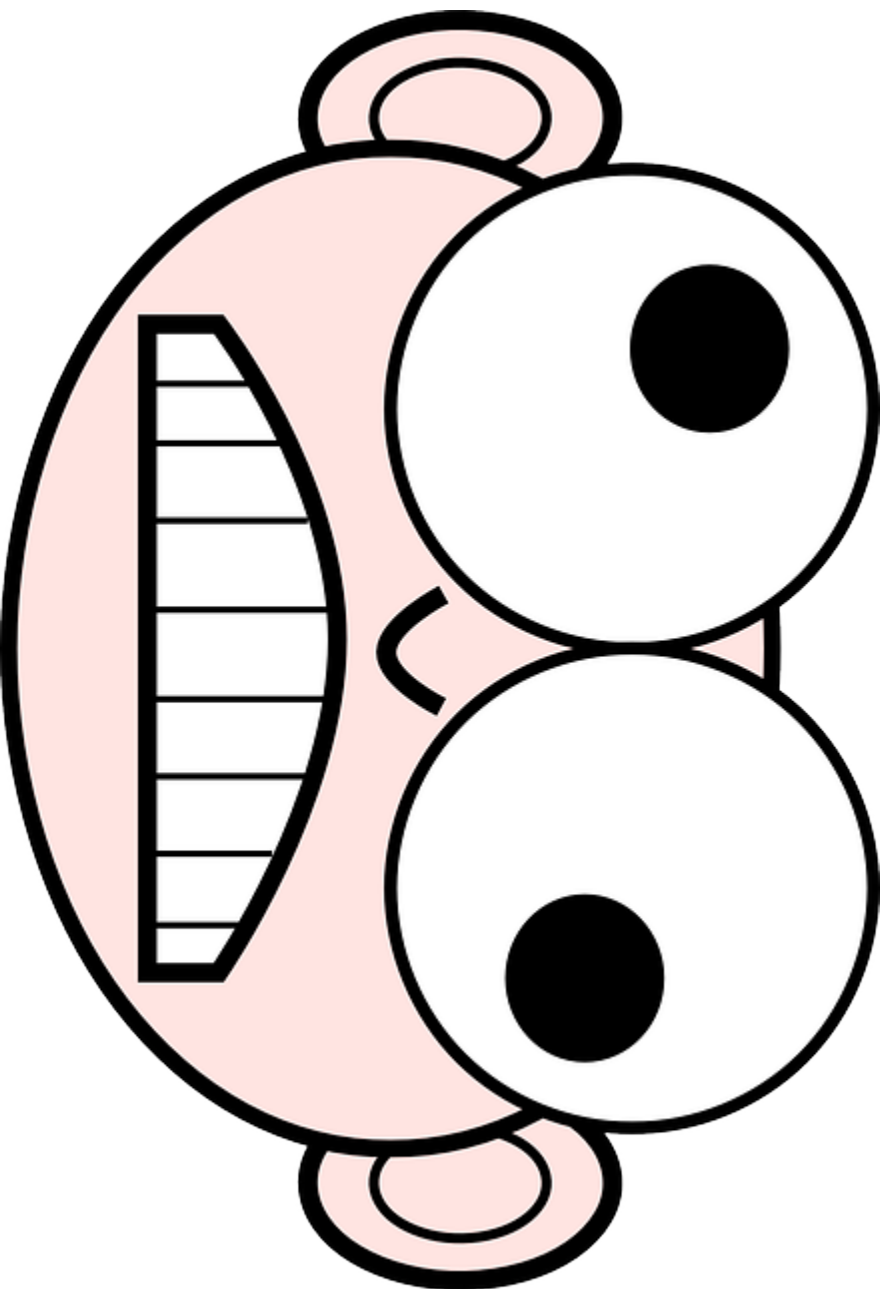
# Mood Swings and Mental Changes !



Poor Concentration  
Disorientation



# Eye Troubles !

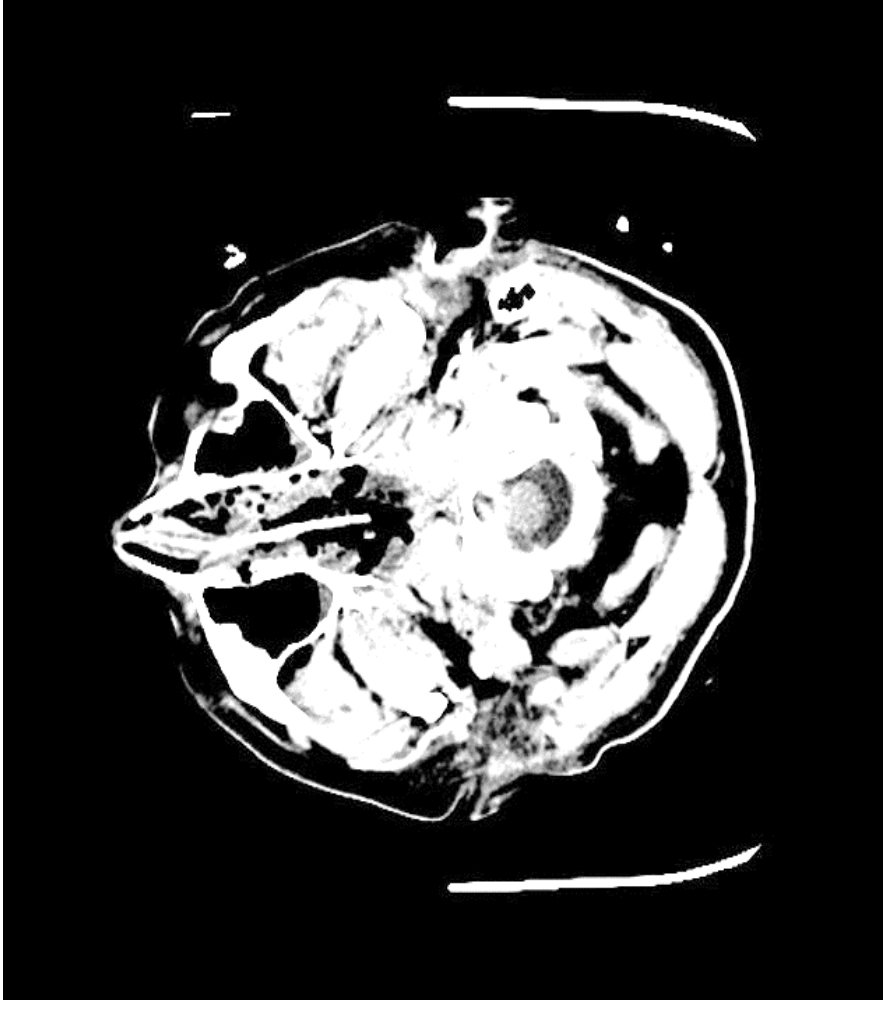


Vision Blurring

Dry Eyes = Corneal Abrasions



# Increased Risk of Brain Injury !



Concussion  
Brain Injury





# Thank you!



*[www.associationofringsidephysicians.org](http://www.associationofringsidephysicians.org)*

# Section 1

Articles Relating to  
Dangers of Weight Cutting,  
Dehydration & Overhydration





# Section 1 Article Directory

## **The Real, and Simple, Truth About Dehydration and Performance**

[http://running\\_competitor.com/2014/05/nutrition/the-truth-about-dehydration-and-performance\\_76027](http://running_competitor.com/2014/05/nutrition/the-truth-about-dehydration-and-performance_76027)

## **The impact of a failed experiment**

[http://espn.go.com/boxing/story/\\_/id/9759238/the-abuses-dangers-difficulties-surrounding-weight-limits](http://espn.go.com/boxing/story/_/id/9759238/the-abuses-dangers-difficulties-surrounding-weight-limits)

## **Weight Cutting: Solving 'The Biggest Problem in Combat Sports'**

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2555772-weight-cutting-solving-the-biggest-problem-in-combat-sports>

## **Cutting weight can kill you**

<http://www.mixedmartialarts.com/news/344363/Cutting-weight-can-kill-you>

## **Why making the weight is boxing's lethal secret**

<https://uk.sports.yahoo.com/blogs/the-pugilist/why-making-weight-boxing-lethal-secret-212809382.html>

## **Weight cutting: A dangerous game some MMA fighters are willing to play**

[http://www.nj.com/sports/index.ssf/2013/11/mma\\_weight\\_cutting\\_a\\_dangerous\\_game\\_some\\_fighters\\_are\\_all\\_too\\_willing\\_to\\_play.html](http://www.nj.com/sports/index.ssf/2013/11/mma_weight_cutting_a_dangerous_game_some_fighters_are_all_too_willing_to_play.html)

## **The Negative Health Effects of Weight Cutting in Mixed Martial Arts**

<http://www.bloodyelbow.com/2010/2/15/1311633/the-negative-health-effects-of>

## **The risks and rewards of drying out**

<http://www.boxingnewsonline.net/the-risks-and-rewards-of-drying-out/>

## **As Mayweather prepares for Canelo: The lessons and perils of boxing's lethal secret**

<http://www.sportingintelligence.com/2013/06/25/as-mayweather-prepares-for-canelo-the-lessons-and-perils-of-boxings-lethal-secret-250601/>

## **'Making Weight' – The Effects of Dehydration on Physiological Functioning**

<http://www.grapplearts.com/making-weight-the-effects-of-dehydration-on-physiological-functioning/>

## **The Truth About MMA's Dangerous Weight Game**

<http://espn.go.com/espnw/news-commentary/article/11711953/the-truth-mma-dangerous-weight-game>



**Weight cutting: An issue of little benefit, some danger, and difficult solutions**

<http://www.mmafighting.com/2013/10/15/4832976/weight-cutting-the-issue-of-little-benefit-some-dangers-and-difficult>

**MMA: The Dangers of Cutting Weight in Mixed Martial Arts**

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/1487089-mma-the-dangers-of-cutting-weight-in-mixed-martial-arts>

**The dangerous culture of weight cutting on 'The Ultimate Fighter'**

<http://www.foxsports.com/ufc/story/the-dangerous-culture-of-weight-cutting-on-the-ultimate-fighter-112713>

**Health Risks Won't Stop Fighters From Weight Cutting**

<https://sports.vice.com/ca/article/health-risks-wont-stop-fighters-from-weight-cutting>

**In Case You Forgot, Weight Cutting Is Dangerous**

<http://www.cagedinsider.com/featured/in-case-you-forgot-weight-cutting-is-dangerous/>

**Miller discusses the dangers of weight cutting**

<http://www.toothlessmma.com/miller-discusses-the-dangers-of-weight-cutting>

**Why Cutting Weight Could Cause Career Ending Kidney Issues For Fighters, And How To Avoid It**

<http://www.scifighting.com/2013/12/13/20695/cutting-weight-cause-career-ending-kidney-issues-fighters-avoid/>

**Julie Kedzie: This is what it feels like to cut weight for an MMA fight**

<http://www.si.com/mma/2015/05/19/julie-kedzie-what-it-feels-cut-weight-mma-fight>

**Making Weight: A First Hand Account of a Journalist Cutting Weight With a Pro**

<http://www.foxsports.com/ufc/story/making-weight-a-first-hand-behind-the-scenes-account-of-the-ufc-183-weigh-ins-020815>

**Can Same-Day Weigh-Ins Benefit Combat Sports?**

<http://www.scifighting.com/2014/10/13/35127/can-same-day-weigh-ins-benefit-combat-sports/>

**MMA & Boxing: Same Day Weigh-Ins – Has the Time Finally Come?**

<http://ringsidereport.com/?p=53280>

# The Real, And Simple, Truth About Dehydration And Performance

By Jeff Gaudette, Published May. 20, 2014

*We examine what might be worse than dehydration — over-hydration.*

As the temperatures this summer begin to creep up, runners are bombarded with the message to drink early and drink often when training and racing. However, is it possible that sports drinks companies have overhyped the message about the performance impact of dehydration? Moreover, is it possible that over-hydrating is actually a greater threat to health and performance than dehydration?

According to renowned exercise scientist Dr. Timothy Noakes, this is exactly the case. After critically reexamining the existing research and conducting his own studies, Dr. Noakes has found that runners are more likely to be over-hydrated than dehydrated. More importantly, compared to dehydration, over-hydration is a more serious condition and may have life-threatening complications.

In this article, we'll examine the signs, symptoms and causes of over-hydration, why dehydration isn't as dangerous as we fear, and provide research-backed and practical hydration protocols for training and racing.

## ***What Is Over-Hydration?***

Over-hydration, scientifically referred to as hyponatremia, is the result of having low blood sodium levels. Despite the marketed hype of dehydration, hyponatremia is actually one of the most common medical complications in long-distance training and racing.

Novice and slower runners who may take four hours or more to finish a marathon and who are drinking mainly water are at extreme risk of hyponatremia.

Slower runners often have an easier time drinking while running since they're running at a slower pace. In addition, they are more likely to walk through water stops since they are more crowded and the time loss is less significant. As such, they tend to fill up on water quickly and are thus more likely to be at risk for hyponatremia.

The exact mechanism behind hyponatremia is not clear, but it is known to be associated with the over-consumption of hypotonic fluids (like water). It is important to note that hyponatremia can develop from drinking too much fluid before, during, and even after the race. Furthermore, hyponatremia can also develop from over-drinking sports drinks, despite the fact that most contain sodium.

## ***Signs And Symptoms***

Although the signs and symptoms of hyponatremia have been described as similar to those of dehydration, Noakes points out that the only true symptom of dehydration is thirst. Symptoms associated with hyponatremia include:

- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Headache
- Muscle weakness
- Nausea and vomiting

If left untreated or misdiagnosed as dehydration, hyponatremia can progress to seizure, brain swelling, pulmonary edema (fluid buildup in the air sacs of the lungs), comatose, cardiorespiratory

arrest, or death.

### ***Is Dehydration Really Detrimental To Performance?***

The current recommendation for hydration is four to eight ounces of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes of running. However, these recommendations were based on early studies conducted in the 1960's, which suggested that dehydration determines the body temperature response to exercise and thus, the development of heat-related illnesses.

However, more recent studies have now shown that dehydration, or rather a reduction in body weight due to exercise, is a normal part of exercise.

A recent meta-analysis of laboratory-based studies examining the impact of dehydration on performance resulted in the following conclusions:

- It was found that a reduction of body weight of 2.2 percent was not associated with a decrease in performance.
- It isn't dehydration itself that is responsible for any decrease in performance, but rather not drinking in response to thirst.
- Drinking enough to satisfy thirst resulted in a 90 percent performance advantage compared to drinking below thirst and a 63 percent performance advantage over drinking above the thirst response.

The only symptom of dehydration is thirst and often, this thirst becomes so overwhelming that the athlete is compelled to drink when fluid is available.

Furthermore, studies have disproved the claim that a reduction in body weight of less than 2 percent results in impaired performance. For example, a recent study confirmed that Haile Gebrselassie lost 10 percent of his body mass due to dehydration during his world record marathon run in Berlin.

The results of this latest research show, for the first time, that drinking according to thirst is the superior hydration protocol to maximize performance.

### ***Recommendations***

The maximum rate at which the intestines can absorb fluid is, on average, about 600 mL (or 20.3 fl oz.) per hour. The kidneys can only excrete fluid at a rate of about 800 mL/hr in males and closer to 600 mL/hr for smaller females. If fluid is ingested above these rates, it will be retained and may cause a number of problems associated with hyponatremia.

Therefore, based on the latest research and findings, hydration for training and racing isn't as complicated as we've tried to make it. Simply drink according to your level of thirst and you'll be maximizing your performance while also keeping yourself safe.

### **References:**

1. Noakes, T. *Waterlogged: The Serious Problem of Overhydration in Endurance Sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics; 2012.
2. Rosner, MH, Kirven J. Exercise-associated hyponatremia. *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, 2007;2(151-161).
3. Goulet, ED. Effect of exercise-induced dehydration on endurance performance: evaluating the impact of exercise protocols on outcomes using a meta-analytic procedure. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 2012.
4. Wyndham CH, Strydom NB. The danger of an inadequate water intake during marathon running. *South African Journal of Medicine*, 1969; 43(893-896)

[http://running.competitor.com/2014/05/nutrition/the-truth-about-dehydration-and-performance\\_76027](http://running.competitor.com/2014/05/nutrition/the-truth-about-dehydration-and-performance_76027)

# The impact of a failed experiment

Nigel Collins

5 de March de 2014, 1:22 PM

English pugilist Dutch Sam stood 5-foot-6, weighed between 130 and 133 pounds, and is credited with inventing the uppercut. Even though he trained on three glasses of gin a day and sometimes entered the ring drunk, according to no lesser an authority than Pierce Egan, Sam was "one of (if not) the best fighting man in the kingdom."

Nonetheless, despite his fighting prowess and widespread acclaim, Sam, who fought from 1801 to 1814, never became bare-knuckles champion. He was a victim of his time, a lightweight living in a heavyweight world.

From the dawn of modern boxing (during the early decades of the 18th century) until the middle of the 19th century, all prizefighters were lumped together regardless of size. If the same system applied today, Floyd Mayweather Jr. would have to fight Wladimir Klitschko if he wanted to be champion.

It wasn't until 1886 that Jack McAuliffe became the first lightweight champion, knocking out Billy Frazier in the 21st round. By then it was too late for Dutch Sam -- he died in 1816.

The advent of weight divisions was intended to ensure, as much as possible, that boxers were evenly matched and that ability, rather than size advantage, would decide the outcome. It was a noble idea and helped shape the sport's development, but the proliferation of weight divisions (now 17 and counting) was no panacea.

True, separate weight classes greatly benefited fighters below heavyweight, and that's a good thing. Even so, the concept also introduced plenty of new problems, some of which threaten to make a mockery of the notion of a fair fight.

The most recent scam is fighters buying their way out of making the contracted weight, as exemplified by the scandalous shenanigans surrounding Saturday's Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.-Bryan Vera match.

In order to earn the biggest payday of his career, Vera, who has spent the bulk of his career as a middleweight, was forced to agree to a series of increasingly higher weights. And as the fight drew near and it became obvious that Chavez wasn't going to make 168 pounds, the limit was raised to 173 pounds and a portion of Chavez's purse was given to Vera.

The controversy caused quite a stink, reinforced Chavez's spoiled-brat image, and put another dent in the sport's battered reputation -- as did the contentious decision in Junior's favor.

Perhaps the most egregious case of pay-to-weigh (or whatever you wish to call it) came when Mayweather gave Juan Manuel Marquez \$600,000 rather than shed the two pounds required to make the stipulated 144 pounds before their 2009 bout. As the \$300,000 per-pound penalty was written into the fight contract, you can't help but wonder if multimillionaire Mayweather ever had any intention of making weight.

Paying your opponent in order to gain an unfair advantage is not only poor sportsmanship but also defeats the purpose for which weight classes were created. Although we are seeing more and more of this sort of gambit, it's actually a symptom of a larger weight-related aberration -- the day-before-the-fight weigh-in.

Concerned about dehydrated fighters not having enough time between the weigh-in and the fight to properly rehydrate, influential ringside physician Dr. Edwin "Flip" Homansky advocated switching to day-before weigh-ins. It seemed to make a lot of sense. There are many medical risks associated with dehydration, including reducing the amount of cerebrospinal fluid in which the brain floats. Insufficient fluid compromises the cushion-effect and the brain's ability to absorb

shock.

The Nevada State Athletic Commission saw merit in Dr. Homansky's suggestion and instituted the new day-before policy in the mid-1980s. It wasn't long before virtually all jurisdictions followed suit, but unanticipated complications soon surfaced.

Many boxers abuse the change, taking it as an invitation to drain their bodies to an unhealthy degree in order to make a weight that is inappropriate for their age and body size. After the weigh-in, these emaciated fighters chug down large quantities of fluids and stuff themselves with food to a point where they are often a division or more over the contracted weight by fight time.

"It has actually become part of the matchmaking process," said Keith Kizer, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, "with some people not wanting to fight a certain fighter because he is known to put on extra weight after the weigh-in. Or sometimes they'll agree to a fight because they know the opponent will come in depleted."

In many instances, the extra weight gives a fighter a substantial edge over his opponent, such as when Arturo Gatti gained 19 pounds after the weigh-in for his 2000 match with Joey Gamache. Gatti blasted Gamache in the second round, sending him to the hospital and ending his career. On the other hand, when Oscar De La Hoya depleted himself to make weight for his fight with Manny Pacquiao, his rehydration effort failed. He gained only two pounds and was hammered into a humiliating defeat.

"Going back to the morning of the fight would be more uniform," said Homansky, who has changed his mind about the benefits of day-before weigh-ins. "It would decrease abuse. A welterweight should go into the ring not much more than 147 pounds. It's a crime when a kid weighing almost 160 fights somebody weighing 147."

Homansky is not alone in his belief that the day-before weigh-in is a failed experiment and should be abandoned.

"Our sport and our boxers suffer from ill-advised weight loss and weight loss practices," wrote Greg Sirb, executive director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, in a letter to members of the Association of Boxing Commissions. "By granting them the privilege to weigh-in well before the event we are only encouraging boxers to starve so that they can regain, sometime large amounts of weight, so that by the time the actual competition takes place the true weight class of the boxer becomes a farce."

Sirb is practicing what he preaches and, except for an occasional title fight, holds weigh-ins the morning of the fight. But why aren't other commissions doing likewise? After all, the NCAA has already banned day-before weigh-ins for all collegiate wrestlers.

"Every one of the commissions knows there is a problem, but it's easier to turn a blind eye and pray for nothing to happen that places the sport in a bad light," said Dr. Margaret Goodman, a neurologist and former chairman of the Medical Advisory Board of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. "If there are no deaths, nothing changes."

Then there are business concerns. The day-before weigh-in has become an important part of the promotion. For major fights in Las Vegas, fans stand in line for hours in order to snag a free seat to see their favorite fighters step on the scales. These events have transformed one of boxing's oldest rituals into a pep rally, creating the sort of boisterous scene that garners plenty of media attention and helps market the fight.

Even before the introduction of day-before weigh-ins, making weight was a dodgy part of the boxing culture and frequently resulted in a whatever-it-takes mentality. Unhealthy weight-cutting methods often start in the amateur ranks, where youthful boxers routinely binge and purge, a habit that can quickly become a full-blown eating disorder and carry over into their pro careers.

The improper use of diuretics and laxatives can also be extremely detrimental to metabolism and body chemistry, as are extended stints in the steam room. It's a dangerous game, and fighters

who practice extreme weight-cutting techniques are literally flirting with death.

On Sept. 26, Brazilian MMA fighter Leandro "Feijao" Souza died from a stroke while cutting weight for an upcoming contest. Pathologists have yet to establish a definitive link between Souza's weight cutting and his stroke, but aggressive weight loss is known to lower blood pressure, cause kidney failure and lead to unconsciousness.

Any trainer will tell you that the best course of action is for a fighter to get in the best possible physical condition and fight at whatever weight he or she is at that point. Some, such as Bernard Hopkins, have practiced that method with great success over a long period of time, but for most fighters it's not that simple. Opportunity and money have persuaded athletes involved in combat sports that fighting at an inappropriate weight is the way to go, which has resulted in a multi-horned dilemma that undermines what was intended to be the sport's great equalizer.

It wouldn't be a cure-all, but a return to same-day weigh-ins would certainly be a significant step in the right direction. Unfortunately, most commissions lack the resolve to rectify a mistake that was ballyhooed as an innovative safety measure.

If Souza had been a boxer fighting in the United States, his death might have been the kind of tipping point that Goodman suggested it would take to bring back day-of weigh-ins. But an MMA guy in Brazil doesn't cut close enough to the bone, and nothing is going to change anytime soon.

Dutch Sam, who understood how difficult it is to buck the system, would probably just sigh and order another gin.

[http://espn.go.com/boxing/story/\\_/id/9759238/the-abuses-dangers-difficulties-surrounding-weight-limits](http://espn.go.com/boxing/story/_/id/9759238/the-abuses-dangers-difficulties-surrounding-weight-limits)

# Weight Cutting: Solving 'The Biggest Problem in Combat Sports'

By Scott Harris , Featured Columnist Aug 31, 2015

The tipping point was blood.

When your talents for hand-to-hand combat put food on the table and shelter overhead, the sight of your own blood usually isn't enough to make a memory. Jim Miller remembers this particular sighting, though, because he hadn't fought in months. And the blood was in his urine stream.

"I was peeing blood," Miller said. "And my kidneys hurt."

Soon after, Miller, a professional mixed martial artist in the UFC, learned he had kidney stones. On top of that, about a year earlier, he had suffered a full-blown kidney infection. The cause of these problems? Damage inflicted on the organs by the process of cutting weight.

"I think it has definitely had an effect on my body," Miller said of weight cutting. "It's something I don't feel today, but I wouldn't be surprised if it took a couple years off my life."

In combat sports like **MMA**, wrestling and boxing, weight cutting is as common as heavy bags and ankle tape. The practice entails losing large amounts of weight, mostly through deliberately and aggressively dehydrating oneself, over the course of about a week. The goal is to meet the threshold of a certain weight class and then massively rehydrate between the official weigh-in and the fight in order to gain a maximum size advantage over an opponent.

Because weight cutting shares a risk-impact chart with brain injuries and performance-enhancing drugs, it usually assumes a backseat in the safety discourse. After all, its cause-and-effect cycle doesn't play out under bright lights or in highlight reels or summer-movie physiques. It happens in the world's grayer areas: the hotel bathroom, the low-lit sauna, the early-morning fitness room, before the conventioners arrive, a hooded figure hunched over the wheels of a rapid-firing stationary bike.

But weight cutting is every bit as dangerous as the better-documented risks that combat sports present. In fact, the day-to-day familiarity of the practice may have spawned a counterproductive sense of complacency. In the two sports for which cutting weight is the largest problem—amateur wrestling and MMA—it may be the most insidious danger of all. And according to doctors, regulators and fighters, it's only getting worse.

Fortunately, there are solutions. The key is finding the right ones—and the will to put them into motion.

"This is the biggest problem in combat sports," said Andy Foster, executive officer of the California State Athletic Commission. "Five or 10 percent of people are doping. The number of people dehydrating is much, much higher... [Weight cutting is] a traumatic event. Then the very next day, you combine that with another traumatic event, and that's called a fight. Combine these two things, and you're just asking for trouble."

According to a **2013 study** published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 39 percent of MMA fighters compete while significantly or seriously dehydrated. (Although it's impossible to determine the percentage of MMA fighters using PEDs, it stands to reason that the number is declining in light of the UFC's **aggressive new drug-testing policies**.)

Specific formulas vary from person to person or team to team, handed down from teacher to pupil like old family recipes. In general, though, a cut can include days of total fasting or severely restricted food intake, refusing all liquids for 12 hours or more, hours-long stints in a sauna or steam room to promote perspiration, Epsom salt baths, protracted cardio workouts that are sometimes performed in a heated room or while wearing sweats or special insulating suits, diuretics and even laxatives or induced vomiting.



**Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**  
***Jim Miller before facing Benson Henderson.***

“The methods are not necessarily healthy,” wrote Dr. Sherry Wulkan, medical chair for the Association of Boxing Commissions and lead MMA and muay thai ringside physician for the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board (NJSACB), in an emailed response to questions. “And some, especially if modified by the athlete, can be dangerous and may even result in permanent organ damage or death.”

Many in the combat sports community seem desensitized to weight cutting. As a typical fight week unfolds, observers tend to offer vague expressions of solidarity with a weight-cutting fighter, as if he or she was serving some undemocratic spate of after-school detention. It's different in the medical community.



**Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**  
***Miller on fight night with Henderson.***



Doctors who follow combat sports seem, to a person, gravely concerned (if not alarmed) over the practice and its growing intensity.

“No medical professional would be in favor of allowing that procedure,” said Dr. Robert Cantu, director of sports medicine at Emerson Hospital in Massachusetts and a clinical professor of neurosurgery at Boston University School of Medicine. “There are definite dangers of dehydration. There is electrolyte imbalance, low blood sugar, the danger of overhydration.”

What really illustrates the problem from a physiological standpoint is not so much the number of pounds but the amount of water that weight-cutting fighters wring out of their bodies. On average, water comprises 60 percent of total body weight. So, if a 144-pound MMA fighter loses eight pounds of water weight (along with weight lost in the form of body fat or other things) as part of an effort to reach the 135-pound bantamweight maximum, the fighter has drained 8.6 percent of the body’s water weight.

By medical standards, any water loss of more than 5 percent is **considered serious**. Anything **more than 10 percent** is cause for a trip to the emergency room.



**Photo courtesy Jim Miller**  
*Miller wrapped up during a weight cut.*

“I wasn’t aware of what an issue this was,” said Jeff Novitzky, who in April was named the UFC’s vice president of athlete health and performance. “Some athletes drain 10-15 percent of their water in two or three days. After that point, [medical professionals] I’ve spoken to recommend immediate hospitalization.”

Groups including the **American College of Sports Medicine** and the **Association of Ringside Physicians** have issued recommendations to end excessive dehydration and its related mechanisms as a weight-loss tool.

As the body dehydrates, blood thickens, forcing the kidneys to work harder to filter it. The organs can’t produce enough urine to flush themselves out, laying the groundwork for kidney stones and infection. Once a person has experienced these conditions, the likelihood of a future incident increases. In a worst-case scenario, severely dehydrated individuals can experience kidney failure, shock, seizures and coma, at which point death is possible.

And the kidneys are far from the only vulnerability.

According to Dr. Wulkan, dehydration on this scale strains the heart and thyroid, increases the chance of muscle and tendon injury and weakens the immune system. It also turns out that the endpoints of an opponent's limbs are not the only factor in brain injury. Excessive rehydration after a cut can spur the body to channel massive amounts of water back into cells, which can sometimes cause them to expand and burst. If this occurs inside the brain, the result, called cerebral edema, can be fatal.

Then there's that little thing called a fight. A definitive study would be inhumane, but it's widely accepted that dehydrated fighters run a higher risk of concussion.

"When you're dehydrated, the brain is smaller because there is less cerebrospinal fluid," Cantu said. "So you can think of the brain having more room to bounce around the skull."

Female fighters **take more risks than** their male counterparts by cutting weight. Estrogen, a crucial ingredient for proper bone health in women, is stored in fat cells. As such, a significant body-fat shortage potentially compromises bone density. What's more, big drops in water weight can interfere with menstrual cycles.

### rondarousey



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The home stretch - charging the end of the #ufc184 cut with @thedolcediet, this guy is the man and makes the hardest part for most seem easy - pic via @hansgutknecht

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Ronda Rousey, the UFC women's bantamweight champion and the most famous MMA fighter in the world, has been fairly open about the sizable cut she makes (**about 17 pounds**) to reach her division's 135-pound limit. She has been almost as open about the role that the pressure of making weight played in **her developing bulimia**, a condition that affects about **1.5 million Americans**, 95 percent of whom are women.

"When I started MMA, I walked around at 145 pounds, so I fought there, but I thought I could capitalize more fighting at 135 pounds and get more attention because it's a deeper division," Rousey said of her weight-cutting rationale in a 2012 **article on UFC.com**. "But I hadn't been that light since I was like 15 years old, so I went and got help for that. It's been one of the easiest weight cuts I've ever done."

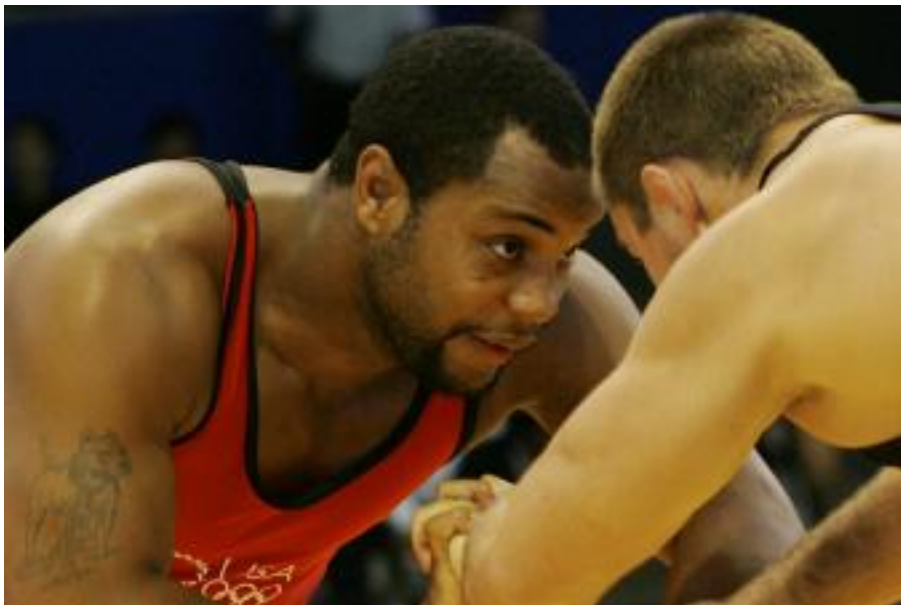
## When the Cut Goes Wrong

The perception of weight cutting as little more than an inconvenience is countered by relatively recent history. Tragedies are not uncommon.

Weight cutting's largest casualties to date occurred in grim succession over a six-week period in the late autumn of 1997, when three collegiate wrestlers, competing for different schools in different parts of the country, died from **weight-cut-related complications**.

The amateur wrestling community responded on several fronts, and no deaths have occurred since. But leaders with USA Wrestling, one of the sport's top regulators as well as its Olympics coordinating body, are quick to acknowledge that challenges persist two decades after those wrenching six weeks.

The most prominent illustration comes from 2008, when Daniel Cormier, who happens to be the UFC's reigning light heavyweight champion, suffered kidney failure and was **hospitalized while cutting weight** for the Beijing Olympics. He was unable to compete in the games as a result.



**JEYHUN ABDULLA/Associated Press**  
**Daniel Cormier (left) at the 2007 world championships.**

It doesn't account for the many thousands who have competed without incident, but it does indicate that more work remains.

"It's definitely less of a problem than it was in the '90s and prior. But there's still problems and things we need to face," said Mike Clayton, manager of USA Wrestling's national coaches education program. "Wrestlers are a strong reactive group. If there's a problem, we fix it. But we can be better at being proactive so we don't have to be reactive in the first place."

As MMA has continued its ascendance toward the mainstream, tragedies and problems around weight cutting have grown proportionately.

In September 2013, MMA fighter Leandro Souza, 26, a member of Brazil's prominent Nova Uniao training camp, was offered a fight with the Shooto Brazil promotion. There was a catch: The fight was in the 125-pound flyweight division. Normally, Souza was a bantamweight. He had one week to cut 33 pounds. He had not competed professionally since 2011.

Did he want the fight or not?

Souza accepted. He shed many pounds, evidently **taking diuretic pills** to help him along. As he waited his turn to step on the scales, Souza collapsed. He was later **pronounced dead**, with the

cause of death **determined as a stroke**.

Shooto Brazil President Andre Pederneiras claimed the death was not related to his weight cut.

“That could have happened to anyone,” Pederneiras **told Extra** in an interview shortly after Souza's death (**h/t MMAFighting.com**).

Two months after Souza's death, UFC welterweight **Brian Melancon retired** from competition after learning his kidneys were functioning at 47 percent of their capacity, thanks to a condition exacerbated by cutting weight.

Jose Aldo, the lineal UFC featherweight champion and one of the greatest fighters in the world, was **hospitalized in 2013** for kidney stones.

In late 2012 and early 2013, UFC middleweight Alessio Sakara **was forced** to withdraw from a bout and stop training for several months because of “renal stress.”

The list goes on.

## 'You Feel Like You're Gonna Die'

On fight-week Monday, Miller (25-6-1, 14-5-1 UFC) clocks in at about 170 pounds. On Friday morning, he's down to 155.

“It's kind of miserable,” Miller said. “You get kind of foggy. It's hard to make decisions. I get a headache, a little bit of weakness.”

The night before weigh-ins might be the toughest stretch. The kinetic life of a fighter grinds to a halt when Miller settles into a near-scalding salt bath that draws every bit of moisture from his pores. He emerges periodically to scrape away the sweat, clearing the way for more. In this manner, he sheds the final pounds.

Despite prolonged fasting, when Miller wakes up on weigh-in day, his appetite is gone. By that point, his body is unable to muster saliva. Forcing down a side salad or spinach omelet keeps the machine running, one final shovelful of coal for the metabolic fires.

Miller makes weight; he always does. That consistency speaks to his professional diligence over the long term, as well as the experience gained by cutting weight approximately 75 times, dating back to his scholastic wrestling days.

But part of it stems from another fact, plain to fighters and observers but perhaps surprising to the uninitiated.

“My cut,” Miller observed, “is not on the extreme end.”

For the extreme end, you have to look to someone like James Vick.

Like Miller, the 28-year-old Vick (8-0, 4-0 UFC) competes at 155 pounds. But the 6'3" Vick's “walking-around” weight hovers near 185. That means he cuts as much as 30 pounds during fight week.

Also like Miller, Vick has yet to miss his mark. But it comes at a brutal cost.



Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images  
*James Vick at a weigh-in.*

“You feel like you’re gonna die,” Vick said. “It’s hard to explain how painful it is. You have the attention span of a two-year-old. You can’t focus on anything. If I fought on the day I weighed in, I’d lose to anyone.”

Vick’s relative youth renders him resilient, able to handle and recover reasonably well from the process. But, he says, he still gets the question: *Why would someone do that?* “People look at me like I’m nuts when I tell them [how much weight I cut],” Vick said. “But I do it because of the size advantage it gives me.”

After rehydrating, Vick enters the cage more or less back to his original size, which is technically equivalent to that of a middleweight, two weight classes up. That is, quite literally, a big advantage, and it illustrates the nature of the arms race happening in MMA and other combat sports, where ever-steeper weight cuts keep athletes ahead of the pack.

“There are a ton of risks when you cut that kind of weight,” said George Lockhart, a nutritionist and former fighter who, with his company, Fitness VT, works with Vick and some 60 other fighters. “Everyone’s trying to push that envelope and get that edge. Cuts keep getting bigger and bigger.”

## The Bottom Line and the UFC

In the past, UFC officials have attempted to distance themselves from incidents like Souza’s. Days after Souza’s death in Brazil, UFC President **Dana White** drew a sharp distinction between a typical UFC fighter’s weight cut and Souza’s. In a 2013 news conference, White told reporters, according to *MMA Weekly*:

**“Where you see the dangerous situations are the guys that take last-minute fights and have to lose a ton of weight. It’s never good. In the UFC, these guys have plenty of time. They know when they have to fight. They know the time they have. They diet and do the proper nutrition to get down the right way. When they get closer (to weigh-ins), they cut a few pounds. That’s the healthy, normal way to do it.”**

It’s a nice bit of talk, but it doesn’t sync with the UFC’s walk. Souza’s case was undoubtedly extreme (and most diuretics are prohibited by most state athletic commissions in the U.S.), but White’s sound bite conflicts with UFC reality, where injuries and other circumstances routinely set off mad scrambles to keep a fight afloat.



**Brad Barket/Getty Images**  
**Dana White**

An unscientific review of UFC events between January and August shows 15 instances of a replacement fighter filling in on 15 days' notice or less. In 12 of these cases, it was the replacement fighter's UFC debut—not exactly the strongest of negotiating positions. In two instances, the replacement fighter missed weight or was ultimately unable to compete because of complications that arose during weight cuts.

One of those instances was the case of Andrew Todhunter. Nine days before UFC 188 on June 13, the UFC tapped the welterweight to **replace the injured Hector Urbina**. It was to be Todhunter's UFC debut. During his weight cut, he passed out, and medical professionals subsequently **deemed him medically unfit** to compete. His bout with Albert Tumenov was cancelled.

About a month later, the **UFC released Todhunter**.

UFC fighter cuts also frequently surpass “a few pounds.” Vick's case is extreme, but it's not a total outlier. Middleweight champion Chris Weidman, for example, said he once **cut 32 pounds in 10 days** to take a UFC bout with Demian Maia as an injury replacement. Anthony Johnson, currently on the UFC roster as a 205-pound light heavyweight, first entered the promotion as a 170-pound welterweight. According to Brett Okamoto of ESPN.com, Johnson has said he “**knocked on death's door**” while cutting to welterweight, which he did on 10 occasions while fighting for the UFC.



**Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**  
**Anthony Johnson weighs in for a welterweight bout in 2011.**



Though one might hope that health and safety dwarf any other concern, the truth is nothing motivates like the bottom line. And weight-cutting mishaps have the power to hit promotions squarely in the wallet.

An unscientific review of every UFC event from 2012 through August 25, 2015, shows what appears to be an upward trend line in matchups that have been disrupted either by a fighter missing weight or because what appear to be cut-related issues forced a matchup change or cancellation. In 2012 and 2013, the UFC held 31 and 33 events, respectively, with 12 fights altered in each of those two years. In 2014, a total of 20 fights were altered in 35 UFC events. As of August 25, 2015 has seen 19 fights altered in 29 events.

