

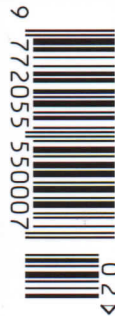
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Homelessness and The Ashley Foundation

★ Megan Morris - World Champion ★

Brandon Taylorian and his philosophy known as Astronism

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MEGAN MORRIS – World Champion

by Andrew Harris



Megan Morris in the ring



This is the story of a 20-year old Lancashire lass from Samlesbury who has gone from novice to world champion in just three years. In Bahrain last November Megan Morris won the Female Junior Flyweight Mixed Martial Arts World Championship. A spectacular achievement – but what is mixed martial arts?

Mixed Martial Arts is a full-contact combat sport that allows striking and grappling, both standing and on the ground, using techniques from various sports and martial arts. MMA – as it is often known – can trace its origins to Ancient Greece when the sport of pankration featured a combination of grappling and striking skills which are features of the modern sport. Similar

contests have been held in several far east countries for many years but in western countries it wasn't until the late 1960s and early 1970s that this type of sport was popularised by Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do. The first use of the term Mixed Martial Arts was in 1993 then it was adopted by the Ultimate Fighting Championships in 1995. It became increasingly popular and the US Army recognised mixed martial arts in 2005 when it began annual Army Combatives Championships.

Techniques used in MMA competitions generally fall into two categories: *striking* using kicks, knees, punches and elbows and *grappling* by throws, takedowns, sweeps as well as clinch, pinning and submission holds. Like most sports it has



Megan celebrates winning

a language all its own with tactics such as sprawl-and-bawl, ground-and-pound, submission-seeking, score-oriented fighting and clinch-fighting. Some of these terms are self-explanatory and painful. As a result injury rates for MMA are higher than other full-contact combat sports such as judo, taekwondo, and boxing. It has been calculated that there are about 228 injuries for every 1,000 appearances by MMA fighters.

The International Mixed Martial Arts Federation was formed in 2012 to regulate and promote the sport. The IMMAF held its first Amateur World Championship on Las Vegas USA in 2014. Since then there has been an explosion of interest in MMA which has been referred to as the world's fastest growing sport. The IMMAF is working to support this expansion and gain worldwide recognition for mixed martial arts – ultimately as an Olympic sport.

Megan's martial arts club is Blackburn Predators which meets in Chadwick Street Mill in the town. The club offers training for people wanting to get fit, improve their self-defence skills or compete in top shows and championships. Head Coach Rob Freeman has over 20 years experience in MMA and submission grappling and is keen to helping others to improve their mixed martial arts skills. For more information call 07584 071557 or visit www.blackburn-mma.co.uk. There are other clubs teaching MMA in Blackpool, Chorley, Preston, Liverpool and Wigan

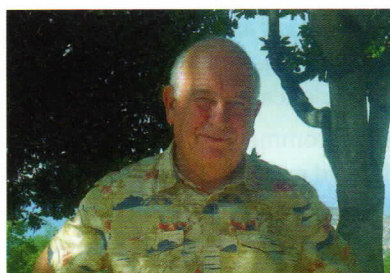
Mixed Martial Arts skills have changed Megan. In three years from the age of 17 she was bound to change from a girl to a woman but her quiet self-confidence has grown much more. She was aspiring to a relatively predictable career in the army or police after studying public services and gaining a diploma but then came MMA. Today Megan is planning to compete in the IMMAF European Championships in Ireland later this year and is looking forward to the next World Championships – in Bahrain again – when she can face even



The winner is always interviewed

stronger opponents in the senior categories. After winning 5 of her last 7 fights and now the Female Junior Flyweight World Championship she can consider going professional as the sport increasingly attracts sponsorship with the potential to make it a lucrative career.

Lancashire and the North West – and her family - can be proud of Megan. More importantly, Megan can be proud of herself and look forward to competing in the sport she loves. We wish her every success!



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