



THE CHAMPIONS FIGHT IT OUT: BJJ vs. Boxing

by **Daynin Dashefsky**

This was a night of firsts for Extreme Wars X-2 promoter **Chad Tsuneyoshi** of Honolulu, Hawaii. He broke the mold in October at the Oakland Coliseum by launching the first-ever live, online MMA event via HDTV through their website: www.MMAHawaii.com. In addition, they also featured their first female champions bout on the card.

At 30 years old, it was 2006 Pan American champion **Lana Stefanac** facing off against 36-year-old, three-time World Champion boxer **Martha Salazar**. This was no small matchup, as both athletes weighed in at 237 pounds with Lana having a one-inch lead over her opponent. Would the art of champion BJJ defeat champion boxing?

When the bell rang, there was no question that Lana was determined to keep her perfect record by leaving the ring at 29-0. Martha got in a few good punches and a kick or two, but it didn't seem to bother Lana much. Lana continued to go head to head with Martha at her own game, but when the boxer caught Lana with a solid right hook to the face, it was time for the BJJ phenom to stop playing around and finish the fight. She rushed into Martha and submitted her with a guillotine to win the match in the first round.

What amazed me was that before and after the fight, these women were very friendly and non-threatened by one another. They truly looked at themselves as professional athletes with nothing to prove except in the ring. Although I interviewed both girls extensively, it was Lana who surprised me when I asked her some very point blank questions about women in fighting. As a woman in this industry, I have heard every kind of comment about women and decided to give Lana a shot at answering one of these unfair and down-right rude stereotypes given women by men.

In a very male-dominated sport, women are commonly viewed by their fellow counterparts as being one of two types

of women. 1) If they look decent enough, based on a male standard, then they must be in the sport to check out the guys. 2) If they are really good at the sport, then they look like men and are not feminine in any way. Based on these types of stereotypes, I asked Lana what she thought.

Lana explained that, like men in the fighting industry, you will find attractive women and not-so-attractive women, but both types can make very good athletes. She also explained that for a woman to take her sport as seriously as a man, she will have to train as hard as a man. She continued to explain that, like a man, a woman's body will change when she does this kind of extensive training and dieting. She continued to say that being the best requires sacrifice. Although it seems she has to sacrifice some of her physical femininity to be the best, it doesn't change who she is inside, and that is good enough for her and the people who care about her. As for everyone else, they don't matter.

It just goes to show that the double standard is still alive and well. If men can realize and appreciate the fact that women can love this sport for the very same reasons they do, they might start learning to appreciate why women want to compete and be the best they can be within this sport. Hopefully then, men can respect women as fellow athletes the same way they are accepted and respected in sports like marathons, tennis, golf, volleyball, gymnastics, skiing, biking, etc.

If you want to view Lana and Martha's fight photos, along with the other bouts from the Oakland X2-Wars event, visit my website at www.Daynin.com. As usual, you can e-mail me at Daynin@Daynin.com with any comments or suggestions on future articles.