

The new face of MMA in OC



Owner Forrest Parkinson puts some final touches on the mixed martial arts cage area. The bag with handles is used for grappling/throwing practice and ground and pound. The floor is firm and not too squishy, allowing for precise movement while still providing a safe surface to fall.

Photos by David Beasley The Clackamas Print

A Duck fan at Civil War

Zak Laster
Ad Manager

For anyone who loves attending live sporting events, there is no greater experience than spending a fall day watching the Oregon Ducks at Eugene's Autzen Stadium, known as the place where opponents go to die.

Every year, the hottest ticket is the game against the Oregon State Beavers known as the Civil War. It is tied for the fourth longest rivalry in the Football Bowl Subdivision, playing since 1894. During this season's Civil War, on Friday Nov. 29, the Oregon Ducks defeated the Oregon State Beavers, 36-35 in a wild back-and-forth game.

Civil War week is the one week out of the year where the state is divided. You're either a fan of the green and yellow, rooting for the Ducks or the orange and black, rooting for the Beavers. Being at the game is an experience all fans of the rivalry need to experience at least once in their lives. It's more than just a football game, it's a giant party.

With the Autzen parking lot open four hours prior to kickoff, it is best to get there right when the gates open, if you're lucky enough to get a parking pass. With the addition of a baseball stadium in recent years, the tailgating area has really shrunk, making it that much harder to find a spot. If you're able to get one however, there's so much you can do. It's definitely recommended that once you get settled, crack open a cold one and take a walk throughout the tailgate lot. Duck fans are always willing to talk to you and welcome you to their party. The marching band will also walk throughout the parking lot with Puddles the mascot. If you're lucky, you can usually get a picture with him!

Three hours prior to kickoff, the University of Oregon turns their practice facility into a giant tailgate party for fans to sit, buy food and drinks, and watch football going on in other parts of the country. When the football team arrives, the fans get together to create an alley way from one exit to the other. The players, coaches, and members of the marching band walk through the fan-made alley, high-fiving fans and sometimes even stopping for a quick picture.

Once kickoff for the Civil War is close, there's an excitement and energy in the stadium that cannot be matched anywhere in the country. After the national anthem is played, there is a highlight video shown up on the Jumbotron, which at Autzen is called DuckVision. This really gets the crowd pumped up just in time for the players to come running onto the field, led by Puddles the Duck riding on the back of a Harley Davidson motorcycle. When that engine gets revved up, the crowd hits a volume level that rivals the sound of standing directly beside a jet engine. With the Civil War being the final home game of the season, it is senior day where the seniors are individually recognized for their four-year playing career. It's a great thing to watch the players have their moment.

This season's Civil War was especially close. The Beavers would take a 35-30 lead with 1:38 remaining, and Beaver fans everywhere were beginning to believe that this was going to be the year they broke their losing streak to the Ducks. The Beavers hadn't beaten the Ducks since 2007.

However, Marcus Mariota, quarterback for the Ducks, lead his team to a game-winning touchdown pass to receiver Josh Huff with 29 seconds left to seal their sixth straight victory over the Beavers. When Huff caught the pass, Autzen Stadium was the loudest it's been in years. Fans were hugging people they didn't even know and were jumping up and down all over the stadium. As the game clock went to zero, fans stormed the field and celebrated the hard-fought close victory late into the night.

Watching a game at Autzen Stadium, and witnessing a scene like the one last Friday night is something all college football fans should do if they have the opportunity. There's nothing better than a game day at Autzen in the fall.

David Beasley
Sports Editor

Oregon City was the end of the Oregon Trail in the early 1800s. Pioneers and frontiersmen traveled from across the country to take part in the economic hub of the West. Now martial artists and athletes from the city and surrounding areas can convene at a hub of their own. Pyramid Sports Training Mixed Martial Arts Academy is the newest addition to historic downtown OC.

Located at 1401 Washington St., the new gym brings a much needed diversity to the local martial arts community. Practitioners of all martial arts have a place they can exchange ideas with others and become more well-rounded combatants.

"I just want to give fighters a home," said owner and head instructor Forrest Parkinson. "I want this to be a one-stop shop for mixed martial arts."

Parkinson teaches the MMA class for adults, kids and young adults. He is a brown belt in Taekwondo and taught it for one and a half years. Parkinson taught Krav Maga for two and a half years. He is also brown belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu under Pedro Souer. Parkinson also has wrestling experience.

His father Keith Parkinson is part owner of the gym along with Isidro Sanchez. Parkinson senior is a U.S. Olympic weightlifting coach; he worked with college and pro athletes on speed agility quickness, SAQ. Sanchez is a black belt instructor in Krav Maga and he is a second degree black belt in Taekwondo.

Ryan Carr is also a black belt in Taekwondo and is a nutritionist; he will join the staff along with another certified BJJ instructor. Pepsi worked out a deal to sponsor the gym, helping with signs, donating Gatorade, waters and juice.

"Painting expenses were \$6,000 over budget," said Parkinson. "The last thing will be a platform [hanging] from ceiling for focus bags."

Talesha Wood, Parkinson's fiancé, painted the majority of the back rooms.

