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## Anchorage fighter heading to the octagon in Vegas

By ANDREW HINKELMAN  
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A day before his son Isaiah turned 1 year old, Anchorage mixed martial arts fighter Doug Evans got the call every MMA combatant wants to hear:

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The Ultimate Fighting Championship wanted him to fight in the season finale of UFC's reality series, "The Ultimate Fighter 5."

For Evans, this was the hoped-for callup from the minor league Alaska Fighting Championship to

the big league UFC.

"Most every fighter that gets in the octagon anywhere, their dream is to make it to UFC one way or another," he said.

The call came June 7. June 8 was the younger Evans' birthday. On June 22, Doug and Heather Evans will celebrate their sixth wedding anniversary.

And on June 23, Doug Evans will fight UFC star-in-the-making and Sports Illustrated cover boy Roger Huerta in Las Vegas on Spike TV (cable Channel 38) to cap off a whirlwind



MARC LESTER / Anchorage Daily News

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Joel Dulatre tries to land a punch on Justin Hatton in a middleweight match June 14, 2007, at Sullivan Arena. Hatton won despite being knocked down a couple of times.

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month.

"We've been working with these guys to get in there, and a lot of times yeah, that's how it is," Evans said Thursday night during AFC 36 at Sullivan Arena where Brian Ryan defended his heavyweight title with a second-round knockout of Joe Fonoti. "Your first time around it's like you're pretty much a standby guy.

"They use you to build other guys up. Like this guy. He's a vet, he was on the cover of Sports Illustrated. He's also referred to (by some) as the Oscar de la Hoya of MMA.

"I have a feeling they're trying to build him up, but he doesn't know what I have in store for him, he doesn't know what I can do," Evans said.

Evans, who holds the lightweight title belt in AFC with a perfect 5-0 record (he also won a fight in Kenai under a different governing body), has only been fighting MMA a little over a year.

A wrestler since he was 7, Evans' biography on the UFC Web site says he is a seven- time Alaska state champion in freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling. He went on to coach the sport after graduating from Bartlett.

"I was helping a buddy out who was going to fight here, showing him some wrestling (moves)," Evans said. Before I knew it, I was fighting."

He made his debut in May of last year and got a quick win by choking out his opponent. His last fight was last month, when he beat Mike Joy in a unanimous decision.

"This has been a really quick, fast ride," said Evans, who moved to Anchorage as a young teen when his Air Force dad was transferred here. "I can't even say it was a hard struggle or anything. I just trained my butt off six days a week year-round, and the hard work paid off.

"I can only imagine how I'll be in another four or five years."

Of more immediate concern is his fight next Saturday against Huerta, who sports a 3-0 record in UFC.

"I'm not too pleased with having that short a time (to prepare)," Evans said. "I don't feel like I'm at where I need to be for this level of fighting.

"But on the other hand, you don't turn (UFC) down because they may not call back. As long as I get out there and display heart and put on a good show for them, I'm sure they'll call

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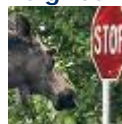
Beagle talks about being back at Sullivan Arena playing against former UAA teammate Justin Bourne.

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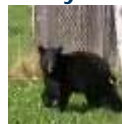
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Evans, 26, provides an interesting counterpoint to the animalistic bloodlust of MMA fighting.

He talks of using his platform as a fighter to showcase his faith.

"I like to glorify the name of the lord," he said. "Being a Christian, I want to show the love and faithfulness of Jesus Christ. That's most important, always.

"It's just a thrill to be able to move up to this level and reach more people."

At first, it comes across as an incompatible dichotomy -- the love-thy-neighbor teachings of Christ and the beat-the-other-guy-into-submission mentality of fighting.

"No, because it's not a mean, angry thing," Evans countered. "I don't hate the person I'm fighting. I respect every guy that steps in there. It takes a lot of nerves, training and guts.

"God needs somebody in every walk of life, and I really feel like this is my walk. It's a good way to be a tool for him.

"It's really not as barbaric as people think it is," Evans continued. "Most of us are very well-spoken, polite people who love the competitiveness of it."

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