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Pulver again hints at retirement after loss

Ex-UFC lightweight champ emotional after fifth straight cagefighting defeat

By ADAM HILL
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

After being submitted in the first round for the third consecutive time, World Extreme Cagefighting featherweight Jens Pulver delivered a tearful speech to his fans.

The former Ultimate Fighting Championship lightweight champion seemed to indicate that he was ready to end his mixed martial arts career, something he also did in June after his previous loss.

Not that he didn't once again leave the door open to a return.

"I don't know how many more times I can cry in front of (the fans). I love y'all way too much to keep putting you through this," the 35-year-old said Saturday night at WEC 47 in Columbus, Ohio. "I'll never say (I'm done), but I love you all way, way, way too much to put you through this again. You guys have made my life a miracle. You're the only reason I've been doing this from day one."

Pulver became the first UFC lightweight champion by beating Caol Uno in 2001. He vacated the belt after two successful defenses when he left the organization in 2002 in a contractual dispute.

He has lost his past five WEC fights, all against top-flight competitors, and seven of his past eight overall.

Pulver published his autobiography, "Little Evil: One Ultimate Fighter's Rise to the Top," in 2003. The book details the fighter's upbringing in a violent home and eventual rise to MMA stardom.

He also served as a coach on Season 5 of "The Ultimate Fighter."

■ **STRIKEFORCE RETURNS TO CBS** -- Strikeforce announced its plans to return to CBS for a live prime-time card in Nashville, Tenn., on April 17, but the move could spark a chess match with the UFC.

The UFC has indicated it could put together a live card for the same night to be aired on Spike. The organization has counter-programmed its rivals in the past.

Strikeforce, in turn, has not refuted the possibility that it could counter the move by pushing back its card to April 24, which would put it in direct conflict with the first pay-per-view event of the UFC-owned World Extreme Cagefighting organization.

Strikeforce plans three title fights for the card, including former UFC star Dan Henderson challenging Jake Shields for the middleweight belt.

Several reports indicated the UFC planned a James Toney-Kimbo Slice bout for the April 17 date, but the organization announced Monday that Slice will fight Matt Mitrione on May 8 at UFC 113.

Representatives for Strikeforce and the UFC did not return requests for official comment.

■ **SWICK TO BE SCOPED** -- UFC welterweight Mike Swick spent his Monday morning having a doctor examine his left elbow.

He provided his 13,000 or so followers a play-by-play of the experience on Twitter, saying he has bone spurs and fragments, inflammation of the area and possible nerve damage, while posting the X-ray.

Swick also posted that he will have the elbow scoped as early as next week and might need to have a nerve rerouted. He says it will require four weeks of stretching and rehabilitation and that he can "ease back to training on it" in six to eight weeks.

The once-rising welterweight prospect has suffered two losses and the injury since November.

"Last 6 months has been a big kick in the (expletive) but its what makes u stronger," he posted. "It can always be worse. Gotta stay positive & push forward!"

■ **VARNER FIGHT OFF** -- Former WEC lightweight champion Jamie Varner will not be in action on the organization's first pay-per-view card on April 24.

Kamal Shalorus sustained an injury in training and has been scratched as Varner's opponent. The rest of the contenders in the division already are tied up in fights, so Varner will have to wait.

Contact reporter Adam Hill at ahill@reviewjournal.com or 702-224-5509.

Find this article at:

<http://www.lvrj.com/sports/pulver-again-hints-at-retirement-after-loss-87100232.html>

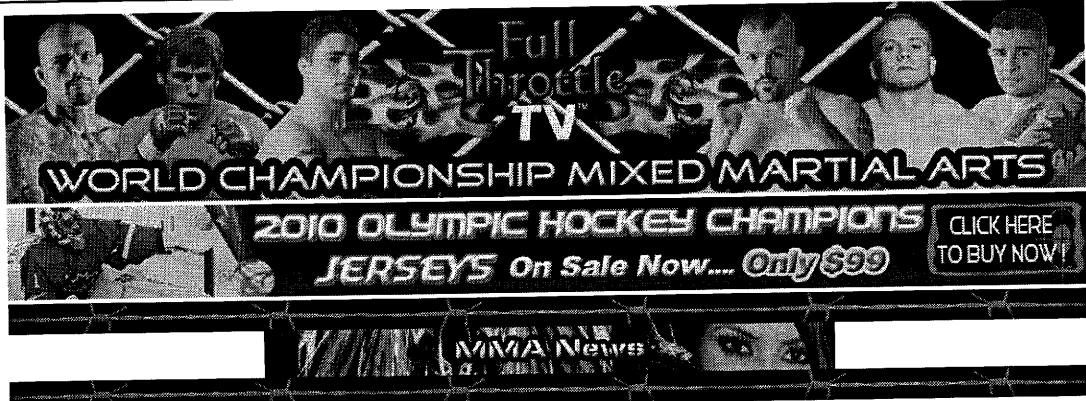
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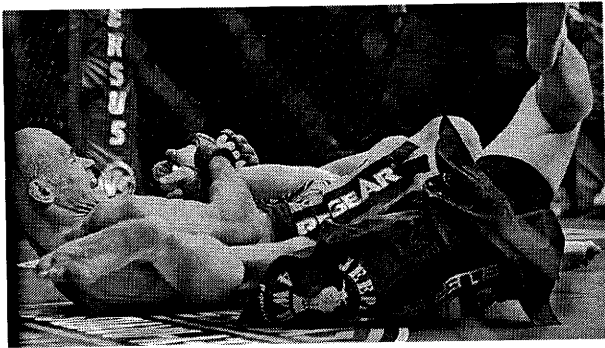
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