"We scraped the ceiling and sanded and spray painted, it was very hard," said Wood. "Scraping was the hardest and keeping him [Parkinson] together. I knew one way or another he'd get what he wanted."

According to Woods, they had looked at three different places before deciding on this one.

"I'm excited about this place because I can start practicing self-defense," said Wood. "We can keep it all family and friends and none of us are greedy. We've made so many new friends."

Membership dues will start at \$99 a month for regular classes and go up to \$200 a month for fighters until they compete. Then training will be free. Punch card options are also available. The 80-year-old building has given them challenges as they wanted to be open Nov. 1. The new gym is already home to five local fighters, including two women.

"I want to give women fighters a place to feel comfortable and not be treated differently," said Parkinson.

Amateur female fighter Kacey Schreiber has a record of 3-0 and will fight for Pyramid. Amateur male fighter Jordan Carstensen has a record of 1-0 and will also fight for Pyramid.

Also fighting for Pyramid will be amateur Boxer/MMA fighter Jon Connors who has a record of 3-1 in MMA and 4-0 in boxing. The training and curriculum will not involve testing, but instead will focus on performance-based rankings, much like Jiu Jitsu. Kajukenbo will have belt system. Curtis Frost Jr. is a U.S. Boxing coach who knows his stuff.

The gym has a very convenient amenity, a shower and also two bathrooms. They will also have lockers. Patrons can take a load-off in the lounge area, which features a couch and a TV.

Pyramid has a myriad of good equipment, including a great mat for grappling and a cage wall to practice against.

"If you train safe and smart, nobody gets hurt," said Parkinson.

Carstensen works across the street at Spicer Bros. and saw the sign one day.

"The sign said Pyramid MMA," said Carstensen. "I've had a little experience in MMA so I thought I'd check it out."

Carstensen aspires to be an instructor some day.

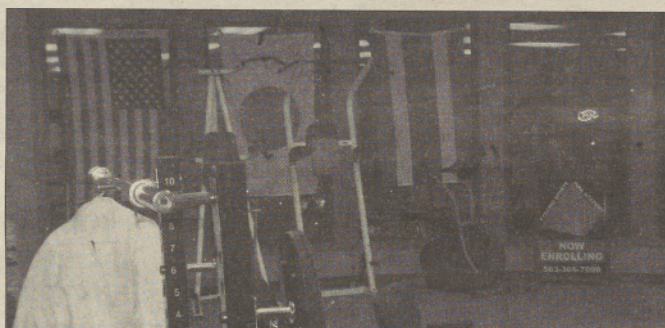
"First fighting and see how I do and maybe coach," said Carstensen.

He lists his strength as Jiu Jitsu.

"I need to work on my mentality for competing," said Carstensen. "I had one fight, [won] 45 second TKO at the Washington Fisticuffs Gym event."

He looks forward to his second fight.

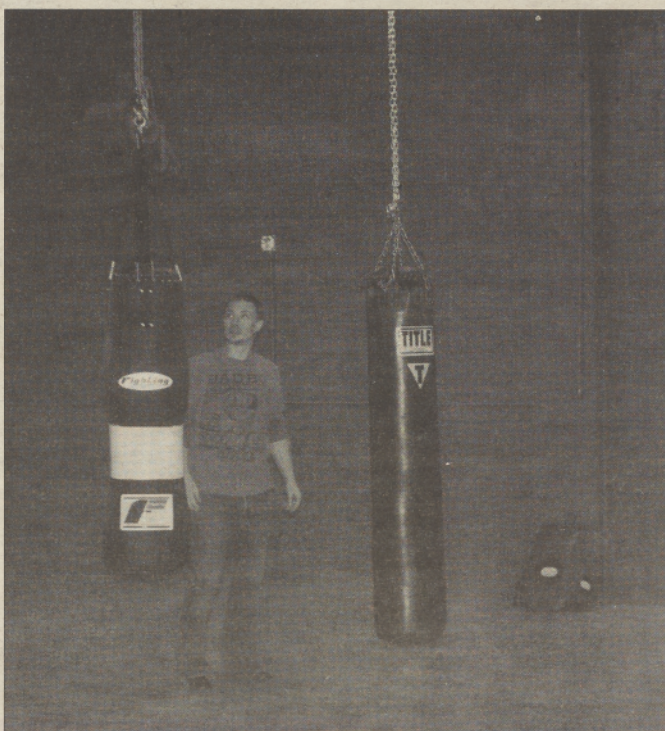
With a good stable of fighters growing and qualified instructors available, the new gym has a bit to offer and if things go well it could turn into a local mecca of martial arts and sports training.



The front foyer welcomes students and features weight training equipment. Various national flags are displayed in honor of the many arts in MMA.



Parkinson demonstrates technique on his speed bags. Students practice targeting, refine speed, reflexes and rhythm with the speed bags. U.S. Boxing coach Curtis Frost Jr. is the head boxing instructor for Pyramid.



Parkinson tests out his heavy bags. The bags hang over the hardwood floor in the striking practice area. On the sturdy, raised platform, students practice combinations and hitting techniques on the heavy bags, focus pads, kicking shields and speed bags.