The most famous example came in August 2014, when a scheduled rematch at UFC 177 between bantamweight champion T.J. Dillashaw and Renan Barao was **scuttled the day before** the event after **Barao was hospitalized** near the end of his weight cut. UFC announced newcomer Joe Soto as Barao's last-minute replacement; Soto fought gamely before losing by knockout in the final round.

UFC 177, a pay-per-view event, drew an **estimated 125,000 buys**, tied for the UFC's second-lowest total of the past nine years.

### **Culture Change and the Role of Wrestling**

The solutions to weight cutting are as multivariate as the problems but a good deal more nebulous. But they are out there. For simplicity's sake, they can be grouped under two conceptual umbrellas: culture change and regulatory actions.

The former begins with perhaps the biggest—and truest—cliche in the entire health world: diet and exercise.

"In general, more accomplished professional athletes tend to have fewer large weight swings in the 'off season,' and have the ability to hire sports nutritionists and other... 'experts' to assist with healthier forms of weight reduction," Wulkan wrote.

In other words, maintaining consistent fitness and nutrition habits keeps an athlete closer to his or her "fighting weight," which mitigates the need for bigger cuts. That's where nutritionists like Lockhart come in. But when it comes time to make the cut, Lockhart and others like him are honing bodily tendencies down to the cellular level, where modulating weight becomes a matter of what switches to flip and when, in order to eliminate the "negative feedback," as Lockhart puts it, that interferes with the body's ability to shed fats and fluids.

The hormone aldosterone, for example, helps instruct the body on whether to hold sodium. Vasopressin, secreted by the pituitary gland, influences water retention.

"Your body doesn't have a brain," Lockhart said. "What your body knows and what your brain thinks are different. Your body doesn't know that if you're not eating, you can just go to the grocery store. So it slows down your metabolism."

Vick started working with Lockhart about a year ago and says the approach is making his gargantuan cut more tolerable and efficient. Vick now eats six times per day during his cut. If only it could narrow the gap between his normal weight and the weight at which he technically competes.

"Even with the science, it's horrible," Vick said. "It's extremely grueling. When you can't drink water and you're stuck in the sauna for two or three sessions a day, that's just hard, man. You suck on a piece of ice to give you the feeling of drinking something."

Vick does it to gain a size advantage. Backstopping and motivating this assertion is an easy assumption: that heavier is always better. But that's not necessarily so.

"While some in the media make great comment about the actual fight time weight of the contestant and the advantage therein, statistics in New Jersey for mixed martial arts do not support that viewpoint," NJSACB Counsel Nick Lembo wrote in an emailed response to

questions. “Frequently, the lighter contestant or the contestant who had an easier time at the weigh-in proves to be the victor. ...[The other fighter’s] lack of cardio and strength becomes apparent.”



**Michael Cohen/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**  
**Nick Lembo (at podium)**

State athletic commissions bear responsibility, Lembo wrote. The New Jersey commission, long considered a leader in combat sports regulation, can serve as a role model and partner for less-active governing bodies. Every state athletic commission is freestanding, with no consistent policy-making or information-sharing among them.

“The sport should have the same or similar weigh-in rules regardless of the location of the contest,” Lembo wrote. “A weigh-in change should be discussed by and among the various commissions and their medical staffs... There needs to be cooperative efforts between commissions, physicians, athletes and trainers to educate proper weight-loss techniques, dangers of dehydration and improper cutting, and selecting a proper weight class.”

Many professional MMA fighters (especially Americans) start their careers on the wrestling mat, so that sport’s culture has a wide ripple effect on the landscape. According to some, that effect is not healthy.

“While more recent methods of weight cutting heavily rely on ‘science,’ the basic tenet, based predominantly in wrestling culture, has remained the same,” Dr. Wulkan stated. A wrestler’s mindset is one of will and determination. Anything other than gritting one’s teeth and powering through your weight cut is often interpreted as weakness.



**Hunter Martin/Getty Images**

“MMA has evolved; wrestling really hasn’t,” said Lockhart. “It’s tradition. ... They’ve done it the same way for so long. There’s almost a quiet understanding that they all kind of agreed to.”



To its credit, USA Wrestling has since 1997 worked hard to **turn wrestling culture around**, implementing several concrete measures like prohibiting the use of saunas, self-induced vomiting and diuretics.

If only people were as easily changed as rule books. Rank-and-file wrestling coaches have proven more than once that old-school habits die hard.

“One of the common sayings is that we can’t change everybody,” Clayton said. “Some coaches say ‘this is the way I was coached and it made me tough, and this is what I’ll do.’ You can’t change that. ... [But] if I affect one coach and the coach has 20 kids a year for 20 years, that’s 400 people I’ve directly affected. ... We have coaches that are willing to learn.”

## Smarter Measures

Culture change is always a long game. In the nearer term, with the cuts and awareness of their consequences both growing, promotions and commissioners are looking hard at tests and regulations that safeguard athletes and the competition.

The UFC is a part of this contingent, with Novitzky at the helm. In June, the promotion, as part of its new partnership with the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, announced a **ban on intravenous rehydration**—long considered an effective tool for quick fluid replacement after a cut—following weigh-ins, barring a medical exemption.

Never known for nuance or half-measures, UFC officials recently added that violators **could face two-year suspensions**.



Susan Walsh/Associated Press/Associated Press  
**Jeff Novitzky**

Several **fighters have publicly lamented** the new policy, calling it unwieldy, unhelpful and even dangerous. Perhaps in response, the USADA pushed back the effective date to October 1 but doesn’t appear willing to bend any further, stating the ban will ultimately help mitigate weight cuts. “[Fighters are] using IVs as a crutch to do these severe and unsafe cuts,” Novitzky said. “I think they really need to educate [themselves]. [Rehydration] can be done smoothly with salts and electrolytes.”

Novitzky said he and the UFC are still researching the issue, with more changes potentially “on the table,” though nothing is imminent.

The UFC is far from the only MMA promotion struggling to address weight-cutting problems. At least one organization is putting its mouth where its (and its fighters’) money is. Great Britain’s Cage Warriors, which has spawned big names like current UFC interim featherweight champ

Conor McGregor, **stripped Brett Johns** of his bantamweight title after Johns came in heavy for what would have been a title defense. In May 2014, after seven athletes missed weight for a single event, the promotion announced it would begin **docking fighters 60 percent** of their purse.

One oft-visited idea for new regulation on this topic is that of **same-day weigh-ins**, either instead of or in addition to regular weigh-ins the day before an event. The move worked well for **NCAA wrestling**, proponents say, and could work elsewhere, as it shortens rehydration periods, thus curtailing steep cuts.

“Our sport and our boxers suffer from ill-advised weight loss and weight-loss practices,” Greg Sirb, executive director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, wrote in a letter to the Association of Boxing Commissions that called for a ban on day-before weigh-ins in boxing, according to a **2014 article on ESPN.com**. “By granting them the privilege to weigh in well before the event we are only encouraging boxers to starve so that they can regain, sometime[s] large amounts of weight, so that by the time the actual competition takes place, the true weight class of the boxer becomes a farce.”

According to Lembo, however, same-day weigh-ins may not be as strong a deterrent in practice as they sound in theory.

“I am not certain that ‘double weigh-ins’ or same-day weigh-ins are improvements, at the current time,” Lembo stated. “In theory, the concept that contestants will properly cut weight because of the added weigh-in or same-day weigh-in is a nice concept. In practice, I fear that a high enough percentage of contestants will not change their weight-cutting habits. Thus, we will have even less hydrated contestants in the ring or cage at greater health risks.”

As far as MMA drawing lessons from boxing, increasing the number of weight divisions—the UFC currently has nine, the World Boxing Council has 18—could also encourage more fighters to compete closer to their “normal” weight.

Another measure implemented for **wrestling by the NCAA** is the so-called “1.5%-Per-Week Rule,” which stipulates that amateur wrestlers can only lose 1.5 percent of their total body weight each week, based on body fat and hydration benchmarks. The issue here, however, is one of enforcement.

“[The rules] do help a lot by reducing the impact of severe cuts,” Clayton said. “But they don’t guarantee that [wrestlers] are descending by 1.5 percent, that they’re following it.”

Foster said CSAC is set to begin **certifying amateur MMA fighters** at a specific weight class in January 2016, based on a physical assessment that will include a body-composition test. Fighters will not be able to compete at a lower weight class than the one at which they are certified. Fighters are re-assessed once per year under the program.

“We use a body-composition scale or body-caliber test and calculate the lowest weight the fighters should be fighting at, while maintaining 5-7 percent body fat,” Foster said. “We assign that for one year, and you can amend it later.”

CSAC also is performing hydration testing in a pro setting—as they did Saturday at the Bellator 141 event in Temecula, California—but so far are doing so only for informational purposes.



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The athletic state commission monitors the water in our body. To make sure dehydration is not too extreme.

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There is one hydration test that appears to be effective, simple and inexpensive. It's also a well-established tool for assessing not only dehydration, but the degree of dehydration in individuals, and without extensive measurements or regulation.

It's called urine specific gravity testing, or gravity-strip testing, and it's done with a simple urine test that measures the specific gravity of urine. The specific gravity of water is 1.000. If a urine sample's specific gravity clocks in at over 1.020, the person is dehydrated. The higher the specific gravity, the greater the degree of dehydration. Already in use in the NCAA and elsewhere, these tests can be administered at or before weigh-ins, before fights or any other time.

"Urine has a specific gravity that can be measured," said Dr. Cantu. "There are safe gravity ranges and unsafe gravity ranges. You just look at the urine to see how concentrated it is."

On several different medical supply sites, a pack of 10 gravity-strip tests sells for less than \$30.

Reusable refractometer devices—shown in **at least one study** to be the most effective means of specific gravity testing—range in price from \$90 to \$2,000.



**Uncredited/Associated Press**  
***Specific gravity strip test***

It might be difficult. Still, the answers are out there, right alongside the problems. It's all about lining them up.

"Let's take things one step at a time," Novitsky said. "Throwing a ton of rules out there is not a good thing. ... We're furiously reaching out to the medical community, nutritionists, [to] put the tools, research and science together."

Combat sports are as old as sport itself, but MMA is still fairly new to the landscape, as are scientific findings that can evolve weight cutting beyond a test of wills with oneself. As the sport and the science mature, new measures will continue to do the same and reduce the risk of long-term health problems and worse.

"The way so many people do weight cuts is so primitive, and we're so far past that nowadays," Lockhart said. "But people don't know what they don't know."

*Scott Harris is a freelance writer covering MMA for Bleacher Report. He is available on Twitter. All quotes obtained firsthand unless otherwise noted.*

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2555772-weight-cutting-solving-the-biggest-problem-in-combat-sports>

# Cutting weight can kill you

by Kirik Jenness | source: [sbnation.com](http://sbnation.com)

I have reffed, judged, cornered and occasionally fought in hundreds of MMA bouts. I am often asked what was the worst injury I ever saw from within the cage.

He was a first time fighter, a little older, and a little big. I taped his hands before the rules meeting, as his corner didn't know how to. He did okay the first round, could hit pretty hard. Towards the end of the first, things did not appear to be going his way, but I didn't end it.

Very early in the second, he didn't want to be there, and something felt wrong, so I stopped it, although he was not in imminent danger. There was little protest, and then he went back to the locker room with his brother.

He passed out in the locker room. Then in the ambulance, his heart stopped. They airlifted him to Boston, and diagnosed renal failure.

Then there was a wait, day after day, to see if his kidneys started again. If they did not, he would be on dialysis, for ever. The good news was that he had lived. He had never cut before. After a little research, he went on the Atkins Diet. Protein is tough on the kidneys. Then he cut water weight, which placed further demands on the renal system. Then, under the heat of TV lights, his kidneys stopped, right in the middle of a fight.

Eventually his kidneys started, but the potential dangers of cutting weight are impossible to escape.

It is not only first time fighters that face danger from cutting. At the last Strikeforce Challengers event, [Ocala.com](http://Ocala.com) profiles T.J. Cook's struggle. For a brief moment, T.J. Cook felt a wave of euphoria.

And then, seconds later, he knew something was very wrong.

Competing on the July 22 Challenger Series 17 in Las Vegas, Cook made his Strikeforce debut and defeated previously unbeaten Lionel Lanham by technical knockout with just 1 second remaining in the first round. However, soon after referee Kim Winslow pulled the 205-pound Team Trauma product off of his defenseless opponent, Cook staggered to his corner and spoke uneasily to his boxing coach, Tito Ocasio.

"I told him my body felt like it was shutting down," Cook said. "Then, I blacked out. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't see."

After Cook essentially was carried to mid-cage to have his hand raised, he was hurried to the back of the Pearl at The Palms where medics deemed he needed to be rushed to the nearest hospital. Upon arrival, the doctor did a full examination and notified Cook that he had kidney failure.

"They told me if I hadn't been brought in, I probably would have died," Cook said. Instead, he spent the night awaiting blood tests that the next morning revealed his body had recovered. Cook was released and traveled back to Ocala. Called in as a replacement for the injured Carlos Augusto "Guto" Inocente Filho less than a week before the fight, Cook said the scare was the result of having to cut around 11 pounds of body weight in a matter of days. As a result of his brief crisis, he is under a medical suspension handed down by the state of Nevada until mid-August.

When the suspension is completed and he is cleared to train again, Cook, who made \$2,500 to appear and earned a \$2,500 win bonus against Lanham, said he expects to hear from Strikeforce about his next bout.

The dangers of weight cutting can extend to the most experienced and carefully monitored athletes on Earth.

Strikeforce heavyweight Daniel Cormier, who just snuck into the SF Heavyweight Grand Prix tournament as an alternate replacing Alistair Overeem, had to miss his shot at Olympic gold in 2010 when his kidneys failed in Beijing. Cormier was cutting weight to compete at 211lbs.

Now he's a permanently undersized heavyweight who doesn't dare try to make 205lbs because he doesn't dare push his kidneys again.

Cormier is no doubt familiar with the symptoms of Acute Renal Failure (ARF) like dry mouth, lack of urine, headache, lower back pain, nausea, and drowsiness. ARF can be treated with fluids and a quick rehydration, but it can also become Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) if the fighter's kidneys give out from the strain.

It's not just the kidneys that don't do well when the body is drained of fluids. Dehydrated brains are an even bigger threat to fighter health. Boxing fans old enough to remember Duk Koo Kim know why same day weigh ins are a thing of the past. Kim took a 14 round beating from Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini the same day he made a brutal cut down to 135lbs.

Without sufficient time to rehydrate before the fight, Kim's dried up brain slammed against his skull every time Mancini's gloves made contact and after 14 rounds it was too much. Kim died 4 days after the bout.

MMA fighters need to be aware of the dangers of weight cutting when they sign those contracts and hit those scales.

<http://www.mixedmartialarts.com/news/344363/Cutting-weight-can-kill-you>

# Why making the weight is boxing's lethal secret

By Eurosport  
28 October 2013 21:23  
The Pugilist



*Brandon Rios lands a punch to the head of John Murray (Reuters)*

If you want an idea of just how much damage boxing can do to a brain, [do a quick internet search for Denis Lebedev](#).

After his fight with Guillermo Jones in June of this year, Lebedev became a fleeting internet oddity – the boxer with the elephant man's face, the skin around his eye socket swollen grotesquely and his eyelids squeezed shut by the puffy, purple flesh around them.

It looks horrifying, but it's mostly just soft tissue damage.

The real problem lies behind that soft tissue, and behind the bones of the skull, and with the brain, which is floating free in a suspension of cerebro-spinal fluid.

Newton's third law of motion tells us that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Which means that for every blow that hit with enough force to make Lebedev's face react as it did, there was a similar force shunting the brain backwards and forwards against the inside of the walls of the skull.

Last month, Timothy Bradley described what it feels like when a boxer's brain is treated like that. After his brutal fight with Ruslan Provodnikov – following which he was taken to hospital – he told boxing broadcaster HBO that "A few weeks after the fight I was still affected ... my speech was a little bit off and I was slurring a bit. After about two months, I got my speech back."

Those effects on the brain are greatly amplified when boxers are dehydrating to cut weight: and dehydration is far more common than you'd think.

In January 2012, sports broadcaster HBO ran a short documentary about boxer Brandon Rios and his struggles with dehydration before his December 2011 fight with a British boxer named John Murray. Rios had been contracted to fight at 135 pounds and failed on three separate occasions to make the weight on the day of the weigh-in. The documentary follows the pre-fight interview with the HBO commentary panel in which Rios, despite hiding his face behind large sunglasses and under a heavy hoodie, looks pale, drawn and very unhealthy. In the interview,



Rios's trainer Robert Garcia said, "Normally fighters gain eight, no more than ten, and that's normal for a fighter that loses a lot of weight before the weigh-in. But Brandon gained 20 pounds ... it's not healthy, it's dangerous."

Rios was stripped of his title for failing to make the weight, but allowed to fight. The dehydration had left him physically spent and he took far longer to beat Murray, turning the fight into a gruelling, blood splattering duel that inflicted far more damage on the two men than needed to be. The shocking images of Rios' haggard dehydrated face, followed by its swift expansion to its usual roundness, and the subsequent goriness of the fight were presented by HBO with no real commentary on the prevalence of dehydration or its dangers, other than Garcia's candid admission that his fighter had been in real danger.

In June 2012, Julio Cesar Chavez Jnr stepped onto the scales for his fight against Andy Lee weighing 159 pounds and looking skeletal. He later complained that he developed leg cramps half way through the fight, which many attributed to his efforts to make weight through dehydration.



*Julio Cesar Chavez Jnr weighs-in (Reuters)*

A month after that, in July 2012, Edinburgh's Paul Appleby fought a fight he'd taken at six weeks' notice and for which he had dehydrated severely to make the weight for. He lost the fight and felt so sick afterwards that he spent nearly a week in hospital before deciding to take a break from fighting (after which he decided to move up a weight division to avoid having to dehydrate so severely again).

Then in September, Rodel Mayol complained that he lost his IBF Super Flyweight challenge to Juan Carlos Sanchez because he had been dehydrating before the fight and suffered cramps before his ninth round knockout.

In December 2012, Manchester boxer Kieran Farrell nearly died after spending his training camp dangerously dehydrating before his fight with Anthony Crolla. After the fight, Farrell collapsed and was rushed to the hospital suffering from a serious bleed on his brain. He would later tell The Guardian that thirty per cent of his brain had been destroyed by the bleed, and he can never box again.

In May 2013, Hose Aguiniga pulled out of his fight with Francisco Vargas in Las Vegas when he collapsed, severely dehydrated.

These are just the cases that, briefly, broke into the public record. In truth, dehydration ahead of fights is now virtually universal in boxing. The advantages are obvious. A boxer who normally weighs, say, 180 pounds can train at that weight but fight at 168, with a potentially dangerous advantage over their opponent. All they have to do is strip out all their water weight the day before the weigh-in then try to pour it all back in before the fight. But it's based on a flawed notion – that one can rehydrate as quickly as one can dehydrate. In reality, the body needs days more to fully replenish the stores of utterly vital water in the cells, muscles and organs. Multiple scientific studies in the past few years shows that a boxer who is dehydrated, even if he's been drinking



rehydration fluid for a fully day, cannot perform at the same level, and cannot defend himself properly.

No full record of boxers' weights exists in the world but the unofficial reweighing done by HBO is a good sample – non-scientific but certainly sufficiently random – to highlight just how many boxers are now essentially cheating the scales. Nearly every boxer that agrees to be reweighed shows an increase in weight in the 24 hours between the official weigh-in and the day of the fight. The majority of boxers add on more than 10 pounds of weight in less than a day, all of which is in the form of vital hydration for the boxer's body and brain.

The recent wave of recorded brain injuries in American football ought to serve as a parallel for boxing's governing bodies to act upon. Various studies have shown that the majority of damage is caused by the kind of mild, repetitive and cumulative damage that is caused by repeated blows to the head. For a boxer who has been dehydrating, that damage is massively amplified but virtually invisible. It only raises its head intermittently in the likes of the cases above, and it's often hard to prove unless the boxer himself admits to it. As with American footballers, the real results may only be seen when this generation of boxers gets much deeper into retirement.

All of the major sanctioning bodies have some form of prohibition on dehydration, so there's an obvious acceptance that this is dangerous. Yet boxers continue to do it because it is not policed effectively.

The 24-hour weigh-in was designed to make boxing safe from a raft of dehydration related deaths and injuries in the 1980s and 1990s. It was a well-meaning but poorly executed rule which has only served to take that danger and spread it among an even wider number of boxers. It's time to dispense with the widespread fallacy that boxers can dehydrate safely and implement a set of rules that can stem the invisible tide.

<https://uk.sports.yahoo.com/blogs/the-pugilist/why-making-weight-boxing-lethal-secret-212809382.htm>

# Weight cutting: A dangerous game some MMA fighters are willing to play



***MMA fighter George Sullivan checks his weight in his modest garden apartment in Brick Township as he prepares for a painful epsom salt bath to as he tries to shed more than 13 pounds in preparation for his MMA title fight in Atlantic City, which will take place in less than 48 hours. (Andrew Mills/The Star-Ledger)***

**By Matthew Stanmyre | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com**

Before mixed martial arts fighters step into the cage on fight night, many battle another enemy: Their weight.

Dramatic weight cutting before bouts has become common in MMA, according to doctors, trainers and fighters, and it may be the sport's other big health issue, along with brain injuries.

There are few studies or credible sources of information about rapid weight cutting, but doctors fear some fighters are competing while dehydrated, making them more vulnerable to tendon, musculoskeletal and even brain injuries, and more quickly sapping their cardiovascular systems for the fight.

The debate over weight cutting was reignited in September after Brazilian fighter Leandro Souza reportedly suffered a stroke and died just before his weigh-in. According to media reports, Souza was a late injury replacement attempting to lose 33 pounds in a week. The exact cause of his death remains unclear.

"Weight cutting is a bastion we really need to address more fully," says Sherry Wulkan, one of the nation's leading MMA ringside doctors. "There's a proportion of fighters that are more savvy and know a little bit more about it. But there (is) a significant number who really don't understand the nuances of it and the impact that cycling over and over again can have long-term."

According to a study published this year in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, roughly four in 10 fighters studied fought while they were significantly or seriously dehydrated. Many MMA fighters say they attempt to cut significant weight a day or so before weigh-ins, hoping to gain an advantage by putting the pounds back on afterward and fighting closer to their natural weight. In other cases, fighters who are called on to fill in for injured fighters often must shed considerable amounts of weight with little notice.

UFC middleweight champion Chris Weidman filled in to fight Demian Maia last year and told reporters he lost 32 pounds in 10 days. And Kurt Pellegrino, a former UFC fighter who now runs

his own gym in Belmar, says he once cut so much weight he could not sit up straight and temporarily lost his hearing.

Another time, for a 155-pound fight, "The day of the weigh-in I woke up 174 — like an idiot," Pellegrino says. "I had (six) hours to lose 19½ pounds. I did it."

Wulkan says it can take between 24 and 72 hours for the body to rehydrate following a significant weight cut. The brain is usually the last part of the body to rehydrate, the doctor says, so fighting can increase the likelihood of concussion.

The different ways fighters rehydrate also can be an issue. Some don't know which kinds of fluids to drink to replenish their bodies and fall ill or suffer from bloat, Wulkan said. Others use IVs that sometimes are not overseen by a doctor.

The New Jersey State Athletic Control Board is looking into changing weigh-in requirements, according to longtime counsel Nick Lembo.

One example cited is the model used by the World Boxing Council for championship fights — where fighters are weighed 30 days out, seven days out and the day before the fight, and restrictions are placed on the percentage of weight they can lose.

"Obviously there's health risks to a big weight cut in a short period of time," says Lembo. "We are experimenting. We are looking into things."



***Covered in towels and wearing a rubber suit, Brick's George Sullivan lies on the bathroom floor after an epsom salt bath in scalding hot water and isopropyl rubbing alcohol in an effort to cut weight for his MMA in less than two days.***

[http://blog.nj.com/realtimesports\\_impact/print.html?entry=/2013/11/mma\\_weight\\_cutting\\_a\\_dangerous\\_game\\_some\\_fighters\\_are\\_all\\_too\\_willing\\_to\\_play.html](http://blog.nj.com/realtimesports_impact/print.html?entry=/2013/11/mma_weight_cutting_a_dangerous_game_some_fighters_are_all_too_willing_to_play.html)

# The Negative Health Effects of Weight Cutting in Mixed Martial Arts

By [Elliot Matheny](#) on Feb 15, 2010, 7:27p  
Promoted from the FanPosts by Kid Nate.

So, lately I've been thinking about how omnipresent an issue weight cutting (& the pros/ cons thereof) is in MMA/ Wrestling/ Boxing etc., and I thought I'd do a little research on the topic. Partly inspired by [Matt Pitt over at Sherdog's "Fistic Medicine" column](#) (esp the articles about the science behind a KO, and the one about brain trauma in MMA/ boxing), I think it would be interesting to see what kind of info I could dig up about weight cutting.

You always hear people talking about how weight cutting should be banned from the sport, how it's bad for the athletes & gives an unfair advantage to wrestlers, etc. etc., and nauseam. However, after doing some rudimentary research via Google, here's what I took away: cutting offers a 2- pronged threat to an athlete, physical & mental. The main physical threat being dehydration & the second (in extreme cases) being the possibility of hypothermic death (either by heart attack or kidney failure). Psychologically, the toll of an athlete nearly starving their bodies of food & water in the days leading up to the fight dramatically increases the risk of eating disorders, and causes serious hormonal imbalances & mood swings.

***The picture on the right shows UFC fighter & behemoth lightweight Gleison Tibau, who allegedly cuts from the neighborhood of 190 pounds.***

First, I'll delve into the problems dehydration presents. Specifically, hypohydration, which refers to "dehydration induced prior to exercise". According to the US National Library of Medicine's website (Link- [Effects of dehydration on exercise performance](#)), weight cutting negatively affects aerobic endurance & reduces plasma volume:

*The effects of hypohydration may vary, depending on whether it is induced through diuretics or sauna exposure, which substantially reduce plasma volume, or prior exercise, which has much less impact on plasma volume. Hypohydration reduces aerobic endurance, but its effects on muscle strength and endurance are not consistent and require further study.*

In Layman's terms, weight cutting reduces your body's ability to deliver oxygenated blood through your body because of reduced plasma volume, which negatively affects Cardio/ aerobic endurance. That's why guys like Guida, Edgar, Faber, & WW Diego Sanchez have seemingly endless gas tanks while maintaining frantic tempos in their fights- because they don't cut much weight. BJ Penn has excellent cardio @ LW because he walks at around 165 during his training camps; You'll never see Fedor gas, because he works very hard on his cardio & doesn't have to deal with the strains of weight cutting.

The second (and more rare, but severe) health threat is from extreme weight cutting- and that is the possibility of death. An incident in the late 90's with NCAA wrestlers opened eyes about this:

*In 1997, three college wrestlers made national headlines, dying within 33 days of each other. Coming from Michigan, North Carolina, and Wisconsin, these dedicated athletes died from the same cause: weight cutting. In all three cases, the students experienced dehydration resulting in*



*hypothermia after they layered on clothes and did endless workouts in heated rooms. Unfortunately, they out-worked their bodies. The perspiration they produced cooled them to the point of hypothermia resulting in heart attacks and kidney failure, all common effects of extreme weight cutting.*

Basically, the gigantic weight cut attempted by these wrestlers were too much for their bodies to handle, and they died from heart attacks & kidney failure. Now, some camps in MMA are renowned for their weight cutting abilities (ATT comes to mind, with fighters like JZ, Tibau, Alves, Gouveia @ 185, etc), but how much is too much? With Tibau allegedly cutting from 190+, he's losing upwards of 30 lbs- which is almost 15% of his body weight, within the period of a month. That's just not healthy, and even though he has a decent size/ strength advantage, he's still lost to fighters such as Griffin, Nick Diaz, Joe Daddy, & Guillard. Will there be a death or serious health incident in MMA because of extreme weight cutting?

Finally, the psychological threat of eating disorders due to weight cutting is present. Fighters, bodybuilders, wrestlers, etc are all known for eating & drinking next to nothing in the days/ week preceding a match, shredding every available ounce of fat & water in order to have a size advantage. What this does to the brain is bad, though. It causes hormonal imbalances which cause mood swings, depression, & eating disorders. In fact, in the "Weight Cutting" article, the writer talks about the positive correlation between cutting & eating disorders:

*With 81 percent of wrestlers cutting weight, there are many unique methods to achieve the task... Consequently, they [wrestlers] account for three-quarters of male athletes with eating disorders. Eating disorders claim 300,000 lives a year.*

Do we really want our favorite athletes to suffer through the trauma of having bulimia, anorexia, etc? Guys like Fedor (who is notoriously a little doughy around the midsection) have said that, simply put, they are fighters & shouldn't have to worry about extreme dieting; by eating healthy & exercising vigorously, Fedor is able to maintain a healthy psyche, and as we all know- it is his composure and mental unflappability that make him one of the greatest fighters of all time.

So that about sums it up. I know that weight cutting will never truly be an issue that can be solved, but I do think it can be regulated (for example, the NC athletic commission has a rule that says there can't be a 13 lb. differential between the weigh ins and the fight, something which the aforementioned Tibau is preparing for), as the NCAA has been doing as of late:

*Following these deaths, the NCAA took steps to make wrestling safer by banning cutting techniques such as training in a room hotter than 80 degrees, self-induced vomiting, and extensive food or fluid restrictions. Following the actions of the NCAA, even high schools have taken precautions. The NCAA requires wrestlers to take hydration tests, checks their body fat, and restricts the amount of weight they can lose.*

<http://www.bloodyelbow.com/2010/2/15/1311633/the-negative-health-effects-of>

# The risks and rewards of drying out

## *Fight nutritionist Freddy Brown explains the effects of water loss on performance*

December 19, 2014 **John Dennen**

A LOT is being made in combat sports of being “big for the weight”. Boxers will obviously aim to weigh in their leanest state, after having shed every last ounce of surplus fat that may be more permissible in other professional sports. However, there are many things that influence an athlete’s daily fluctuation in weight, and even food and water in an athlete’s stomach (“gut weight”) can make an impact of a couple of pounds. However, being 70% water, an athlete can make serious headway towards their target weight by manipulating their hydration. It is reported that the majority of MMA fighters, with day-before weigh-in schedules and an experience of American high-school wrestling, are immersed in this culture. However, we’ve been told for years that dehydration is bad for performance, while many deaths in boxing have been attributed to drastic weight-loss. I’m going to briefly cover some of the risks, rewards, and reported effects of “drying out”...

### The Pros of Sweating Down

The advantage of losing water weight is obvious. Boxers aim to bend the rules to fight smaller people, and to enjoy a weight advantage. The sad fact is that in reality it will be just minimising your opponent’s advantage – if everyone is sweating down, many feel they also must do so in order to compete. HBO’s unofficial fight-night weigh-ins demonstrate that most fighters gain at least 10lbs after weigh-in, while many may put on far more. **Brandon Rios** was noted as rebounding 20lbs before his lightweight match against **John Murray** (15% of his body mass), whilst MMA exponents of this strategy like Georges St Pierre have been reported to put on in excess of 25lbs before entering the octagon. Now, the debate begins when we start weighing up this reward versus the risk... Some fighters believe that given 24 hours to rehydrate, the risk to performance and health will be outweighed by the reward of being bigger. Evidence that would go at least some way to supporting this view can be found in studies done on lightweight rowers, who preserved their performance after dehydrating by 4-5% body-weight (e.g. 3kg for a welterweight). Given only 2 hours for rehydration, consuming high carbohydrate electrolyte solutions restored performance to previous values. Interestingly, **Derry Matthews’** second training camp with nutrition expert Dr James Morton allowed Derry to maintain 2kg more lean mass, his strength being 10% greater throughout his training camp before using a pre-weigh-in dehydration strategy. More recently, **Vasyl Lomachenko’s** first loss was inflicted at the hands of experienced pro **Orlando Salido**, who held, spoiled and outmuscled the skilled amateur star. This gamesmanship also extended to weight-making, as Salido came in almost a stone heavier than Lomachenko on fight night. We’ve talked about the rewards... but what of the risks. Well, we know that in combat sport, the risks don’t get any bigger...

### The Cons...

The faster an athlete loses weight, the faster they lose performance. Athletes such as **Carl Froch** and the **GB Elite** Amateurs based in Sheffield stay within 5% of their body weight year round, and demonstrate high levels of fitness and power that may be explained by their ability to focus on fitness rather than weight issues. **Floyd Mayweather** famously gives away weight to opponents, compensating with razor sharp reflexes that would be dulled by dehydration. Faster weight loss is also more likely to result in weight loss from muscle and bone, rather than the fat stores one would ideally target. Rapid weight-making has shown a negative impact on boxing-specific measures of skill, speed and accuracy and power. Put simply, boxers are less able to defend themselves. To add to this increased risk from their opponent, rapid weight-loss and dehydration may also amplify the damage inflicted by a punch. A 3kgs loss of sweat has been associated with a reduction of 30% of the liquid round the brain. This may explain why so many boxing



causalities have been at the lower weights. I've read reports that Paul Ingle, Leavander Jonson were suspected as struggling with weight, while Joey Gamache was pummelled into retirement by a replenished version of Arturo Gatti, who bore little resemblance to the shell who weighed-in 21 lbs lighter. While it has been suggested that rehydration can rapidly restore muscular performance after drying-out, the speed at which the brain is rehydrated is not known. Judging from some of the catastrophes in the ring, we may assume that it takes longer than 24hr.

Some of the recent water-loss strategies to be publicised have become increasingly sophisticated as athletes gradually hone their methods of dehydration. By flushing the system with excessive amounts of water in the lead up to a fight, fighters are able to lose tens of pounds in a few days by eliminating salts from the body that increase water retention. This state, reported as "flushing mode" on some MMA forums is known by a more established term in the scientific community; hyponatremia. This state of water-intoxication has been associated with many deaths amongst marathon runners, who have drunk excessive amounts to inadvertently dilute their bodily fluids. Weakness and cerebral dehydration will undoubtedly increase the risk of injury in the ring; if the athlete makes it that far. In 1998, three American college wrestlers died from the effects of dehydration before they even got on the mat.

So to compare the risks versus rewards, the possibility of death and brain injury would have to add to the weight of the argument against dehydration. However, an athlete may need to weigh-in at their lightest, for example after a sweaty training session and with an empty stomach. If there is no option, an athlete should consider the following:

Monitor your weight pre and post training to know what you lose comfortably – keep a note of how you feel in this state

Be organised; plan your weight-loss in advance to lose a maximum of 1% of your body weight per week

Never aim to weigh in more than 3-5% below you normal hydrated weight

If you have had to "dry-out" (only in the last day or so – sweat suits should be banned at all other times!), consume 1.5 x water losses between weigh in and competition, aiming for a salty, moderately sweet drink (40mM sodium and 4-6% sugar can be achieved with diarolyte and sports drinks)

**Get in touch to arrange nutritional support by phoning 07746075161, emailing me at [freddybrown1984@gmail.com](mailto:freddybrown1984@gmail.com) , or visiting my website [www.specificnutritionconsultancy.com](http://www.specificnutritionconsultancy.com)**

<http://www.boxingnewsonline.net/the-risks-and-rewards-of-drying-out/>

# As Mayweather prepares for Canelo: The lessons and perils of boxing's lethal secret

Boxing's 24-hour weigh-in lets fighters "boil down" for weigh-in day then pile the weight back on before the fight. It encourages extreme dehydration, leaving those who do it susceptible to heat stroke, heart failure, increased risk of brain damage and death. Little has been done adequately to investigate the subject, which is one reason **Barry J Whyte** took it upon himself to do so. The result is '**Making the Weight: Boxing's Lethal Secret**', a compelling piece of long-form investigative journalism, [on sale now](#). It focuses primarily on the consequences of a fight between Joey Gamache and Arturo Gatti at Madison Square Garden in February 2000. Gatti weighed in at 139 pounds and fought at 160. It wasn't an even fight (see video at foot of this piece) – and all manner of lessons still remain to be learned.



By Barry J Whyte  
24 June 2013

Boxing blogs have been abuzz since Floyd Mayweather agreed to a catchweight of 152 pounds for his upcoming fight with Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez. Worse still, for Money fans, he's enforced no rehydration limit on Canelo.

A sample of comments illuminates what has been viewed as the big issue around Mayweather's latest challenge.

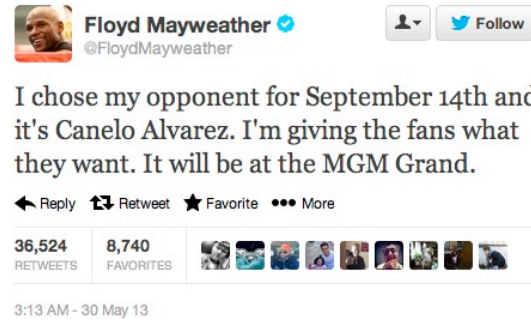
*"Mayweather really blew it by not insisting that a clause be in the contract because he'll likely come into the fight weighing no more than 150 at the most and more likely around 146 or 147."*

*"If Canelo rehydrates to 170-172, he'll have a considerable weight advantage over Mayweather."*

*Indeed, Canelo will have a weight advantage that most fighters would die for."*

*"I'm respecting Mayweather a ton for letting Canelo take the fight without a clause because the chances are Mayweather is going to be out-weighed by 26-30 pounds for this fight."*





The truth is, Mayweather – who rarely puts himself in a position where he has to dehydrate – knows that the more Canelo rehydrates, the better. A fighter who balloons 15 to 20 pounds has just come off a gruelling dehydration session. And while the water has gone back into his body, it has not replenished the muscles and cells and organs – including the precious, vulnerable brain. That takes days more.

So while Mayweather cedes advantages in age and weight, he has given Canelo a huge incentive to exhaust himself before the fight. Canelo is likely to run himself down even further chasing Mayweather and to eventually expose himself to the older fighter's counterpunching style.

That's all fascinating from a tactical, boxing perspective – and very astute by Mayweather – but, neurologically, Canelo is in serious peril. A dehydrated brain, no matter how much water he loads into his system after the weigh-in, will be smaller in volume and will have greater distance to move within his skull.

While the distance is just millimetres, it's additional millimetres across which the moving brain – directly after a punch, for example – can pick up force and crash into the inside of the skull. This is not insignificant. As we learn more about how the brain reacts to impact, it becomes clear that it's not the big, shocking impact that causes the damage anymore, but the low-level, repetitive impact – which is virtually the definition of boxing.



Moreover, a boxer who has been dehydrating will be physically depleted and so less well able to defend himself; he will take more punches than normal, further exposing him to an accumulation of brain trauma.

This is not a problem isolated to Mayweather versus Canelo. Today, virtually all boxers engage in this dangerous dehydration to some degree. And few boxers talk about the process in detail. While I was investigating the process and the risks of long-term brain to which boxers expose themselves, I spoke to one boxer who agreed to explain the process in detail, but refused to let his name be used.

In the extract below, he is referred to as Tony:

A few years ago, Tony found himself in a difficult situation before one of his title defences. With 20 hours to go to his official weigh-in, he was 20 pounds too heavy. If he got caught cutting so much weight he risked losing his title and his licence to box. If he didn't lose the weight, he'd lose his title without a fight.

He chose to lose the weight.

While most boxers limit their intake of water and exercise in sweat suits, Tony resorted to the full body sauna, inside of which he wore layers of clothes with a sweat suit, three t-shirts, long johns and thermal bottoms to soak up the sweat. And his head, though outside the sauna, was covered with a wool cap to keep it sweating. Like all boxers, his goal was to remove all that so-called water weight in the hope that it could be replaced in the 24 hours before the fight.

"Most people don't know what it's like to spend so much time in a sauna," he says. "It starts to affect your mood. You start getting really agitated. You start panicking because you're so hot. It isn't so much claustrophobia as panic. You're overheating and all your body's natural defences are telling you to get out. I stayed in for 40 minutes to start, then came out for ten, then went back in for 20, then ten, then five, and it wasn't long before I could only stand a couple of minutes at a time."

As he became more dehydrated, and more fluids left his body and brain, Tony's mind began to drift. He would be in that semi-dream state for the next few days, all through the fight, and for days afterwards.

That night in the sauna, having eaten nothing that day and drunk no water, Tony shed 11.5 pounds. It was already more weight than he had ever lost for a fight and he was far from finished. "To keep going, I was trying to convince myself that it wasn't too bad, that I was handling it. But the truth was, I couldn't even drive myself home. I just didn't feel confident at the wheel."

