

Willamette River Rumble

Oregon City's Jake Morris makes short work of West Linn's John Bartlett to win his first mixed martial arts title at the Roseland on Saturday night.

BY MATTHEW GRAHAM

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JAIME VALDEZ / CLACKAMAS REVIEW

Jake Morris after his title fight victory at Saturday's Rumble at the Roseland.

Oregon City's golden boy of wrestling is now the region's golden boy of cage fighting, at least in the lightweight division.

Jake Morris, at just 18 years old and after a run of five undefeated fights, now holds the title for the Portland-based Full Contact Fighting Federation.

The title match on Saturday was all hype, with Morris challenging John Bartlett of West Linn. Promoters pumped the two cities' rivalry and it was the featured match of the night. But after 40 seconds in the ring, there was little question of the outcome.

Morris opened the bout with the same ferocity he showed two months ago, when he won his third match by breaking his opponent's jaw.

Morris lunged at Bartlett, who also placed in the state tournament while wrestling at West Linn, throwing a right hook with his pile-driver arms with such commitment and momentum that he stumbled over. But Bartlett retreated too much to take advantage of the opportunity.

Morris then lunged at Bartlett, grabbing him around the waist and driving him to the corner where, after 11 seconds of scrambling, Morris came out with Bartlett's head locked in his arms. He slammed Bartlett down on the ground and held him there for 25 seconds before flipping around and getting another choke hold from behind. Eighteen seconds later, and only a minute and 20 seconds into the match, Bartlett tapped out, and Oregon City took home the belt.

Morris was happy and confident, but surprised as well.

"It was quicker than I thought it was going to be," he said. "I thought it was going to be a decision, more of a pound-to-the-ground type fight ... I had him in my legs, I had him in a choke, but it wasn't a very high success rate (choke), so I flipped him around."

An 'inspiration'

The Roseland Theater, which hosted Rumble at the Roseland 45, was filled with Oregon City supporters, including Morris's family, friends and sponsors. John Guyette is with Islands Tanning, Morris' main sponsor, and said Morris is such an inspiration and has such integrity as a person that he asked Morris to train his son.

"Everything about him is motivation," Guyette said. "I have him come to my house four times a week to train my son. He's as much a motivation outside the ring as in. When he comes to my house, when he leaves my house my son talks about him for hours."

Jake's dad, Kurt Morris, was also a state-placing wrestler in high school. He said he was pumped about watching his son fight and said he and his wife back up Jake in whatever he does. And although they support him with mixed martial arts, they also made sure he thought further out than the immediate glory.

"He isn't going to be able to live off this," Kurt Morris said. "I want him to get his degree, but he likes (fighting). He's going to college, he got a full ride (to **Clackamas Community College**)."

Looking toward the future

While Jake Morris was happy with the result and with wearing the belt, it's just the beginning for him.

"It's just a stepping stone," he said. "I'm not here just to be the FCFF champ."

He said he's probably going to defend the belt at the next FCFF rumble in September and then take some time off to focus on wrestling for CCC.

"I've already had five fights in six months, most people only do four or five fights a year," he said.

But he said now that he holds the belt and no one's lasted more than a round in the ring with him, he'll be looking to go pro in the next couple of years.