

Young's MMA, fighters receive honors

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

Young's MMA came up a big winner during the 2015 New England MMA Awards banquet held Saturday night in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The Bangor-based mixed martial arts gym, which was founded in the garage and basement of co-owner Chris Young's Brewer home and now is located in the former Bangor YMCA, was named team of the year resulting from a popular vote conducted by Mass-MMA.com.

New England Fights, the Lewiston-based promotion owned by Matt Peterson and Nick DiSalvo that provides the primary outlet for Maine

MMA practitioners, was named New England's promotion of the year.

Several fighters based at Young's also were honored, including New England Fights professional lightweight champion Bruce Boyington, who was named both most improved professional and breakthrough fighter of 2015.

Boyington (12-8) ended the year on a three-fight winning streak after a non-title loss to Jamie Harrison in April after Harrison failed to make the 155-pound lightweight limit.



Boyington

Boyington bounced back with a second-round stoppage of John Raio in June 2015, then scored a split-decision victory over Rodrigo Almeida on the undercard of World Series of Fighting 24 in October at the Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Connecticut.

Boyington capped off his 2015 schedule in November with a successful NEF title defense by second-round stoppage over once-beaten Jimmy Davidson in Lewiston. He will make his 2016 debut in Lewiston on Saturday night in another title defense against Jon Lemke as part of NEF 21 at the Androscoggin Bank Colisee in Lewiston.

Earning recognition for upset of the year in New England was "The" Ryan

Sanders, who scored a five-round split decision victory over Lucas Cruz to win the Toe 2 Toe lightweight title on Oct. 3, 2015, in Portland.

Sanders followed up that victory with a nationally televised second-round win over Luis Felix on the CES MMA 32 card on Jan. 8 in Lincoln, Rhode Island. That bout was televised by AXS-TV.

NEF amateur lightweight champion Josh Harvey was honored in the amateur knockout of the year category for his second-round KO of Ryan DiBartolomeo at NEF 19 in September 2015.



Sanders



LMP PHOTOS

Young's MMA owners Chris Young (left) and Ernie Fitch were honored Saturday when their team was named team of the year at the New England MMA Awards banquet in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Cimbollek

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snowbirding — breaking away to their basket — every time the opponents shoot. Five or six easy layups may result because opponents aren't expecting it.

An upset also can be achieved by reducing fouls, which is important because tourney games have three officials and will be tightly called. Teams should commit less than seven fouls per half to keep the favored team off the foul line. Leads are built or lost on the line with the clock stopped.

Here's a winning formula for teams to follow: shoot 70 percent from the foul line, commit no more than seven fouls per half and commit less than 12 turnovers. I saw this work when our John Bapst team won consecutive state championships in 1989 and 1990 by using this formula all season.

Conversely, teams can prevent upsets by controlling what they do. Don't take quick shots or shots that aren't determined by offensive sets. This will help reduce turnovers and control the tempo of the game.

A team that advances in the tourney also will often have to survive a poor shooting game, especially as teams seem to be relying on 3-pointers more, but remember the old saying is true: if you live by the three, you may die by the three.

Some final advice for postseason teams deals with the officials. Every time an official hands you the ball for a throw-in or bounces the ball to you for a foul shot, say thanks. Teams and coaches also should remember that well-played games are well-officiated.

Bob Cimbollek is a retired high school basketball coach and athletic director.

Jarvis

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be named the president of the New England Professional Golfers' Association last fall, and he said that will provide him with valuable networking opportunities and ideas.



Jarvis

He will be progressive and said he will be discussing ways to improve the "golf experience" with the members.

"You have to make sure you don't become complacent. I'll be looking for fresh ideas," said Jarvis, a former Bangor High basketball player and a 2001 graduate of the University of Maine.

The Downeast Metro Amateur Golf Tournament, a two-day tournament involving both the Bangor Muni and the Kebo Valley Club in Bar Harbor, will return for the second straight year and will be held on June 11-12, he said.

The 50th annual Greater Bangor Open will be held on July 21-23.

CBS to share Thursday night games with NBC

REUTERS

The NFL will split the broadcast rights for its Thursday Night Football games between NBC and CBS Corp., a move that reportedly earns the league higher fees and underlines the increasing cost of content for TV networks.

The NFL also said that it was in "active discussions" with potential partners for streaming rights for the games, but it did not name any specific company.

The NFL will get about \$450 million in total rights fees from CBS and NBC for broadcasting 10 games, higher than the \$300 million CBS paid for eight games this season, the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing people familiar with the matter.

Based on the report, the new rights fees works out to \$45 million per game compared with \$37.50 million earlier.

The rise in content costs comes at a time when TV networks are struggling with falling advertising sales.

NFL, CBS and Comcast Corp.'s NBC did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the Journal report.

The NFL said NBC and CBS would broadcast five

games each in 2016 and 2017 and "contribute to the production of Thursday Night Football exclusively on NFL Network."

Reuters reported last month that the league planned to live-stream all three games scheduled to be played in London next season, with Apple Inc. and Alphabet Inc. as the tech companies in the running for streaming rights.

In October, Yahoo became the NFL's first over-the-top streaming partner, when the Internet company broadcast a game between the Buffalo Bills and Jacksonville Jaguars. That game got 33.6 million views.

Bryant wants Hardy back with Cowboys

Dallas Cowboys star wide receiver Dez Bryant "would love to see Greg Hardy back" with the team next season.

The Cowboys have to decide if they want to resign Hardy only a year after the defensive end was released by the Carolina Panthers due to his troubles with the law off the field.