On the morning of the weigh-in, Tony had 9.5 pounds left to shift and five hours in which to do it. He'd had his last protein shake at 3pm the previous day, with just 500 millilitres of rehydration fluid containing precious salts and minerals since then. His mouth was dry and he felt completely sapped. All he could manage was ten minutes in the sauna followed by ten minutes lying on the couch, exhausted, with a wet towel over his face to promote more sweating.

"By that stage, I was really agitated, really fretting. And I could tell from [other people's] faces I didn't look well," he says. "I had a horrible cramp in my solar plexus, like severe hunger pains." By 11.30am, he had boiled down to his last pound but it was taking hours to evaporate. After yet another ten-minute spell in the sauna, with his mind beginning to phase in and out of focus, he weighed himself. He was 0.1 pounds overweight. Close enough, he thought. "I was just happy to be out of the sauna."

In the videos of the weigh-in, the skin on Tony's normally round face is drawn tight around his cheekbones. His forehead and the orbital bones of his eyes are shockingly prominent. His eyes are circled with dark rings and his face is pasty and drawn. "I looked like I was dying of cancer. And I was in pain. It hurt to breathe. My throat was so dry that if I inhaled through my nose, it would actually hurt me."

Eyes vacant, Tony steps gingerly up to be weighed. The scale is no more than four inches off the ground, but even at that small height his movements are not coordinated. He gives the crowd a wan smile and curls his biceps, but he does not look fully there. His opponent steps confidently on to the scales, posing for the crowd, smiling, flexing his muscles.

On the morning of the fight, Tony awoke with a huge headache centered behind his eyes, unable to focus and weighing 21.5 pounds more than the night before, just from drinking water. But he was not even close to being rehydrated and the doubts were beginning to creep in. "All I could think was, 'I hope you can do this. I hope you can pull it off.'"

"It wasn't self-pity. I knew I wasn't capable of going 12 rounds. Even if all I did was chase him around the ring, without throwing even one punch, I was going to run out of steam pretty quickly. Everything had gone into making the weight.

"Usually when you're knocked out you don't know it, you don't see it. I see this one," he says of the punch that knocks him out, "but I can't do anything about it. I didn't get knocked out. He lets me walk on to the punch," he says. "I get dizzy, all my equilibrium goes. I get wobbly. I fall sideways into the ropes."

*As he walked out of the ring that night Tony had only dehydration on his mind: "On my way back to the dressing room I was thinking, 'Fucking hell, that's what you get.'"*

*Barry J Whyte is the author of *Making the Weight: Boxing's Lethal Secret*, available for download on the digital-only sports imprint *90 Minutes* from [www.backpagepress.co.uk](http://www.backpagepress.co.uk), exclusively through [the Kindle store for Kindle devices](#) or for the Kindle app. [Follow Barry J Whyte on Twitter](#)*

<http://www.sportingintelligence.com/2013/06/25/as-mayweather-prepares-for-canelo-the-lessons-and-perils-of-boxings-lethal-secret-250601/>

# 'Making Weight' – The Effects of Dehydration on Physiological Functioning

April 8, 2012 by Stephan Kesting

*Many combat sport competitors cut weight. Many fighters cut 20 or more pounds, and then rehydrate, trying to put most of those pounds back on between weigh-in and competition. This undoubtedly gives some fighters an advantage, but is not without its own dangers and disadvantages.*

*In this article, researcher, and Judo / Jiu-jitsu champion Dave Coles explores some of the perils and pitfalls of cutting weight. If you decide to cut weight anyhow, then do it carefully and sensibly.*

Here is an [article on one approach to cutting weight](#).

During prolonged exercise in hot environments, water losses of up to 3 litres per hour have been reported, with 90 percent of this total loss occurring through sweating (Wilmore and Costill, 1994). For the fighter struggling to make their weight, a litre of sweat lost in the sauna/steam-room or through exercising in sweat kit will be “rewarded” with approximately 1 kg of lost body weight. This may seem an attractive prospect as the fighter tries to make their weight, however in order to facilitate optimal physiological functioning, the body’s water and electrolyte content should remain relatively constant. Many investigations have been carried out to study the effects of dehydration on physiological function. Dehydration has been shown to:

- reduce blood and plasma volume, this results in a decrease in the amount of blood pumped out by the heart, consequently the heart has to work harder in an attempt to maintain an adequate blood (oxygen) supply to the working muscles (Robergs and Roberts, 1997; Clarkson, 1998)
- decrease testosterone levels (Booth et al., 1993; Viscardi, 1998)
- increase blood lactate accumulation (Wilmore and Costill 1994)
- impair the body’s ability to sweat, resulting in an increased risk of overheating. (Armstrong, 1992; ACSM, 1996).
- “Dehydration results in reduced muscle blood flow, waste removal, and heat dissipation, all of which are necessary for sustained, high power muscle action in events such as boxing and judo.” (Armstrong, 1992, p.29)
- Taken to the extreme, rapid weight loss when achieved through dehydration can be fatal. Viscardi (1998) identifies that excessive dehydration can harm bodily functions, leading to kidney failure, heat stroke or heart attack, indeed in 1997, within a period of thirty-three days, three young American wrestlers tragically died whilst trying to ‘make their weight’ (Hickling, 1999).

## Does re-hydration work?

After completing the weigh-in, fighters typically try to rapidly replace lost body fluids in an attempt to return to a normal state of hydration. However, the fighter is unlikely to eat and drink sufficiently because of the negative effects of fighting on a full stomach. In many cases the time between the weigh-in and first contest is usually insufficient for fluid and electrolyte balance to be fully re-established in muscles, or for the rehydration and replenishment of muscle and liver glycogen (ACSM, 1996; Yankanich et al., 1998; Clarkson, 1998).

Horswill et al. (1990, p.470) state, “The period between the weigh-in and competition is probably not enough time for wrestlers, boxers, and judo athletes to replace muscle glycogen.” This is supported by Foster (1995, p.66) who identified that “The body takes from **4 to 48 hours** to fully recover from moderate dehydration, which means there isn’t enough time between weigh-in and

the match to ensure peak performance and health.”

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<http://www.grapplearts.com/making-weight-the-effects-of-dehydration-on-physiological-functioning/>

# The Truth About MMA's Dangerous Weight Game

By Michael Huang | Oct 17, 2014  
For [espnW.com](http://espnW.com)



Steve Snowden/Getty Images

*Is cutting 10 pounds the day before a fight worth it? For Holly Holm -- and many other MMA fighters - the answer is yes.*

Picture [Holly Holm](#), one of the UFC's newest female fighters, sitting in a sweat suit on the top shelf of a sauna.

Sweat pours down her face. Sometimes she or her teammates will bring bags of ice into the sauna just to cool her head. The purpose? To help her stay in there longer. She needs the weight gone *now*.

Holm is just one of a huge number of MMA fighters playing a potentially dangerous weight game: Dropping enormous amounts of weight in the week leading up to a bout, with the goal of having a size advantage against an opponent on fight night. There are obvious problems with [putting the body through such turmoil](#), and those problems have been popping up more and more in the news, both inside and outside of MMA. Amateur wrestling has [a long history of athletes dropping too much weight](#). Boxers routinely tack on 15-plus pounds between weigh-ins and bouts.

And recently, crash weight-loss has become a UFC headline, too. [Renan Barao](#) passed out and had to go to the hospital the night before his headlining fight against [TJ Dillashaw](#) on Aug. 30, gutting a major UFC event. The former 135-pound champ plummeted in the UFC hierarchy and [now must fight his way back to title contention](#). And on the first episode of this season's "The Ultimate Fighter," a preview for upcoming episodes showed one female fighter who appears to pass out trying to make weight.

Holm, one of the best female boxers ever, has been cutting weight for years. She has transitioned to MMA and, at 7-0 with name recognition and street cred, is a crucial recent addition to the UFC's women's roster. She's also an example of an athlete pushing her body to extremes as she trains her sights on dethroning UFC champ [Ronda Rousey](#).

Holm is 5-foot-8, with a "walk-around" weight of about 155 pounds. But she will be fighting at bantamweight (135 pounds) when she steps foot into the Octagon for the first time, on Dec. 6. When she talks about making weight, she speaks casually. It's a part of a fighter's life, she says, and it has been a daily thought for Holm for the past decade. She doesn't want anybody to feel sorry for her -- it's part of the deal as a pro fighter.



But the sheer numbers are alarming. Holm feels comfortable if she can be within 10 pounds of her weight class the day of the weigh-in. That means she has to lose 10 pounds -- in 24 hours. The sauna is a quick solution, generating massive amounts of heat and sweat. But the sauna is also an example of an unscientific rapid weight-loss process that experts say is incredibly dangerous for the human body. Especially for female fighters.

ESPN analyst Dr. Mark Adickes, who previously served as the team physician for the Houston Rockets and the U.S. ski team, said quick weight loss for female athletes who already maintain such a low body-fat percentage can put them at risk for long-term repercussions. "Fat cells produce estrogen, which is necessary for females to maintain healthy bone density and strength," Adickes said.

That kind of drop also can begin to impact women's menstruation cycles, and female fighters often complain about retaining water. "At that time, your hormones are doing completely different things," Holm said. "It's so unpredictable. But your body just naturally keeps that water. There are definitely things that make it harder for females, but that's not an excuse. If you sign up for a fight, you have to make weight. Otherwise fight at a higher weight class. It's that simple for me."

**Felice Herrig**, a contestant on Season 20 of "The Ultimate Fighter," is among the group of competitors vying to be the UFC's first 115-pound (strawweight) champ. Most of the women in the house are dropping at least a few pounds to get to 115. "I don't cut that much water weight," Herrig said. "So I eat really healthy year-round, and I'm never really far from weight. I don't have a lot of body fat anyway. But it's a lot of trial and error of what diet works for your particular body."

That trial and error can be problematic. Most rapid weight-loss is handled individually, with fighters, wrestlers and even horse jockeys figuring out on their own how to cut down. Often there is little or no medical supervision.

Saunas are a popular go-to method for fighters. Others employ the Epsom salt bath method to draw out toxins and pounds. "I never liked using Epsom salt baths, though," Holm said. "I'd sit there forever and lose maybe one or two pounds. I'd rather sit in the sauna where I knew I could lose more weight. It also seems that guys just sweat more. But I've always been one of the fortunate ones -- as a female I do sweat really well."

UFC star **Anthony Pettis**, one of the coaches on TUF 20, also is not a fan of the salt bath. "The bath weight cut -- I hate that thing," he said. "That's what happened with Renan Barao [at UFC 177]. He was in the bath, got lightheaded and fell. I mean it works, you can drop weight quick and it's easier than the sauna, but you can get lightheaded. The bath is so hot and you're losing all this weight ... you just pass out."

The repercussions of constant weight loss aren't just physical, either. Rousey **has talked before** about how dropping weight played a part in her developing bulimia. Herrig says she fell into a dangerous mindset at one point in her career. She worried constantly about maintaining and making weight, and that preoccupation turned into something darker. "I've always been really healthy, but there was a point in my career where I got so worried about making weight, psychologically you develop body dysmorphia and eating disorders because of it," Herrig said. "You're thinking 'Oh, that's too much or I can't eat that.' I'm in a good place now, though."

According to **McCallum Place**, an eating disorder center, athletes in combat sports may be particularly susceptible to disordered eating because of the nonstop weight yo-yo of their professions. And this can put athletes into the scary cycle known as the female athlete triad: disordered eating and inadequate calorie consumption overall can result in a disrupted menstrual cycle -- and both of these health concerns then decrease the athlete's overall bone density, resulting in stress fractures and broken bones.

"I have a patient who is an elite athlete but she had repeated stress fractures and she hasn't been able to compete in three years," Adickes said. "She's so lean, she's not producing enough estrogen to strengthen her bones. So we got some dietitians to help her with proper nutrition. But for any female athlete, the damage can be long-term. You've got to train hard, but train appropriately to what your body can take."



UFC VP of regulatory affairs Marc Ratner **has said in the past** that rapid weight loss is an important issue to be addressed. But he's also referenced the ingrained culture that fighters, trainers and doctors around MMA all describe when they talk about what should be done: These are adult, professional athletes who decide to drop weight and, for the most part, do so without issue. It's been a part of the fight game forever, and may always be. How much can the UFC really do?

The reality may be, not much, other than increased education about the ramifications of cutting weight. Helping athletes minimize the risk during cuts may be another option.

One technique that Holm uses is to make sure she never does a major weight cut by herself. All along the way, when she or a female teammate at Greg Jackson's MMA camp in Albuquerque is trying to make weight for a fight, it's with a team of supporters -- both to help with the mental battle as well as to keep an eye on her, physically. "The girls all just come together and never let anyone go through the process alone," Holm said. "This job is hard. Half the struggle is just making weight. I don't know anyone who thinks it's fun. But we try to look out for each other. Teammates make it so much more bearable."

<http://espn.go.com/espnw/news-commentary/article/11711953/the-truth-mma-dangerous-weight-game>

# Weight cutting: An issue of little benefit, some danger, and difficult solutions

By Dave Meltzer on Oct 15, 2013, 3:00p

*The recent death of fighter Leandro Souza is hardly the first catastrophe caused by the practice of weight cutting. And it's likely not to be the last.*

If 10 days before a show, the UFC or any mixed martial arts promotion, sent out a memo stating they were amending every contract, and the change would be every fighter on the card is still fighting their same opponent, just moving up one weight class, it's almost funny to think of what the repercussions would be.

Most fighters at the time would already be within a few pounds of their new weigh-in weight. Some would already be at weight and a few may even be below it.

The fight week weight-cutting ordeal, which nobody enjoys, wouldn't have to happen. Fighters wouldn't be grumpy. Instead of torturing themselves to make weight, they could be studying their fight, resting their bodies, working on their timing, or promoting the card. Nobody would be drawn out at weigh-ins, since they'd be near their actual fighting weight. Nobody would get off the scale and grab some liquid because they were in a rush to put weight back on and get liquid in their body as quick as possible.

When they got into the cage for the fight, just about everyone would be a little stronger. They'd have more energy and stamina. The fighters in the main event, in particular, going five rounds, wouldn't have to worry quite as much about pacing early for fear they'll have little left at the finish. Everyone would be in a little better shape physically, and perhaps mentally, because they wouldn't have taxed their bodies so much by draining as much water as they could out of them, and then putting the water back, all a day before the fight. The fights would be better. The fighters would be happier. The spectators would get a better show.

Of course, this will never happen.

Yes, I know, from a legal standpoint this can't happen the way I suggested. But when you put it in that perspective, the entire process of heavy weight cutting does nobody any good. It happens because nobody can figure out how to keep it from happening.

Everyone does it because everyone else does it. Some are trying to get an advantage. Others are trying to negate the advantage by of their opponent. It's an endless chicken-and-egg game, whose effects are all negative, but the game will never stop. So then, when both guys do it, they are both miserable the last week, and getting nothing positive out of it.

Not only that, but the New Jersey Athletic Control Board has been studying the issue, and found the advantage of being the bigger fighter are, statistically, not anywhere close to what people think.

Anyone who has been around major MMA fights has had the experience of seeing a fighter, usually the ones who wrestled in college, suddenly 20 pounds less than they were the night before. They have that vacant look in their eyes, and you see it and think, "This guy is fighting tomorrow night? He looks like a stiff breeze will blow him over."

It's just accepted that this is a part of being a top-level fighter. The bigger the weight cut and the

more you're able to put back on, the thought process is, you increase your chances of winning by being the bigger and stronger fighter. There's not just a physical edge in being the bigger guy, there's the mental edge as well.

In the early seasons of The Ultimate Fighter (TUF), when hard weight cutting segments were shown, the public for the most part freaked out, enough that you don't see that kind of footage on the show anymore. It's a hard sport and guys torture their bodies in a number of different ways to get ready for a fight, this being just one of them. And a few times a year, when you hear about how the commission doctor isn't allowing a fighter to cut anymore weight, it's because at that point, there is significant fear of serious health problems if they continue.

But a few things happened in recent weeks.

The first was the death of Leandro Souza on Sept. 26, while trying to cut from 159 pounds to 126 in less than a week on a show in Brazil. It should be noted that Brazilian commissions, unlike most of their North American U.S. counterparts, don't test for diuretics, which reportedly were part of the equation in Souza's attempt to lose 23 percent of his body weight in less than a week.

A week later, UFC fighter Rodrigo Damm suffered painful kidney stones as he was trying to get rid of water weight for a fight that was to take place on Oct. 9.

Also last week, and the timing was just coincidental, Nick Lembo, the counsel for the New Jersey Athletic Control Board, publicly discussed a plan to come up with standards that would make this potentially dangerous process a little safer.

Lembo suggested an idea where, at 30 days before fight time, everyone has to weigh-in. At that point they can be no more than 10 percent above the contracted weight.

Flyweights would have to make 137.5 pounds, bantamweights 148.5, featherweights 159.5, lightweights 170.5, welterweights 187, middleweights 203.5, light heavyweights 225.5 and heavyweight 291.5. In other words, for most weight classes, they have to be about one weight class above what they fight at.

Then, at seven days before fight time, there is another weigh-in, requiring fighters to be within five percent of their contracted weight: flyweights at 131.25, bantamweights at 141.75, featherweights at 152.25, lightweights at 162.75, welterweights at 178.5, middleweights at 194.25, light heavyweights at 215.25 and heavyweights at 278.25.

This is not a random idea. The World Boxing Council (WBC) has mandated those same weigh-in regulations for all championship fights. And Lembo said since the WBC instituted this rule, back in 2007, there have been no problems.

But the mentality of weight-cutting in MMA comes more from amateur wrestling, not boxing. In that sport, the participants, as a rule, cut far more. It's why the WBC adopted those regulations with little issue, while in MMA, these same rules would have far greater resistance. Immediately, instead of the idea, gradually losing weight during camp to where the cut wouldn't even be an issue, critics would say it'll force fighters into three weight cuts instead of one.

"The so-called wrestling mentality is there (in MMA)," said Lembo. "If this was implemented tomorrow, there would be a huge outcry of concern. But in the boxing community, it was implemented and there wasn't a big outcry. You've rarely seen problems with it."

Of course the funny part of this is many wrestling programs have same day weigh-ins, as do major jiu-jitsu tournaments, and both, far more than boxing, are the base styles of a large percentage of MMA fighters.

The problem is that MMA is a striking sport, and, thus, there are medical issues going into combat less than fully rehydrated. Removing the fluid from the brain makes it far more susceptible to damage, which is what should be the biggest long-term concern in MMA. That's the big argument against same-day weigh-ins.

Perhaps an answer can be a combination of same day weigh-ins and rehydration tests at the same time. In theory, that forces fighters to weigh-in at a healthy weight and would force elimination of significant water weight cutting. But then the pressure on the commissions would be immense if a fighter makes weight, but isn't fully hydrated. They wouldn't know until a few hours before fight time. If it's a main event, unlike someone missing weight where they can reach an agreement, be fined, and still fight, this would have to outright cancel a match. If it's the wrong fight, that could be catastrophic from a business standpoint.

There are two very different issues with weight cutting. One has to do with potential health risks of cutting large amounts of weight before weigh-ins. The other has to do with the competitive advantage of putting weight back on after weigh-ins and creating significant size differentials in the fighters.

The entire idea of having weight classes is so fighters face people who are close to their own size. But while weighing within a pound or so of each other the day before would seem to eliminate size discrepancies, anyone who watches MMA has seen occasional fights where there are probably 20-pound differentials, even in lower weight classes.

"There are two people who come to mind," said Lembo. "One is Frankie Edgar, because he lives in my town. I have literally seen him, the week of a UFC fight, eat at an Italian restaurant, eating bread, soup, salad. He's not cutting any weight at all. At the other end of the spectrum, we have Gleison Tibau. He's cutting a huge amount of weight."

As part of studying this issue, New Jersey did a program where MMA fighters were weighed in before going into the cage, strictly for informational purposes. The weights were never revealed publicly, but Lembo said most fighters ranged, not unexpectedly, as between 10 and 20 pounds above what they weighed the day before.

"We found the edge wasn't what everyone thought," he said. "Just over 50 percent, actually 52 percent of the fighters who gained more weight, won the fight."

Essentially, this indicates that all the work people do in manipulating their weight to come in bigger isn't really the advantage it is purported to be, since nearly 50 percent of the time the smaller guy winning would essentially mean size was zero advantage. But nobody still wants to be 15 or more pounds less than their opponent, so if you opponent is cutting 20, the feeling is you have to get big enough naturally to cut close to that same level as well, or go in with a disadvantage.

"The fighters who cut a lot of weight hit a wall at a certain point in the fight," Lembo said. "I wouldn't recommend it if someone was fighting a five-round fight."

Lembo is also familiar, working with high school wrestling, with how that sport completely changed years ago after three college wrestlers died cutting weight in the 1997 season. The regulations involved checking body fat and hydration levels at the start of the season to figure out what is the lowest weight the person can perform at and still be healthy.

"These guys have to see a doctor at the beginning of the season, and they give you a number, a weight that goes on file, and that's the lowest weight you can wrestle at," Lembo noted.

Lembo's thoughts are to avoid a potential weight-cutting tragedy, which inevitably will happen in the U.S. if current practices go unchecked. T.J. Cook, a Strikeforce fighter, went into kidney failure from weight cutting a few years back. Part of the story of Daniel Cormier and talk of his cut to 205 are the memories of his kidneys shutting down as he was cutting a large amount of weight to make 211.5 pounds in the 2008 Olympics, and he couldn't compete. That's one of the reasons, as short as he is for the division, he's fought at heavyweight in MMA.

"What I don't like is what some people are in favor of, what Massachusetts was proposing and what Pennsylvania was in favor of and the IBF was looking at doing, and what was, you weigh in at 155, now tomorrow (the day of the fight), we'll weigh you at 2 p.m. and you can't be more than

10 percent above that weight," said Lembo. "After somebody makes weight, I want them to focus on rehydration, not to worry about their weight again. I don't want people who gain weight and then have to cut again the day of the fight."

He noted a key to pre-fight physicals is that on fight night, before the fight, fighters have to give a urine sample to test for hydration levels because they won't clear a dehydrated fighter to compete.

"Our pre-fight physicals are pretty extensive," he said. "I don't have any concerns a doctor won't pick up a dehydrated fighter before the fight. The concern is more before you get to that point. We had the tragedy in Brazil. We had a fighter in a local regional title fight who made weight, but then was hospitalized for kidney function problems. I'm not sure you can completely regulate this issue. Hopefully, with education, more trainers will be taking input from medical experts and weight cuts will be a little more scientific and a little less dangerous."

Lembo noted there are issues with any change, such as what happens in the event of a late replacement fighter who takes a fight less than 30 days beforehand. He sees this as a serious issues and would like to see more doctors involved. He feels some nutritionists, who use the bath salts and water-loaded diets, may be doing their clients more harm than good.

As far as any actual changes being made, Lembo said that is a long way away.

"I think we're very far from that point," he said.

Lembo said a report on AxsTV, which talked about his plan and called it a proposed change, wasn't the right phrase. He felt the word "proposed change" indicates something voted on by the athletic control board and something that went through a formal hearing process.

"This is just something we are studying and analyzing," he said. "Another story, on SB Nation, which said I was denying it was being talked about, I wasn't denying it, it's just something that currently isn't in place on the immediate horizon."

<http://www.mmafighting.com/2013/10/15/4832976/weight-cutting-the-issue-of-little-benefit-some-dangers-and-difficult>

# MMA: The Dangers of Cutting Weight in Mixed Martial Arts

By James MacDonald , Senior Analyst Jan 16, 2013

The process of cutting weight to maximise one's physical advantages on fight night is something that we have come to take for granted. We have become so used to this pre-fight routine of starvation and dehydration that many of us no longer recognise its inherent dangers. Fighters cut weight. That's just how it is, and likely how it always will be.

I don't mean to generalise, of course. There *is* a safe way to do it. People like Mike Dolce have demonstrated that there are ways to shed pounds without compromising one's health or performance.

Unfortunately, too many fighters are willing to risk their long-term health for short-term convenience, by engaging in a process of rapid weight loss that is potentially ruinous.

There are countless past examples in both **MMA** and boxing of fighters who were either oblivious or indifferent to the hazards of taking an unscientific approach to cutting weight.

One major contributing factor to the propagation of this culture of haphazard weight-cutting is that it is continually reinforced by virtue of its relative ease and its superficial utility.

Fasting and dehydrating one's body to the point of desiccation *does* allow fighters to get down to their contracted weight. What's more, fighters often get away with it for years, which only serves to reinforce the behaviour.

But when a fighter's body is no longer willing to consent to the abuse, its protests are rarely peaceful.

Daniel Cormier's **well-documented** plight prior to the 2008 Olympics has alerted people to the fact that Acute Renal Failure (ARF) and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) are two potentially life-threatening and/or life-altering consequences that can result from rapidly divesting one's body of fluids.

However, extreme dehydration also has potentially **lethal neurological consequences**.

Depletion of the fluid that surrounds the brain not only renders fighters more susceptible to being knocked out, but it also carries with it the risk of more permanent consequences.

Indeed, the death of Korean boxer Duk Koo Kim in 1982, after his bout with Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, has in part **been attributed** to his notoriously taxing weight cut prior to the fight.

The culture of weight-cutting is made all the more vexing by the fact that its advantages are mitigated by its sheer ubiquity.

While the aim of cutting weight may be to gain a physical edge over one's opponent, the practice is now so commonplace that it has become necessary just to compete on even terms.

The only way to truly gain an advantage in modern MMA is to cut even greater quantities of weight, which has the effect of exacerbating an already-virulent issue.

Some fighters have been known to cut as much as 50-60 pounds before fights. Anthony "Rumble" Johnson's attempts to make 170 pounds were so extreme that one could have been forgiven for thinking that he was going for *The Biggest Loser's* at-home prize.

Is there a sensible solution to a problem that has become so pervasive? The most common solution offered is that of same-day weigh-ins, but this would almost certainly compound the problem.

Fighters will always look to gain an edge on the competition. Introducing same-day weigh-ins won't address the issue.

Rather, it will only make the process of weight-cutting even more unhealthy, as fighters will continue to dehydrate and starve themselves, yet they won't have the benefit of a 24-hour recovery period.

The truth is that we are forced to view the issue from a libertarian perspective. We must respect the athletes' right to do as they please with their own body so long as they are not harming anyone else.

For our part, we can seek to raise consciousness and make more people aware of the risks, in the hope that more athletes will be as rigorous in their approach to cutting weight as they are for all other aspects of their fight preparation.

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/1487089-mma-the-dangers-of-cutting-weight-in-mixed-martial-arts>



# The dangerous culture of weight cutting on 'The Ultimate Fighter'

*The Ultimate Fighter is generally regarded as one of the best way to make it to the UFC so it's no surprise competitors will routinely go through hell to get there —even if it means sacrificing their bodies along the way.*



**The Ultimate Fighter puts competitors under grueling conditions for their weight cuts.**  
**AI Powers/Zuffa LLC / Zuffa LLC**

By Damon Martin  
Nov 27, 2013 at 1:12p ET

The list of athletes that have come to the UFC via [The Ultimate Fighter](#) over the last 18 seasons number in the hundreds, but there are also a lonely list of names that were cut from the show without ever being eliminated via the competition.

Some left the show voluntarily because they missed their girlfriend, others were booted after bad behavior, but up until this latest season, [Gabe Ruediger](#), Kenny Stevens and Jason Guida stood together for a particularly notorious distinction.

All three fighters missed weight prior to competition - none more memorable than Gabe 'Put Me Back In' Ruediger as part of The Ultimate Fighter season five when he was [literally asking his coach BJ Penn and teammates to drag him back into the sauna](#) to help him shed the last few pounds he needed to cut. In the end, Ruediger didn't make weight and he was released from the show.

Any fighter that's ever had to cut weight will say that it can be one of the most miserable experiences to go through just 24 hours away from competition, but for those athletes that appear on [The Ultimate Fighter](#), many times they are asked to make weight at least two or three times over a six week period.

In many past seasons of the series, fighters would enter The Ultimate Fighter house competing at a weight class higher than their normal division just to prevent the situation where they would be forced to cut 15 or 20 pounds, multiple times over a six-week period. [Kenny Florian](#) famously fought at 185 pounds during season one of the reality show, and by the time his career was over he had cut as low as featherweight to fight in the UFC.

During the latest edition of The Ultimate Fighter, two different competitors—Cody Bollinger and Anthony Gutierrez—joined the list for not making weight during the competition. Both received a very harsh speech from UFC president Dana White for committing the transgression of taking a

spot on the show and leaving simply because they could not cut the weight.

The scenarios that unfolded this season, however, bring up two possible issues that the series may be facing in the coming years. First off, is it fair to ask any fighter to cut weight multiple times over a six week period and two, are the right fighters being cast on the show for the correct weight classes?

Cody Bollinger was one of the unfortunate souls who found out what it's like to land on White's bad side when he failed to make the 135-pound weight limit for his bout against Anthony Gutierrez in the quarterfinal round. He was immediately cut from the cast, and after it was over Bollinger admitted that the weight-cutting debacle was all his fault, but he also revealed that prior to The Ultimate Fighter he had never even competed at bantamweight before.

"The blame's on me. It was my fault, there's no excuse for that. I've done it without coaches before. It's your job as a fighter and I know how to do it. I did it wrong, my body wouldn't cooperate that day. I couldn't sweat. It was my fault and I accepted that," Bollinger told FOX Sports.



Sam Alvey competed on TUF as a welterweight when he's normally a light heavyweight.  
AI Powers/Zuffa LLC / Zuffa LLC

"I knew going into the show that it would be a really tough weight cut. I've never fought at 35's before. The last time I even competed at 35 was in wrestling when I was in eighth grade. I'm usually a 45'er but we made a lot of adjustments to make sure I could make weight to get in the house and I did. It was the toughest weight cut that I've ever had, but I made it. I just didn't learn how to go through that on a regular basis."

Season 16 cast member [Sam Alvey](#) had a similar story when he competed on the show as a welterweight coached by [Shane Carwin](#) and [Roy Nelson](#). For a big part of his career, Alvey was a light heavyweight before eventually shedding quite a bit of weight to move down to 185 pounds.

Miraculously, Alvey's appearance on The Ultimate Fighter came at 170 pounds and he admits it was one of the most grueling experiences of his life. The opportunity to fight in the UFC comes with a price, however, and Alvey was willing to sacrifice his body to get there.

"Most of my career I've been at 205 and then I made the cut to 185 and that was a pretty big cut. Then 29 days before the show aired I got asked to be on the show so I cut 40 pounds in that 29 days," Alvey said.

While Alvey made the cut for the show with a stunning knockout in the elimination round, when it came time for him to make the welterweight limit a second time, his body just shut down. Alvey eventually made the weight, but his performance the next day could only be described as lifeless and lackluster.

"I was so drained after the cut and I just never regained," Alvey said. "I mean in the fight I threw

three punches, I had two takedowns or what could have been takedowns had I used it. It just wasn't my day."

During the first season where The Ultimate Fighter opened up to featherweights and bantamweights, [Akira Corassani](#) saw this as his golden chance to get into the UFC by way of the popular reality show. Fighting at 145 pounds was an easy choice for Corassani, but once he got on the show he figured out just how tough dropping that much weight could be when doing it two or three times.

Looking back now, Corassani believes that his time on the show actually put so much punishment on his body that it opened him up to a litany of injuries he suffered after it was over. He ended up taking two months off earlier this year just to get his body back to full health before booking his next fight at this weekend's Ultimate Fighter finale card in Las Vegas.

"During those six weeks I was picked late to fight, so I fought two fights in one week and I was heavy in the house. I'm a little on the heavier side so in total I cut like 65 pounds in six weeks, up and down. I had three hard weight cuts and my body was hurting," Corassani told FOX Sports.

Ultimate Fighter 18 finalist [Chris Holdsworth](#) won't make any excuses for his former housemates Bollinger and Guteirrez, who both failed to make weight this season. Still, as a massive bantamweight competing at 135 pounds where he was forced to shed the weight on three different occasions, Holdsworth sympathizes with what they went through.



**Mike Dolce's dieting expertise helped Johny Hendricks easily make 170lbs at UFC 167.  
Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC / Zuffa LLC**

"It's definitely not an easy task to keep your weight that low," Holdsworth said. "I'm a pretty big 135'er myself, but I think that MMA has a lot to do with discipline, sacrifice and making the right choices. I'm pretty disciplined and I make a lot of sacrifices and I know what needs to be done to get my weight down and keep it down."

The UFC does provide medical personnel and during this season of the show and several times in the past as well, coaches have brought in personal nutritionists to help their fighters make weight. Still, it doesn't necessarily curb the danger of the human body cutting that many pounds

several times in less than two months.

The foremost expert on this entire subject may be nutritionist Mike Dolce, who not only has worked with a laundry list of top fighters while seeing them through the rigors of weight cutting, but he was also a part of The Ultimate Fighter season seven as a competitor. Dolce, who fought most of his career as a welterweight, took the chance to fight on the show as a middleweight because he knew the weight cut wouldn't be as brutal on his body.

Seeing the misery that both Bollinger and Gutierrez went through this season while dropping upwards of 20 pounds doesn't sit well with Dolce. He believes if a fighter is going to cut weight three or four times over a six week period, they shouldn't be dropping more than a few pounds each time— not the massive cuts that have been witnessed lately.

"On my season it was 185 pounds and most of the guys on my season dropped a weight class. I'm a welterweight, I was a welterweight before that. [Gerald Harris](#) had his successes at welterweight, [Amir Sadollah](#) who actually won the show dropped down to welterweight so it's very typical. In the TUF format the unwritten rule is that you're fighting a weight class up because you have to make multiple weight cuts," Dolce explained when speaking to FOX Sports. "If (the show) is one weight class, the winner could fight five times in six weeks - that's five weigh-ins! So you can't make your true weight class."

Dolce points to one of his prize clients as an example for how weight cutting should be handled on The Ultimate Fighter.

Top UFC welterweight contender [Johny Hendricks](#) has been competing at 170 pounds since he started fighting, but according to Dolce the idea of him suffering through three or four weight cuts over a six week period isn't just ludicrous—it's dangerous.

"Johny Hendricks could never do that. He walks around over 200 pounds, healthy. So if he were to do the Ultimate Fighter he would be 185 possibly even 205 depending, while his true competition weight is 170," Dolce explained.

"It's not recommended. I don't recommend it; I think it's terrible. It's unhealthy, that's why you want to compete at a weight class up. So now you're competing at close to your natural body weight. You don't eat breakfast that day, you squeeze out a few pounds of water and you're on weight. You can do that multiple times."

Dolce says the current trend of competitors trying out for the show or being selected when it's clear that a foreboding weight cut lies ahead needs to change. There's no denying that The Ultimate Fighter is potentially the opportunity of a lifetime, but is it worth giving up your life to get there?

"Guys want that opportunity and I get that," Dolce said. "They think well let me roll the dice and make it, but once they do that their reputation is on the line and their health is on the line. That's the most important part."

As seasons roll forward, casting directors along with the UFC brass may be forced to make some tough choices when selecting cast members to avoid situations like what arose this season. Fighters could have to show proof that they have fought at a certain weight class before being chosen, or experts like Dolce could be brought in to measure body weight and other factors prior to someone being selected.

Either way, the culture of weight cutting is a subject that will continue to be explored and possibly exploited no matter what adjustments are made, but The Ultimate Fighter seems like the perfect place for changes to start taking place.

<http://www.foxsports.com/ufc/story/the-dangerous-culture-of-weight-cutting-on-the-ultimate-fighter-112713>

# Health Risks Won't Stop Fighters From Weight Cutting

September 17, 2015 Nicole Smith

It's an early Sunday morning in Iowa on the last weekend of June. Wade O'Brien sits in the passenger seat of a Chrysler Town & Country minivan—his coach behind the wheel—watching the sun as it begins to make its ascend into the sky. The two drive by several gyms in search of a sauna, but their hunt yields nothing but locked doors.

O'Brien has eight pounds to lose before his Muay Thai championship fight and less than two hours to do it. His coach turns to him and says, "It's time for the van sauna." Five minutes later, O'Brien finds himself sitting in a parking lot with the heat cranked as high as it will go. He's fully c

There's a bang on the window every so often. O'Brien holds out a thumbs up in response. His coach, who decided to wait on the curb after a few minutes of being in the van, checks on him periodically to make sure he hasn't passed out.

"Take a really hot, humid day and put someone in that hot humid day who has a bad case of asthma... then times that by 10. That's what it feels like," said O'Brien. "I was lightheaded and it got to the point where I zoned out. You're drained afterward."

O'Brien's everyday weight hovers around 178 pounds. Prior to a fight, competitors are expected to cut down in order to make a specific weight class. The logic behind the ritual is: the bigger you are, the harder you hit. Fighters that pull lower numbers on the scale are able to gain a size advantage over their opponents as a result of dehydration tactics. When they actually walk into the ring after the recovery period, they're usually 10–15 pounds heavier.

The rules are different for amateur and professional fighters, but if the pros fail to make weight they can face a penalty—in some cases, it could be a fine upwards of \$100 for every pound over. Weight cutting rules also differ based on the various fight sports and the specific state commission regulating the event.

For the Thai Boxing Association-Sanctioning Authority's amateur North American championship, O'Brien fought at 159 pounds. Cutting 15–20 pounds prior to a fight isn't uncommon—for most, it's standard practice. This is done using both gradual approaches and other tactics that may seem "batshit crazy" to most people.



***Batshit crazy methods of weight cutting are normal to fighters like O'Brien (second from right). — Photo courtesy Wade O'Brien***



Warren Lee, instructor and owner of Toronto Kickboxing and Muay Thai Academy, said that in the weeks leading up to a fight, fighters start a strict training regiment and adapt a low carb, high protein diet—that means no refined foods, no sugar and no salt. The fighters are essentially limited to meat, eggs, nuts and vegetables. By the time competition day rolls around, any remaining weight is usually just water, which is where these sauna suits—among other strange methods—come into play.

After an intense workout in the sauna suit prior to leaving for Iowa, O'Brien weighed in at 162 pounds—just three pounds over what he needed to be at. He hadn't eaten or drank anything all day and wasn't planning to. For the duration of the 12-hour drive, he sucked on sugarless hard candies and spit his saliva into a plastic water bottle to rid himself of excess liquids. When he stepped on the scale, the number read 157. It wasn't until his second weigh in two days later, right before the championship fight Sunday, that he thought to himself, "holy shit, I've got to cut a lot of weight."

After the initial weigh in, competitors are allowed to rehydrate and eat normally. In some competitions, however, if they advance to the final round of fights, they're expected to weigh in yet again. This time, they get a one-pound allowance.

O'Brien weighed 157 on Thursday and by Saturday night, he was back up to 169 pounds. A rubbing alcohol and Epsom salt bath combined with hours spent in a hot tub brought him down four pounds, but the next morning he woke up to find that he'd gained three back.

Time for the van sauna.

"I was in there for an hour. When I took the sauna suit off, water gushed out. There was a huge puddle," said O'Brien. "I lost eight pounds and had to fight that same day."

Rapid weight loss can put major stress on the body. Janet Huehls, a clinical exercise physiologist and certified wellness coach at UMass Memorial Weight Center, said that water loss deprives the body of electrolytes, like sodium and potassium. This can affect normal cell functions—especially in muscle cells, including the heart. When the level of water within our bodies drops, so does the blood volume. Since blood is made up of 90 percent water, this means the heart needs to work harder to perform normal circulation and pump oxygen throughout the body.

John Berardi, an expert in the field of sports nutrition, conducted an experiment where his subject spent 34 days drastically manipulating his body weight. Berardi wrote that if a person dehydrates themselves by one percent, they will experience temporary strain on their heart and a short-term drop in aerobic endurance. Five percent dehydration means reduced strength and motor skills, along with potential fatigue, heat exhaustion and a lowered mental capacity. Hallucinations or heat stroke can occur at ten percent. Anything over ten percent presents the worst case scenario—a coma or, in extreme circumstances, death.

Lee has seen a handful of crazy instances in his years of training, most of which have involved sauna suits.

"The majority of the human body is made of water. Some people can lose ten pounds in a few hours. It comes as such a shock to your body," he said. "I've seen it all. Everyone reacts differently. It's like jet lag—some people get over it in a day, and for others, it takes an entire week."

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Robin Macmillan, known as "the weight cutting queen" by people at her gym, has been fighting competitively for two years and has earned herself three championship belts. Her normal weight is around 140 pounds, but she usually fights at 125.



*Macmillan in the ring.* —Photo courtesy Destiny Fights.

At a competition last year, her coaches asked if she wanted to try fighting at 142. She agreed, but then broke her nose while sparring. It was then recommended she drop down to the 135-pound class—which meant losing 12 pounds with only 10 days to go before the fight—in an attempt to avoid serious injury.

