

MMA Fighters who Wrestled

Here are a few:

Shonie Carter, Triton College – Carter is 34 years old and has fought a staggering 86 MMA bouts. One source lists him as an NJCAA All-American.

Randy Couture, Oklahoma State – A 43 year-old former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion, Couture was a three-time NCAA Division 1 All-American and a three-time Greco-Roman USA National Champion.

Marvin Eastman, Merced Community College – One source lists him as a two-time All-American, presumably at the junior college level. Merced no longer has a wrestling team.

Rashad Evans, Niagara-Westfield and Michigan State – Rashad was an NJCAA National Champion before becoming a two-time NCAA Division 1 National Qualifier. In 2003, he eliminated then-reigning National Champion Greg Jones from the NCAA Division 1 National Tournament.

Urijah Faber, UC Davis, Currently holds the all-time win leader at UC Davis, two-time NCAA Division I qualifier, Freestyle National Runner-Up.

Drew Fickett, Pima Community College – In an interview, Fickett states, "I was hit by a truck and broke my knee and two bones in my foot...I spent like four years practicing in college, but I never really got to compete too much because of injury, and the lack of a red shirt I got." The 26 year-old is one of many MMA fighters who used the sport as a second chance of sorts when their college wrestling careers didn't work out for them.

Jon Fitch, Purdue – Fitch wrestled for five years at Purdue, but he never wrestled varsity at Big Tens.

Jesse Forbes, Pima Community College – One of a few ultimate fighters from this tiny college in Tucson, AZ, Forbes states on his UFC bio that he was an NJCAA All-American.

Matt Hamill, Rochester Institute of Technology – Hamill, now 29, was a three-time NCAA Division 3 Champion at RIT before going on to become a two-time World Champion freestyle wrestler.

Pat Healy, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville – Healy was a two-year starter for SIUE, but he never got out of his NCAA Division 2 Regional.

Dan Henderson, Arizona State University- 1993 NCAA Championships, Two-time CA HS State Placer for Victor Valley H.S., 1992 and 1996 Olympian (Greco-Roman Wrestling).

Jay Hieron, Iowa Community College, Nassau Community College, and Hofstra – He won an NJCAA National Championship, then transferred to Hofstra and finished 5th at NCAA Division 1 Nationals.

Brandon Lee Hinkle, West Liberty State – Now 33 years old, Hinkle was an NCAA Division 2 National Champion at West Liberty State before becoming the UFC Welterweight Champion in his first UFC appearance in 2001.

Roger Huerta, Augsburg – Roger went 5-6 in 2002-03 during his only season as a college wrestler. He did not crack the starting line-up for Regionals at NCAA Division 3 powerhouse Augsburg College.

Matt Hughes, Lincoln Community College and Eastern Illinois – Hughes was an NCAA Division 1 All-American twice at Eastern Illinois – and twice prior to that at the junior college level.

Solomon Hutcherson, Triton College – “I was an avid wrestler in freestyle and folkstyle, but due to personal problems I had to cut my wrestling career short,” explains “King” Solomon.

Josh Koscheck, Edinboro – “Kos” had four NCAA Division 1 All-American seasons – capped by a 42-0 National Championship season – for Edinboro. Josh is now a coach for the University of Buffalo.

Chuck "The Ice Man" Liddell, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo- Was the Captain of his high school football and wrestling team and was a Division I Wrestler at Cal Poly.

Terry Martin, Northern Illinois University (NIU) – The only stats we could find were that Terry went 2-4 in 2001-02, his senior year at NIU. (He likely wrestled there in previous years as well.)

Gan McGee, Cal Poly SLO – “The Giant” was a two-time NCAA Division 1 National Qualifier at heavyweight for the Mustangs, in 1998 and 1999.

Jeff Monson (23-5-0), Oregon State and Illinois – Monson lost out at the NCAA Division 1 National Tournament for OSU in 1992 before transferring to the U of I and making it to the Round of 12 in 1993.

Mark Munoz, Oklahoma State- Two-time All-American and 2001 National Champion, two-time Big-12 Champion, three-year member of the FILA Junior World Wrestling team earning Silver medal in 1998. Assistant Wrestling Coach UC Davis and Oklahoma State. Two-time California State Champion for Vallejo High School.

Josh Neer, Waldorf College – His College wrestling career wasn’t very productive. He explains, “I wrestled in college for a year, but I ended up breaking my nose in a fight, so I kind of got hurt half way through my first year at college, but I finished out the year.”

Jake O’Brien, Purdue – O’Brien wrestled at Purdue for two years, redshirting in 2003-04 and going 14-18 as a starter in his second season of 2004-05. Now 21, Jake states that has been focused on becoming an ultimate fighter since he was 12 years old.

Tito Ortiz, Golden West College, Cal-State Bakersfield – Tito’s a unique case, and not just because he calls himself “The Huntington Beach Bad Boy.” He won a California State Junior College Championship, and then he transferred to Cal State Bakersfield – where he served as a back-up to eventual the NCAA Division 1 National Champion, World Champion, and current New England Patriot, Stephen Neal.

Trevor Prangle, North Idaho College – Not only was Prangle a two-time NJCAA All-American for the Cardinals, but he was a South African National Champion in freestyle wrestling.

Chael Sonnen, Oregon – Sonnen won two University Nationals Championships and had an NCAA All-American season for the University of Oregon.

Nick Thompson, Wisconsin – Nick’s website states that he wrestled for the Badgers from 2000-2002.

Frank Trigg, Oklahoma, Phoenix College – Trigg went the opposite way of most wrestlers, beginning his career with the Sooners before transferring to a junior college. He went 53-1 at Phoenix and won the NJCAA Wrestling Sportsman of the Year Award in 1994 and later went on to be a 2000 Olympic Trials Finalist.

Mike Van Arsdale, Iowa State – Van Arsdale is a former National Champion, Olympic alternate and, perhaps most impressively, is still fighting at the age of 41.

Mike Whitehead, North Idaho College – One of three ex-wrestlers from this NJCAA powerhouse, Whitehead was an NJCAA All-American in 2001.

Travis Wiuff, Rochester Community & Technical College (RCTC) – Currently weighing in at just 205 pounds, the 28 year-old Wiuff finished 5th and 2nd at NJCAA Nationals in 1998 and 1999, respectively, at heavyweight.