

# Upstart Holm upsets champ Rousey to take women's ultimate fight title

By Los Angeles Times, adapted by Newsela staff on 11.19.15

Word Count **925**



Mixed martial arts fighter Ronda Rousey trains at the Glendale Fighting Club in Glendale, California, July 15, 2015. Photo: AP/Jae C. Hong

Mixed martial artist Holly Holm's smart training program created a Sunday destruction of Ronda Rousey in Melbourne, Australia. Never before had Rousey been beaten, and she was thought to be unbeatable.

Holm was in great shape from training in the high altitude of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Holm thrived when Rousey tried a highly flawed fight plan of a stand-up bout, instead of trying to fight on the mat. Holm stunned the sporting world with a second-round knockout victory over Rousey in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) women's bantamweight title bout, with both fighters weighing under the 135-pound limit.

Rousey was sent to a hospital for stitches in her cut lip, and although a CT brain scan was negative, she remained in the hospital overnight, according to a UFC spokesman.

She sent an Instagram message that said, “I appreciate the concerns about my health, but I’m fine. As I had mentioned before, I’m going to take a little bit of time, but I’ll be back.”

## **Boxing-Mixed Martial Arts Rivalry Renewed**

Holm became the first former boxing world champion to collect a UFC belt, and she re-ignited the rivalry between boxing and mixed martial arts. The Ultimate Fighting Championship features mixed martial artists, while boxing is a separate sport.

“Everything we worked on ended up being used,” Holm (10-0) said after the fight, which drew 56,214 people to Etihad Stadium.

Rousey, 28, is six years younger than Holm, but she appeared exhausted by the end of the first round. She badly missed with a punch that Holm ducked and was repeatedly hit by Holm’s left hand, including one punch that set up the knockout left kick to the head.

## **Upset Follows Three Swift Wins**

Physical conditioning hadn’t been a worry for Rousey going into the match. In Rousey’s three fights before facing Holm, she needed only 64 combined seconds to finish off Alexis Davis, Cat Zingano and Bethe Correia, three other mixed martial artists who compete in the UFC. These speedy wins made her one of the best-known sports personalities in the world.

“I have a lot of respect for Ronda,” Holm said. “This wouldn’t have meant as much if it hadn’t been for what she has done. She’s been imposing her will on everybody. She tried the hip-toss, the arm bar. I just wanted to stay focused. We did this in practice. I (knew I) could do it again.”

Holm’s track record of deciphering talented fighters continues. Holm wasn’t only a former boxing champion who had 38 fights, she had pro kickboxing experience, and is unbeaten in MMA. She reported to Australia after a grueling camp that included five sessions of occasional workouts per day, sometimes leaving her in tears, she said.

“What Holly did hurt Ronda in a number of ways. Hurt her physically. Hurt her pride,” said Roy Englebrecht, a longtime Southern California boxing and MMA promoter.

## **Holm's Coach Not Surprised**

The man who scripted Holm’s performance, her striking coach Mike Winkeljohn, said of Rousey, “I figured we’d pick her apart little by little. It played out real well.

“Holly walked into my gym 17 years ago. Now, you’re going to come here and give the biggest upset in history in people’s minds ... not in our minds. We knew she could do it.”

Holm fought tears in post-fight interviews, saying, “I’ll probably have a few sleepless nights replaying everything that happened.”

In her first two UFC fights, Holm appeared sound but a bit cautious, winning both by a judge's decision, instead of by knockout.

“I wanted to move and be precise,” Holm said. “Not too cautious. I wanted to go forward in a smart way, not let her bum-rush me to the cage.”

## **Rematch On The Horizon**

UFC President Dana White said he’ll set up a rematch.

“Obviously ... biggest upset ever,” White said. “When you look at how Ronda is revered — baddest woman on the planet — definitely.”

White first leaned toward making Miesha Tate, the No. 1 contender, fight the bout against Rousey.

But conversations with matchmakers shifted the focus to Holm because Rousey had beaten Tate twice and because Holm, with her boxing know-how and slight height and reach advantage on Rousey, made for a more compelling fight.

“This is the fight I went after,” White said. “Holly, we said it at the time, had the range, uses her distance very well, has great head kicks. Everything we talked about is essentially what went down.

“Obviously, I thought Ronda would have more answers.”

## **Rousey Busy With Movie Project**

The stunning event came after Rousey, from Los Angeles, California, acted out of character by confronting Holm at the weigh-in a day earlier, charging at the challenger and labeling “the Preacher’s Daughter” a phony.

She has a movie project in the works, but the defeat was a sobering reminder of what generated such fame and where her focus should be.

“It’s been an interesting camp and a rough couple of months for her,” White said. “It’s impossible to say that doesn’t affect her. She’s the mentally strongest person I’ve ever met, a workhorse. If anybody can deal with it, it’s her.”

White said he originally planned for Rousey to fight at UFC 200 in July. Rousey’s past success qualifies her for an immediate rematch against Holm if she wants it, White said, but he would not commit to a date.

“I don’t think there’s any rush,” White said. “She still has a movie to film, doing all the things she has to do before she fights again. I wouldn’t (expect) her back any time soon.”

## Quiz

- 1 Which of these sentences from the article would be MOST important to include in its summary?
- (A) Holm was in great shape from training in the high altitude of Albuquerque, New Mexico.
  - (B) Never before had Rousey been beaten, and she was thought to be unbeatable.
  - (C) Rousey was sent to a hospital for stitches in her cut lip, and although a CT brain scan was negative, she remained in the hospital overnight.
  - (D) She sent an Instagram message that said, "I appreciate the concerns about my health, but I'm fine."
- 2 Read the central idea from the article.

*Rousey's style of fighting and many victories had made her a clear favorite to win the match with Holm.*

Which sentence from the article BEST supports the above central idea?

- (A) Rousey was sent to a hospital for stitches in her cut lip, and although a CT brain scan was negative, she remained in the hospital overnight, according to a UFC spokesman.
- (B) In Rousey's three fights before facing Holm, she needed only 64 combined seconds to finish off Alexis Davis, Cat Zingano and Bethe Correia, three other mixed martial artists who compete in the UFC.
- (C) The stunning event came after Rousey, from Los Angeles, California, acted out of character by confronting Holm at the weigh-in a day earlier, charging at the challenger and labeling "the Preacher's Daughter" a phony.
- (D) Rousey's past success qualifies her for an immediate rematch against Holm if she wants it, White said, but he wouldn't commit to a date.

- 3 Read the sentence from the section "Rousey Busy With Movie Project."

*She has a movie project in the works, but the defeat was a sobering reminder of what generated such fame and where her focus should be.*

Which of the following words from the article provides a clue to the meaning of the word "sobering"?

- (A) project
  - (B) defeat
  - (C) reminder
  - (D) generated
- 4 Read the sentence from the section "Rematch On The Horizon."

*White first leaned toward making Miesha Tate, the No. 1 contender, fight the bout against Rousey.*

The author uses the word "contender" to mean:

- (A) victor
- (B) concern
- (C) supporter
- (D) competitor