It can be a lot more difficult for women to cut water weight because they're more likely to retain it. According to Jeffrey Utz, a neuroscientist and pediatrician from Allegheny University, the female body is made up of 55 percent water—this is approximately five percent less than the average male has. Women also tend to carry more weight as fat while men naturally have more muscle. Since fat is 50 percent water and muscle is 75 per cent water, a male is able to shed up to five extra pounds.

To make weight, Macmillan drastically reduced her food and water intake, started sleeping in her sauna suit, and was waking up at 4 AM to jump rope while still wearing said suit. On the final day of her cut, she layered on sweaters, a toque and mittens, zipped the sweat-inducing suit overtop her clothes, and sat in a steam room. She compares the entire process to that of turning a grape into a raisin.



*Macmillan (right) shows off her sauna suit.* —Photo courtesy Robin Macmillan



"You start to feel weak, your mouth gets really otton dry and you just want water. You don't care about food at this point, even though you haven't eaten in a while. You just have to hold on mentally until you weigh in," she said. "I'll never forget the first time my trainer told me to put on the sauna suit. I had to train with it on and your body feels like it's 100 more pounds... you just can't wait to get that thing off you."

She did hold on, both physically and mentally, and took home the championship belt, despite the fact that she only had three hours of recovery time. She says the entire process is an art.



When O'Brien stepped into the ring that Sunday afternoon, he was drained— figuratively and literally. His coach turned to him and said, "leave everything in the ring... give it your all."

"I thought to myself, 'We've come this far, we've trained so hard and I have one fight left.' I don't think there's anything I wouldn't have done at that point," O'Brien said. "I was running on a high of adrenaline and got motivation because my kids were there."

"The team was behind me the whole time."

After a trio of two-minute rounds, he was handed the belt. He won.

For competitive fighters, the cut is half the battle. It's a gruelling mental and physical process that requires determination and perseverance. O'Brien, however, has no qualms about doing it again. In fact, he started his most recent weight cut earlier this month.

<https://sports.vice.com/ca/article/health-risks-wont-stop-fighters-from-weight-cutting>

# In Case You Forgot, Weight Cutting Is Dangerous

By Jim Genia on August 3, 2015



We almost had another death in the sport recently. No, I'm not talking about what **Ronda Rousey** did to **Beth Correia**. This past weekend a fighter from Seattle, W.A., was cutting weight for a bout in the minor leagues, but the cut didn't go so well. The fighter's name is **Dex Montenegro**, and here's what his wife Amy posted to Facebook:

*Just wanting to let everyone know what's going on. Dex made weight for his title fight last night although it was a very hard cut. During his rehydration process last night he wasn't able to come back to himself and continued to be very weak. Late in the night he started to have sharp pains in his chest especially while breathing. We continued to hydrate him thinking it would turn around with some rest and fluids. This morning he was doubled over in pain and couldn't sit up or walk without help. He needed to be seen by a doctor. I was very worried and took him to the ER. They gave him fluids and ran lots of tests. He has a collapsed lung and a large amount of air trapped in his heart cavity that is putting a great deal of pressure on his heart which is potentially very dangerous.*

Yikes! And that's just from trying to cut weight!

*We have been here since 6:00am and we are being transferred to the thoracic surgery unit in Cherry hill Seattle at 4:00pm where he can be monitored by the thoracic surgeon more closely. They explained if anything goes wrong with his labs it could be very serious. He is getting IV antibiotics and they are doing their best to treat his pain. He will be observed over night and we are praying he will improve in the morning. Hopefully we will not have to get surgery. He is still in massive amounts of pain and it goes without saying that he is devastated over not being able to compete tonight. He worked very very hard for this fight and to have something like this get in the way is awful. This was a fight that he really was excited for, and we know his opponent trained very hard and was excited as well. We are so sorry to Dex's opponent and his camp, to the promotion, and to all of the supporters who were planning to come out to watch Dex tonight and just want to say thank you for the prayers and well wishes. I will try to keep people updated the best that I can. God bless!*

The sad thing here is that, because MMA has weight classes, there will always be fighters trying to shed pounds for a competitive advantage. That's just a fact of life. We're still tackling the problem of brain trauma and long-term damage to competitors, but there will come a day when the dangers of cutting weight will be at the forefront.

<http://www.cagedinsider.com/featured/in-case-you-forgot-weight-cutting-is-dangerous/>

# Miller discusses the dangers of weight cutting

UFC lightweight contender Jim Miller (25-6-1 MMA 14-5-1 UFC) is no stranger to cutting weight. While Miller “walks around” at 177 to 180 pounds when he’s not preparing to fight, Miller cuts all the way to 155 pounds when he steps on the UFC scales. Weight cutting is the most commonplace practice in the UFC and Mixed Martial Arts as a whole, with the ability to cut weight sometimes being synonymous with the amount of success one has as a fighter. Executive officer of the California state athletic commission Andy Foster called weight cutting “The biggest problem in combat sports” in an interview with Bleacher Report.

***“Five or 10 percent of people are doping. The number of people dehydrating is much, much higher... [Cutting weight is] a traumatic event. Then the very next day, you combine that with another traumatic event, and that’s called a fight. Combine these two things, and you’re just asking for trouble.”***

Jim Miller is no stranger either to the complications that arise from cutting weight. Miller has suffered numerous kidney problems including infections and stones as a result of weight cutting.

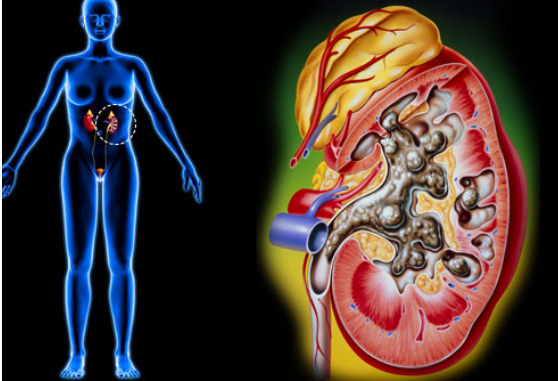
***“I was peeing blood, And my kidneys hurt. I think it has definitely had an effect on my body. It’s something I don’t feel today, but I wouldn’t be surprised if it took a couple of years off my life. It’s kind of miserable, You get kind of foggy. It’s hard to make decisions. I get a headache, a little bit of weakness. And my cut [20-25 pounds] is not on the extreme end.”***

Regulatory changes are currently being put in place to cut back on the amount of fighters both amateur and professional who are cutting extreme amounts of weight, including a ban on rehydration via IV fluids, which the NSAC hopes will discourage fighters from cutting massive amounts of weight. California and Arkansas are also leading the way on ground breaking legislation that will limit the amount of weight a fighter can cut and re gain in a short amount of time. The California state athletic commission is set to begin certifying amateur MMA fighters at a specific weight class in January 2016, based on a physical assessment that will include a body-composition test. Fighters will not be able to compete at a lower weight class than the one for which they are certified. Fighters are re-assessed once per year under the new program. With athletic commissions cracking down on the use of performance-enhancing drugs [PED’S] and now cracking down on massive weight cutting as well, we could be witnessing the dawn of a new era in MMA. This new era should certainly see a massive shift in top-tier MMA promotions weight classes, with guys like Thiago Alves, Conor McGregor, Gleison Tibau and Johny Hendricks known for being big weight cutters. If these sanctions make their way into the UFC we are going to see a lot of fighters movin on up.

<http://www.toothlessmma.com/miller-discusses-the-dangers-of-weight-cutting>

# Why Cutting Weight Could Cause Career Ending Kidney Issues For Fighters, And How To Avoid It

By Bryanna Fissori - Dec 13, 2013 at 12:00 PM PST



Frequent dehydration and high protein intake are two factors directly linked to kidney failure. Recently a number of professional fighters have found themselves questioning whether the risks are worth the reward in regards to the weight cut.

Most combat sports require athletes to participate at a pre-determined weight class. Rarely does this mean that the combatants have to add on pounds to make it in to the correct class. Weight-cutting has been an integral part of combat sports since the beginning of sanctioning, and is not losing any momentum. Newer diets, better supplements and more creative methods have given fighters increased options on how to shed the pounds.

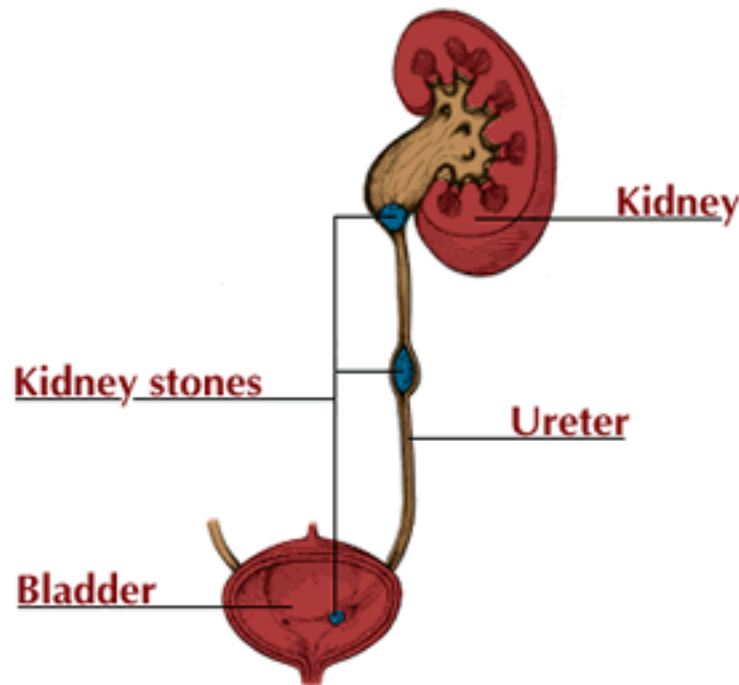
Regardless of how the majority of the weight comes off, one would be hard-pressed to find a fighter who doesn't factor in some element of dehydration and carbohydrate reduction.

"It's a severe problem with many mixed martial artists because they lose weight rapidly through dehydration," Dr. Steven Chinn told SciFighting.com. Dr. Chinn is a Urologist with an emphasis in kidney stones based out of Honolulu, Hawaii. According to Dr. Chinn, one-fourth of the body's cardiac output goes to the kidneys. When the body lacks fluid the blood is thicker and more difficult to move.

"In the short term it may not affect performance, but can have long term effects," said Dr. Chinn. The formation of kidney stones occurs when crystals in urine grow faster than they can be flushed from the kidneys. These stones are made of calcium and other materials that collect in large quantities before being removed from the body by the kidneys. This type of waste is water-soluble, and therefore its transportation is highly dependent upon water intake.

"Classically a person is supposed to drink enough water to urinate 2 quarts daily," said Dr. Chinn. "For me that means I have to drink 2 -2 1/2 gallons a day. If the fighter is dehydrating just for the weight cut day they should be re-hydrating with large amounts of water and be alright for a fight. As far as electrolytes go, people who work out in the gym daily and carry around their Gatorade and sports drinks are really just buying expensive water. Water is typically sufficient." Jose Aldo was hospitalized for a broken foot and kidney stones after his victory over Chan Sung Jung at UFC 163 earlier this year. This was not the fighters first bout with kidneys stones, and it is not entirely surprising given that he has been rumored to have a difficult weight-cut in the featherweight division. The hospital visit may assist in making a decision to move up to lightweight.

Aldo is not the first, nor will he be the last fighter to find himself heading to the E.R. in sudden excruciating pain. Symptoms do not usually occur gradually, but instead, come on unexpectedly. Pain is often followed with vomiting and bloody urine. Passing a kidney stone may only require heavy hydration and pain medication, though in other cases surgery may be needed.



Rodrigo Damm is another Featherweight who is also second guessing the weight cut after being forced out of UFC Fight Night 29 in October due to kidney stones. Damm was still in the early phases of the weight cut, but could not risk the dehydration required in the last week before the fight.

The process of exercising without re-hydrating the body is one many fighters undergo toward the last few days prior to weighing in for competition. Over several years of repeating this same routine every couple of months, the material built up in the kidneys becomes a burden to the body.

Routine dehydration is not the only factor in the formation of kidney stones. High protein diets also are taxing on the kidneys and athletes who use protein supplement may have an increased risk of kidney issues, especially if coupled with dehydration.

“The average person only needs 4-6 ounces of protein daily, which means a lot of people are taking in excess amounts,” said Dr. Chinn.

When protein is ingested and used by the body, protein waste products are created. Normal functioning kidneys can filter this waste. It is then removed from the body in the urine. When kidney function becomes compromised waste accumulates. One early indication of kidney issues is a sense of pain or soreness on the lower to mid back. This is a common feeling during intense dehydration.



Just weeks ago, UFC Welterweight Brian Melancon (7-3-0) announced his retirement from the sport to preserve the remainder of his kidney function. Melancon was scheduled to fight Robert Whittaker at UFC Fight Night 33. He made the announcement via social media.

“It has been announced, I am sad to say that my fight career is over. I have been having kidney problems that have gotten much worse recently and just found out that my kidney function has dropped to 47%. If I continue to train, fight, and cut weight then I run the risk of permanent damage. I have been advised by my Specialist to retire and move on and that is what I will be doing. This is not how I wanted to go out, but I have to believe that God has another path for me. Thanks to all of you who supported me throughout my career.”

Dr. Chinn stresses that important method of maintaining healthy kidney function is hydration throughout training and immediately after weigh-ins assuming dehydration is necessary.

“The likelihood or timeframe at which a fighter may develop kidney issues is depended upon how frequently they dehydrate, for how long and their diet. 50 percent of people with kidney stones will develop them again within five years if they do not change their lifestyle and diet.”

<http://www.scifighting.com/2013/12/13/20695/cutting-weight-cause-career-ending-kidney-issues-fighters-avoid/>

# Julie Kedzie: This is what it feels like to cut weight for an MMA fight

By Julie Kedzie

Posted: Thu May. 21, 2015



*What It Feels Like* is a new SI.com series featuring first-person stories directly from athletes across all sports.

In her **forthcoming book *My Fight/Your Fight***, Ronda Rousey recalls watching Julie Kedzie fight. Long before Rousey won Olympic medals in judo and stepped into the Octagon to fight, Kedzie was a Mixed Martial Arts fighter and for Rousey, her famed bout against Gina Carano marked a seminal moment in her own decision to pursue a career in MMA.

While Rousey would go on to experience an exceptional level of stardom, cleaning out her weight class, Kedzie had tougher go as a fighter, working her way up the ranks for almost 10 years. She's since retired but has not left the sport completely, now serving as a matchmaker and commentator for the Invicta FC.

Kedzie chronicled her last fight against Bethé Correia and shares this section, written with the support of the Kansas City Writer's Salon, about the anguish of cutting more than 10 pounds of weight in the week leading up to a bout.

I stared at Picasso's *La Belle Hollandaise* and my throat tightened. So *this is it, huh?* My eyes felt hot and I shook my head a little, pretending I was holding off a sneeze.

But she just kept looking at me. *It's like she knows everything about me.* She was naked and pale and delicately clutching her sides. Exasperated with the imbalance of her unconstrained flesh and her traditional Dutch hat, she stared at me with a look of infinite patience. And she said, OK. It's time now. You know it.

The museum was freezing. The flimsy, short dress I was wearing was a castoff from my friend Colleen and I had hoped that its brown and mauve stripes would glide gracefully over me the way it did her 5'8" frame. Unfortunately, I am 5'5". And thick. Instead of creating the same tiger-like



effect on my body as it did on hers, it bulged out at strange angles and clung to me in weird places. I kept tugging at it uncomfortably and slipping on the marble floor as my sandals scratched the tops of my feet. My coach, Greg Jackson, looked at me in alarm and hissed, "Don't you dare fall down and hurt yourself, Kedzie."



**Photo: Courtesy of Julie Kedzie**

The dress was perfect for the walk from our hotel in the baking Australia sun, but here in the Queensland Art Gallery, this outfit was about as warming as the little white hat perched on top of *La Belle's* head. And hell, from the way she was looking back at me, I felt as naked as she was painted. I shivered and a sob caught in my throat, surprising me. How do you hide the moment when you decide that everything is over? How do you hide the moment when everything you've dedicated the last decade to—every drop of blood, every ripped-out chunk of hair, every broken bone and skin infection and mat burn and crushed heart—is suddenly over, like some imaginary person had snipped the thread of your passions?

Turns out you go ahead and pretend to sneeze after all.



**Photo: Courtesy of Queensland Art Gallery; © Pablo Picasso, 1905/SUCCESSION PICASSO; VISCOPY, Sydney 2004  
La Belle Hollandaise**

I was nervous as hell for my upcoming fight. It was normal, though. Edgy, tired and uncomfortable, I had just flown 20-plus hours from the U.S., slept four and gone three days without carbohydrates or salt. I was as bloated as a hippo from drinking gallons of water—water loading, as we call it—to help make the weight cut easier. To do what I love, I became a walking urine tank, stopping every five minutes to find a pee. As the lack of salt gives the water nothing to cling to, it pauses in your stomach and intestines and then strips your weight down through your body when you pee. It's immensely irritating to force your bloated body to drink when all you want is food. I felt like I was peeing out all of my body, so that my feelings were directly on the surface. But the absurdity of being talked to by a nude painting in an a little hat on the other side of the world was blurred by the anticipation of what was to come. I was about to drain eleven pounds of water from my body, climb on a scale in front of thousands, pose in my underwear and then face a woman whom I would then try to smash in a cage.

So there in front of me was a painting of a naked person that I imagined was talking to me. And she said, It's time to quit.

Hearing that was like a balm on my brain—I felt so f---ing relieved. *It's done, done, done*, my heart thumped.

But I had to grab this thought and jam it back down inside of me. I swallowed hard looked at the people around me: Greg, exhausted but implacable, was enrapt in conversation with Peter, his friend and museum employee, who gesticulated wildly as he spoke. They couldn't see the shift in me. They couldn't see me talking under my breath like a crazy person. They couldn't see how *La Belle* had just become part of a dialogue in my head.

As we walked toward the next exhibit, I craned my neck and looked over at *La Belle* in the adjoining gallery. Even in the next room she still held my gaze, quietly and smoothly understanding my need to protect myself and remain silent. We both knew that if I acknowledged my compulsion to let go—to quit fighting—I wouldn't survive the week in front of me. I wouldn't be able to generate the drive to make weight and pretend I still care about it. As Greg and Peter happily chatted about shared past experiences and new ideas, I told myself, Stop, stop, stop. Focus in. Listen. Be in this moment—stop talking to your new make-believe friend.



**Photo: Albuquerque Journal, Greg Sorber/AP Photo**

Peter kept bringing up the beauty of the intersections of physicality and art; how he admires Mixed Martial Arts because it is art in action. "What you make with your fights is a beautiful art. The human form engaged in purposeful action. Such high art," he drawled in his Australian accent. Greg added that the art doesn't just stop there; how it is all connected to math and if you disseminate it to its basic levels, combat can be linked to all things; chaos theory, game theory,

evolutionary biology.

Love, I added in my head. And then thought, But damn, combat is also about trying to hurt another person. Hard to be quite so esoteric and removed when someone won't stop smashing her elbow in your face.

*But you're done fighting, Julie. You're done. Be done now.*

As we exited the museum, Peter pressed books into our hands as gifts and asked if there was anything else from the gift shop we'd like.

"Can I please have a print of *La Belle Hollandaise*?" I asked. "I'll pay you for shipping." I didn't want to forget her face, though I had already translated her into my brain. He took down my address and refused my money, promising she would be shipped to me within a month. There were so many good people that this sport had brought me. *Could* I walk away?

The next day was the day before weigh-in: the official day to cut water weight. In other words, the worst day of fight week. My nerves were in full swing. With eleven more pounds to sweat off, I had not been able to find any distilled water to complete the water load. (Distilled water is used at the end to flush the remainder of the water, like a final strip of remnants in intestines.) My period had started as well and I felt even more like a sausage, my skin as the casing, tightening up all around me, suffocating me. I couldn't tell which cramps were making me more dizzy, dehydration or menstrual. I was jittery and weary. I wanted to rip a hole in the ground and crawl in it and sleep.

You see? I whispered to *La Belle* in my head. *It still means something. If fighting didn't mean something, I wouldn't care if I make weight or not.*

Shut up and be a professional, I scolded myself. *La Belle* winked at me.

The entire fight trip had been steeped in surreality. I had been so eager to fight in Brisbane. In a bizarre reflection of the small size of the MMA world, Greg had once coached fighters and athletes from here, including "The Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin and his bodyguards, who had both been MMA fighters. Though I never got to meet him, I heard Steve was an avid fan of the sport, even though he did not fight. He flew Greg out on multiple occasions for private training. Like Peter from the museum, passionate people always seemed drawn to Greg, flocking to him and flinging ideas and experiences at him, in the hopes some genius or energy would bounce back to them. I gathered Steve was the same way. From all accounts, his passion for wildlife conservation caused the people around him to catch fire with enthusiasm. Through their deep friendship, Greg had accompanied him on conservation trips, wrestling crocodiles and rescuing exotic animals.

The loss of such a friend had profoundly altered Greg.

I was always spellbound by his adventure stories. "I want to feed a tiger!" I said when looking over his album of pictures from the Australian Zoo.

"I'll take you to the zoo someday," he responded. But I had doubted this—Steve's horrific death had etched a deep groove of pain in his psyche, and though he had returned several times since his passing, it was clear that the memories of Australia were agonizing for him.

Yet here was my fight, bringing him back to this place. And we were going to the zoo like he had promised. But what should have been the trip of a lifetime was bogged down by my exhaustion and discomfort, by my schizophrenic conversation with a painting. My thoughts were all over the place: Am I sweating? Did I bring enough tampons? Don't talk to *La Belle* out loud or people will think you're nuts.

Slathered in Albolene—a grease that makes your pores open—and bundled up in spandex and sweats, I climbed into Greg’s friend’s Land Rover to go to the zoo. I instinctively made room for *La Belle* beside me and said a silent prayer that the extra layers of seat pants would hide the inevitable sweaty stain that my ass would make on the leather seat. It was blisteringly hot that December day and I was already drenched.



**Photo: Courtesy of Julie Kedzie**

As I cut my first six pounds of water, I *did* get to pet baby tigers, along with leopards and wombats. And I muttered to myself—to *La Belle*—the whole time under my breath.

I held a python and pet an alligator and watched the crocodile show in amazement, all while wondering how I was going to tell to my coach, my mentor, my best friend, “Thanks for all of this. Now I want to quit.” Greg made MMA take on so much meaning for me, and for everyone around him. And he was so connected to it—would I also be walking away from a part of my best friend? In the sweltering Australia summer sun, I bit down on this thought. We explored the zoo and tried to feed a rhino named DJ, laughing hysterically when he skittered sideways from us, spooked from something we never could discover. We dubbed him “DJ the Cowardly Rhino” and I wanted to grab him and stare into his wrinkled, concerned rhino eyes. To hug him and tell him it was ok. I wanted him to do the same for me.

When Greg walked off privately to visit with the Irwin family, I sprawled in the grass outside the compound, surrounded by kangaroos eating out of my hand. I had to admit—this was the best way to cut weight I’d ever experienced, even though my ribs felt like a corset.

This is a nice one to go out on, *La Belle* told me. I relaxed as much as I could and I agreed. It was.

But the euphoria didn’t last.

The next stage of cutting weight involved sitting in a hot bath with Epsom salt for 20-minute intervals. It’s known as one of the easier methods to sweat, as it drains the muscles of water quietly. It’s supposedly less taxing on the body than sweating in a sauna or running on a treadmill. But embarrassingly, I cried. I cried baby tears because I was hot; for DJ the Cowardly Rhino because he was so mighty and yet so scared. I cried for the loss of Greg’s friend. I cried for a future without his direct guidance.

I cried because as a fighter, I never quite “made it.” I sat in the bathtub and mourned a career that always fell short of greatness.

If you want to review every minute of your life, force yourself into the hottest bath you can stand and make yourself stay in for twenty minutes. You’ll relive every mistake, every lost opportunity. Sitting in the steaming hot water, your thoughts will begin to cook into a state of frenzy to match

your overheating body as the minutes tick by slower and slower.

As the sweat poured off of me, I stewed, realizing that at every turn I had been given a chance to excel and had always failed. And now it was over. It really sucked.

With three and a half pounds left to lose, Greg finally left the room. He was baffled at my tears, but assured me that there would be enough time tomorrow.

“Get your head some rest and you’ll feel fresher in the morning,” he said. “We’ll make it. Don’t worry.”

I waited for him to leave and stretched out on the bed, drained. I sobbed, pushing my face down into the pillow to muffle the sound. But around 4:00 a.m., awake and resigned, I filled up the tub and finished the cut on my own. Half a bag of Epsom salt. Disgustingly-strong rubbing alcohol. Scalding hot water. Timer on. Twenty minutes. Go. Sweat.

I staggered into the elevator, leaned against its mirrored sides and stared at myself, gaunt and red-eyed. The ride to the second floor workout rooms seemed to last forever and I loathed the idea of encountering another person. I tripped getting off the elevator and caught myself on shaky legs, wondering if I had fallen, if I would’ve picked myself up or just napped on the floor.

The final stages of a weight cut are a lot like the worst kind of hangover. I stumbled down the hall and pushed on the heavy wooden doors leading to the workout room. Of course there was someone else here. I glowered at him. What’s his name? I asked myself. Nick. Nick Ring. Fighter from Canada. Nick Ring from Canada you better get the hell out of here if I’m not on weight, I thought. Everything is so cold and I am not in the mood to be smiling at you.

“Well you’re up early, eh?” Nick asked. I sighed. Cheerful mother-----.

“Ya, couldn’t sleep,” I croaked. “Just finished a bath. Can I check?”

He moved out of the way and politely turned his head as I disrobed. Oh, Canada, I thought. Like I could give a crap what my tits look like at 4:00 a.m. at 130-something pounds.

I climbed on the scale.

135.5.

*Really?!*

I stepped off and step back on.

135.5.

Jubilantly I beamed at him. “I’m on,” I said, fumbling to get my shirt back on. My head and heart filled with the warmth that only a good shot of psychological reinforcement bestows.

“Oh, good work, eh?” Nick said. “I’m just on my way to early morning yoga to cut the rest of mine. Would you like to join me?”

“Ummm, no thanks,” I said. Yoga? I’m on weight, mother-----, I thought. I’m going to lie down in my room, feel proud/sorry for myself and fantasize about eating...eating everything. Impulsively I reached out and hugged him. Poor Nick Ring, I said to myself. I thought such mean thoughts about you being here, but now that I am on weight everything is magic. I’m glad you can share this moment with me, Nick Ring. Everything is good now.

He politely returned the hug (Oh, Canada) and nervously looked out of the side of his eyes at me as I followed him to the elevator. I pressed the up button. He immediately presses the down button.



“So, I’m, uh...going to go to my yoga class,” he said. “You’re sure you’re ok?”  
Swaying and smiling absently, I nodded. Yes, I’m on weight now, I thought. I’m on weight now and this is the last time.

Wait. Am I still thinking that?

Greg was a little surprised when he came back to my room a couple hours later and I proudly—if a little hoarsely—announced that I was on weight and ready to go.

“I couldn’t sleep, so I just made another bath and did it.”

He laughed, but I wondered if he was looking at me funny. Could he see La Belle sitting on my head, talking to me?

“Here, I’ll show you,” I said, dragging him into the bathroom, stripping off my sweats.

God I am so cold, I thought. You always forget that part—how sweaty you are, how clammy and dry you feel.

The bipolar nature of this sport is insane: Get in a bath to dry yourself out. Drop as much weight as you can; be the biggest one competing. Never give anything away to the press, but don’t be boring. Try to inflict as much punishment as you can on another person but be classy about it. Have your opponent scream at you and smash you into the ground while a thousand people boo you, but for God’s sake, don’t cry. Or complain. So when the reporters ask you, “What happened?” you always find a reason to blame yourself, unless you want to cause trouble, hurt your coaches and friends, or look weak. Never tip your hand to the reporters. Never complain about money. And if you are a woman, you better clean up well, or expect to be called unmarketable. It’s like being the one brave enough to walk down into a pit: The hole widens deeper and deeper and you have to circle it, smiling and waving up at the people watching from above. What was at first an adventure is now you hugging the sides of the crevice, bruising your fingers and just going down, down, down—still smiling, of course, so no one can see how hard it is to keep putting one foot in front of the other...



**Photo: Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**

“Julie?”

“Oh, sorry. I spaced out. Look—this is what I’m weighing in. 135.5 on my scale. It’s even with the official scale downstairs.”

“Perfect,” Greg replied. “Good job—you’re a goddamn soldier. I wish you had slept though.” He paused. “Did you?”

“Nah.”

We both laughed. If jet lag needed a spokesmodel, Greg would be on the short list. He had flown in from cornering a fight in Belarus. After the fight, he had spent two days wild boar hunting in a mountain range on the outskirts of Chernobyl, Ukraine. All for the fun of it. Which got me thinking—he can talk to art critics, wrestle crocodiles and hunt wild boars in the mountains of Eastern Europe, but what’s life going to be like when I don’t have to plan myself around this sport any more? When my body is no longer the chief object of my profession? Will I get to go on adventures too? Could I hunt down a wild boar? Or some kind of mutated scavenging Chernobyl beast?! Night closing in, lost in the woods, howls of unspeakable wild creatures getting closer...

“JULES!”

“Oops, spaced out again,” I grimaced.

“You should probably try to take a nap or something before weigh-ins,” Greg said. “You’re a little out of it.”

I opened my mouth to ask him if I would be invited on his adventures when I quit, but instead swallowed around the lump in my throat.

“I’m good.”

The weigh-ins for this show were held at noon the day before the actual fight, to allow the athletes a chance to rest and recuperate. Fighters walk onto a stage, climb on a scale and have their weight read by an official before a crowd of media and fans. They come face-to-face with the person they are fighting the next day and the crowd gauges the intensity between the two combatants. It’s a great way to generate buzz for the next day’s event.

It’s also almost every fighter’s least favorite part.



**Photo: Robert Beck for Sports Illustrated**

The rest of my day passed in a blur. Before we boarded the buses for the arena, we sat in my hotel room and watched a reality show about an Irish couple that wanted to transform an old house in a French village into a dream house. Naturally, the process was horribly expensive, causing so much stress that it threatened to split the couple. Then, in formulaic mastery, the house was somehow completed in the allotted television hour for all of the new neighbors to come over for a party. Then the Irishman proposed to his girlfriend. In a house full of French strangers. Ugh, how romantic, I thought.

When the time came to get on the buses, I caught no glimpse of my opponent or her coaches. This didn’t bother me much—I don’t like interacting with people who I’m going to hit. She’s not



real until we fight. At the arena, I checked my weight on the scale behind the curtains. 135 pounds even. I sipped some water, sloshed it around my mouth and spit it out. I chewed some gum and twitched around a bit, pretending to be not nervous and not hungry and not-feeling-the-horrible-cramps-in-my-back-and-diaphragm and not talking to a naked lady in a painting. I took off my sweatshirt and then put it back on over and over; hot then cold, hot then cold. I smiled at friends. I lied to the doctors that I felt perfectly fine and passed my pre-fight medicals. Greg and I stood in line and I shifted from foot to foot, grinding my knuckles into my lower back, trying to relieve pressure.

When they called my name and I walked onto the stage, the flashing lights and crowd overwhelmed me, as usual, and I blushed taking off my pants and sweatshirt. I hope my period didn't bleed through, I thought to myself. I hope the crowd doesn't think I'm fat, that they can't all see the ringworm scars on my stomach. I hope the number on the scale is exactly right.



**Photo: Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**

135 even. I grinned at the crowd and called "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie" hopefully. I was greeted with a slightly puzzled but polite "Oi, Oi, Oi."

Lame. Should have kept my mouth shut.

I walked to the opponent for the face off. She was built differently than the fight footage I'd seen of her; she was larger than I thought and as I stared into her eye—I can only stare into one eye at a time—I tried to quell the giggles bubbling up. It was her "mean face" that did it to me; I couldn't help it. With that scowl, she looked like a grumpy toucan with Groucho Marx eyebrows. And bangs.

Our fists were raised as we stood facing each other and the matchmaker stood in between; as if to break up the fight that wouldn't even happen until the next day. My opponent glared at me fiercely. I tried not to laugh outright. I had a feeling that even in repose her expression is affronted. Oh, settle down, kid, I thought. Her eyes widened at my smirk and she lunged at me, snapping her teeth.

But oddly, it didn't occur to me that she had just jumped at me, that there was just a gesture of attack. Bemused, I stared at her. Then I woke up and realized that the crowd wanted some kind of response—this was the theater of fighting people paid for. I waited half a beat and put my hands over my mouth in mock horror, pantomiming fear: "Ooooooohhhh."



**Photo: Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Getty Images**

The audience laughed appreciatively and she turned on heel and flounced off the stage. "Thank you," the matchmaker muttered to me. A tussle on stage garners up good pre-fight hype, but it's also a pain for the staff to deal with.

Backstage she ignored me and I her. Tomorrow we would be locked in a cage together. And, after twenty-four hours of no food or water, of smiling and pretending to be fine, it occurred to me: Fighting can be really, really dumb.

The best part of making weight is the first bite of food, the first sip of liquid through parched lips. As I ate my fruit and sipped on water, the adrenaline faded and I let the crankiness wash over me. I started to get mad at this b---- for getting in my face. Who the hell does she think she is? I started to get mad at my brain, too, for inventing an imaginary friend who was trying to talk me out of fighting.

I grabbed a handful of animal crackers and got mad that they kept sticking in my throat.

Friggin' cookies, I thought. I glared and snarled at everyone when we boarded the bus back to the hotel and eventually dozed off on the ride back.

At the hotel I woke up disoriented, still feeling tense and groggy. Greg patted me on the head absently. "Still got cramps?" he asked.

"Yeah." Also, everything is stupid, I thought.

"You'll feel better after an IV," he said.



**Photo: Courtesy of Julie Kedzie**

We headed back to the room for rehydration. Greg had arranged for his friends to come by with a couple of EMTs to administer the bags—two of saline and one Lactate Ringer's solution—that are basically cocktail of vitamins, administered intravenously. I watched absently as the needle glided into my skin and blood leaked out the side—I'm a bleeder—and melted into the back of the chair in relief. As the cold liquid entered my veins and skin, my body began to fill out more, to soften. My grumpiness subsided and although my ribcage still felt too tight, I began to relax. I looked around the room, happily buzzing with the conversation of friends and well-wishers who had come by. They weren't really friends of mine; just more moths attracted to the light my coach gave off. But they made me happy. These are the surreal moments that made this all so special—the random moments of intimacy with strangers. Ironically, a repeat of the reality show came on and everyone gave their thoughts on the Irish couple, on how the house had changed. Then the conversation turned to dinner.

I didn't really want dinner. My stomach had shrunk over 24 hours of fasting and the cookies I had shoveled in made it hurt in a weird way. Maybe I ate too fast, I thought.

"Peter invited us back to the museum restaurant," Greg said. I stared at him. Is it possible that I haven't spoken to *La Belle* for over two hours?

"Julie? That ok?" he asked. I smiled and nodded at him and my stomach lurched.

<http://www.si.com/mma/2015/05/19/julie-kedzie-what-it-feels-cut-weight-mma-fight>

# Making Weight: A First Hand Account of a Journalist Cutting Weight With a Pro

*Writer Elias Cepeda cut weight with Joe Lauzon leading up to one of the year's biggest UFC events.*



Exactly what do UFC fighters like Joe Lauzon have to do in order to "make weight," for fights, and how hard is it on their bodies?

*Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC / Zuffa LLC*

**By Elias Cepeda**

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Let's start with the salt, because that's the first thing I failed with. I'd originally intended to shadow UFC lightweight star [Joe Lauzon](#) on the last day or two of his weight cut for his UFC 183 pay per view fight against [Al Iaquinta](#), and try to do what he did - meaning not eat or drink much for twenty four to forty eight hours, while sweating out water weight in the sauna, tub and mats.

Joe liked the idea and offered me full access in Las Vegas, but also recommend that I up the ante, a bit. "You should try to do the whole thing," he told me over the phone this past fall.

"You should see what everything is like. Sweating out the last two days is just the end of the process. Do the whole diet and water plan as well. I'll give you my whole plan, it's actually not that complicated. Just try to do the whole thing, and if at any point you don't feel good, just stop."

If I were to follow the diet of any fighter on the UFC roster, Joe's was probably the easiest to mimic. Case in point, two weeks before UFC 183, I sat in a sub shop in Suburban Boston with Joe and one of his Lauzon MMA students, discussing his weight cutting plan over rib tips, fries and Greek salad (well, Joe had the salad, I had fries and onion rings to go with my ribs).

Joe doesn't diet, per se. This is in large part due to the fact that, unlike a surprising amount of pro fighters, he stays in the gym year-round.

Lauzon may not spar when he doesn't have fights coming up, but he's always grappling, always doing skill work, and sweating in the gym every day. As such, he never gets too heavy, or out of shape.

So, crash diets of extreme calorie reduction aren't necessary for him when training camp comes around. He eats pretty healthy during camp (other than indulging me in my fat boy lunch invitation), thanks to prepared meals from [SanoVita](#), so Joe doesn't have to worry about the occasional French fry.

Joe's plan to get to the light weight limit of 155/156 was indeed simple. I would learn that simplicity does not equal ease, however.

At least not to anyone but the most disciplined. Around ten days before his fight, he starts cutting back, hard, on sodium, ie. salt.

He also starts to "water-load," that is, significantly increase his daily water intake. Ordinarily, he told me, he drinks about a gallon of water a day.

Heading into his weight cut, however, Lauzon would take in about twice that amount, each day. Many fighters begin to cut back their water intake three to five days before they have to weigh in.

Weigh-ins for UFC fighters and high level professional boxers take place the day before their fights. So, fighters have a chance to rehydrate and pack back on the water pounds they've lost, before getting in the ring or cage.

Joe explained to me that we would load up on as much water as possible, up until about 2PM on the day before weigh-ins, Thursday. Then, water consumption stops, and the sweating begins.

After cutting out water, there would be a Thursday evening sweat or "cut," session, followed by a second Friday morning cut, before weighing in Friday afternoon.

In between Thursday and Friday, there would be no food or water for Joe, and perhaps, me. I would have to see how I would feel after sweating it out for a couple hours on Thursday with Team Lauzon before knowing if I could make it through a second session the following morning, to say nothing of not ingesting any water in between.

That all seemed like a tough task as I'm the type of guy to get out of the hot tub or steam room after five minutes because I start to get uncomfortable. If I do ten minutes in either, you'd best believe it's because I'm chugging a bottle of water, at the same time, and headed to a pizza lunch afterwards.

Before I could get to "the cut," however, I had to adjust my normally salty diet to include virtually no added sodium. It would be difficult, I thought, but with that as my only real diet restriction, I felt confident I'd make it through, and with my heart thanking me afterwards

So, back home in Chicago, I hit the grocery store and stocked up on herbs and spices to flavor my food, as well as a humble and sassy little product by the name of "Mrs. Dash," which promised lots of seasoning flavor, with no salt or sodium.

I bought two bottles. Just in case.

Some chicken and fish from the meat department, and I headed home excited about dinner. That night, I didn't even finish my dinner because it tasted so bland.

I should have picked up some lemons or lime, to marinate my white fish, and add some acidity that my tongue might mistake for salt, I thought. But mostly, I should have used some salt.



The next morning, I laid out the sweetest breakfast and lunch I could imagine (smoothies, on top of yogurt, on top of oats, over and over) to tide me over and help me forget how badly I already missed salt. So, I ate, and ate a lot.



Joe Lauzon tapes an interview with videographer Brandon Chase after completing his UFC 183 weight cut.

*Elias Cepeda*

I ate absolutely as much as I wanted, and it all tasted sweet and good. But by dinner, I became a bit more concerned about diabetes in my future and wanted to have a savory meal after working out and before going to bed.

That's when I broke. I ate cheese, and the cheese had plenty of salt.

I had lasted less than twenty four hours in the first stage of Joe's weight cut plan. The night prior, I didn't go to bed hungry, but I felt as though I had.

The pangs were not in my stomach, but rather in the spoiled-rotten first-world taste buds of my mouth. What was food without added salt?

Oh, sure, life-sustaining, healthy and completely adequate for a good while, but, you know, other than that?

Not good enough. I knew my prospects for doing this weight cut were in trouble, already, when I felt entitled to salt after eliminating it for less than a day.

Rib tips Joe Lauzon never told me this part would be so hard.