"You see guys perform at a high level around him, and that's what he brings to the defense," Bryant told the



Bryant

Sporting News. "I know I would love to see Greg back with us. He's a great teammate. I love him. I hope we can get him back. Greg Hardy loves the game. Anybody who loves the game, I love him."

The Cowboys' front office reportedly has been wavering in its support of the controversial pass rusher.

The Cowboys signed Hardy to a one-year, \$11.3 million deal in 2015. He recorded six sacks, 35 tackles, an interception and a forced fumble in 12 games after serving a four-game suspension by the NFL.

Cowboys fans, former greats of the team and state and local politicians spoke out against Hardy after he signed with Dallas because of a high-profile domestic violence incident in North Carolina. Hardy spent most of the 2014 season on the commissioner's exempt list before charges were formally dropped.

Photos showing bruises and abrasions on the body of Hardy's former girlfriend were published by Deadspin last year. The Cowboys claim they did not see the pictures before signing Hardy even though the NFL acknowledged seeing the



Hardy

graphic evidence during its own investigation.

NFLPA president plans to donate brain for research

NFL Players Association President Eric Winston has decided to donate his own brain for NFL concussion research after he dies.

The 32-year-old Winston has played 10 NFL seasons with four NFL teams and is currently a member of the Cincinnati Bengals.

"It's an 'if I don't need it and can do some good for somebody else, then I'm all for it' kind of thing," Winston recently told reporters. "I wouldn't say that I was thinking about it for a long time. I thought about it and just thought, 'This could be a good idea. This is something that could help.'"

Concussion research efforts have increased in recent years as doctors try to understand CTE, which stands for chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

The effects of repeated blows to the head are believed to be the major cause. Among the notable football players diagnosed posthumously with CTE is Hall of Famer Junior Seau, who shot himself to death in 2012.



Seau

Winston emphasized he isn't experiencing symptoms. He just feels donating his brain for study is the right thing to do in regards of future players.

"There's a host of reasons that it's good for a lot of guys, even if you're not showing symptoms, to donate your brain because there's guys who think they're healthy or are healthy, and obviously there's guys that aren't and we've been getting a lot of those," Winston said. "Knowing what we all know now, you can't help but think, 'Gosh, I wonder if that's going to be me in 20 years or 30 years.'"

Broncos' bus involved in minor accident

A Denver Broncos' team bus was involved in a minor traffic accident on Monday.

The accident occurred at 1:47 p.m. PST on Highway 101 in Mountain View as the team was returning to its hotel in Santa Clara. The crash also involved a California Highway Patrol motorcycle officer, according to reports.

A Broncos' spokesman released a statement saying nobody was injured. Further details weren't immediately available.

Denver is practicing at nearby Stanford for its Super Bowl 50 contest against the Carolina Panthers. The team had just concluded its workout before the crash.

Betting

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Except at Nevada's casinos, where regulators keep a close eye on the action. Gamblers placed \$116 million in bets on the Super Bowl last year through the casinos' sports books, according to the Nevada Gaming Control Board.

The New England Patriots defeated the Seattle Seahawks in that game, 28-24. But untold millions of dollars changed hands among bettors in the final minute when, just as Seattle appeared set to score the go-ahead touchdown, New England's Malcolm Butler intercepted a pass to preserve the Patriots' victory.

The amount wagered in Nevada last year was down 3 percent from the record \$119.4 million bet on the Super Bowl

in 2014. But the betting volume generally has increased in recent years in step with the U.S. economy's improvement from the severe recession.

Super Bowl gambling at the Nevada sports books has more than doubled in the last 22 years. The figure was \$54.5 million in 1994 when the Dallas Cowboys defeated the Buffalo Bills, 30-13.

That's not surprising because the Super Bowl itself "has become so much of a social and cultural event for Americans," said David Schwartz, director of the Center for Gaming Research at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

A record 114.4 million Americans watched last year's game, and "there's just a sense of the atmosphere around it, it's almost like a holiday," Schwartz said.

Just as many people watch the game mainly to see the new TV commercials, placing

a bet also is widely considered part of the festivities, he said.

But for those betting at Nevada's casinos, wagering on sports generally has one of the lowest winning percentages compared with other forms of gambling, gaming board figures show.

Sports' winning percentage was 5.8 percent last year, compared with 18 percent for roulette and 12 percent for blackjack. Even slot machines, with an average winning percentage of 6.4 percent, have a better payout than sports.

The American Gaming Association started estimating the total amount of Super Bowl gambling last year mainly to raise awareness of

how much illegal gambling occurs and whether state and federal gaming laws need to be changed.

The group's purpose, after all, is to represent the legal casino industry and funnel more betting its way. But Moyer said the effort was aimed more toward curbing large-scale illegal betting. "We're not talking about those harmless office pools" that are "relatively low-dollar figures and fun," he said.

There is no federal law against making bets on sports, but about half the states "have ancient laws on the books saying you can't make a bet," said I. Nelson Rose, a law professor and gaming expert at Whittier Law School.

Those laws "of course are

never enforced" at places such as bars and backyard Super Bowl parties, he said. Betting on horse racing is legal because it's "expressly carved out on the federal and state level" to allow parimutuel gambling, Rose said.

Some of those state laws also are now being tested by the increasingly popular daily fantasy sports business, led by DraftKings and FanDuel. But those companies maintain that their contests are games of skill and not gambling.

Fantasy entrants draft professional athletes for their virtual teams and then, using points based on the athletes' real-world performances, calculate how their virtual teams finish.

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