## "Just Do What You Can"

In Boston, former world champion Mike Brown told me that the weight cut would be a matter of motivation, a matter of the mind. I was in Boston to cover the most recent UFC on FOX card, on the undercard of which Brown's student [Charles Rosa](#) would go on to win his first ever UFC fight.

I spent a few days with Rosa and his coaches, Brown, [Charles McCarthy](#) and Stefan Berkenpas leading up to the event. We trained together, and I observed Rosa go through some of his weight cut.

Brown loved that I was set to write an experiential story about weight-cutting. In fact, whenever I'd told most professional fighters about the idea, all of their faces lit up and spread into the same

type of knowing and giddy smile.

I suspect they relished the thought of someone else getting a taste of the bitter medicine they force-fed themselves for so many years, in order to fight. "You can definitely do it," Brown told me.

"The thing is, will you have the motivation to do it? You won't have a fight coming up that you're doing it for, so there will be points where you'll have to decide whether or not it's worth it to you."

I would begin the process with Joe in a couple of weeks weighing around 200 pounds. Brown estimated that, if I followed the whole plan, I'd probably lose fifteen pounds during UFC 183 fight week.

The American Top Team coach and former fighter seemed to emphasize that that was a big "if," however. For all the physical pain and damage it causes, the process of cutting weight would eventually become a mental challenge, he promised.

And, without the motivation of doing it for a reason, for a fight, Brown seemed doubtful that someone would see it through. He gave me a similarly qualified prodding to the one Joe had offered weeks back.

"Just do what you can," he said.

"Try it and see how much you can do."

## **The Squeeze Behind the Juice**

Without a fight ahead of me, what was the point of cutting weight? I wanted to see what even fraction of the experience was like, for one.

But why? The first question I'd gotten from most professional fighters when I mentioned the story idea was why I was doing it, and whether it was for a fight.

Even Charles Rosa, overhearing Brown and I discuss the idea in the UFC practice room in Boston assumed I was doing it for a competition. "You're going to take a fight?" he asked.

Not this time. In fact, I'd fought six times before, five times in MMA and once in boxing, and had never "cut" weight for any of them.

Over fifteen years of training, I'd also never "cut" weight for a grappling competition, either. Sure, I'd trained hard and improved my diet and lost pounds of fat in order to be in better condition to compete.

But that's not really what fighters mean when they say the "cut weight." Fighters like Rosa and Lauzon begin their weight cut already lean and shredded with no fat to lose.

What they do lose is insane amounts of water weight in order to make their division's limits, and avoid being the much smaller man come fight night. That whole thing - "the thing of intentionally dehydrating yourself in the days and hours leading up to a fight - is the thing I'd never once considered doing before.

It has just never seemed worth it. I fight as an amateur and not once do I feel that a guy beat me because he was bigger.

He beat me because he was better that night. I never wrestled in my youth, so I didn't get into MMA with the typical wrestler history of weight cutting, either.

But, in the two years since my last fight, I'd healed up herniated discs in my neck and back and



also put on thirty pounds. A month after my last fight, in Feb. 2013, I weighed about 173 pounds.

I'd fought at 175 pounds and wanted to be ready to fight at 170 pounds, soon. Then, I busted up my neck.

Then, my back. After a couple years of not sparring or rolling Jiu Jitsu regularly, I'd gotten up to about 205 pounds.

I knew I'd fight again, but doing so at welterweight seemed unlikely. I'd also fought at light heavyweight twice before, going 1-1 at that class, but I did so in pretty bad shape, and that portly size came with a pretty lazy and resigned attitude to fighting much bigger opponents.

After training a bit more seriously in recent years, and getting into slightly better shape, I wasn't so sure about walking around at 205 pounds and fighting guys who would be coming down from about 225. So, the idea of learning about weight cutting began to seep into my mind.

This story could be my "test" cut, to see how much I could drop in a day or two, and to feel how healthy I felt the day after.

The second purpose of this story, I thought, would be to simply share what it was like to cut weight for professional fighters. The idea that all athletes must walk around twenty or more pounds above their weigh-in weight has been an accepted one in fighting, for years.

Fans also seem to take for granted that cutting that amount of weight in days' time is simply "a part of the job" of being a professional fighter. So, when we see a ridiculously fit UFC fighter on the scale, and they miss weight by a few pounds, we're quick to jump on them as unprofessional or lazy, or some other flip characterization.

I've been around gyms and fighters since I was 15 years old, and so I've seen enough to know that there's a lot that goes on before guys and girls hit the scale or cage. What did that sunken, depleted fighter on the scale who just weighed in a pound and a half too heavy go through over the past hours and days?

That's what I wanted to observe and, at least partially, experience for myself, and then attempt to relate to fans. Fans take so much for granted, from weight cutting to knockouts to fighting through injury, that the opportunity to get a first-hand, embedded account of just a portion of what someone like Joe Lauzon goes through immediately before he has to head out and fight another trained man, seemed like a great opportunity.

As it turns out, we picked a heck of a weekend to do a story on weight-cutting.

## **The Cut: Day 1**

I'd tried to eat very light Thursday morning before heading out West from Chicago, to meet Joe Lauzon and his team as they began his cut down to lightweight for UFC 183. I had a liquid breakfast of a water, frozen berries, Greek yogurt and vanilla whey protein shake. After completely failing at cutting salt out or even significantly down over the past few days as Joe had instructed, I hoped to at least be good today, the first day of the cut. That lasted until I landed in Nevada.

I found some grilled chicken in a packet, with hard boiled eggs, and brie cheese and crackers. I'd just eat the chicken and eggs, and leave the salty cheese and crackers out, I told myself as I purchased them from a stand in the McCarran airport, before getting on my shuttle to pick up the rental car.

I ended up eating a lot of the cheese, and some of the crackers. Perhaps worse than any of my diet lapses, was how little water I'd been drinking.

If I were following Joe's plan, I would have upped his and my usual gallon a day of the good stuff, to about two gallons each day, for the past few ones. Everyone can understand how restricting yourself from things you enjoy is challenging, but professional fighters also have the burden of making sure they get enough of things they need, in order to train.

I'd quickly learned not just the challenges of keeping certain things out, but also of putting in enough of what I needed, heading into this cut. An excess of water was needed at the same time a depletion of water-retaining sodium was, Joe told me, so that, once water was eliminated (in a couple hours, on Thursday), the body would go into a "flushing mode," and urinating a ton of water would supplement the sweating out of other pounds of water weight.

By not eliminating salt, and by not water-loading, I was sure to lose less water weight over the next two days than I could have if I'd stuck to Joe's plan. So, I showed up to Las Vegas, over-fed and over-salted (my usual state, since the age of 3), under-watered, and unsure of how I'd feel in a sauna for an extended period of time.

After a delay at the hotel check-in counter in a hotel connected to the UFC 183 host venue of the MGM Grand, I raced to the arena to meet Joe and his team to begin the process, shortly after 4PM. Many fighters on the card stayed at the MGM Grand hotel and then walked down to the portion of the arena which housed makeshift training rooms with mats and cheap standing heavy bags, as well as the pop-up UFC offices, where they'd check in, take photos, and do a dizzying array of other pre-fight commitments, all while extremely dehydrated.

Joe, his boxing coach Steve Maze, manager Chris Palmquist, teammate and grappling coach, TUF veteran [Jimmy Quinlan](#), and videographer Brandon Chase, came down an escalator, towards the arena, and I greeted those I knew - Joe, and Chris, and shook hands with the others I was just meeting for the first time.

Joe gloved up and hit Maze's held mitts for a minute or two at a time, while the rest of the team hung around, watching and checking their phones. The air was light, with lots of teasing and trash talking in between hitting mitts.



**Getting their gear from, and their own shorts and banners approved by the UFC, is just a small amount of the errands and logistics and chores UFC fighters have to do during fight weeks, while cutting weight.**

***Elias Cepeda***

I shadowboxed a few feet away. The goal was to just get the body sweating, lightly, to be followed by more intense sweating sessions in the adjacent hotel spa.

Joe checked his weight on a scale in the room. He was about 168 pounds. I jumped on afterwards, and had managed to lose two pounds since the night prior with my (for me) light

eating, and weighed in at 198 pounds.

Several other fighters on the card would come into the room and check their weight also. [Jimmy Hettes](#), who would be pulled from UFC 183 two days later because he'd gotten sick, looked good at the time and was all smiles Thursday afternoon when he stepped onto the scale, likely before beginning his dangerous cut in earnest.

Flyweight contender [Ian McCall](#) came in and checked his weight. We were all pretty astounded when he stepped onto the scale and he said it read 143 pounds and some change.

McCall was lean and ripped and in just twenty four hours he'd somehow have to weigh, at most, 126 pounds, to fight [John Lineker](#). When Lineker once again missed weight the next day, and [McCall came on to the stage cursing the Brazilian](#) and gesturing violently at him, it didn't surprise me.

I don't know exactly what McCall did between Thursday at 143 pounds and Friday to make 126 pounds, but it was most likely brutal enough to justify his anger at Lineker for not going through the same. In any case, McCall didn't seem worried as he explained to Joe that he was "water-loaded."

Then, our own sweating began. Joe and his crew headed to the spa, with me trailing.

A soak in the hot tub for about twenty minutes was first.

Before fighting Michael Johnson in 2013, Joe tried out a method of cutting that was different for him. It involved sitting in a bathtub filled with hot water, as well as salt and rubbing alcohol.



**Joe Lauzon all warm and snuggly in his burrito wrap of sweat.**  
**Brandon Chase**

That solution sucks the moisture out of the body while you sit in agony. Joe said it was more physically painful than sauna sessions, and it didn't help that they used water that was far too hot.

"They were literally pouring boiling water into the tub," Palmquist recounted with a shake of his head.

Joe made weight but felt extra drained the next day. No more bathtub cuts for Team Aggression.

The jacuzzi would do, for a warm up. After that, we walked the few steps from the tub to the sauna, and sat inside the wood room for over twenty minutes.

There are rules around fighters during weight cuts. Some are universal.

For example, when coming in and out of the sauna, you close that door behind you as fast as you can. When an athlete is forcing themselves in an environment that sucks out dangerous amounts of moisture from their body, they are committed, and every degree of heat counts.

A sauna door that lingers on its swinging path from open to closed, lets in "cold" air, and messes with the sweat inside. One prohibition that didn't exist with Lauzon, at least, was against talking.

We all talked, a lot. Over the next two days, the topics ranged from silly to serious, and everything in between.

There was discussion of rivals, teammates, the UFC's new deal with Reebok, relationships, and much more. I let Joe, Chris, Jimmy, and Brandon (Maze was too smart to join us for the cutting sessions) take the lead with conversation, at first, uncertain of how the fighter felt about frivolity while going through this process.

It soon became clear that he welcomed it as a distraction. That night, after the first cut, in his hotel room, he would likely not have the same ability to separate himself from the dry, thudding, and waiting pain of dehydration.

"The talking helps a lot," Joe said.

The talking, and the mere presence of supporters, was support. I don't know what Joe felt, but as I stood up out of the tub for the first time, after forty minutes or so of that and the sauna, combined, I felt the type of light headedness from losing water, that had always prompted me to grab a water bottle and stop a soak, in the past.

Now, however, I saw other guys around me going through the same, or much worse, and figured that if they could do it, I could. Also, I knew if I fell down or something, they were there to pick my dumb ass up and call 9-1-1.

After the sauna, Jimmy and Brandon rigged up a wrap on the spar floor using towels for Joe, and another for myself. Joe called the wrap a "burrito."

I imagine the thought of food comforted him a bit, during this hungry time. "We stay here until we stop sweating," Joe explained to me while on the floor, all cocooned up.

If a fighter like Lauzon stayed in the sauna for as long as he'd need to lose the twelve pounds or more of water weight he needed to, without interruption, it would likely be a great deal more hazardous than what he was already doing. That much heat, without break, for, let's say, a couple hours at a time, could do some serious damage to a person.

So, we took breaks. However, his body temperature couldn't drop too much, or his ability to continue to sweat out pounds would be hindered.

So, a break from the tub and sauna, meant being wrapped up tightly (so minimal air could get in) in towels, so that he could stay warm while resting. By Friday, even this "rest," would be pretty agonizing for Joe.



**Lauzon (L) and the author keep their core body temps high while resting from the sauna.  
Brandon Chase**

For now, he was pretty talkative and happy, it seemed, in his "burrito." After a half hour or so, Joe's sweat dried up, and we headed back into the sauna.

Joe's goal for Thursday was to hit 160 pounds, leaving him just four more pounds to cut the next morning, perhaps less, depending on how much he "floated," overnight. We often wake up a little lighter than we went to bed.

Joe would not hit that 160lbs mark on Thursday, however, due to limited time in the spa. In all, we got in about two hours of cutting on Thursday, before it closed at 7PM.

Joe didn't seem worried when the scale showed 163lbs after Thursday's cut. He explained to me that they would have basically doubled their sweat circuit of sauna and wrapping, if they hadn't been cut short on time.

I weighed in and had also lost five pounds, and was down to 193.

If Joe would have hit 160lbs, he would have allowed himself a sip or two of apple juice, and perhaps a bite of bland chicken breast. The former would be to allow himself a bit of sugar and moisture on the tongue, and the latter to simply give his metabolism a morsel to work with as ember.

He would allow himself neither, however. As his team headed off to a restaurant in the hotel, Joe went up to his room to rest and sleep early. I wanted to stick with that plan, also.

I was invited to dinner by Brandon, and said I'd meet them there to just hang out, but I didn't want to drink water, or eat food.

I doubted I could last the whole night without more water or food, but I wanted to at least try. I hoped the relatively cool air outside of the spa would be enough relief to distract me from wanting food or water.

I was wrong.

I got to my room, showered, got dressed, made a call and answered a few emails.

I decided not to go to dinner with the guys because the food and water would be too tempting. My earlier light headedness had turned into a dull, throbbing headache.





**After seeing just how much weight Ian McCall (L) lost to make weight in just 24 hours, his anger at John Lineker (R) for not making weight, was put into full context.**  
*Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC / Zuffa LLC*

My mouth was a bit dry. Certainly, I was in no risk of starving, after eating a protein shake, eggs, cheese, crackers and chicken earlier in the day.

But I felt that normal person urge of, "I want to eat because it's been a few hours," that we often mistake for hunger. I'd have some water, I decided.

But, no food. The headache from losing five pounds of water bugged me and, though I could have held out for longer that night, I began to realize I couldn't imagine trying to sleep feeling that way.

So, I drank water. A bit too much, too soon, it turned out.

The next day, Joe would tell me the importance of sipping, not chugging, to avoid the type of stomach ache that would stay with me the rest of Thursday night. Who would have known that the same advice given to college kids regarding tequila would hold true for water, after weight cuts?

I had told myself I'd just drink water but not eat, but once that water bridge was crossed, food no longer seemed so taboo. So, I chose what I would call a "light" buffet option, and headed to an all you can eat sushi and seafood restaurant across the street.

It really is all or nothing with discipline, at least with me, I suppose. A lot of emphasis is placed on how hard, or extreme professional fighters train.

There isn't nearly as large a spotlight on these physically inactive, psychological components to what they do, however. Certainly there is not enough understanding of how their lives are often really not just extreme, but rather steeped in routine, out of necessity.

If you don't have the discipline to go to bed at a certain hour every night, wake up at a certain time every morning, go to the gym every day, eat the same stuff every day, and then force yourself to stick to every little detail during a crucial time like weight-cutting, you likely don't have what it takes to be a great professional athlete. Or, if you have the ridiculous talent to do so, anyhow, your chances at achieving longevity are slim.

Outliers aren't what game plans are based on or how proven roads are paved. So, the path is of consistency and attention to detail.

If one small rung, say having a little water after the first half of a cut, is off, then the whole thing

may be derailed as you sit in front of three plates at a bargain seafood buffet just off the Las Vegas strip.



**Kelvin Gastelum (R) worked hard during his weight cut to get down to welterweight for his UFC 183 co-main event fight against Tyron Woodley, but ultimately missed the mark, big.**  
*Jayne Kamin-Oncea / USA TODAY Sports*

## The Cut: Day 2

There weren't many other UFC 183 fighters in the spa Thursday afternoon. The next day, Joe and Chris would comment on how they were always surprised by how few fighters they see in the hotel spa, cutting weight.

Most, it seemed, left the bulk of their cut to Friday, and/or hit up a 24 hour gym in the area. TUF winner [Kelvin Gastelum](#), who would go on to miss weight and [lose a close decision to Tyron Woodley](#) on Saturday, got into the whirlpool with us Friday morning, just after 9AM as Joe began his second day of weight cutting.

He and Joe's team exchanged pleasantries. The young fighter was clearly there to do work, but he smiled and gave no indication of the problems that were soon to come and be evident to the whole world.

Hours later, as Joe was putting on the finishing touches on his own weight cut with the help of his corner man and TUF 17 middleweight member Jimmy Quinlan, the TUF 17 winner Kelvin watched his weight cut crash and burn. By this time, Gastelum was done smiling, had gotten dressed and supposedly refused to return to the sauna.

He and his team were said to plan to go up to his room and try a salt bath to get the rest of the weight off. Word in the spa was that Gastelum was still 179 pounds with time ticking away before he'd have to make 171 to fight Tyron Woodley in the UFC 183 co-main event.

Should the 5'9" Gastelum have stayed in shape and gotten leaner in between fights better so he'd have less weight to cut the week of UFC 183? It certainly would seem so.

But on Friday morning, his apparent refusal to get back in the sauna was by no means the tantrum of some spoiled, pampered athlete. He looked miserable and awful, after no doubt spending hours and days cutting back on and sucking necessary water out of his body.



Once a body stops sweating, as Gastelum's appeared to have done, it is in a serious danger zone. Sweat cools the body so that it doesn't overheat and fail, and sweat is also a sign that a body has some water left in it to, you know, live.

Quinlan told me that it wasn't rare at all for teammates and coaches to physically restrain and force fighters back into saunas to continue to cut weight, if need be. "If a cut is going badly, you can get to a point where you don't care about anything else in the world," he explained.

"You don't care about money, your career, the fight, the cut. You are too thirsty."

What Jimmy didn't say, but what the situation he described actually was, of course, was that fighters can get near death during weight cuts. That's what all of this was, after all.

A controlled but accelerated process of intentional dehydration, during which fighters also do everything they can to beat back their bodies' natural life-saving mechanisms.

Fighters trick their bodies into flushing out water they need, after taking out sodium they needed to live as well for the past few days, and then they undergo intense heat to sweat out pounds more of water. And, just in case a fighter's body starts to try and do its job by cooling itself down and lowering their core temperature to avoid over-heating, let's just wrap you up in towels and a blanket to prevent that from happening.

Oh yeah, Joe's wrap on Friday morning stepped up from just towels to also including a full comforter blanket. It appeared to provide little comfort to him, however, as he lay prone, after tub and sauna sessions.

During weight cuts, comfort is relative. Just as he had us switch from sauna to tub, to wraps, to provide relief from the sauna as much as anything, while still keeping his body hot, Joe would ask for help from Brandon in moving his body to a different position while wrapped up for a half hour.

"Can you move me to my stomach," Joe asked.

I can't imagine what actual relief being on his stomach, as opposed to his back, could have given Joe at that point. It would seem to me his difficulties had more to do with not having had salt in days, no water or food in nearly 24 hours, and having sweated out about ten pounds in the past twelve hours, with what had to have been crappy sleep in between, than with lumbar positioning.

I didn't ask Joe to reflect on any of that, in the moment, as at this point, he truly seemed to be getting uncomfortable. In the internal psychological war that is weight cutting, however, I surmised that even small changes can be used to trick the mind into thinking things are getting a little bit better.

For me, the wraps, outside of the sweltering sauna and boiling hot tub, did still provide me with relief. My body's situation was simply a much different one than Joe's, however.

After giving in and drinking water the night prior, after our first cut, I went on to drink enough water before bed to take me to a gallon for the entire day. And no, I didn't have breakfast Friday morning, and had my last cup of water at 4:30AM to bring me to three total for the day before we began sweating again at 9AM, but I'd had a sushi buffet the night before.

Simply put, my body had stuff in it to use, as well as a good night's rest, while dropping some pounds on Friday morning. Joe's body was rapidly running out of anything to use, and that was the point.

That's how a person as lean and fit as Lauzon is at 170 pounds, can get down to 155 or 156 pounds in a day or two. All he had left in his body was necessary stuff - water, muscle.

He had been cutting away the former for a while now, with hopes of impacting the latter as little as possible.

Joe openly admitted that he didn't feel great at this point, but he never complained. In fact, he still seemed to take joy in conversing.

He did so with his team, when he wanted. Lauzon also had an amazingly good attitude, humor and energy for speaking with other fighters and fans while he cut.

Unlike Thursday, the MGM spa was filled with fighters and their teams on Friday morning. [Derek Brunson](#), who would go on to win impressively at UFC 183 and shimmy his way into the hearts of millions of women, err, his girlfriend, sat down next to Joe and the two talked for about fifteen minutes, mostly about personal finances.

[Matt Serra](#), the coach of Lauzon's UFC 183 opponent Al Iaquinta, saw Joe from across the room, then came over and reminisced with him about times they had played Call of Duty online together.

A fan came over to Joe and introduced himself as his biggest fan, and then went on to chat with him for about five minutes. Joe was lively, sharp, warm and engaging with all of them.

Some asked his advice on matters, others asked process questions about cutting weight...as he was cutting weight. He hadn't had water or food for a very long time and his body was drying out and his eyes sunken a bit into his shaved head because of the weight cutting stress he was putting himself through, yet Joe maintained a talk show host's conviviality, somehow.

I mentioned how impressive that all was. Joe shrugged.

Soon, a quick steam session was plugged in between sauna times. Joe cycled us through several more tub-sauna-wrap circuits and then checked his weight.

He was under 156 pounds, and so was ready to make weight. Weigh-ins were still not for about four hours, however, so there would be no celebrating with buckets of Gatorade or pedialyte just yet, however.

Joe had to stay dry until after weighing in. Still, there was a light at the end of the tunnel for him, now that he had gotten past where he needed to be.

And, that sweet, amber light at the end of the tunnel for Joe was apple juice. "I don't even care about eating food right now," he said.

"I just want to be able to drink something."

So, Joe decided to get out of the sauna, get out of the wrap and simply sit and rest in the spa on a chair for the better part of an hour. It was a break from the intense heat and near-constant sweating he'd been going through for the past twenty hours or so.



**Lauzon amazed Cepeda with how he maintained good cheer throughout an exhausting weight cut.**

***Brandon Chase***

He couldn't drink, but he could just, be. After sitting and resting, Joe and I got back into the jacuzzi to sweat out just a bit more.

Joe wanted to sweat out some more ounces so that, after showering and getting to his room, he could safely drink some apple juice, carefully measured out by Brandon, before weighing in at 4:30PM. Joe looked forward to this juice like a fat kid (me) looks at a buffet line (the night prior).

After the dehydration and calorie restriction he'd undergone, the flavor and sugar of the juice would feel like heaven. "The sugar in it is going to give him a rush of energy up on that stage, while weighing in," Brandon explained.

With that to look forward to, Joe got as talkative as he'd been the last two days, while sitting in the tub, losing his last half pound or so. When we got out, after nearly a half hour, we both had to pause to gather our light heads, before standing, unsupported, on our own two legs on the slick, wet spa floor.

I don't know about his, but my kidneys had begun to hurt hours ago. Still, knowing he'd made the weight and had a mini-sugar rush to look forward to, made the room light once more.

Joe weighed in on the scale he'd been carrying around all week, and which had been calibrated to match the scale which would be used by the Nevada Athletic Commission just hours later during the weigh-ins at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, and he indeed had ounces to spare for liquid refreshment before 4:30. I stepped on and had lost another five pounds, from where I ended Thursday night.

## **Packing it Back On**

Even after drinking water and eating a "light" buffet the night prior, I woke up relatively light. From Wednesday night to Friday around noon, I'd gone from 200 pounds and some change to 190.2lbs.

I'd cut ten pounds in about thirty six hours, while drinking a gallon of water on the first day of cutting, and eating three times that day. Certainly, I realized that it would be pretty easy to clean up my diet and get down to a "walking around" weight of 195 pounds, and then lose ten pounds of water weight in one or two days, to make 185 pounds.

How well would I perform in a fight after a cut, and how much could I put on in a day's time, were still open questions. Of course, after doing my own weigh-in at the spa, I hit the MGM Grand

Buffet while Joe was still abstaining and waiting to weigh in.



**The author steps on the scale just after Lauzon to see exactly how much weight he's lost.  
*Brandon Chase***

After weighing in, Joe would ever so slowly eat a healthy sandwich, while sipping water. Then, after UFC president Dana White gave his usual pep talk to the fighters backstage, post weigh-ins, Joe finished hydrating safely and fully.

I hadn't gone through enough to warrant an IV, which many fighters get after weighing in, I figured. And though I certainly also didn't deserve another buffet, I took one as my savory, fatty reward.

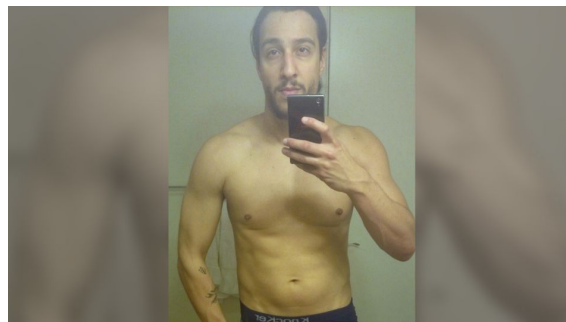
There were eggs, there were hush puppies, there was fried chicken, but also Brussels sprouts, fresh fruit and green beans. Oh yeah, and sausage.

Delicious sausage.

Sure, I like food, but I also wanted to get started on the fun part of cutting weight - putting it back on. Fighters want to cut weight only because they can put it back on afterwards and walk into the cage much heavier than they weighed in at, the day before.

So, it's not just about cutting a huge amount of weight, it's about doing so in a magical way that allows you to put it all back on, and more, in less than a day, and then feel well enough to fight.

Some fighters do it to have a size advantage. Others, like Joe, simply don't want to be a great deal smaller than their opponents.



**After cutting ten pounds, Cepeda could only put six back on by the next day. Also, Team Alpha Male is totally not impressed.  
*Elias Cepeda***

Joe walks around at 170 pounds, and he fights at lightweight. There are featherweights, these days, who walk around at over 180 pounds.

The option for professional fighters is clear - either cut weight, or go into fights as the much smaller man. I wasn't fighting Saturday but I figured I could become a much bigger man, if I kept eating all day Friday.

I weighed myself in again Saturday morning just as I woke up, before drinking or eating anything, in the hotel gym, before my mini, see how I feel after cutting weight, workout. I'd cut ten pounds, but only put back on six.

In all likelihood, the plan Joe had given me, that I didn't follow through completely on, not only would have allowed me to drop more weight if I'd followed it, but it might have also made it possible for me to put it back on, afterwards, as well. If I'd removed salt from my diet, and water-loaded, the water would have probably come off easier and in more volume.

Then, I could have perhaps sucked up more effectively afterwards, especially if I'd gotten an IV. I felt fine after my little workout, but I've fought enough to know that nothing could have approximated the energy needed to compete in an MMA bout, and so I still don't truly know how much energy I'd have after doing a moderate weight cut.

## **Lessons from 'The Fight Before the Fight'**

In the end, I cut a little weight, but more than I'd ever done before. I cheated along the way, and did almost everything I could have done to make it easier for me, but it was still painful and scary at times.

Friday night, Joe gathered the men who helped him cut weight, along with his fiancée, and a larger group of close family members and friends who'd traveled from Massachusetts to Las Vegas to support him. There were cheese curds, burgers, fries, fish, and plenty of water laid out on the long table, sidelined by stools, and smiles on friends.

Joe held court, and everyone had fun. There was still a fight to fight, but fighting was the fun part, the reward.

For the rare warrior breed of women and men like Joe Lauzon who relish the battle, the real fight is earning entrance into that arena, or onto that battlefield. Things like cutting weight.

On Friday night, that fight before the fight was over and won. It was a time to relax and be hopeful.

<http://www.foxsports.com/ufc/story/making-weight-a-first-hand-behind-the-scenes-account-of-the-ufc-183-weigh-ins-020815>

# Can Same-Day Weigh-Ins Benefit Combat Sports?

By Kurt Tellez - Oct 13, 2014 at 2:50 PM PST

The problem of dangerous weight cutting has been under the media microscope ever since Renan Barão and Henry Cejudo's resulting health complications forced them out of UFC 177. It's not uncommon for combat sports athletes to strategically compete in a weight class that is lower than their natural body weight to gain a competitive edge. The 24 hour period after the weigh-in and before the fight is used to rehydrate and renourish an athlete that has had to effectively starve themselves of adequate food and water for multiple days. After observing the **dangerous effects** that this practice can have, the **Association of Ringside Physicians** released a statement that presented the solution of a same-day weigh-in policy to prevent against dangerous weight cutting measures. Would same-day weigh-ins effectively help combat sports organizations fight against dangerous weight cutting?

**Yes**



*(Jason Miller weighs in at Oceans 808, Jamm Aquino/Honolulu Star-Bulletin)*

A certain amount of weight cutting will inevitably be required for competition in weight-restricted sports. One way or another, when you sign a contract that says you will compete at X weight class, you absolutely have to meet that number. However, without a 24-hour period to recover before a fight, athletes will have to seriously evaluate if they can fight in good health on the same day they make weight. For all the advantages and disadvantages there are to cutting down to fight lighter competitors, going into a fight just hours later dangerously dehydrated and malnourished hardly seems worth the risk. We've seen that combat sports athletes are willing to go to any measures to get a competitive edge when it comes to competing in a lighter weight class, but it seems impossible to make it count if you step into the ring withered and dehydrated. Having to make weight on the same day of the fight could prove to be a very effective deterrent to dangerous and unhealthy weight cutting.



No



*(Renan Barao pulled out of UFC title fight due to weight cut complications  
Photo: Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC/Zuffa LLC via Getty Images)*

For all of the **health risks** already known about the dangers of weight cutting, it's quite possible that athletes may chance a same-day weigh-in regardless. Even with all of the extreme dangers it would present to a fighter, it seems inevitable that some athletes would attempt the feat anyway. The result could mean less than adequate performance from fighters in the ring if they're able to pass official approval to fight in the first place. In addition, a fighter chancing a dangerous weight cut despite a same-day weigh-in could mean huge financial problems for combat sports organizations. Consider the possibility that a fighter makes it to the scale and isn't approved to fight for a scheduled bout expected to take place just hours later. Even if the organization had fighters available as replacements, every event go-er and pay-per-view buyer would be disenchanted and hesitant to make the same purchase again. Another financial point to consider is how it would affect the current roster of athletes and champions. If a considerable number of athletes have to abandon their weight class (including champions), that would restructure the whole organization. Who knows how many classic rivalries would never play out again because athletes cannot safely compete. However ethical, safe, and fair a same-day weigh-in would be for the athletes and sport, any combat sports organization is going to seriously weigh the financial risks and damages it can bring to their promotion.

<http://www.scifighting.com/2014/10/13/35127/can-same-day-weigh-ins-benefit-combat-sports/>



# MMA & Boxing: Same Day Weigh-Ins – Has the Time Finally Come?

By Nathan “Diesel” Hendrickson

The latest season of The Ultimate Fighter: American Top Team vs. Blackzilians, Episode 4: “Boiling Point” which aired last month on May 13th featured another seemingly healthy fighter fall ill to the side effects of a drastic weight cut.

Steve Montgomery of American Top Team had a dramatic seizure that was filmed and aired on the Fox broadcast. After he was taken to the hospital, Steve was diagnosed with hyponatremia, a condition that occurs when the level of sodium in the blood is abnormally low. Fighters during weight cuts often have low levels of sodium due to drinking large amounts of water to flush their system. Combined with a weight-cut diet that may not replenish the body with the necessary nutrients and electrolytes, a recipe for disaster exists.

While Steve was eventually given a clean bill of health from his doctors, he was still pulled from the show as a precaution, thus, temporarily at the very least, ending his opportunity to compete in the UFC.

Health problems associated with weight-cuts aren't limited to MMA. After several deaths of student athletes, the NCAA has adopted rules governing the management of weight cuts, recommending that athletes keep weight cuts to 5% of their hydrated weight before competition. The Association of Ringside Physicians (ARP) has also “weighed-in” (pun intended) on the matter in a statement released last year. According to the ARP, “Unhealthy and sometimes dangerous weight loss practices continue to be a significant problem in amateur and professional combat sports. The ARP recommends that regulatory bodies adopt standardized weigh-in policies in conjunction with year-round weight management and educational programs.”

## **The ARP goes on to state:**

*“The ARP recommends standardized weigh-in policies in conjunction with year-round weight management programs. These would include scheduling weigh-ins twenty four hours or less before the start of competition. Therefore, establishing a lowest allowed fighting weight (weight class) for competitors through body composition and hydration assessment is essential. Combatants should be assessed and certified at their appropriate weight annually. This assessment should be completed by non-biased examiners, in conjunction with licensure, and stored in an international data bank accessible to athletic regulatory bodies. In this light, the ARP will be establishing a medical database to provide this and other resources. Regulatory bodies should also consider adding additional weight classes in certain sports where needed.”*

To highlight another ramification of drastic weight cuts in layman's terms, consider this: We have a brain. In fights or rigorous activity, the brain gets knocked around. If the brain connects with the cranial wall, the person the brain belongs to gets knocked out, and/or a concussion, and/or a traumatic brain injury. So what is surrounding that brain? Cranial fluid which is mostly water. What happens when a fighter dehydrates themselves rapidly? The fluid surrounding the brain decreases, thus providing less of a cushion to the brain when it gets knocked around. The possible end result? An increased likelihood of injury to the athlete.

Another draw-back to “gaming” weight cuts is its common for a fighter to “game” the weight-cut process to weigh “X” weight the day before the fight, then gain a large amount of weight in the 24 hours leading up to the event. If the other fighter has weighed in at closer to their natural weight, then that fighter who is closer to his or her natural weight is at a disadvantage.

A good example is the February 26th, 2000 bout between the late Arturo Gatti and Joey

Gamache. The fight was to take place at 140 pounds. Gatti devastated Gamache in the second round, with Gamache claiming afterwards that he was permanently injured after the fight. Gamache claimed that Gatti actually weighed about 20 pounds more than Gamache did during the fight, and went on to sue Gatti and the New York State Athletic Commission. After the fight, many in the boxing world pushed for revised rules to prevent “gaming” the weight-cut process.

<http://ringsidereport.com/?p=53280>



# Section 2

Articles Related to  
Weight-Cut Failures





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**Association of Ringside Physicians Releases Consensus Statement  
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**Thiago Santos apologizes for weight-cutting failure**

<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/mma/story/2012-03-29/Thiago-Santos-apologizes-for-weight-cutting-failure/53867346/1>

**Frankie Gomez's promise questioned again after failure to make weight**

<http://ringtv.craveonline.com/news/388973-frankie-gomezs-promise-questioned-again-after-failure-to-make-weight>

**Jacarezinho' Stops Velasco at TPF 22, Failed Weight Cut Costs Him  
135-Pound Crown**

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**Johny Hendricks' Failed Weight Cut at UFC 192: Let's All Share the Blame**

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2574983-johny-hendricks-failed-weight-cut-at-ufc-192-lets-all-share-the-blame>

**Gastelum Coach on Bad Weight Cut: "I was scared"**

<http://www.bjpenn.com/mmanews/gastelum-coach-bad-weight-cut-scared/>

**Ian McCall on UFC Fight Night 56 pullout: 'My body completely failed me'**

<http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2015/02/01/weight-cutting-issue-brought-to-forefront-at-ufc-183>



**Henry Cejudo was 'scared' after bad weight cut, will now fight at bantamweight**

<http://www.thescore.com/mma/news/574586>

**UFC's the Ultimate Fighter: Video of the 5 Wussiest Moments in TUF History**

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/657596-ufcs-the-ultimate-fighter-video-of-the-5-wussiest-moments-in-tuf-history>

**ONE Championship boss 'disgusted' at Luis Santos' missed weight for Ben Askren fight**

<http://mmajunkie.com/2015/11/one-championship-boss-luis-santos-missing-weight-for-askren-had-staff-completely-disgusted>

**Bellator 137 weigh-in results: Brandon Halsey misses weight, stripped of title**

<http://www.sherdog.com/news/news/Bellator-137-Weighin-Results-Brandon-Halsey-Misses-Weight-Stripped-of-Title-86173>

**Bellator 96 weigh-in results: Two fighters miss marks in Oklahoma**

<http://mmajunkie.com/2013/06/bellator-96-weigh-in-results-five-fighters-miss-their-marks-in-oklahoma>

**Melvin Guillard, Cody Bollinger both miss weight at World Series of Fighting 11 weigh-ins**

<http://www.bloodyelbow.com/2014/7/4/5871753/mma-news-melvin-guillard-cody-bollinger-miss-weight-wsof-11-weigh-ins>

**Five of the Worst Weight Cuts in MMA History**

<http://www.cagepotato.com/five-of-the-worst-weight-cuts-in-mma-history/>



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For Immediate Release

March 24, 2014

## Association of Ringside Physicians Releases Consensus Statement On Weight Management in Professional Combat Sports

The Association of Ringside Physicians (ARP), an international, non-profit organization dedicated to the health and safety of the boxer and mixed martial arts athlete, has released a consensus statement on weight management in professional combat sports as follows:

### Introduction

Unhealthy and sometimes dangerous weight loss practices continue to be a significant problem in amateur and professional combat sports. The ARP recommends that regulatory bodies adopt standardized weigh-in policies in conjunction with year-round weight management and educational programs.

### Discussion

There is a growing body of information in the medical literature that presents unequivocal evidence of the danger of excessive weight loss, rapid weight loss, and repeated cycling of weight gain and loss. Rapid weight loss and dehydration have been proven to negatively affect a number of health-related parameters including: physical performance, cardiovascular function, temperature regulation, hormonal balance, nutritional status, neurologic function, mental performance, and energy utilization. These may cause life-threatening muscle breakdown, shock, heat illness, kidney failure, and electrolyte imbalances, in addition to placing the athlete at increased injury risk. Additionally, the possible relationship between dehydration and predisposition to concussion requires more investigation. Significant dehydration also puts the athlete at risk of improper rehydration techniques — when, in reality, proper re-hydration requires hours to days.

The prevalence of these problems is significant. One recent study found that 39% of MMA fighters were entering competition in a dehydrated state. Many cases of dehydrated athletes using intravenous fluids to re-hydrate after weigh-ins have been reported – considered a doping violation with several international organizations. Heat illness and death in athletes have been previously documented in the sports of wrestling and MMA. Weight management regulations for boxing/MMA competitors are warranted to mitigate improper weight loss techniques contributing to severe dehydration and starvation and their complications.

A number of organizations including the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have adopted rules to minimize unhealthy weight loss in weight-classified sports. The rules emphasize hydration and body composition assessment to identify an individual's proper weight class, and provide a safe, gradual, weekly weight control plan (gain or loss) to achieve same if desired. The new regulations were subsequently investigated for their effectiveness and were reported to be successful by minimizing unhealthy weight loss, excessive weight fluctuations, and competition at weight classes inappropriate for a given athlete. *It is noted that the effectiveness and success of protocols such as same day weigh-ins are directly tied to proper weight management programs.*



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**Recommendations**

The ARP recommends standardized weigh-in policies in conjunction with year-round weight management programs. These would include scheduling weigh-ins twenty four hours or less before the start of competition. Therefore, establishing a lowest allowed fighting weight (weight class) for competitors through body composition and hydration assessment is essential. Combatants should be assessed and certified at their appropriate weight annually. This assessment should be completed by non-biased examiners, in conjunction with licensure, and stored in an international data bank accessible to athletic regulatory bodies. In this light, the ARP will be establishing a medical database to provide this and other resources. Regulatory bodies should also consider adding additional weight classes in certain sports where needed.

Additionally, in order for an athlete to maintain proper weight control and optimal body composition, a continual commitment to proper diet and training is required. Educational programs should be established to inform coaches, athletes, administrators, promoters and sponsors about the adverse consequences of prolonged fasting and dehydration on performance and health. These programs should discourage the use of extreme methods for making weight; i.e., excessive heat methods (such as rubberized suits, steam rooms, hot boxes, saunas), excessive exercise, induced vomiting, laxatives and diuretics. Nutritional programs should also be instituted to emphasize and meet an athlete's individual needs for adequate daily caloric intake from a balanced diet high in healthy carbohydrates, the minimum requirement of fat, and appropriate amounts of protein.

The ARP wishes to thank Alan C. Utter, Ph.D., M.P.H., FACSM, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC for his dedicated assistance in the development of this consensus statement.

For more about the ARP, visit its website at [www.associationofringsidephysicians.org](http://www.associationofringsidephysicians.org).

###

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# CagePotato Stats: The MMA Weigh-In Failure Leaderboard



(The moral of the story? When Gina Carano does it, it's awesome. When Paulo Filho does it, it's terrible. / Photo courtesy of [CombatLifestyle.com](http://CombatLifestyle.com))

Anybody can be forgiven for missing weight by a half-pound — as long as it doesn't become a habit. But when an MMA fighter comes in a full four pounds heavy, as [Efrain Escudero](#) did this week for his doomed [UFC Fight Night 22](#) bout against [Charles Oliveira](#), it tends to raise some eyebrows. As we've done previously with [steroid busts](#), we decided to catalog the worst scale-fails in MMA history, arranged by number of pounds over the limit. When the information was available, we also listed the punishments the fighters were given, along with their excuses for missing weight, which range from injuries to salt water to the dreaded "menstrual period." This is by no means a definitive list — but we'd like it be, eventually. So if you know of any other occasions where fighters missed weight by four pounds or more, or missed weight for multiple fights, please let us know in the comments section.

\* Note: We've eliminated the "Repeat Offenders" section. In the instances where fighters have notably missed weight on more than one occasion (see: A. Johnson, P. Daley, T. Alves), we've ranked them in the leaderboard by their greatest weigh-in failure.

## **Lew Polley @ World Series of Fighting 4**

**Weigh-in date:** 8/9/13

**Weight:** 237 pounds, 32 over the light-heavyweight limit

**WTF??** No idea. We'll let you know when we find out.

**Fight result:** Polley was immediately removed from his scheduled bout against Hans Stringer, and will likely be released from the promotion. Stringer was paid his show-money.

### **Karl Knothe @ Shark Fights 17**

**Weigh-in date:** 7/14/11

**Weight:** 253.75 pounds, 23.75 over the 230-pound catchweight limit

**How is that even possible?** Due to some miscommunication between Knothe and his management, Knothe was never informed that his scheduled bout against Ricco Rodriguez was supposed to be at a catchweight, instead of at heavyweight.

**Fight result:** The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation disallowed Knothe from competing due to the large weight-gap and concerns over [excessive weight-cutting](#). Knothe was paid a portion of his salary anyway, while Ricco Rodriguez instead faced 5-12 replacement Doug Williams. Rodriguez won via rear-naked choke in the first round.

### **Ricardo Mayorga @ Omega MMA: Battle of the Americas**

**Weigh-in date:** 5/2/13

**Weight:** 175.9 pounds, 20.9 pounds over the limit for his contracted lightweight match against Wesley Tiffer, who came in at 153. Needless to say, [shoving ensued](#).

**How was this fight even allowed to happen?:** The match took place in Managua, Nicaragua — which is Mayorga's hometown, by the way — and the Nicaraguan combat sports commission that was overseeing the event didn't seem to have a problem with the ludicrous weight discrepancy. (I hear they're much more stringent when it comes to [cock-fighting](#).)

**Fight result:** [Mayorga by TKO after two rounds](#), aided by a fairly illegal knee to the spine. [Stay classy](#), Ricardo.

**Update:** The result was [overturned to a no-contest](#) the following week due to the illegal blow, and Mayorga was suspended from MMA for three months. Mayorga was last seen smoking an entire pack of cigarettes and giving less than half a fuck.

### **Art Parker @ Legacy FC 29**

**Weigh-in date:** 3/20/14

**Weight:** 204 pounds, 19 pounds over the middleweight limit

**Fight result:** Parker lost to Todhunter by first-round rear-naked choke.

### **Jozette Cotton @ Bellator 129**

**Weigh-in date:** 10/16/14

**Weight:** 167.7 pounds, 15.7 pounds over the original 152-pound catchweight limit

**Fight result:** Cotton defeated Holly Lawson by unanimous decision.

### **Heather Martin @ Freestyle Cage Fighting 46**

**Weigh-in date:** 4/8/11

**Weight:** 178 pounds, 13 over the lightweight limit; Martin got down to 173 after two additional attempts

**Fight result:** Martin's opponent Amanda Lucas actually withdrew from the fight. As she [explained](#), "This is a professional sport, one I take seriously, and in which I dedicate my life to. To fight someone in [Martin's] condition or to fight someone way beyond the contracted weight is bad for both myself, and women's MMA."

### **Thiago Santos @ Bellator 62**

**Weigh-in date:** 3/22/12

**Weight:** 277.8 pounds, 12.8 over the heavyweight limit

**Punishment:** Santos's scheduled match against Eric Prindle was canceled; Prindle was automatically declared the season-five heavyweight tournament winner, and was granted a \$100,000 check and a future shot at champion [Cole Konrad](#). Santos vs. Prindle was supposed to be a rematch of their [no-contest at Bellator 59](#), which ended in the first round when Prindle was unable to continue after a groin-kick.



### **Anthony Johnson @ UFC 76, UFC 104, UFC 142**

**Weigh-in dates:** 9/22/07, 10/23/09, 1/13/12

**Weights:** 177.5, 176 (7.5 and 6 pounds over the welterweight limit, respectively), and 197 (12 pounds over middleweight limit; the most in UFC history)

**Punishment for UFC 142:** Johnson forfeited 20% of his show-money to his opponent, [Vitor Belfort](#). The fight was only allowed to proceed if Johnson weighed no more than 205 pounds during a follow-up weigh-in on fight day.

**Fight result:** Belfort by first-round rear-naked choke; Johnson was [immediately fired after the loss](#).

**Remorse-free explanation:** "I'm already laughing at what ppl are saying. Yeah it was for medical reason and I did what the UFC Dr Told me to do. Believe it or don't I give a fuck cuz the ppl close to me were freaking out but I'm still alive and something like this has never happen before. [Ed. note: It's happened twice before.] Say what you want I'm still gonna do my thang. You try not having feeling in your legs and can't move then and see how you look at life after that."

**Punishment for UFC 104:** Johnson forfeited 20% of his purse, 10% of which went to his opponent, [Yoshiyuki Yoshida](#).

**Fight result:** Johnson by 41-second TKO

**Excuse:** Rumble said he started [cutting down from 220 pounds, a mind-blowing 50 pounds over the welterweight limit](#). "That's the heaviest I've ever been in my life," Johnson said. "But I got an injury when I was getting ready for [Matt Brown](#), I hurt my knee again. When you get injured, you don't do much. You sit around and eat and get fat. That's exactly what I did. Usually I start at 210. That ten pound difference made a big impact. You know what I mean? It kicked my butt, but I was prepared for it. I was prepared to just grind it out and get down to 171. And I was in the sauna for an hour and I lost three or four pounds right off the bat. I knew it was coming off. That's why I said that if I had another hour or two, I would have been able to make it. I got out of the sauna, and I think I was out too long because my sweating stopped, and when I got back in the sauna I couldn't get anything else off. That's what broke me."

**And the streak continues...:** After being released by the UFC, Johnson was booked for a middleweight bout against Dave Branch at Titan Fighting 22, but the fight had to be [changed to a 195-pound catchweight at the last minute](#) when Johnson once again had trouble making his contracted limit. Johnson officially weighed in at 194.2 for the fight, and won by unanimous decision. He's now considering a [move up to light-heavyweight](#).

### **Anthony Morrison @ Bellator 44**

**Weigh-in date:** 5/13/11

**Weight:** 146.5 pounds, 11.5 over the featherweight limit

**Fight result:** Morrison's bantamweight match against Bryan Goldsby was [immediately canceled](#). New Jersey only allows a fighter to lose another 2.5 percent of their body weight after a failed weigh-in, so Morrison wasn't given the chance to try again — not that it would have mattered.

### **Jerron Peoples @ Strikeforce: Melendez vs. Masvidal**

**Weigh-in date:** 12/16/11

**Weight:** 180.5 pounds, 10.5 over the welterweight limit. Peoples had agreed to a 179-pound catchweight shortly before weigh-ins, but couldn't even make that. The fight officially went down at a catchweight of 181.

**Punishment:** Peoples forfeited 20% of his purse to his opponent, Roger Bowling.

**Fight result:** Bowling by 42-second knockout.

### **Ricco Rodriguez @ Israel FC: Genesis**

**Weigh-in date:** 11/8/10

**Weight:** 215 pounds, 10 over the light-heavyweight limit. It was supposed to be Rodriguez's first fight at 205 pounds.

**Punishment:** Rodriguez forfeited 20% of his purse to his opponent, Daniel Tabera.

**Fight Result:** Rodriguez by unanimous decision

**Excuse:** “Ricco had a very tough time making weight because of the old injury that came back two days ago,” said his manager Tiago Okamura. “He trained really hard. He also had a staph infection one month ago, so it’s not so easy to cut so much weight after a long recovery process.”

**Epilogue:** Rodriguez’s next fight was a 215-pound catchweight bout against [James McSweeney](#) at BAMMA 5. [Rodriguez missed weight again](#), coming in at 217. He went on to defeat McSweeney by unanimous decision.

#### **Ryan Diaz @ ONE FC: Rise to Power**

**Weigh in date:** 5/30/13

**Weight:** 144.8, 9.8 over the bantamweight limit

**Punishment:** Diaz forfeited an undisclosed percentage of his purse to opponent Yusup Saadulaev.

**Fight result:** Diaz lost by second-round submission.

#### **Nick Diaz @ EliteXC: Return of the King**

**Weigh-in date:** 6/13/08

**Weight:** 169.5 pounds, 9.5 over the 160-pound limit

**Punishment:** Diaz forfeited a portion of his fight purse to his opponent, Muhsin Corbbrey.

**Fight result:** Diaz by third-round TKO

**Excuse:** After arriving in Hawaii, [Diaz said](#) he “went in the salt water and absorbed a lot of sodium or something.” In [Cesar Gracie’s version of the tale](#), Diaz got sick after accidentally ingesting the water. Nick reached out to Corbbrey when the weight-cut was looking grim, and made a deal to hold the bout at a catchweight.

#### **Dale Hartt @ Ringside 7: No Escape**

**Weigh-in date:** 6/17/10

**Weight:** 163.4 pounds, 8.4 over the lightweight limit

**Fight result:** Hartt lost to Guillaume DeLorenzi by second-round TKO (shoulder injury)

#### **Kelly Warren @ Fight Tour: Sylvia vs. Adams**

**Weigh-in date:** 8/19/11

**Weight:** 123.2 pounds, 8.2 over the strawweight limit

**Fight Result:** Warren’s 115-pound meeting with Felice Herrig was canceled after she couldn’t make it down to a 120-pound catchweight. Herrig was understandably [pissed about it](#).

**Card subject to change:** Of the six scheduled fights on the Fight Tour main card, two were canceled at the last minute, while the main event fighters (Tim Sylvia and Shayne Adams) were forced to fight different opponents because their bout [wasn’t sanctioned by the local athletic commission](#).

#### **DaMarques Johnson @ UFC on FUEL 5: Struve vs. Miocic**

**Weigh-in date:** 9/28/12

**Weight:** 183 pounds, 8 over the 175-pound catchweight limit

**Punishment:** Johnson forfeited 20% of his purse to his opponent, Gunnar Nelson

**Fight result:** Johnson lost via first-round submission (rear-naked-choke)

#### **Livia Von Plettenberg @ Invicta FC 6**

**Weigh-in date:** 7/12/13

**Weight:** 113 pounds, 8 over the 105-pound atomweight limit

**Result:** Unable to drop seven pounds on short notice, Von Plettenberg’s scheduled bout against Cassie Robb was removed from the lineup.



### **Zak Cummings @ TUF China Finale**

**Weigh-in date:** 2/28/14

**Weight:** 178 pounds, 8 over the welterweight limit

**Result:** The fight was canceled immediately, and Cummings's opponent Alberto Mina was paid his show and win money.

**Excuse:** Cummings's full explanation is [too long to print here](#), but basically, he was walking around at 217 pounds when he accepted the fight against Mina due to numerous setbacks, including the death of his father and a recent injury. Nevertheless, Cummings did his best to cut down to 171 pounds, and he says he got down as low as 176 by the day of weigh-ins. Then, his body shut down: "While in my room getting stuff together for weigh ins my body started cringing with pain and losing my vision and on the verge of passing out with every movement...I was the 1st fighter to see the doctors for medicals and the doctors saw how bad I was and became very concerned. They knew they had to figure something out quick and could not wait till the official weigh in because my body needed fluids so badly to function...In all honesty even if [Mina] accepted the catch weight I don't think the physicians were going to medically release me...I've had some very hard cuts before which left me in pain but never have I been legitimately concerned about [losing my] life. Hindsight I should have never taken the fight and attempted this craziness...I messed up and will regret it forever."

### **Marcos Marquez @ Bellator 129**

**Weigh-in date:** 10/16/14

**Weight:** 177.4 pounds, 7.4 pounds over the welterweight limit

**Fight result:** Marquez suffered a unanimous decision defeat to Victor Moreno.

### **Brian Cobb @ Sengoku 15**

**Weigh-in date:** 10/29/10

**Weight:** 73.3 kg (161.6 pounds), 3.3 kg (7.3 pounds) over the 70kg limit

**Fight result:** Cobb defeated Kazunori Yokota by split decision.

### **Goiti Yamauchi @ Bellator 109**

**Weigh-in date:** 11/21/13

**Weight:** 152.3 pounds, 7.3 over the featherweight limit

**Fight result:** Yamauchi knocked out opponent Saul Almeida in round 1.

### **Junie Browning @ MMA Fight Pit: Genesis**

**Weigh-in date:** 8/12/11

**Weight:** 162.25, 7.25 pounds over the lightweight limit; Browning's opponent Jacob Clark also came in three pounds heavy for their bout.

**Punishment:** MMA Fight Pit fined both fighters an undisclosed sum of money per pound over the 155-pound weight limit.

**Fight result:** Browning tapped out due to strikes in the first round.

### **Cristiane "Cris Cyborg" Santos @ Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Diaz**

**Weigh-in date:** 4/10/09

**Weight:** 152 pounds, 7 over the featherweight limit

**Punishment:** Santos forfeited 20% of her purse, 10% of which went to her opponent, Hitomi Akano

**Fight result:** Cyborg via third-round TKO

**Excuse:** "I used the same diet that I used to fight [[Shayna Baszler](#)] and I made 140lbs, much less than this time. But I had a little problem that all women suffer every month. I had the menstrual period three days before the weigh-in and it put me in trouble."

**Rory Markham @ UFC 111**

**Weigh-in date:** 3/26/10

**Weight:** 177 pounds, 7 over the welterweight limit

**Punishment:** \$1,000 (12.5% of Markham's show-money) was forfeited to his opponent, [Nate Diaz](#)

**Fight result:** Diaz by first-round TKO

**Excuse:** Markham's trainer, [Pat Miletich](#), told [MMAjunkie](#) that the fighter's weight-cutting process simply went "haywire."

**Jake O'Brien @ DREAM.15**

**Weigh-in date:** 6/9/10

**Weight:** 212 pounds, 7 over the light-heavyweight limit

**Punishment:** 10% pay deduction, yellow card at start of fight

**Fight result:** O'Brien lost to [Gegard Mousasi](#) by guillotine choke in 31 seconds.

**James Irvin @ KSW 15**

**Weigh-in date:** 3/18/11

**Weight:** 192 pounds, 7 over the middleweight limit. Irvin originally weighed in at 197, but managed to drop an additional five pounds after four hours in the sauna. Irvin's fight against Mamed Khalidov still went forward as a middleweight title fight.

**Fight result:** Khalidov via armbar in 33 seconds. Who knows why Irvin accepted [another fight at middleweight](#) in the first place.

**Diego Brandao @ UFC 168**

**Weigh-in date:** 12/27/13

**Weight:** 151.5 pounds, 6.5 over the featherweight limit. Brandao initially weighed in at 153 — damn near lightweight! — but cut an additional 1.5 pounds before his final attempt.

**Punishment:** Brandao was fined 25% of his fight purse.

**Excuse:** Nothing yet, although he did release a tweet [apologizing and saying that "haters never going to understand me."](#)

**Fight result:** Brandao lost to Dustin Poirier by first-round TKO.

**Antonio McKee @ MFC 32**

**Weigh-in date:** 1/26/12

**Weight:** 162, 7 pounds over the lightweight limit

**Punishment:** McKee was stripped of his lightweight title and released from the promotion — although his scheduled belt defense against Brian Cobb was allowed to take place as a non-title fight. "Mandingo" was also fined 20% of his purse.

**Fight result:** McKee won via unanimous decision.

**Excuse:** "[Mark Pavelich] knew I wasn't going to make weight before the fight because I told him I wasn't going to make weight. I was sick. I had f—ing kidney issues. My stomach was messed up. They already knew that. I called Brian Cobb and told him that I wasn't going to make weight and that he wouldn't be fighting for the title. The surprise to me was that Brian Cobb didn't make weight. He stepped on the scale first, and he was a half-pound over. I stepped on the scale and weighed 159.8 pounds [before the weigh-in]. I started rehydrating, because my organs were starting to give me issues, and I weighed in at 162...The problem is that Mark Pavelich doesn't have anyone who can beat me, and it costs him a lot of money to bring in guys to fight me. That's the real reason why I'm not in the MFC, because he can't afford me anymore. I still came [to fight] as a warrior and champion and gave them one of the best fights I've ever had in the MFC. At the end of the day, it's about my health and well-being. Mark Pavelich could give a s—t if I die, or my kidneys shut down, or I need a new liver. He could give less than a rat's ass."

**Epilogue:** [Brian Cobb was fired, too.](#)

**Paul Daley @ MFC 19, MFC 20, UFC 108, Shark Fights 13, BAMMA 5, BAMMA 7**

**Weigh-in dates:** 12/4/08, 2/19/09, 1/1/10, 9/10/10, 2/25/11, 9/09/11

**Weights:** 174, 171.5, 172, 171.75, 170.4, 176

**Punishments:** Daley forfeited 25% of his purse for the MFC fights, 10% of his purse for the UFC and Shark Fights bouts, and an undisclosed percentage of his purse for the BAMMA fights.

**Fight results:** Daley def. [John Alessio](#) via second-round TKO, [Nick Thompson](#) def. Daley via unanimous decision, Daley def. [Dustin Hazelett](#) via first-round KO, Daley def. [Jorge Masvidal](#) via unanimous decision, Daley def. Yuya Shirai via first-round KO, Daley def. Jordan Radev via unanimous decision

**Excuse for Masvidal fight:** "We came in a bit later than we normally come in, like we arrived here Wednesday, so it only really gave us like one real good day of weight-cutting. I don't want to create too many excuses, but we didn't get the official scales to check our weight on until the day of the weigh-in as well, which sucks a little bit, and my scales were two pounds off from the official scales. So there were some problems, but again, I don't want to make too many excuses."

**Excuse for BAMMA fights:** The sauna is off/unavailable/inoperable/unbearably hot and humid.

**Nick Pace @ UFC 139**

**Weigh-in date:** 11/18/11

**Weight:** 141, 6 over the bantamweight limit

**Punishment:** Pace forfeited 20% of his purse to his opponent, [Miguel Torres](#).

**Fight result:** Pace lost to Torres by unanimous decision.

**Quinton Jackson @ UFC 144**

**Weigh-in date:** 2/25/11

**Weight:** 211 pounds, 6 over the light-heavyweight limit

**Punishment:** Jackson forfeited 20% of his purse to his opponent, [Ryan Bader](#).

**Fight result:** Jackson lost to Bader by unanimous decision.

**Excuse:** "I almost didn't make it to the fight, but I didn't want to pull out for the Japanese fans. I injured my knee pretty bad, and my doctor told me not to fight. But it wasn't real serious. I didn't need surgery or nothing, but he told me it wasn't a good idea to fight. I decided to fight anyway...I was worried about it, and I had to lose a lot of weight since I couldn't really run and stuff. It was downhill from there."

**Tim Sylvia @ ONE FC: Rise to Power**

**Weigh in date:** 5/30/13

**Weight:** 271 pounds, 6 over the heavyweight limit

**Punishment:** Sylvia forfeited an undisclosed percentage of his purse to opponent Tony Johnson.

**Fight result:** Sylvia lost by third-round TKO due to doctor's stoppage.

**Nah-Shon Burrell @ UFC 157**

**Weigh-in date:** 2/22/13

**Weight:** 175.8 pounds, 5.8 over the welterweight limit

**Punishment:** Burrell forfeited a portion of his fight purse to his opponent, Yuri Villefort

**Fight result:** Burrell won by unanimous decision

**Nate Diaz @ UFC on FOX 13**

**Weigh-in date:** 12/12/14

**Weight:** 160.4 pounds, 5.4 over the lightweight limit

**Punishment:** Diaz forfeited 20% of his purse to opponent Rafael Dos Anjos

**Fight result:** TBA

### Jason Guida @ Bellator 29

**Weigh-in date:** 9/15/10

**Weight:** 215 pounds, 5 over the 210-pound catchweight limit

**Fight result:** Guida lost to Justin Lemke by split decision

**Remember when?:** Clay's a-hole big brother was going to be a contestant on [TUF 8](#), but [blew the weigh-ins by two pounds](#) after an agonizing cutting session. In the process, he exposed his balls on national television, and promised that "Dr." Keith Kizer would "never be forgiven."

### Tim Means @ UFC on FOX 8

**Weigh-in date:** 7/26/13

**Weight:** 160 pounds, 5 over the lightweight limit

**Punishment:** Means forfeited 20% of his fight purse to his opponent, Danny Castillo.

**Fight result:** Castillo by unanimous decision

**The sauna is not your friend, bro:** In December 2012, Means had to withdraw from UFC on FOX 5 at the last minute after [slipping in the sauna during his weight cut and knocking himself out](#).

### Ronny Markes @ UFC Fight Night 38

**Weigh-in date:** 3/22/14

**Weight:** 190 pounds, 5 over the middleweight limit

**Punishment:** Markes forfeited 20% of his purse to his opponent, Thiago Santos.

**Fight result:** Markes was TKO'd by Santos in just 53 seconds.

### Charles Oliveira @ UFC Fight Night 50

**Weigh-in date:** 9/4/14

**Weight:** 150 pounds, 5 over the featherweight limit

**Excuse:** "I was sick for the past weeks in Brazil, and I was pretty bad when I got to the United States," [Oliveira told MMAFighting.com](#) after the weigh-ins. "I couldn't cut weight, and I'm not feeling well to cut weight, so that's why I missed weight. I had high fever, headache. I think it was a viral infection. But I was the one who asked for this fight, so I couldn't withdraw."

**Fight result:** The fight didn't happen. Oliveira was [pulled from the match the next morning due to illness](#).

**Close, but no cigar:** Oliveira also [missed weight](#) for his UFC 152 fight against Cub Swanson (coming in at 146.4 pounds) and for his TUF 20 Finale fight against Jeremy Stephens (coming in at 146.5).

### Gina Carano @ EliteXC: Primetime

**Weigh-in date:** 5/30/08

**Weight:** 144.5 pounds, 4.5 over the 140-pound limit

**Punishment:** Carano forfeited 12.5% of her fight purse to her opponent, Kaitlin Young

**Fight result:** Carano by doctor's stoppage TKO after two rounds

**Excuse:** "I get a lot of flack from people who are like 'oh she's not serious about fighting' and that's not it at all...I'm not just a fighter...I'm a bunch of things, I have a lot of interests...I'm really looking forward to after this fight just sticking to a routine and a program. I'm just getting a handle on it, I think that's why I've slipped up in certain areas, missing weight, I've been all over the place, cause I didn't have any stability or anything."

**Not the first time, not the last time:** Carano struggled with weight cuts on multiple occasions earlier in her career. Four months after beating Young, she faced Kelly Kobold at EliteXC Heat; in one of the most notorious weigh-ins in MMA history, Carano came in at 142.75 on her first attempt, and had to [weigh in naked](#) to make 141.

**Dustin Kimura @ UFC 156**

Weigh-in date: 2/1/13

**Weight:** 139.5, 4.5 over the bantamweight limit

**Punishment:** Kimura forfeited 20% of his purse to opponent Chico Camus.

**Fight result:** Kimura def. Camus via third-round rear-naked choke.

**Chris Lane @ Bellator 129**

**Weigh-in date:** 10/16/14

**Weight:** 139.5 pounds, 4.5 pounds over the bantamweight limit

**Fight result:** Lane suffered a first-round triangle choke submission loss to John DeVall.

**Thiago Alves @ UFC 85, UFC 117**

**Weigh-in dates:** 6/6/08, 8/6/10

**Weights:** 174, 171.5

**Punishment:** Alves forfeited an unspecified amount of his purse to [Matt Hughes](#) at UFC 85, and 20% of his purse to [Jon Fitch](#) at UFC 117; [earlier in his UFC career](#), he was slapped with a nine-month suspension for the use of banned diuretics.

**Fight result:** Alves def. Hughes via second-round TKO, Alves lost to Fitch by unanimous decision

**Excuse for the Hughes fight:** "(Ten days before the fight) I was sparring, and the floor was really slippery, and I rolled my ankle back,. My doctor thought I wasn't going to be able to fight...I wasn't able to do anything for three days. I am a really heavy guy. I walk around at 195-200 (pounds), so if I don't keep my diet and work out really hard...even the last week before the fight, I (have to) train really hard to (try) to keep my weight low...With the cortisone shot, it holds more water in my body. My body wasn't sweating. It's the worst feeling. I would stay 15 minutes, 20 minutes in the sauna, and my body just wouldn't sweat anymore. I even passed out twice in the sauna...My coach had to carry me out."

**Paulo Filho @ WEC 36**

**Weigh-in date:** 11/4/08

**Weight:** 192.5 pounds on first attempt, 189 after two additional hours; 4 over the middleweight limit

**Punishment:** Filho forfeited 25% of his fight purse to his opponent, [Chael Sonnen](#); the scheduled title defense was downgraded to a three-round non-title bout

**Fight result:** Sonnen by unanimous decision

**Epilogue:** The following week, Ed Soares shipped Filho's WEC middleweight belt to [Matt Lindland](#), to give to Sonnen. Filho nearly missed weight again for his [Impact FC fight against Denis Kang in July 2010](#). He was two pounds over on his first attempt, but was able to shed an extra pound in an hour; he weighed in completely naked, "[with absolutely no regard for the audience](#)."

**Efrain Escudero @ UFC Fight Night 22**

**Weigh-in date:** 9/14/10

**Weight:** 159 pounds, 4 over the lightweight limit

**Punishment:** 20% of Escudero's show-money was forfeited to his opponent, Charles Oliveira

**Fight result:** Oliveira by third-round submission

**Excuse:** "I tried everything but I hit a wall. This morning I weighed in at 161 and then we had 2 hours to make weight and we went to the gym, jumped on the treadmill put everything on like I usually do. We just ran and then I went into the Sauna, like I normally do, relaxed in there periodically all through my workout and after that I checked my weight and I was at 159. I was like whoa, what the hell and so I went back in there and pushed my body but I was just too dehydrated. I couldn't go any lower. I tried, I tried I tried and nothing. At one point I felt good I was just like, Im going to get this shit out of the way, do what I got to do and continue cutting and make weight for the fight. So I put on all my stuff, went for a jog, but I was just too dehydrated, I

started feeling dizzy so I was like, 'you know what, I want to be able to perform in the fight, I want to give the fans what they want to see so I'll take this pay cut to give the fans what they want to see...[The UFC knows] I come from a wrestling background and making weight is a priority but we got to put that aside now and move on forward. I want to apologize to Lorenzo and Frank Fertitta, Dana White and the rest of the organization for not making weight."

### **Tyson Griffin @ UFC 137**

**Weigh-in Date:** 10/28/11

**Weight:** 149 pounds, 4 over the featherweight limit

**Punishment:** Griffin forfeited 25% of his purse to opponent Bart Palaszewski.

**Fight result:** Griffin lost to Palaszewski by [first-round knockout](#).

### **John Lineker @ UFC 163**

**Weigh-in Date:** 8/2/13

**Weight:** 129 pounds, 4 over the flyweight limit

**Punishment:** Lineker forfeited 20% of his purse to opponent Jose Maria Tome.

**Fight result:** Lineker won by second-round TKO.

**A history of heaviness:** Lineker came in [two pounds heavy](#) before his UFC on Fox 3 submission loss to Louis Gaudinot, and [three pounds heavy](#) before his UFC Fight Night 30 TKO win over Phil Harris. He was fined 20% of his purse for each incident.

Record of the fighters listed above, for the fights where they missed weight:

18-23. Just like [steroid use](#), coming in overweight hasn't proven to be a competitive advantage, because it often suggests that there were difficulties in a fighter's training camp. Except for Paul Daley, who's clearly at his best when he comes in heavy.

### **Honorable mentions:**

- **Travis Lutter**, who [missed weight by 1.5 pounds](#) for his [UFC 67](#) title fight against [Anderson Silva](#). Following his loss, he was fed to [Rich Franklin](#) then fired.

- **Tim Sylvia**, who [crushed the scales at 310.6 pounds](#) for his Adrenaline MMA III fight against Ray Mercer, which was apparently an open-weight bout. Mercer weighed in at 256.6, and [knocked Sylvia out in nine seconds](#).

<http://www.cagepotato.com/cagepotato-stats-mma-weigh-failure-leaderboard/>

# Mike Rhodes recounts ridiculous 36-pound weight cut for recent UFC debut

By Mike Bohn June 25, 2014 7:15 pm

Although drastic weight cuts are anything but uncommon in MMA, UFC welterweight Mike Rhodes may have taken things to a whole new level for his octagon debut in January.

Rhodes accepted a short-notice bout against George Sullivan at UFC on FOX 10 and had just 11 days to tip the scale at the 171-pound welterweight limit. Even though he initially tipped the scale at more 200 pounds when he agreed to the contest, Rhodes did everything possible to make the cut and was ultimately successful.

But it came at a cost.

"I cut 36 pounds in 11 days," Rhodes, who returns Saturday at UFC Fight Night 43, told MMAjunkie. "It was very mentally draining. I had to pretend to everyone that I was OK. I was trying to tell myself that I was OK by telling other people that. I was trying to make myself believe it, but it's something I hope I never have to do again, but you can't say no to the UFC."

Despite some pre-fight buzz, Rhodes ultimately suffered a decision loss and looked underwhelming in the process. With the knowledge of his hellacious weight cut now public, it's more understandable why Rhodes didn't look his best. Still, though, the idea of turning down the fight was not an option, he said, and he'd do it again.

"You have to do certain things to get where you want to get in life, and that was something I had to do," Rhodes said. "It tested my mental capacity – my mental toughness – and I overcame it. "My fight that night was with the scale, and when I made weight, that kind of hit me on fight night. I was excited, but my body didn't react well to cutting that much weight. On fight night I looked like how I felt, which was horrible. I just hope I never have to cut that much weight again ever."

Rhodes hesitated to reveal the methods used to drop such a substantial amount of weight in the 11-day timeframe, but he's not hesitant to label the experience as one of the most trying of his life.

The 24-year-old went through something similar when he was fought under the RFA banner; however, the weight cut was not quite as extreme. He lost that fight as well, though, which has taught him short-notice bookings may not be the best choice for his career.

"I don't like to make excuses or anything like that, but my two losses are short-notice fights," Rhodes said. "I took a fight against Brandon Thatch, who is on a tear in the UFC, on eight days' notice, and I cut 23 pounds for that. I had to fly to his home state of ... Colorado and had to fight at elevation while cutting that much weight.

"It seems like short-notice fights with big weight cuts aren't good to me. I could be one of those guys with a padded record, but those are the fights that have done the most for me even in the loss."

While Rhodes fell flat in his UFC debut, he's determined to show his full potential in his sophomore effort. The Duke Roufus-trained fighter is a teammate of UFC lightweight champion Anthony Pettis and said if spectators like the offensive-minded style of "Showtime," they're going to enjoy what they see at UFC Fight Night 43.

"Fans should expect a very aggressive fighter," Rhodes said. "My style is usually to let my



opponent fall on his own sword, but they can expect my movement to be very aggressive. I don't get tired in fights. Cardio is a big part of my fight game and my strategy. Expect me to apply pressure and be very dynamic, powerful and technical with my striking. I can get in there and get dirty as well, so expect a complete fighter from every aspect of MMA. I'm going to put it together, and I'm going to put on a show."

While Rhodes won't be spending the final days before the fight cutting an absurd amount of weight, he will spend a considerable amount of time on a plane. UFC Fight Night 43 takes place at Vector Arena in Auckland, New Zealand, and marks the first time Rhodes has ever fought outside the U.S. The entire event streams on UFC Fight Pass with Rhodes (6-2 MMA, 0-1 UFC) scheduled to meet "The Ultimate Fighter: Smashes" winner Robert Whittaker (11-4 MMA, 2-2 UFC) in the main-card opener.

Traveling to another continent and another time zone forces its own series of challenges, but after pushing his body to its limit for his UFC debut, Rhodes is confident he can handle any situation put in front of him.

"Everything's a new test, every obstacle is something that you've got to try to overcome," he said. "I try to explain that to people that the fight is the fun part. All this stuff we have to go through to that point is actually the most difficult part. Cutting weight while having to travel so far, flying and trying to get my body used to the time. It's just a part of the game.

"I'm going over there with all these things I have to conquer and also him as an opponent. It would be a huge feat for me in what I'm calling my actual first fight in the UFC where I've got time to prepare. I've never lost a fight in my fight career where I've got to prepare for an opponent. So I'm going to make sure I keep that streak alive."

<http://mmajunkie.com/2014/06/mike-rhodes-recounts-ridiculous-36-pound-weight-cut-for-recent-ufc-debut>

# A brief history of weight cutting failures

by Viktor Yakovlev

*UGer Viktor Yakovlev is an avid MMA fan and aspiring writer out of Ontario, Canada. He is concerned about the culture of Extreme Weight Cutting in MMA and instead of just being bummed out, he put together this brief history of Extreme Weight Cutting failures.*

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Today, Anthony Johnson is one of the UFC's top light heavy weight contenders, most recently wrecking Alexander Gustafson, and Jimi Manuwa, only to lose to Daniel 'DC' Cormier. Anthony Johnson has looked huge for 205 pounds in his recent bouts. It's hard to believe that at one point that same fighter was cutting down (with mixed results) to the 170 pound welterweight division.

Fighters cut weight to gain a size advantage over their opponent because size matters in fighting. The bigger you are, the harder you hit, and the more energy your opponent expends trying to control you. We've all seen an MMA bout with two fighters who look so completely different that fans are left wondering how the two fighters can even be in the same weight class.

There are a number of different techniques fighters use to cut weight, most of which include dehydration of the body. While every fighter has unique routine that works for them, common ones include increased water intake followed by decreased, epsom salt baths, towel wraps, Albolene, and as highlighted in the UFC embedded videos, cardio workouts with the use of sauna suits. Weight cutting is one of the most grueling aspects of MMA.

A proper weight cut requires dedication and more importantly discipline. While there is a culture of extreme weight cutting in MMA, there are numerous health risks associated with it. These risks can range from the less serious such as elevated heart rates, poor performance, and increased blood pressure, all the way to the scary and life-threatening such as DC's well documented case of Acute Renal Failure during the 2008 Olympics, and the death of Leandro Souza's back in 2013 (Although there is debate on whether or not the cut was the sole cause of the mortality).

Serious dehydration can have adverse affects including potentially serious neurological repercussions. The fluids that surround the brain that are diminished by dehydration, and can lead to increased vulnerability to concussion, ending the fight, and potentially ending your self as you know it.

While large weight cuts are common in combat sports there are countless examples of cuts failing, leading to a loss of huge opportunities for fighters. Here are the top 5 recent fights canceled due to poor weight cutting regiments:

## 5. Andrew Todhunter vs Albert Tumenov - UFC 188

Todhunter, an undefeated prospect with a record of 7-0, was scheduled to make his UFC welterweight debut against Albert Tumenov at UFC 188. Todhunter who has all of his 7 wins coming from a finish had MMA fans excited to see the 27-year-old former US sniper make his UFC premier. He took the fight on two-weeks notice after Hector Urbina withdrew from the bout due to injury. Incredibly, Todhunter had competed as a boxer just a month prior to UFC 188 at 200 pounds. During interviews, Todhunter said he wasn't concerned about the tough cut, citing a prior fight where he cut 38 pounds in just four days only to finish his opponent in the first round. Prior to his debut Todhunter passed out trying to make the 171lb cutoff and UFC officials took note, alerted doctors who then administered an IV and deemed him unfit to compete.

#### **4. TJ Waldburger vs Wendell Oliveira – UFC Fight Night 61**

TJ Waldburger had eight fights in the Octagon and illustrated that the risks associated with unsafe weight cutting regimens do not discriminate against veterans, as he was forced out of his fight at UFC 183. Waldburger was scheduled to fight Wendell Oliveira and was pulled out after passing in an elevator and hitting his head against a mirror.

#### **3. Diego Brandao vs Jimmy Hettles – UFC 183**

At UFC 183, a preliminary fight between Brandao vs Hettles had to be rebooked last second as Hettles fainted backstage just prior to the fight. Dana White explained that even though the doctors cleared Hettles to fight after fainting, the commission took a vote and decided that they were not going to let him compete. It's good to see the commission putting the fighters health first.

#### **2. Johnny Hendricks vs Tyron Woodley – UFC 192**

This past weekend, one of the most highly anticipated fights on the card was a #1 title contender bout between former welterweight champ Johnny Hendricks and his college wrestling rival Tyron Woodley. A day before the fight, Hendricks' management informed the media that Johnny was bowing out of the fight due to intestinal blockage and a kidney stone, which landed the former champ in the emergency room. Hendricks has struggled in the past with his weight. He cited his poor weight management as the cause of him "fading out" during the championship rounds of his bout against Robbie Lawler back at UFC 181. Hendricks' coach told the media that he came into his camp at about 210-215 pounds leaving him to cut an egregious amount of weight.

#### **1. Renan Barao vs TJ Dillashaw 2 – UFC 177**

One of the most highly anticipated rematches in UFC bantamweight history was a bout between former champion Renan Barao and newly crowned TJ Dillashaw. MMA fans were excited to see if Dillashaw's incredible UFC 173 performance was a fluke, and unfortunately the fight was scrapped last second as Barao felt dizzy stepping out of the tub, passed out, and hit his head against a wall, just one day before the rematch.

These examples show that the UFC is committed to the health of their fighters but more importantly they illustrate the risks and dangers of this ever pervasive problem in combat sports. Fighters will always be looking for ways to gain an advantage over the competition and cutting weight is one of the most common. Some experts believe that same-day weigh ins could counter this issue however fighters will then continue the dehydration up until right before the fight and as previously mentioned removing fluid from the brain makes it far more susceptible to damage.

There is no easy answer here, however it's clear that there needs to be some sort of change.

<http://www.mixedmartialarts.com/news/454523/A-brief-history-of-weight-cutting-failures/>

# Thiago Santos apologizes for weight-cutting failure

By John Morgan and Christian Stein, MMAjunkie.com

[Bellator Fighting Championships](#) heavyweight Thiago Santos (10-1 mixed martial arts, 2-0 Bellator) says he is a changed man.

After making the trip from the [U.S.](#) back to his native Brazil, Santos has reflected on last week's [Bellator 62](#) weight gaffe and now takes full responsibility.

While Santos' camp initially criticized [Bellator brass](#), the fighter and his team now admit not making weight is nobody's fault but their own. While the mistake cost Santos a chance to fight for Bellator's heavyweight belt, he's positive it will never happen again.

"First, I'd like to apologize to the entire Bellator team, to my fans and to MTV2," Santos told [MMAjunkie.com](#) in his native Portuguese. "I take responsibility for my error and promise that starting today, all will see a new Thiago 'Big Monster.'"

"I thought I could cut weight two weeks in a row. I didn't manage to do it. I tried everything but couldn't lose a single gram."

Santos earned his way into Bellator's season-five tournament final with impressive submission wins over [Neil Grove](#) and Josh Burns. He then faced [Eric Prindle](#) in the finals of the tourney only to see the fight end in a no-contest after kicking his opponent in the groin. The controversial ending set up a rematch at [Bellator 61](#), but that fight was delayed one week when Prindle was stricken with flu-like symptoms.

Santos then failed to make weight for the rescheduled rematch at this past Friday night's Bellator 62 event, he was pulled from the fight, and his opponent was awarded a season-five tournament victory.

Santos' manager, Josef Borges, initially put some of the blame on the promotion, claiming that the need to cut weight in two-consecutive weeks made it impossible for his client. However, now that he's had a chance to reflect, Borges is also changing his tune.

"I would like to publicly request Bellator's forgiveness," Borges said. "I was emotionally stunned by all that took place. Thiago arrived from his trip home and spoke to me. He helped me see that the blame for what happened is ours only."

"Bellator has always treated Thiago well, and Thiago had every chance to become the champion. As such, I withdraw my previous statements and apologize to Bellator. I admit our error, and we'll make changes to make sure it does not happen again."

Santos currently walks around at more than 300 pounds and cuts to the heavyweight limit of 265. However, after this incident, he's going to trim down in an effort to avoid future issues. He also promises to make Bellator proud of their decision not to release him from his contract.

"Starting now, I'll follow the advice of my manager Josef Borges and my teacher Cezar 'Casquinha' Guimaraes, and I'll remain at 118 kilograms (260 pounds) for my next bouts," Santos said. "I wish to thank Sam Caplan, who took good care of me and gave me his full support. Thank you, Sam."

"I wish to put an end to all controversy. I admit my guilt and exempt Bellator. I received good advice from my team, but I did not listen, so I wish to publicly admit my error, and I ask for the forgiveness of the fans and others I've disappointed. I promise to do things differently going forward."

"I owe a debt to Bellator and plan to pay it with exciting fights. I hope they call me to fight soon because I'll be very motivated."

<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/mma/story/2012-03-29/Thiago-Santos-apologizes-for-weight-cutting-failure/53867346/1>

# Frankie Gomez's promise questioned again after failure to make weight

Francisco Salazar

May 8, 2015

Frankie Gomez was hoping a new lease on his pro career would have been a win over an experienced foe such as Humberto Soto. Unfortunately for him, Soto, and boxing fans, that fight will not be taking place.

The Soto-Gomez fight was cancelled after Gomez weighed in 147.5 pounds, six and a half pounds more than the contracted weight, Golden Boy Promotions matchmaker Eric Gomez told RingTV.com after Friday's weigh-in.

Frankie Gomez reportedly told Golden Boy representatives earlier in the week that he was not going to be able to make the contracted limit of 141 pounds. A meeting took place the night before the weigh-in to discuss what agreement could be reached between handlers of Gomez, Soto, along with Golden Boy Promotions.

"We started having meetings last night (Thursday)," Gomez told RingTV after the weigh-in. Gomez is the Vice President and matchmaker for Golden Boy Promotions. "We told them (Soto's handlers) that he (Frankie Gomez) was heavy. We told them he was not going to be anywhere near the (contracted) weight. If they were willing to go forward, we started discussing some of the details in order to make the fight happen. Soto's a warrior. He still wanted to fight him, but under certain parameters."

After Gomez weighed 147.5 pounds, he was given the ultimatum of dropping two and a half pounds or the fight would be postponed. Rather than attempt to lose the weight, Golden Boy and HBO decided to pull the plug on the fight.

Eric Gomez did confirm Frankie Gomez took some time off from the gym because he came down with the flu a few weeks ago. Still, he displayed his displeasure with the events that transpired over the last couple of days.

"This happens where a fighter comes in a pound or so heavy, but not seven, eight pounds. When this happens, it's very hard to do something. We don't want to put anyone in jeopardy. Something bad happens with Frankie (Gomez). It's too risky to be in that position. If something happens to Soto. Frankie could come in tomorrow and he's at 160 (pounds). We pulled the plug."

"It's a big disappointment because we have at least 20 other fighters that would've killed to be in that spot. I feel bad for (Humberto) Soto because he worked very, very hard. He was responsible and he made weight. He followed the contract. He did everything. It's a bad position to be in, but someone has to be a grown-up and do the right thing. Do you reward someone for not doing their job?"

*Francisco A. Salazar has written for RingTV since October of 2013 and has covered boxing in Southern California and abroad since 2000. Francisco also covers boxing for the Ventura County (CA) Star newspaper, Boxingscene.com, and Knockout Nation. He can be reached by email at [santio89@yahoo.com](mailto:santio89@yahoo.com) or on Twitter at [FSalazarBoxing](https://twitter.com/FSalazarBoxing)*

<http://ringtv.craveonline.com/news/388973-frankie-gomezs-promise-questioned-again-after-failure-to-make-weight>





# Jacarezinho' Stops Velasco at TPF 22, Failed Weight Cut Costs Him 135-Pound Crown

By C.J. Tuttle  
Feb 5, 2015



***Fabiano Silva da Conceicao stopped Rolando Velasco at TPF 22.***  
Photo: Jeff Sherwood/Sherdog.com

Occasionally in mixed martial arts, failed weight cuts can alter a title fight. That was the case with the bantamweight pairing of Rolando Velasco (10-3) and Fabiano Silva da Conceicao (25-6-1) in the Tachi Palace Fights 22 headliner on Thursday night.

“Jacarezinho” came into weigh-ins on Wednesday nearly 10 pounds overweight, forcing the promotion to rule that only Velasco could leave the Tachi Palace Hotel and Casino in Lemoore, Calif., with the belt.

In the end, the added weight might have made a difference. The opening frame was mostly a feeling-out process for both fighters. At one point, Silva threatened his opponent with a rear-naked choke, but “The Machine” persevered. The second round saw Silva drop Velasco with a straight right, which the 26-year-old immediately followed with punches, forcing the hand of referee Jason McCoy. The finish officially came 1:28 into round two.

After the fight, Silva had nothing but praise for his opponent and apologies for anyone he affected by missing his required mark of 135 pounds.

“I did my best and I want to apologize for not making weight,” Silva said. “Tachi is the best promotion I have ever fought for, Rolando is the best opponent I’ve ever fought, so I’m looking forward to coming back here and doing it again.”



**Perez decisively defeated Figueroa. | Photo: J. Sherwood/Sherdog.com**

"I accepted the fight on short notice," Silva added. "I'll come back here, I'll make weight and take the belt with me. Velasco, thanks for taking this fight; you're very tough."

The co-main event featured a flyweight title fight pitting Alex Perez (12-2) against Anthony Figueroa (10-8-1). In the end, "The Decision" reiterated his nickname, walking away with a unanimous nod over Figueroa to capture 125-pound gold. It was the ninth consecutive win for the 22-year-old Team Oyama representative.

The 25-minute contest featured plenty of back-and-forth grappling exchanges, and while Figueroa had his moments, it appeared that Perez's efforts in the early frames were enough to sway the judges. As was the case throughout the night, no scores were revealed.

"I think I did good. I listened to my coaches and followed my game plan," Perez said after his win. "Hopefully the UFC is next. I'm just waiting; I want to eat."



**Mitchell easily tapped DeAnda. | Photo: J. Sherwood/Sherdog.com**

In the first title bout of the evening, David Mitchell (18-4) made the case that he could potentially deserve a second look in the UFC. From the start, "Bulletproof" imposed his will against Angel DeAnda (12-5), ultimately going palm to palm and forcing DeAnda to tap to a rear-naked choke 3:00 into the opening round. As a result, the former UFC competitor laid claim to the Northern California-based promotion's middleweight title.

"I train with the best in the world, you just can't stop that," Mitchell said after the fight. "It's not only about UFC to me; it's about me becoming the best mixed martial artist I can be."

With the win, Mitchell has now won six consecutive bouts since dropping back-to-back fights against Mike Pierce and Yan Cabral under the UFC banner in 2013.

Earlier, Tony Llamas (14-15) took a unanimous decision over Sergio Cortez (9-11) in a lightweight contest. In a bout that featured multiple cage grabs, referee standups and saw Cortez eat plenty of punishment, Llamas walked away with his third straight win.

After the fight, which marked his fourth win under the TPF banner, Llamas made it clear that he has been anxiously awaiting a shot at the promotion's lightweight championship. When asked if he had done enough to earn a shot, "Nuno" had a succinct response: "I been ready," he said.

Castle Williams (2-1) became a bit complacent in the third round of his featherweight encounter with Brandon Cohea (3-1), and as a result, he will head back to San Luis Obispo, Calif., with the first loss of his career. Cohea proved to be a stern test for Williams, a highly-regarded prospect, and was ultimately awarded a unanimous decision.

The fight was close, but particularly in the third stanza, "Lionheart" lived up to his nickname and nearly submitted Williams on numerous occasions, likely earning the benefit of the doubt from the three California State Athletic Commission-appointed judges. Williams was visibly displeased with the decision, but at only 22 years old, he will have plenty of time to bounce back.

Over the course of 15 minutes, Enoch Wilson (19-9-1) used his wrestling pedigree to grind out a unanimous decision against Diego Saraiva (22-18-1) in a catch-weight fight. While no scorecards were read inside the arena, it was a clear cut victory for the former Team Quest member. "The Octopus" nearly grabbed the 15th submission win of his career late in the third frame when he sunk in an arnbar, but Wilson managed to escape and earned only his second-ever win via decision.

Aaron Arana (5-1) destroyed the body of Sergio Quinones (8-16) en route to a first-round technical knockout victory in a featherweight scrap. Arana, who had not competed for five years, pounded the liver of his opponent and with each passing strike, Quinones seemed to be feeling the effects. The finish came at 4:17, when "The Outlaw" was dropped to a knee with a kick to the body. Quinones has only been victorious once in his last nine bouts.

Richard Parra (1-0) made a huge impression in his mixed martial arts debut against Drake Boen (2-2), knocking out his opponent a mere six seconds into their bantamweight clash. After ducking a punch, The Pit product connected with an overhand right that spelled the end for "Sticks and Stones."

Ladale Noa (2-1) used an aggressive striking game to press Salvador Becerra (3-0) against the cage early, but over the course of the final two rounds it was the pinpoint striking and submission attempts by the 19-year-old Becerra that ultimately earned him a split decision. Judges' scorecards for the catch-weight affair were not announced.

In the evening's opening bout, Jordan Williams (3-1) utilized ground-and-pound to pummel Christian Barber (0-2) and earn the stoppage from referee Mark Lawley at 1:14 of the first round in a welterweight matchup.

<http://www.sherdog.com/news/news/Jacarezinho-Stops-Velasco-at-TPF-22-Failed-Weight-Cut-Costs-Him-135Pound-Crown-81387>



# Johnny Hendricks' Failed Weight Cut at UFC 192: Let's All Share the Blame

By Scott Harris, Featured Columnist, Oct 3, 2015

**Johnny Hendricks** ended his **UFC 192** in the emergency room.

There were no vicious head kicks or flesh-cleaving elbows involved this time. No fighting at all, in fact. Hours before Friday's weigh-ins, Hendricks checked into the hospital with a kidney stone and an intestinal blockage, both of which are clearly attributable to a difficult weight cut.

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Hendricks vs Woodley is off the card due to Hendricks weight cut issues.

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**Ariel Helwani of MMA Fighting** was among the first to report the news.

It wasn't the first time **Hendricks has struggled** with his cut, which he previously said **averages about 25 pounds**. But it was the first time he couldn't ultimately make the 170-pound welterweight limit, and it gained him entry into a growing club of fighters with that scarlet "W" on their resumes.

The knee-jerk reaction in the wake of the announcement was to pin it all on Hendricks, and hey, that's understandable. But this blame pie can be divided up many ways, with many groups—including us fans—deserving a healthy piece.

No matter how you slice it, the discussion certainly starts with Hendricks. He put himself in this position, after all, where the extreme dehydration associated with big weight cuts thickened his blood and other various, uh, bodily things, ultimately leading to big problems.

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Dehydration makes constipation worse to the point it becomes obstruction/blockage often requiring surgery

<https://twitter.com/jbkblack/status/650120843704438784>

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Hendricks' main problem appears to be a reluctance to learn from mistakes. At his last fight at UFC 181, he said afterward he **pondered retirement** because his cut was so bad. He has been



open before about having a **poor diet** (the fact that he owns **his own steakhouse** probably doesn't help anything) that creates the need for these kinds of cuts in the first place.

But there's more to this boom-and-bust cycle. Per Dave Doyle of MMA Fighting, Hendricks has said that, during his college wrestling days at Oklahoma State, he inflated himself as high as **218 pounds** before undertaking his cut. That leads to the kind of tough-it-out mindset that science never supported and more MMA fighters are abandoning, and it's engendered by the **amateur wrestling culture** where Hendricks got his combat start.



**Hendricks (left) in his college wrestling days. TY RUSSELL/Associated Press**

That culture should certainly continue to shoulder some accountability in the debate, seeing as how that grin-and-bear-it attitude, still so common in that sport, so frequently gives rise to these drastic, reckless cuts in MMA.

Where was Hendricks' team on this? Where were they when he **dropped nutritionist Mike Dolce** this spring, not long after Dolce rather presciently **accused Hendricks** of repeatedly "ballooning up" between fights? Hendricks said that, without Dolce, he was relying on himself and his wife to handle his diet regimen, rather than a nutritionist. No offense to anyone, but how did that work out? With Hendricks' behavioral pattern so deeply entrenched, where was the tough love among his inner circle?

Also in on the blame here is the UFC, which hasn't done much to date to curb or even acknowledge the existence of dangerous cuts. Kudos to the promotion for adopting a **ban on IV rehydration**—which, as it happens, took effect for the first time here at UFC 192—but if Hendricks' behavior and the comments of other fighters are any indication, it won't curtail cuts but rather make them more dangerous by taking away a prevalent means of rehydration. Then there are the athletic commissions. Some commissions are leaders in the area, but for every **California or Arkansas**, there are several others who don't do much to regulate or monitor cuts or hydration levels. And of course, none of these commissions talk to one another, so even if a behind-the-curve state (like, oh, I don't know, Texas) wanted this information, there's no definite mechanism or requirement for sharing it.

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That time Texas ignored their own Regs and let Hendricks fight despite showing signs of dehydration -

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9:11 AM - 2 Oct 2015



**Erik Magraken**

### **When Making Weight Does Not Cut It in Combat Sports**

Alongside issues arising from Concussion Mismanagement and PED Abuse, Rapid Extreme Weight Cutting practices are a tragedy waiting to happen in MMA. Today, a teachable moment arose at the UFC 171 ...

Let's not forget about the fans. We expect bigger, want bigger. Fine. But at the same time, we can hold athletes and governing bodies to account. It's OK to care about safety. As with brain trauma, if our lust for displays of power and violence isn't tempered by a knowledge of or at least empathy for the real human dangers that attend them, we're stuck in a downward spiral, and a "don't ask, don't tell" attitude isn't the tool to pull us out.

From my outsider perspective, it seems like Hendricks hangs out around the feeding trough too much and goes through his weight cut in the old tough-it-out sort of way, fiddling through the summer only to find he ran out of warm days. He did not control his weight until it was crunch time, and like a student cramming for an exam, he found himself operating without a net.

The news also spurred UFC President Dana White to announce that **Woodley may now receive** the next welterweight title shot—something this fight at UFC 192 was supposed to determine. White went on to note that Hendricks is "**a middleweight as of now**," given this latest mishap, per Kevin Iole of Yahoo Sports.

That's a fairly mild punishment. The fact that Hendricks won't be paid is a stronger one. But in the meantime, until the combat sports culture changes and its fans and athletes start taking this more seriously, we'll have more canceled fights, more ER visits and worse.

So let's share the blame. Without coming together as a community to at least acknowledge this problem, it's probably impossible to come together as a community to work toward a solution.

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2574983-johnny-hendricks-failed-weight-cut-at-ufc-192-lets-all-share-the-blame>





# Gastelum Coach on Bad Weight Cut: “I was scared”

January 31, 2015 12:21 pm by [bjpenn.com](#) staff

*“He wasn’t vomiting food. It was more like mucus. He was in a bad state where he couldn’t get himself off the floor. I had to pick him up. I was scared. I’ve never had an athlete do that before. That’s the long and short of it.*”

*“I was thinking the fight was off. There’s no way this guy is fighting, it’s done. ... That was kind of the attitude. Maybe it was a little bit quick to make the decision, but that’s how I felt at the time.”*

*“I’m not saying it was an easy weight cut, it never is. But it was going as well as it could until that happened. People can say what they want, but that’s the only difference in my book for this weight cut.”*

*“I always leave these decisions up to Kelvin. I’m a coach. Of course, I’m a support system. Do I think that he’s 100 percent? I do not, no. Do I think that he’ll do great and that he’s capable of winning the fight? Absolutely. He’ll come to fight.”*

*“Kelvin wasn’t feeling well in the front end of the week. That’s one of the reasons he was a little heavy at the front end of the week. But ultimately we felt like the weight cut was going fine.*

*Everything was going good. We used different stimuli. He was consistently losing weight.”*

In a new interview with [MMAFighting.com](#)’s Marc Raimondi, Kelvin Gastelum’s coach Chance Farrar detailed the difficulties with this week’s weight cut.

Gastelum weighed in 9 pounds over the welterweight limit during yesterday’s UFC 183 weigh-ins event, and he was fined 30% of his purse as a result.

<http://www.bjpenn.com/mmanews/gastelum-coach-bad-weight-cut-scared/>



# Ian McCall on UFC Fight Night 56 pullout: 'My body completely failed me'

By Dave Doyle @davedoylemma on Nov 10, 2014, 5:30p

With a nightmare weekend behind him, and 30 hours of travel to think about everything that took place, Ian McCall could boil down the health scare that caused him to drop out of his UFC Fight Night 56 co-main event against John Lineker to a simple premise.

"Once I weakened my immune system with my weight cut, my body completely failed me," the flyweight contender from Orange County said on Monday's edition of The MMA Hour.

A blood infection had slowed down McCall during his training in the leadup to his fight against John Lineker in Uberlandia, Brazil. But nearly every fighter goes through aches and pains during their training camp, so McCall thought he'd simply be able to tough his way through things and then get some rest after the fight.

"It wasn't that bad," McCall said of the weeks leading up to the planned bout. "I was a little slow in training, I was still getting all my training in, I was still resting a lot. Everything was on point. It was just, energy levels were a little low, so then I was doing even more recovery stuff, more juices, more stuff for recovery, I don't know I just figure I'm strong enough, I don't like taking antibiotics, I don't look putting that stuff in body, I don't know how this stuff works."

McCall went into great detail in walking through his experience from his weight cut, where everything started going south, to weighing in, to seeing doctors, to getting pulled from the fight. While he endured a sleepless night the previous evening, and ended up vomiting in the middle of his weight cut, ultimately, McCall realized something was seriously wrong when he got to the arena for the weigh-in.

"Usually backstage, I've got a lot of energy, I'm shadow boxing, it's also a mental thing. I like to show the person that I've got energy in spades, cardio in spades, I'm going to cut weight, if we fought right now, I'd bury you. But I just couldn't. I couldn't move, I just wanted to save whatever energy I have for the stage. I went on, I made my weight, put on a little show, and then once we got backstage it just got worse, I started to drink, I couldn't get food in, I took one bite of pineapple and I was like I need a trash can. So [UFC employee] Isabella [Hodge] brought one over. I didn't throw up, even though I felt like it. They gave us the [pre-fight] speech and I couldn't stand up. They had to get me an IV at the stadium, they were like let's do it now." Back at the hotel, McCall stayed hopeful that the worst was over, and that he could get through the evening and be in shape to fight the next night.

"I tried to stay positive and keep breathing and relaxing and focused," he said. "I was eating very small amounts of food, a protein shake here, a little bit of chicken and vegetables. I don't gorge myself before the fight, I eat as healthy as I eat any other day. ... I laid down and my body started steaming up. My throat, my back, my head, my hand, I had shooting pains, all the stuff, I had a lot of trouble breathing, I couldn't really see, I had probably drank 10 pounds water, I had an IV in me, I should have felt a lot better. I couldn't see my phone, luckily I was able to text my coach, 'you need to grab a doctor and come up, you gotta get the doctor, I don't feel good, I don't know what to do.'"

McCall was taken to the hospital. He doesn't remember many of the details of his visit. He does recall going back to his hotel room and sleeping for 10 hours. While he was asleep, the decision was made to pull him from the fight.

"I apologize to everybody, obviously I feel bad for everyone, for the fans, for the UFC, for the media, for my coaches, my family, but the first thing is, everyone at UFC is like listen, get healthy. They looked out for my best interests. that's the main thing."

As much as his employers and inner circle were understanding of the situation, though, McCall couldn't mentally let himself off the hook.

"I tried not to cry to myself," he said. "I tried not to lay there and cry like a little girl. It's depressing, it's something you strive so hard for. I'm a machine, I can fight through this, Why? Why did my body fail me, why did I let this happen. People can talk all the shit they want, I don't care what they say on twitter, people can say what they want, all these twitter trolls that talk shit. As far as myself, look how much training I've put in. I know I'm in this good of shape. I know I'm this healthy. I know I'm this tough. I know I'm this much of a badass. How has this vehicle I've created failed me, why is it happening to me? You go through a whole range of emotions, I just laid there and just tried to be somehow positive about it."

So it's back to the drawing board for McCall, who is still on several of his antibiotics and will need at least a week before he can even think of getting back to the gym. As for when he returns, well, Lineker, who had his usual issues making the flyweight limit in Uberlandia, has indicated he wants to move on, but McCall believes having this bout take place still makes the most sense.

"I want that fight," he said. "I think it makes a lot of sense. I think that him trying to go around me is weird. We still have a date. We gotta dance, homie. We gotta get down, we've got some games to play. I get it, you don't want to fight me, whatever stupid reasons you have in your mind. But I just think he realizes I'm a very bad fight for him. I made weight, I made 125 and I was sick. I'm going to make weight you missed weight [Lineker made weight on his second attempt] and you're good. I think he realizes the type of individual that he's going to have to deal with when I am 100 percent."

<http://www.mmafighting.com/2014/11/10/7189733/ian-mcall-on-ufc-fight-night-56-pullout-my-body-completely-failed-me>

# Henry Cejudo was 'scared' after bad weight cut, will now fight at bantamweight

by Blake Murphy on Sep 9, 2014

Of all people, Henry Cejudo is someone you would expect to have a good handle on how best to cut weight in advance of a weigh-in.

After all, Cejudo is a long-time wrestler, winning four state championships in high school and ultimately winning a gold medal for the United States at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Conceivably, the 27-year-old has been making weight for more than a decade.

Ahead of his would-be UFC debut at UFC 177, Cejudo (6-0 in MMA action) pulled out of the fight due to medical issues associated with his weight cut. With [the same fate befalling Renan Barao](#) on that card, the best practices for weight-cutting [have been called into question](#).

Cejudo [seems to be backing that up](#), suggesting cutting weight has become more difficult as he's aged:

*"Everything was good, I had gotten down to 130 the night before the weigh-ins, and I was only four pounds away from my goal. And that night I just had severe cramping. I couldn't sleep. Every 10 minutes or so I had cramping going on in my back, in my thigh, in my foot, just pretty much every part of my body. It's not that I'm fat or I'm overweight, I'm very lean. My body had pretty much just taken a toll. And it's happened a couple of times already. I've always thought I could get down to - because I've done it my whole life - get down to 125, but it's a little different now. I'm much older."*

Perhaps more notably for the debate that may or may not be heating up, Cejudo cops to having been scared by the issues that popped up during the process:

*"It's just that I think my body has just grown and I think if I ever make 125, if the UFC would ever allow me, there would have to be more science involved into my weight cuts. It can't just be toughness and strong and willful minded, because that's just going to put me in a coffin. And people who know me realize I come from a Mexican background. I'm an American, but I'm willing to go through death for a lot of things ... but maybe not quite, maybe that's not true. That night just scared me a little bit."*

As a result of Cejudo's issue making 125 pounds, he'll be given another chance to make his UFC debut, but only after [agreeing to fight in the 135-pound bantamweight division](#).

<http://www.thescore.com/mma/news/574586>





# UFC's the Ultimate Fighter: Video of the 5 Wussiest Moments in TUF History

By Nick Caron , Analyst, Apr 16, 2011

Spike TV's *The Ultimate Fighter* series is intended to showcase the up-and-comers in the sport of mixed martial arts on their way to the sport's biggest promotion, the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

But what we've seen hasn't always showcased the toughness normally displayed by the athletes in **MMA**. In fact, sometimes what we've seen has been a downright pathetic display of grown men acting like wussies.

As we go a week deeper into Season 13, let's take a trip down memory lane as we relive the top five wussiest moments in the history of TUF.

## 5. Bobby Southworth Needs to be Forced to Cut Weight

*TUF Season: 3*

*The Wuss: Bobby Southworth*

The very first season of *The Ultimate Fighter* produced more future UFC talent than any since. Bobby Southworth was not one of those talents.

It's not that Southworth didn't have the talent to compete, but he didn't seem to have the dedication to be successful.

In this episode of *The Ultimate Fighter*, Southworth needed to cut weight for a preliminary fight against Lodune Sincaid. It wasn't a particularly large weight cut, but judging by the way Southworth acted during it, you'd think he was dropping 25 pounds.

Southworth complained about getting in a sauna to cut water weight and later needed to almost be begged by Josh Koscheck and coach Chuck Liddell to stay in there and finish. At one point, he even tried to escape and Liddell needed to hold the door closed.

Through the forcefulness of his teammates, Southworth made weight and eventually knocked out Sincaid in his fight.

Still, the wussiness about cutting weight cannot be denied.

## 4. Tait Fletcher and Kristian Rothaermel Decline to Replace Matt Hamill in Semi-Finals

*TUF Season: 3*

*The Wuss(es): Kristian Rothaermel and Tait Fletcher*

Despite his disconnect with many of the other cast members, Season 3 of *The Ultimate Fighter* looked to be Matt Hamill's to lose.

But after defeating Mike Nickels in a fight, Hamill went to the hospital to tend to an injury he sustained in the fight; he received the news that the doctors would not clear him to fight again in the competition.

With Mike Nickels not being able to fight due to an injury himself, **Dana White** turned to both Tait Fletcher and Kristian Rothaermel, who turned down the opportunity to re-join the competition. *The Ultimate Fighter* is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and these two fighters decided that, to quote Dana White, they “didn’t want to be [expletive] fighters.”

Thankfully, Ross Pointon saved the day by manning up and moving up to light heavyweight despite originally joining the competition as a middleweight.

### **3. Jesse Taylor Smashes Limo Window, Terrorizes Female Hotel Patrons**

*TUF Season: 7*

*The Wuss: Jesse Taylor*

It takes a tough man to become a mixed martial arts fighter. It takes an even tougher man to make it all the way to the finals of *The Ultimate Fighter*.

But it takes a special kind of wuss to do what Jesse Taylor did *after* he made it to the finals in Season 7.

One night in Las Vegas prior to competing in the finals of the show, Taylor became belligerently drunk and smashed the window of a limousine. But even worse, he began “terrorizing” females inside a hotel. When security tried to confront him, Taylor became even more outraged and started yelling about how he was a “UFC fighter.”

He was no longer a UFC fighter after that night as Dana White kicked him off the show.

### **2. Gabe Ruediger Misses Weight**

*TUF Season: 5*

*The Wuss: Gabe Ruediger*

When he entered *The Ultimate Fighter*, Gabe Ruediger was considered one of the favorites due to the fact that he had already previously fought in the UFC. But what we didn’t count on was him acting like a complete wuss when it came time to fight.

Unlike fighters in the past who have gone up or down in weight to be on the show, Ruediger was fighting at his natural weight of 155 pounds. But when it came time for Ruediger to compete in his first fight on the show, weight became a huge issue.

Some say that Ruediger was scared to fight his opponent, Corey Hill, who had been getting in his face and smack-talking prior to the fight.

During the fifth episode of the season, Ruediger was shown eating ice cream cake in the days leading up to the fight, displaying a complete lack of commitment to making weight. After going to the hospital for extreme exhaustion and being released because he was “healthy,” Ruediger tried to request a procedure to flush the fecal matter from his body in order to make weight.

The next day, UFC President Dana White kicked him off the show. Ruediger proceeded to cry his eyes out before leaving the house.

### **1. Noah Inhofer Quits Because His Girlfriend Cheated on Him**

*TUF Season: 3*

*The Wuss: Noah Inhofer*

Just six episodes into Season 3 of TUF, Team Ortiz’s Noah Inhofer received a letter, informing him that his girlfriend back home had cheated on him.

It was never explained how he received the letter, given the show’s strict “no outside

communication” policy, but the light heavyweight from Yankton, SD took the news like a complete wuss.

Certainly getting cheated on isn't good news, and it's something that's going to hurt no matter who you are, but you can't let it get in the way of your dreams.

He went on a rampage, demanding to be allowed to use a telephone to call the cheating girlfriend, but was told that he knew the no-outside-contact rules and would not be permitted to call her.

Inhofer had already defeated Jesse Forbes in the first fight of the season and looked to be one of the favorites to make it to the finals if he stuck around.

UFC President, Dana White, spoke to Inhofer and tried to reason with him, explaining that this was the opportunity of a lifetime. Inhofer couldn't handle the situation, though, and decided to leave the show.

Noah Inhofer was trying to become a UFC fighter and he completely blew it by being the biggest wuss in TUF history.

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/657596-ufcs-the-ultimate-fighter-video-of-the-5-wussiest-moments-in-tuf-history>



# ONE Championship boss 'disgusted' at Luis Santos' missed weight for Ben Askren fight

By Matt Erickson November 12, 2015 10:35 pm



*Ben Askren and Luis Santos*

The clock is ticking for [Luis Santos](#) – and it may be ticking in more ways than one.

Earlier today, Santos (61-9-1) missed weight for his welterweight title fight rematch against champion [Ben Askren](#) (14-0) at ONE Championship 32. With the title fight scrapped, Askren gave Santos until 1 p.m. Friday local time in Singapore for a second weigh-in – one at which both fighters would need to be 190 pounds or less just to have a non-title fight.

Ahead of that weigh-in, though, ONE Championship CEO Victor Cui told MMAjunkie Santos' future with Asia's largest MMA promotion does not look bright.

"This is singlehandedly one of the most unprofessional things I've ever seen from a fighter in the history of ONE Championship," Cui told MMAjunkie. "He's had months to prepare for this fight. Months. Basically, since the first fight, we said we're going to do a rematch as soon as his eye heals. To come in that much overweight is really unprofessional. I can't believe a professional fighter at this level, with this much at stake, would not make weight."

Santos weighed 172 pounds for the 170-pound title fight. Immediately after the weigh-ins, the fight was "still under negotiation," according to ONE officials. Now everything appears to hinge on "Sapo" coming in under Askren's suggestion of 190 pounds for a catchweight fight. The bout is scheduled to headline ONE Championship 32, which streams as an online pay-per-view in North America from Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore.

Santos first challenged Askren in April at ONE Championship 26. After defending the wrestler's takedowns in the first part of the first round, Askren caught Santos with an accidental eye poke. When the Brazilian couldn't continue, the fight was ruled a no-contest.

Cui said he wants to ultimately put the two together in a title fight. But since that won't happen this time with Santos missing weight, it may never happen since Santos appears to have rubbed Cui and others with the promotion the wrong way this week.

"I do want to make this fight happen down the road," Cui said. "But that said, he's completely

tainted himself. Our staff is all completely disgusted with his lack of professionalism.”

Moreover, Cui said Santos offered no explanation for coming in heavy – not even a dog-ate-my-homework type of excuse for the infraction on the scale.

“He’s not sick, he has no injuries – in fact, when he landed several days ago, I saw him eating, so I thought, ‘Good, he’s on weight,’” Cui said.

Perhaps most perplexing to Cui is that Santos is not new to the concept of making weight for a fight. “Sapo” has 71 fights on his record, including bouts for the WEC and Bellator before he came to ONE Championship.

Cui’s 170-pound champion, on the other hand, had no issue with the scale.

“Ben’s put in the time for this fight,” Cui said. “A fighter’s got two jobs: make weight and put on an entertaining fight. (Santos) didn’t do his job. Ben’s not known for holding back his opinion.

Obviously he’s upset. If this was a prelim fight, or guys who have a record of 3-1, it would be one thing. But (Santos) has over 70 fights in his career, and this is the biggest fight of his life. To promote this event and fly him out to Singapore for an event televised to a world audience, it shows what an utter lack of professionalism he has (to miss weight).”

Following the weigh-ins, Askren, who’s ranked No. 5 in the NOS Energy Drink [MMA welterweight rankings](#), unleashed a flurry of tweets about Santos on [Twitter](#):

[Follow](#)



**Ben Askren**

@Benaskren

My garbage opponent missed weight! He's on the clock.

4:46 AM - 12 Nov 2015

72 72 Retweets 160 160 likes

[Follow](#)



**Ben Askren**

@Benaskren

Santos missed. My demand is that Santos makes 190lbs tomorrow or else the fight is off.

5:37 AM - 12 Nov 2015

98 98 Retweets 158 158 likes

Follow



**Ben Askren**

@Benaskren

So sick of amateur Jabronis that refuse to honor the contract put in front of them.

5:38 AM - 12 Nov 2015

91 91 Retweets 190 190 likes

Follow



**Ben Askren**

@Benaskren

It is on him at this point. 20lbs is more than reasonable.

[https://](https://twitter.com/tim_diazz/status/664800825261187072)

[twitter.com/tim\\_diazz/status/664800825261187072](https://twitter.com/tim_diazz/status/664800825261187072)

...

5:45 AM - 12 Nov 2015

8 8 Retweets 38 38 likes

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**Ben Askren**

@Benaskren

No I said we both weigh in again tomorrow. Under 190 or no fight.

[https://](https://twitter.com/bpvwv8/status/664818861133303808)

[twitter.com/bpvwv8/status/664818861133303808](https://twitter.com/bpvwv8/status/664818861133303808)

...

6:57 AM - 12 Nov 2015

6 6 Retweets 21 21 likes

For more on [ONE Championship 32](#), check out the [MMA Rumors](#) section of the site.

<http://mmajunkie.com/2015/11/one-championship-boss-luis-santos-missing-weight-for-askren-had-staff-completely-disgusted>





# Bellator 137 weigh-in results: Brandon Halsey misses weight, stripped of title

By Mike Sloan May 14, 2015



Brandon Halsey missed weight Thursday at the Bellator 137 weigh-ins, and has been slapped with the stiffest of penalties.

Bellator MMA officials confirmed with Sherdog.com content partners ESPN that win, lose or draw Friday against Kendall Grove, Halsey will not retain his middleweight championship after registering a weight of 188.1. Should Grove (184.9) taste victory, he will claim the title. If the former champion succeeds, the crown will become vacant. Additionally, Sherdog.com independently confirmed that the former ace will be fined 20 percent of his fight purse, with 10 percent going to the Grove and the rest to the California State Athletic Commission.

Halsey wasn't the only combatant to come in over weight: four others on the card all were bloated in some regard. Mike Richman, who is scheduled to fight in the co-feature, is four pounds over the bantamweight limit of 135; Virgil Zwicker missed by .7; Joe Taimanglo is .2 pounds off the bantamweight limit; and Adrienna Jenkins is .7 pounds beyond the featherweight cap.

Bellator 137 goes down inside the Pechanga Resort and Casino in Temecula, Calif., and airs live on Spike TV at 9 p.m. ET. The prelims will stream on Spike.com at 7 p.m. ET.

<http://www.sherdog.com/news/news/Bellator-137-Weighin-Results-Brandon-Halsey-Misses-Weight-Stripped-of-Title-86173>



# Bellator 96 weigh-in results: Two fighters miss marks in Oklahoma (updated)

By MMAjunkie Staff June 19, 2013 1:30 am

Bellator MMA's "Summer Series" debut got off to a rough start on Tuesday with five fighters missing weight for their fights on their first tries on the scale.

In the main event of Bellator 96, [Muhammed Lawal](#) (9-2 MMA, 1-1 BFC) looks to rebound from an upset loss to [Emanuel Newton](#) in his previous tournament outing when he meets [Seth Petruzelli](#) (14-7 MMA, 1-1 BFC) in the semifinals of the "Summer Series" four-man light heavyweight tourney. Both fighters were on target, with heavy favorite Lawal coming in at 205.2 pounds, while Petruzelli was 204.8.

In the other 205-pound tournament semifinal fight, former Strikeforce champ [Renato Sobral](#) (37-10 MMA, 0-1 BFC), whose previous Bellator tourney run ended with a vicious KO loss to [Mikhail Zayats](#), meets [Jacob Noe](#) (11-2 MMA, 2-1 BFC), whose nine-fight win streak also came to an end with a tourney defeat to Zayats. Noe came in 0.2 pounds over at 206.2, while "Babalu" was 204.4. Noe was given two hours to make the weight and was able to shed the additional two-tenths.

In heavyweight tournament action, [Vitaly Minakov](#) (10-0 MMA, 1-0 BFC) meets [Ron Sparks](#) (8-1 MMA, 3-1 BFC) on one side of the bracket. Sparks will have a decent size advantage at 264.6 pounds to Minakov's 246. And on the other side, [Rich Hale](#) (21-5 MMA, 6-2 BFC) takes on [Ryan Martinez](#) (9-2 MMA, 2-1 BFC), who learned just today he'll get the bout after [Vinicius Queiroz](#) pulled out with a knee injury. Hale was 240.1, while Martinez came in at 263.8.

Also on the main card, [War Machine](#) (12-4 MMA, 0-0 BFC) makes his Bellator debut in a welterweight bout against [Blas Avena](#) (8-6 MMA, 1-0 BFC). Each was 170 on the dot for the fight.

On the prelims, four fighters missed their marks. [Steven Artoff](#) was 138.8 pounds for his bantamweight bout against [Justin McNally](#); [Derek Campos](#) was 159.2 for his lightweight fight with [Brandon Girtz](#); [Chavous Smith](#) was 137.7 for a bantamweight contest with [Mike Maldonado](#); and [Keith Berry](#) was 190 for his middleweight matchup against [Cortez Coleman](#). All four fighters were given two hours to cut the additional weight.

Two of those four were able to get down to their contracted limits. Artoff made 135.6 on his second attempt, and Smith hit 135.9. However, Campos could only get down to 157.2, and Berry shed 3.6 pounds to get to 186.4 – but still was too much. Both Campos and Berry will forfeit a portion of their fight purses to their opponents.

Bellator 96 takes place Wednesday at WinStar World Casino in Thackerville, Okla. The three-hour main card airs on Spike TV following prelims on Spike.com.

The Bellator 96 weigh-in results included:

## MAIN CARD (Spike TV, 7 p.m. ET)

- Muhammed Lawal (205.2) vs. Seth Petruzelli (204.8) – light-heavyweight tournament opening round
- Jacob Noe (206)\* vs. Renato Sobral (204.4) – light-heavyweight tournament opening round
- Rich Hale (240.1) vs. Ryan Martinez (263.8) – heavyweight-tournament opening round
- Vitaly Minakov (246) vs. Ron Sparks (264.6) – heavyweight-tournament opening round
- Blas Avena (170) vs. War Machine (170)

**PRELIMINARY CARD (Spike.com, 6 p.m. ET)**

- Steven Artoff (135.6)\*\* vs. Justin McNally (135.4)
- Derek Campos (157.2)\*\*\* vs. Brandon Girtz (155.7)
- [Brandon Halsey](#) (205) vs. [Joe Yager](#) (205.4)
- [Raphael Butler](#) (261) vs. [Jeremiah O'Neal](#) (260.5)
- [Damon Jackson](#) (154.8) vs. [Keith Miner](#) (155.8)
- Mike Maldonado (135.8) vs. Chavous Smith (135.9)\*\*\*\*
- Keith Berry (186.4)\*\*\*\*\* vs. Cortez Coleman (185.6)
- [Jarrod Card](#) (145.7) vs. [Chas Skelly](#) (145.9)

\* Noe was 206.2 on his first attempt, but made weight on his second try.

\*\* Artoff was 138.8 on his first attempt, but made weight on his second try.

\*\*\* Campos was 159.2 on his first attempt, but could not make weight and forfeits a portion of his purse to Girtz.

\*\*\*\* Smith was 137.7 on his first attempt, but made weight on his second try.

\*\*\*\*\* Berry was 190 on his first attempt, but could not make weight and forfeits a portion of his purse to Coleman.

For the latest on [Bellator 96](#), stay tuned to the [MMA Rumors](#) section of the site.

<http://mmajunkie.com/2013/06/bellator-96-weigh-in-results-five-fighters-miss-their-marks-in-oklahoma>

# Melvin Guillard, Cody Bollinger both miss weight at World Series of Fighting 11 weigh-ins

By **Mookie Alexander** M @mookiealexander on Jul 4, 2014, 9:09p

*Weight cutting problems come up once again for Melvin Guillard and Cody Bollinger.*

**Cody Bollinger's** chances of being a UFC fighter ended when he failed to make weight against Anthony Gutierrez on season 18 of The Ultimate Fighter. **Melvin Guillard's** downward spiral towards his own UFC exit included missing weight in an eventual KO loss against **Donald Cerrone** at **UFC 150**. For Guillard, a World Series of Fighting debut awaited him tomorrow against **Gesias Cavalcante**, while Bollinger's 2nd WSOF bout was to be against **Pablo Alfonso**, potentially to determine the #1 contender at bantamweight for champion **Marlon Moraes**. Big fights for both men seeking some form of redemption after their recent setbacks ...

...And they both missed weight yet again.

Bollinger's first weighed in at 138.4 lbs and didn't even attempt to cut the 2.6 lbs necessary to make the bantamweight limit. Meanwhile, Guillard weighed in at 159.2 lbs on his first attempt, then 157.2 on his second. Guillard has forfeited 15% of his purse to Cavalcante, while Bollinger forks over 20% to Alfonso.

Melvin Guillard was interviewed by our own Steph Daniels on Thursday, and he told her that he not only had plans to become WSOF's lightweight champion, but also their featherweight belt holder. He also stated that he was coming into his fight with Cavalcante "a few pounds lighter" than he usually does. For someone who has developed a legacy of failing to reach his potential, primarily through inconsistent performances, failing to make weight in a new promotion just adds another unenviable chapter into his story.

In other weigh-in related news, **Jon Fitch** and **Dennis Hallman** agreed to a last-minute bump up to middleweight, with Fitch at 183 lbs and Hallman at 181.2.

Bloody Elbow will have live coverage of **World Series of Fighting 11** tomorrow at 2 PM ET/11 AM PT, which includes streaming video of the prelims and (for non-US viewers only) the entire main card.

<http://www.bloodyelbow.com/2014/7/4/5871753/mma-news-melvin-guillard-cody-bollinger-miss-weight-wsof-11-weigh-ins>





# Five of the Worst Weight Cuts in MMA History



“Can you tell me what the scale says? I can’t see over my cheekbones.” Props: [CombatLifestyle](#))

By Ben Goldstein

Tired of [fad diets](#)? As MMA fighters have proven for years, the best way to effectively take off pounds is to dehydrate yourself until you nearly die — a miraculous system known as “brutal weight cutting.” Here are some of the sport’s greatest success stories...

[Sean McCorkle](#)



Lost: 55 pounds in three months, before his submission win over [Mark Hunt](#) at UFC 119 (9/25/10)

After charming his way into a UFC contract, Indiana-based super-heavyweight Sean McCorkle was faced with a dilemma — making 265 pounds for the first time since middle school. “Big Sexy” had 12 weeks to come down from his walking weight of 320, which forced him to get very familiar with [chicken breast, apples, and oatmeal](#).

By weigh-in day, it seemed like the world was conspiring against him. “The cut was an absolute nightmare, and the commission scales were off the morning of the weigh-in,” [McCorkle explained](#). “I told them that and the commission said they weren’t. I said I couldn’t possibly be three pounds heavier [on the day of weigh-ins] than I was last night when I didn’t eat or drink anything. So I went to cut an extra three pounds that morning. It took me two hours to cut the weight. Then I weighed in at 263 pounds and I wanted to strangle somebody.” Compared to that, making Mark Hunt cry “uncle” with an armlock was the easy part.

### Jake Shields

Lost: 20 pounds in one day before his split-decision win over [Martin Kampmann](#) at UFC 121 (10/23/10)



Though he’s best known as a 170-pounder, Jake entered the UFC following a three-fight stint in Strikeforce that kept him at or near the middleweight limit. His weight cutting skills were clearly rusty, and he was forced to suck out 20 pounds of water in the 24 hours leading up to UFC 121’s weigh-ins. As a result, Shields’s much-ballyhooed UFC debut turned out to be a dull, hype-deflating performance, capped off by a somewhat controversial win on points.

“I don’t want to make excuses,” [Shields said](#) in the post-fight press conference, “but that was my first time cutting to 170 in a while. I do think I dropped too much weight. If that was a factor, I don’t know, but I pulled out 20 pounds in a day...Will I do that again? No, never. I’ll never drop that much weight again.”

### Rory Markham

Lost: One lung, before his knockout loss to [Dan Hardy](#) at UFC 95 (2/20/09)

We’re not sure where Rory started his weight cut, but he ended it without the full use of a major organ. [As the story goes](#), Markham suffered through an awful cut in London before the fight, and



cramped so badly after weigh-ins that one of his lungs collapsed. Markham had no idea how much he'd damaged his body until after the fight, when a suspicious doctor decided to x-ray his chest. "That was the worst weight cut I've ever done," Markham said later. "I know what hell is like." Despite the awful experience, he decided to take another ill-advised crack at welterweight in his next fight. Markham came in [seven pounds over](#), got TKO'd by [Nate Diaz](#), and was fired by the UFC.

### **Zoila Gurgel**

Lost: About 30 pounds for three consecutive fights during Bellator's Season 3 115-pound tournament.

The fighter [formerly known as Zoila Frausto](#) only had about a year and a half of professional MMA experience under her belt when she accepted a spot in Bellator's 115-pound women's tournament — despite the fact that she had spent the majority of her career competing at 135. In the end, it was a storybook run for Zoila, culminating in a shock upset of Japanese MMA icon [Megumi Fujii](#), but getting into the cage every month was agonizing. We'll let [MMA Rising](#) tell the tale:

Dropping close to 30 pounds every four weeks, as her shell-shocked body clung to every bit of nutrition that it could, a weakened Frausto was only able to undergo limited training as she stuck to a strict diet. Discouraged and on the verge of a collapse, Frausto worked only on cardio while eating bland foods in an effort to lose weight for her fights. The trying times even led to Frausto dreaming of eating regular foods, only to repeatedly wake up at all hours of the night in a panic that she would weigh in heavy.

Amidst the emotional and physical rollercoaster, Frausto was still expected to fight three times in order to win the Bellator tournament. On August 19th at Bellator 25, she used a size and strength advantage to hand [Jessica Pene](#) the first defeat of her career. Six weeks later, while still struggling to maintain weight near 115 pounds, Frausto earned a controversial Split Decision victory over Jessica Aguilar at Bellator 31...

As Frausto continued to battle the struggles of limited training and even more limited food, she had to prepare for the biggest fight of her career; a showdown with pound-for-pound standout and MMA legend Megumi Fujii. Though dehydrated and unable to adequately train, Frausto managed to stay on her feet for nearly the entire fight with Fujii and earned another close decision win to become the first Bellator 115-pound women's champion...

As she returned to a more normal schedule following the tournament, Frausto opted to remain on a strict nutritional diet, even through the holiday season. With her body still in shock, any little bit of food resulted in large gains of weight until Frausto was all the way back up to 155 pounds. Frausto last competed at a more natural weight of 125 pounds, outpointing Karina Hallinan in March at Bellator 35.

### **Anthony Johnson**



Lost: 44 pounds before his knockout win over [Yoshiyuki Yoshida](#) at UFC 104 (10/24/09)

The notoriously massive welterweight came in at an unforgivable 176 pounds before his scrap against Yoshida, and was so exhausted by the cut that he could barely walk without assistance on weigh-in day. So what went wrong? Rumble had suffered a knee injury while preparing for a scheduled fight against [Matt Brown](#) earlier in the year, and [ballooned up](#) to 220 while rehabbing. He thought he could pull it off — dropping from heavyweight to welterweight in a single training camp — but things went south in the week before weigh-ins.

“When you get injured, you don’t do much,” [Johnson said before the fight](#). “You sit around and eat and get fat. That’s exactly what I did...Usually I start at 210. That ten pound difference made a big impact. You know what I mean? It kicked my butt, but I was prepared for it. I was prepared to just grind it out and get down to 171. And I was in the sauna for an hour and I lost three or four pounds right off the bat. I knew it was coming off. That’s why I said that if I had another hour or two, I would have been able to make it. I got out of the sauna, and I think I was out too long because my sweating stopped, and when I got back in the sauna I couldn’t get anything else off. That’s what broke me.”

## Honorable Mentions:

### [Quinton “Rampage” Jackson](#)

Lost: 45 pounds in eight weeks before his unanimous decision loss to [Rashad Evans](#) at UFC 114



45 pounds is a daunting drop, but unlike the other fighters on this list, Rampage didn’t have to ruin himself to make it happen. All credit for that goes to [Mike Dolce](#), the “Dolce Diet” founder who has become a patron saint of weight-cutting lost causes. [As Dolce himself explained](#), “That was one where everybody – even guys on his team, his management – they wrote it off as being nearly impossible...But I was able to get him to lose forty-five pounds in eight weeks, step on the scale, feel great, then go out there and compete with Rashad [Evans] the entire time.”

### [James Irvin](#)

Lost: An unspecified amount of water, muscle, and possibly bone, before his TKO loss to [Alessio Sakara](#) at UFC Live: Vera vs. Jones (3/21/10)



We actually have no idea what James Irvin went through to make 185 pounds last year, and frankly, we don't want to know. Irvin looked like a dying man at the [weigh-ins](#) for his fight against Sakara; even before he was stopped in the first round, it was clear to everyone watching that his desperate drop to middleweight was a terrible idea. Luckily, he returned to light-heavyweight in his next fight, and [things have been going just great since then](#).

<http://www.cagepotato.com/five-of-the-worst-weight-cuts-in-mma-history/>



# Section 3

Articles Related to  
Injury, Illness & Death  
Due to Weight Cutting







## Section 3 Article Directory

**Daniel Cormier remembers the weight cut that almost killed him**

<http://www.foxsports.com/ufc/story/daniel-cormier-remembers-the-weight-cut-that-almost-killed-him-021814>

**Two Fighters Hospitalized After Weight-Cut Gone Wrong**

<http://www.bjpenn.com/mmanews/two-fighters-hospitalized-after-weight-cut-gone-wrong/>

**Fighter from Washington Dies After Amateur MMA Event**

<http://www.bjpenn.com/mmanews/fighter-from-washington-dies-after-amateur-mma-event/>

**UFC fighter passes out cutting weight, pulled from UFC 188 line up**

<http://www.mmamania.com/2015/6/12/8770385/ufc-fighter-passes-out-cutting-weight-pulled-ufc-188-line-up-mexico-mma>

**Stunner: Renan Barao yanked from UFC 177 during difficult weight cut**

<http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/mma-cagewriter/stunner--renan-barao-yanked-from-ufc-177-during-difficult-weight-cut-230703830.html>

**Tuf 2 week 1 recap: a new crop**

<http://www.mmaweekly.com/tuf-2-week-1-recap-a-new-crop>

**Dramatic seizure on the ultimate fighter 21 sends contestant home**

<http://www.mmaweekly.com/dramatic-seizure-on-the-ultimate-fighter-21-sends-contestant-home>

**Fighter in Brazil dies from stroke during weight cut**

<http://www.mixedmartialarts.com/news/439049/Fighter-in-Brazil-dies-during-weight-cut/>

**Dana White and Anderson Silva on weight-cutting controversy: “No fight is worth dying over”**

<http://www.mmaweekly.com/dana-white-and-anderson-silva-on-weight-cutting-no-fight-is-worth-dying-over>



# Daniel Cormier remembers the weight cut that almost killed him

*Daniel Cormier looks back at the 2008 Olympics and how doubt crept into his mind as he started his move down to 205 pounds for UFC 170.*



Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC

**By Damon Martin**

Feb 18, 2014 at 2:23p ET

August 21, 2008 is a day that will live in infamy with [Daniel Cormier](#) from now until the day he passes from this Earth.

It was 24 hours earlier that Cormier was weighing in for his matchup at the 2008 Olympic games in Beijing where he was required to hit the mark of 211.5 pounds (96 kilograms) to compete in his weight division the next day. Cormier got down to the required weight but hours later his kidneys shut down from the trauma endured to cut the extra pounds. The former Oklahoma State wrestler went to a local hospital in Beijing to try and have fluids put back into his body, but nothing was working and his health just deteriorated from there.

Ultimately upon the advice of the doctors, Cormier was pulled from the competition and not allowed to wrestle at the Olympic games. On that fateful Thursday morning while Cormier sat in a hospital room, Cuban Michel Batista walked onto the mat in Beijing and had his hand raised in victory because his opponent wasn't there.

There were no words capable of explaining the kind of heartbreak Cormier endured to miss out on his chance at Olympic glory. He was named the team captain and expected to medal in 2008 if not have a shot at the gold, but instead he became a cautionary tale of how even in a moment of triumph, tragedy is always lurking just around the corner.

**“I was always wondering what I'd do when I start cutting out some of the water, is my body going to lock up, am I not going to be able to do this?”**

Nearly six years later, the Olympics are no longer on Cormier's radar, but the questions about his weight cut are coming up again because he's attempting a move down to 205 pounds after

competing for his entire mixed martial arts career as a heavyweight. It's no secret that in college, Cormier competed at 185 pounds, but as he got older and the pounds packed on he was wrestling at a much higher weight in Olympic competition.

205 pounds is six and a half less than the amount that Cormier cut in 2008 when his body slammed shut and wouldn't allow him to function the next day on the mats. The former Olympian can't deny that he'll always be haunted by that day in China where his dreams disappeared like a puff of smoke in the wind and the images and memories of August 21, 2008 have entered his head on a few occasions as he starts shedding weight ahead of UFC 170 this weekend.

"It was very challenging, very tough mentally," Cormier told FOX Sports. "I was always wondering what I'd do when I start cutting out some of the water, is my body going to lock up, am I not going to be able to do this? At the same time, as happy as this is making me that I'm going to be able to do this and do this the correct way, it's actually really sad.

"One day I was real light and I could have made the weight I needed to make in the Olympics that day and the whole day was sad, it was kind of just ruined because I was thinking I missed out an opportunity to win an Olympic gold medal by just not being disciplined and committing myself to what I needed to be committed to."

An Olympic loss is something a lot of athletes deal with because not everyone goes home with a medal. If Cormier had wrestled in 2008 and lost to Batista in the first round and never made it to a medal, he would have been disappointed but it would have been chalked up to just being beaten by the better athlete on that particular day. Instead, Cormier was defeated by his own body and that's the kind of nightmare you never truly wake up from.



**Jonathan Ferrey / Getty Images North America**

"The one area I could screw myself and I actually did. It's kind of hard," Cormier said. "It's good that it's going well, but it's actually kind of hard to deal with mentally. I feel like if I would have committed myself in the right way I could possibly be an Olympic medalist right now."

In a perfect world, Cormier will make weight on Friday, win his fight on Saturday against newcomer [Patrick Cummins](#), and then start cruising towards a title shot by the end of the year. Cormier has never backed down from his belief that he is the man who could dethrone champion [Jon Jones](#) if he gets the opportunity to face him, but as much as he wants the UFC gold, nothing will ever move him past what happened in 2008.

"Nothing will replace the Olympics. As a kid in 1996 I watched Kurt Angle, I watched Tom Brands, I watched Kendall Cross all win Olympic gold medals and my goal from that day was to be an Olympic champion and I worked towards that for a long time. So even winning the UFC championship won't replace that, but it will actually be for the first time if I can do everything right

and compete and win the championship, that I won't have gotten in my own way," Cormier said.

There are always going to be a ton of questions surrounding a fighter headed into a big matchup. In an odd way, Cormier is getting even more of them now because he's facing a wrestler who claims to have made him cry back in 2008 as he prepared for his Olympic run. That same fighter is also 4-0 and taking this fight on a week's notice, so the pressure on Cormier to perform is even higher.

**"I'm not going to Vegas on Feb 21 to make weight, I'm going to Vegas to put that division on notice and let them know I won't be deterred."**

Then of course there stands Friday – weigh in day – when Cormier will sit in a sauna and cut off the last few pounds to make sure he's down to the 205-pound limit. Once he steps on the scales and the Nevada State Athletic Commission representative there reads off the weight and UFC commentator Joe Rogan relays the information to everyone in attendance, Cormier isn't going to sigh with relief.

As much as Cormier is haunted by the past and how weight cutting cost him a shot at an Olympic medal, the questions he hopes to answer will come on Saturday night when he actually performs as a light heavyweight for the first time ever. Cormier wants his performance against Cummins to speak much louder than his weight cut.

He wants to send a message to every light heavyweight out there with his performance, not the fact that he can actually cut down to 205 pounds.

"It will be good to move past 'can he make the weight, can he compete?' but I'm not going to Vegas on Feb 21 to make weight," Cormier explained. "I'm going to Vegas to put that division on notice and let them know I won't be deterred. I've got a goal and I've got a plan and the first step in that happens on Feb 22. I don't care if people think 'Daniel can't make weight', the majority of the people that ask these questions they've never had to do it. Most people that ask these questions don't understand what we put in and what we sacrifice.

"So I'm not going to Vegas to make weight, I'm going to Vegas to put the division on notice and that's what I'm going to do."

<http://www.foxsports.com/ufc/story/daniel-cormier-remembers-the-weight-cut-that-almost-killed-him-021814>





# Two Fighters Hospitalized After Weight-Cut Gone Wrong

July 18, 2014 5:01 am by bjpenn.com staff

Mixed Martial Arts fighters often cut an extreme amount of weight in order to maximize their potential for victory.

It's part of the game. Come in low on weigh-in day, and rehydrate, gaining 10's, sometimes into the 20's worth of poundage by fight time.

In a recent story up on [MMA.TV](#), a tale is told of two fighters on the regional scene who cut too much weight, resulting in some dire consequences.

Check it:

[On June 16 it was reported that](#)

*"Hopefully Jordan Murray is feeling much better. Jordan had to have emergency surgery on his gallbladder. Here's what he had to say... "All my weight cutting has finally caught up to me I guess, looks like I have to remove my gallbladder after spending all day in emergency and losing alot of blood the Doctor says its 100% from cutting weight, crazy!"*

[This week TopMMAnews reports](#) another near tragedy noting as follows:

*"Scary incident for [Jer Kornelsen](#) cutting weight for his BFL fight. Here's what he had to say... "So I passed out and stopped breathing in the sauna trying to make weight. I guess they did CPR on me for a while and I came too in the hospital.. Seriously pissed off and feel horrible. Sorry to my team, Battlefield and mostly my opponent!"*

If these practices continue there is a tragedy waiting to happen in MMA and when it does the aftermath will land squarely at the feet of the Athletic Commission overseeing the event at question. Athletic Commissions exist first and foremost for athlete safety. When a practice develops that is clearly endangering the sports participants Athletic Commissions enter the realm of negligence if they fail to address the situation. Hopefully commissions are prepared to take note and remember that weight classes exist to protect fighters, not to encourage practices which endanger their health and well being.

<http://www.bjpenn.com/mmanews/two-fighters-hospitalized-after-weight-cut-gone-wrong/>



# Fighter from Washington Dies After Amateur MMA Event

April 28, 2015 10:24 am by bjpenn.com staff

A fighter who participated at an MMA event on Saturday in Abereeen, Washington's Southshore Mall was hospitalized at the Harborview Medical Center with kidney failure after passing out backstage after his fight. He passed away in the hospital on Wednesday.

Promoter Scott Bean told **KBKW-AM Radio** the fighter had already finished his fight and was in the locker room. "I hear my sister from the backroom saying 'he's not breathing get Shihan' and I don't even know how I heard that. I was all the way in the front of the building. I ran back there, my sister; she's a nurse for us that night, and I asked him if he was ok and I got no response. I checked for his pulse and I told her I had no pulse and she told me to start compressions and I did." The compressions had brought him back to life for a brief moment before being taken to the hospital. The fighter would die days later.

"He was exhausted. I'm the promoter, so the first thing I did was asked him was if he was OK, and he actually looked up at me and smiled and said 'Yeah I'm just tired man.'"

No personal information about the fighter is being released at this time, out of respect for friends and family.

Bean posted on social media that the cause of death was a pre-existing condition. While details have yet to be confirmed, it is worthy to note that Amateur MMA in Washington is STILL unregulated. This brings up many questions about what kind of screening was done and whether or not a doctor was present. The promoter's sister-nurse was there, but it has yet to be confirmed that there was a doctor on-sight.

While there are several variables that could have caused the fighter's kidney failure, it is important to know the dangers of weight cutting and regulation in MMA.

Source: **MMA.TV**

<http://www.bjpenn.com/mmanews/fighter-from-washington-dies-after-amateur-mma-event/>



# UFC fighter passes out cutting weight, pulled from UFC 188 line up

By Jesse Holland @Jesse\_Holland on Jun 12, 2015, 9:24a

I've got bad news for the two or three of you looking forward to the Octagon debut of Andrew Todhunter.

"The Sniper," who took his welterweight bout against Albert Tumenov on short notice when Hector Urbina was injured, passed out while cutting weight, according to [MMA Fighting](#), and has been pulled from tomorrow night's (Sat., June 13, 2015) UFC 188 pay-per-view (PPV) event in Mexico City.

"This is a really unfortunate situation, but health is the No. 1 priority," Todhunter's manager Charles McCarthy [said in a statement](#). "Andrew was excited as anyone I've ever seen to make his UFC debut. But I know he'll be back soon and he'll make a major impact when he is." Unfortunately, [this is not the first time something like this has happened](#).

UFC was unable to replace him this close to fight night, and the card will move forward with 11 fights (see the revised line up [here](#)). Both Tumenov and Todhunter are expected to earn their "show" purse.

<http://www.mmamania.com/2015/6/12/8770385/ufc-fighter-passes-out-cutting-weight-pulled-ufc-188-line-up-mexico-mma>



# Stunner: Renan Barao yanked from UFC 177 during difficult weight cut

By Kevin Iole

August 29, 2014 7:07 PM

Cagewriter

Former bantamweight champion Renan Barao suffered some sort of incident while cutting weight in his hotel room in Sacramento, Calif., on Friday and was pulled from his title bout Saturday at Sleep Train Arena in the main event of UFC 177 against champion T.J. Dillashaw for medical reasons.

It remains unclear the nature of Barao's medical condition, but one UFC source said, "I know he's going to be fine, but he's definitely not fighting Saturday."

Nova Uniao, [Barao's fight team](#), issued a statement to MMA Fighting. The statement said Barao was dizzy when getting out of the tub, slipped and hit his head against the wall. It said he passed out and was taken to the hospital.

UFC CEO [Lorenzo Fertitta](#) said Barao was taken to the hospital for precautionary reasons. "Safety has to come first," Fertitta said. "We just wanted to make sure he was all right. My understanding is that he is [OK] and that everyone was being extra cautious, so he was taken to the hospital to be checked."

Considered a large bantamweight, Barao was replaced in the main event by Joe Soto. Soto, who will be making his UFC debut, had been scheduled to fight Anthony Birchak in the opennight fight of the night. Now, he'll shift to the main event to challenge Dillashaw. Soto is 15-2 and on a six-fight winning streak.

Immediately after weighing in, Dillashaw accused Barao of being afraid.

"He's scared, you know?" Dillashaw said while being interviewed by UFC television analyst Joe Rogan on the stage only seconds after successfully making weight. "He don't want it. His coaches wanted the rematch more than he did. He's made this weight before and it's funny he didn't want to do it now."

Soto, a former Bellator champion, said he had been excited to get the opportunity. He said he accepted the bout without hesitation.

"This is something you have to step up for, something you can't pass up," Soto said. "When you have opportunities like this, you jump at them. When the matchmakers asked me if I wanted this fight, I said yes immediately."

It was the third hit the card took in recent weeks. The original co-main event was a flyweight title fight between Demetrious Johnson and Chris Cariaso. That was moved to the main event of UFC 178 on Sept. 27 in Las Vegas when light heavyweight champion Jon Jones injured a knee in wrestling practice and had to pull out of his fight with Daniel Cormer.

It comes on the heels of the cancellation of UFC 176, when featherweight champion Jose Aldo, Barao's teammate, had to pull out of his fight on Aug. 2 in Los Angeles, with an injury. Earlier on Friday, [former Olympic wrestling gold medalist Henry Cejudo](#) had to pull out of his fight with Scott Jorgensen, also for undisclosed medical reasons.

<http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/mma-cagewriter/stunner--renan-barao-yanked-from-ufc-177-during-difficult-weight-cut-230703830.html>





# TUF 2 WEEK 1 RECAP: A NEW CROP

August 22, 2005 Ken Pishna

It's baaaaccckkk.....

Mixed martial arts fans and reality show fanatics had to sweat it out over the summer, but the toughest reality show on television is finally back. The first episode of The Ultimate Fighter Season 2 has finally premiered.

Much as you would expect, the first episode was heavy on introducing the personalities of the new fighters. This season, the show kicked off with 18 new fighters; 9 heavyweights and 9 welterweights.

The Heavyweight Competitors:

Rob MacDonald, Keith Jardine, Kerry Schall, Brad Imes, Seth Petruzelli, Mike Whitehead, Tom Murphy, Rashad Evans, and Eli Joslin.

The Welterweight Competitors:

Jorge Gurgel, Joe Stevenson, Kenny Stevens, Anthony Torres, Melvin Guillard, Josh Burkman, Marcus Davis, Sammy Morgan, and Luke Cummo.

This episode really broke out into four major segments and the outgoing wrap-up.

Jorge Gurgel tried to set the tone for himself on the show by declaring, "Nobody pisses on my bed," but it was Luke Cummo that was the subject of the first real character building on the show. He's kind of singled himself as the odd duck out on the show, kicking things off by removing his mattress from his bed to sleep on the floor. He did this so that he could have his head pointing north while he sleeps to better align his chi.

Obviously, he is quickly becoming the focus of much ridicule by the other fighters. But on the first hard day of training, Luke's focus on his keeping his body in line both physically and spiritually when he had no trouble making it through a grueling wall sitting drill. Season 2 coach Rich Franklin went so far as to declare that Luke is "this season's Diego."

The first drama of the show involved heavyweight competitor Kerry Schall. On day two of filming, the fighters were brought to the UFC National Training Center for a marathon training session involving cardio, weightlifting, jiu-jitsu, boxing, and kickboxing. Basically, the fighters were worked beyond exhaustion, just to push them to the brink and see how mentally and physically tough they are.

Having nearly made it through the workouts of the day, Kerry was held up with severe pain in his knee. Medical personnel looked him over and decided he needed to go and get x-rayed. The x-rays showed no breaks or fractures, but the doctor thought it prudent that Kerry see an orthopedic specialist the next morning.

Once the drama started, it just kept rolling. On the evening of that first really hard day of training, heavyweight competitor Eli Joslin called UFC President Dana White, coach Matt Hughes, and coach Rich Franklin into a private meeting to declare that he couldn't handle being on the show. His excuse was that the cameras were freaking him out, declaring that, "it is too much like jail." Dana, Matt and Rich attempted to convince him to sleep on it and come back the next day for more training, but Eli had his mind made up even before talking with them. Later that night, Eli gathered round the other fighters and told them, "I'm walking out. I've made my decision." With that, he left the house and the show.

The next morning, the fighters were gathered at the training center with Dana. He made the announcement that Kerry's results were back and that he had a torn meniscus that would require surgery. Just like that, Kerry Schall was forced to exit the show. He was obviously fighting back the tears, but left with his head high commenting that, "For it to end this way is just devastating... God has a plan. I'll get by."

With the exodus of two heavyweights already, Dana white declared that a welterweight would now have to go. The determination was that Kenny Stevens was the weakest welterweight and he was allowed to choose one of the others to fight for a spot on the show. He chose Sammy Morgan.

This final drama really kicked in when the weight cutting began. Kenny weighed at 191 pounds,

meaning that he had 24 hours to lose 21 pounds. Sammy Morgan on the other hand, had only 9 pounds to cut to make the 170-pound limit.

The next portion of the show featured Kenny trying to cut the weight in the sauna, much like the same scenario that Bobby Southworth went through in the first season. The first night of cutting saw Kenny get down to 181 pounds before heading off to bed. The following day, they were back at the sauna and got Kenny to within five pounds of his goal before he finally cracked and said, "I'm done."

Kenny Stevens became the third fighter to leave the show in the first episode and it didn't sit well with some of the others on the show. Jorge Gurgel commented, "You're a professional athlete. You never quit, no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the pain." Even the usually subdued Rich Franklin was visibly irritated, "It pisses me off!"

This brought us to the show ending speech from Dana White. If you saw the first season of the show, consider this the "Do You Wanna Be a F\*\*king Fighter" Part II speech. Remarking on Kenny Stevens, he said, "He f\*\*king quit. Thacker, the one that got picked on the most, had more heart than you guys." I can't really go on with the rest of his tirade, I'll wear out the "F" key on my keyboard, but suffice it to say that Dana basically questioned the commitment of the guys on the show and challenged them to give it their best efforts to become UFC caliber fighters.

<http://www.mmaweekly.com/tuf-2-week-1-recap-a-new-crop>

# Dramatic seizure on the ultimate fighter 21 sends contestant home

May 14, 2015 Jeff Cain

Reality television documents unscripted real-life situations featuring a cast of contestants, but often times the “reality” isn’t exactly real. Participants are typically isolated away from any contact with the general public and temporarily removed from the current events happening in the world.

Every now and then something occurs during the filming that cracks the fabricated reality façade, and reminds the contestants that there are things more important than their reality show pursuits.

*The Ultimate Fighter: American Top Team vs. Blackzilians* pits two rival training camps against each other, but there was no team mentality when American Top Team member Steve Montgomery suffered a seizure while preparing to cut weight during this week’s episode.

Panic and concern were spread across team lines when the 24-year-old shook uncontrollably, while teammates who came to his assistance pleaded for help and urged someone to call 9-1-1.

“It didn’t look good. It didn’t look good at all,” said American Top Team member Steve Carl following the dramatic incident.

“I thought he was going to die. He was purple,” recounted teammate Nathan Coy. “I think when you put things in perspective, it makes what we’re going through in the house seem like nothing.” “It was one of the scariest and most helpless things I’ve ever seen,” said Montgomery’s teammate Hayder Hassan.

Fortunately, Montgomery didn’t suffer long-term damage, although the incident seemed life threatening.

“I did my weight cut incorrectly. I drank way too much water, and like an idiot I didn’t put any electrolytes in it and actually diluted all the sodium in my body, so I suffered a seizure,” explained Montgomery.

“Luckily I didn’t have any brain damage; no side-effects other than the seizure I had. But they’re making me leave,” he added.

Montgomery came into the season with the goal of becoming a UFC fighter. While those aspirations seemed dashed following the seizure, UFC president Dana White said “Creepy Steve” would get a shot in the organization.

“It’s an unfortunate situation with ‘Creepy Steve.’ I understand that this is this kid’s dream to fight in the UFC, but I’ll take health and safety over the dream every day of the week,” said White. “If this kid can stay healthy, we’ll give him a shot in the UFC.”

<http://www.mmaweekly.com/dramatic-seizure-on-the-ultimate-fighter-21-sends-contestant-home>



# Fighter in Brazil dies from stroke during weight cut

Nova Uniao flyweight fighter Leandro "Feijao" Souza passed away while cutting weight Thursday for Friday's [Shooto](#) Brazil 43 card in Rio de Janeiro. He was 26 years old.

Souza reportedly passed out in the sauna, and was transported to the hospital, where he was declared dead. He had two pounds to go to make weight.

Nova Uniao founder and Shooto Brazil president Andre Pederneiras announced the tragic news, via his [Facebook](#).

"It is with great regret that we here report the death of the [Leandro Caetano de Souza](#). The athlete died at the emergency unit in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro. The reasons are not yet known. We would like to express condolences to all friends and family."

Souza's teammate and sometime coach Andre Santos offered further details, via MMAFighting.com.

"We don't have much information yet," said Santos. "But we do know that is related to his weight cut. He's my student but he also trains at Nova Uniao for about a year. I wasn't with him during this process because I have a fight scheduled in Russia, so he spent the night at Nova Uniao's gym. His sister called me saying that he had passed out so I went to the hospital, but he was already dead when I got there."

The chief of police in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro, Joao Ismar told Brazil's UOL Sport that an examination by Instituto Medico Legal (IML) indicates that Souza suffered a stroke. Further investigation is in progress to determine if the stroke is related to the weight cut.

The death certificate submitted by the Forensic Institute shows Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA) as the cause of death of MMA fighter, Leandro Santos.

The chief of police in Botafogo, Joao Ismar, who is responsible for investigating the case, told UOL Sport that it is premature to point out the reasons that led to the death. The delegation requested more information to the IML on the causes of death and called relatives to testify.

"It is too early to attribute the death to the weight cutting effort," said the chief. "Need to check medical records to see if there is a historical factor, because it is not common for someone so young to suffer a stroke. IML is working to achieve more substantial elements that may clarify the case."

Souza's aunt, Elma Caetano, believes that Souza had ruptured vein in the brain due to the intense physical effort made by the player to reach the required weight for flyweight.

Souza's coach, Andrew Chatuba understands that the effort made by the athlete to cut weight could be linked to the death.

"He passed out in the sauna, and was rushed to the Emergency Ward," said Chatuba. "It seems to me there is a relationship with weight loss..."

According to a spokesperson for the health department of Rio de Janeiro, Souza was admitted to the public hospital in Botafogo on Thursday, at 2:50 PM, unconscious, having difficulty breathing, and no pulse. He was intubated and subjected to resuscitation, but died an hour later.

He will be buried on Saturday morning, in Rio de Janeiro.

A physiologist, Toribio Leite de Barros, who has worked in sports medicine reports that the stroke that killed Beans may be due to the intense process adopted to lose weight quickly.

Toribio emphasized that the more severe the dehydration caused by fluid loss cutting, the more the body is exposed to strokes.

"Dehydration makes the blood more viscous," said de Barros. "And this causes friction with the wall of the blood vessel to increase, and can break. In his case, it is logical that there is a set of factors that may have contributed to the stroke, but any person be subject facing a severe degree of dehydration in a short period."

"I'm totally against this practice used in weight cutting. Remember that losing liquid is much easier than losing fat. Some athletes take diuretic, laxative, in saunas. It is an extremely dangerous practice..."

Pederneiras cancelled Shooto Brazil 43 as a "sign of mourning" for Souza.

**SHOOTO43**  
**LEANDRO FEIJAO**

IDADE 28  
PESO 67  
ALTURA 1,60  
TOTAL DE LUTAS 10  
VITÓRIAS 5  
DERROTAS 5  
EQUIPE N.U./DELFIN  
CAÇADORES

27.09.13  
SEXTA-FEIRA AS 21H  
HEBRAICA  
LARANJEIRA RIO DE JANEIRO

Logos: LIPPER, Mercatus, HAITAVA, PR, COMBATE

Further details will be posted as they come available, but the story is an old, tragic one in combat sports.

Cutting weight hard had been a staple of collegiate and high school wrestling programs for generations. Then, late in 1997, three wrestlers died in a month. SI had the story:

He died crawling to the scale. Glassy-eyed and pale, his legs too weak to hold him after he had shed nearly 17 pounds in three days, Jeff Reese collapsed and expired on the cold floor of a locker room in Crisler Arena on Dec. 9 in Ann Arbor.

Reese, a junior at Michigan trying to make weight in the 150-pound class for a wrestling meet against Michigan State, spent the last two hours of his life in a plastic suit, riding a stationary bike



in a room in which the heat was cranked up to 92. He was the third college wrestler to die in 33 days. Billy Jack Saylor, a freshman at Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C., and Joseph LaRosa, a senior at Wisconsin-La Crosse, died in November while cutting weight. Though the official causes of their deaths varied, Reese, Saylor and LaRosa died of the same thing: the self-inflicted torture of drastic weight loss, college wrestling's ugly secret.

In response to the three deaths, the NCAA took a number of steps to make wrestling safer, including:

- Banning training in a room hotter than 80 degrees;
- Banning self-induced vomiting;
- Banning extensive food or fluid restrictions;
- Requiring hydration tests;
- Requiring body fat checks; and,
- Restricting the amount of weight that can be lost.

Following the NCAA's lead, high schools too instituted a variety of precautions.

Earlier this year, attorney Erik Magraken in his CanadianMMA Law Blog.com argued that Mixed Martial Arts should not wait for three deaths in 33 days due to weight cutting.

It is important to introduce forward thinking [legislation](#) instead of waiting for a tragedy to occur before bringing legal change. This leads to today's topic, rapid weight loss in combat sports and foreseeable tragedy.

MMA, as with all weight-restricted sports, comes with a risk that athletes will subject themselves to rapid weight loss techniques in order to make their fighting weight. These ['brutal weight cuts'](#) are well documented at MMA's highest level. This in turn leads to many MMA athletes [fighting in a dehydrated state](#). This comes with increased risk of fighter injury including [increased risk of traumatic brain injury](#). With this in mind it is worth examining the justification for weight classes in the first place and discuss whether fights following rapid weight loss should be tolerated.

As MMA has grown in popularity so has legislative oversight of the sport. These two developments go hand in hand with a proper legal framework helping legitimize the sport in turn creating a foundation on which the sport can grow. One of the first regulatory developments which has helped legitimize MMA in the public's eye was the introduction of weight classes. At their core, weight classes exist for fighter safety. The risk of [injury grows with weight discrepancy](#) among athletes.

Appreciating that fighter safety is the core reason behind weight classes, rapid weight loss is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed. Failing to address this issue undermines the entire foundation underlying weight classes.

Studies show that [rapid weight cutting \(ie- more than 5% of body weight\) lead to increased participant injury risk](#) in combat sports. As [noted by Dr. Benjamin](#), a simple solution to address this issue is to require certain weight metrics from 30 days out from a fight.

The MMA community should not wait for a tragedy to occur, as did in the 1990's with NCAA wrestling, before addressing this issue. Unless safeguards are built in some athletes will continue to undertake dangerous methods to make weight. Stakeholders in the MMA community, be it event organizers or legislative bodies, should take proactive steps to address this reality. Not only will this result in competition more reflective of an athlete's 'true' weight, it will promote fighter safety.

Which jurisdiction or organization will have the foresight and initiative to address this issue first?

The long-feared death has now come. It is incumbent on Brazil's regulatory body, the Comissão Atlética Brasileira de MMA (CABMMA), to step in and make appropriate changes, so that another death from cutting is not inevitable.

<http://www.mixedmartialarts.com/news/439049/Fighter-in-Brazil-dies-during-weight-cut/>

# Dana White and Anderson Silva on weight-cutting controversy: “no fight is worth dying over”

September 30, 2013 Ken Pishna

The strategy of cutting weight immediately prior to fighting is commonly used in virtually every combat sport from boxing to wrestling to mixed martial arts. It is also one of the most debated subjects in combat sports due to the inherent dangers that weight cutting possesses, dangers that are taking the spotlight following the recent death of Brazilian mixed martial artist Leandro “Feijao” Souza.

Souza reportedly died of a stroke during the final hours of a weigh-cut for a last-minute fight at Shoot 43 recently. There has been no definitive report that the weigh-cut was the cause of the stroke, but due to the timing, it is possibly related.

Whether the weight cut was the cause or not, the issue has once again been brought to the forefront of conversation.

The standard weight-cutting approach by most athletes is to watch their diet throughout camp, make sure they are within a certain range of their contracted fighting weight in the final day or two prior to weigh-ins, and then do a final, manageable cut to be on target at the weigh-in.

“I have proper nutrition. I have a lot of time to make weight,” said former UFC middleweight champion Anderson Silva during a UFC World Tour stop in Brazil on Monday. “When I get to the fight, I always get there four or five kilos above (nine to 11 pounds), at the most, and I can lose that weight very easily. I don’t wait to lose weight on the last minute.”

Most agree that the more dangerous part of weight cutting is typically when a fighter, for whatever reason, takes a fight on short notice or waits until the last-minute to shed a much higher percentage of their body weight.

In the day or two prior to weigh-ins, Silva is in a position where he has about four to five percent of his body weight to lose, something that is not difficult to achieve by temporarily losing water weight and then rehydrating following the weigh-in.

“I think the biggest problem is for athletes to accept fights at the last minute and wait to cut weight in the last minute,” he added. “No one can do that. There is no way you can recover your weight from one day to the next.”

When a fighter is unable to recover their weight prior to fight time, which generally means they are unable to fully rehydrate, there can be severe consequences. If a fighter is still dehydrated when he enters the cage, he may suffer from anything as simple as a lack of energy to his skin being less elastic and easier to split open to more severe consequences like an accelerated heart rate to light headedness and an increased susceptibility to knockouts.

UFC president Dana White concurred with Silva’s comments about the issue, adding that no fight is worth putting an athlete’s life at such an extreme risk.

“Where you see the dangerous situations are the guys that take last-minute fights and have to lose a ton of weight. It’s never good,” he said, also during the UFC World Tour press conference. “In the UFC, these guys have plenty of time. They know when they have to fight. They know the time they have. They diet and do the proper nutrition to get down the right way. When they get closer (to weigh-ins), they cut a few pounds. That’s the healthy, normal way to do it.

"I don't think that the cutting weight process is ever going to be perfect, but I said it today in an interview I did with a gentleman earlier, I don't care what level you fight on, no fight is worth dying over.

"If you can't make the weight, don't take the fight."

<http://www.mmaweekly.com/dana-white-and-anderson-silva-on-weight-cutting-no-fight-is-worth-dying-over>

# Section 4

## Notes































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