

= Michael Johnson (fighter) =

Michael Julian Johnson (born June 4 , 1986) is an American mixed martial artist who competes in the lightweight division of the Ultimate Fighting Championship . A professional MMA competitor since 2008 , Johnson mostly competed in his regional circuit , before signing onto the Ultimate Fighting Championship to appear on The Ultimate Fighter : Team GSP vs. Team Koscheck . As of July 18 , 2016 , he is # 10 in the official UFC lightweight rankings .

= = Background = =

Born in St. Louis , Missouri , Johnson was raised as the youngest of three siblings . Johnson began fighting at the age of 10 , after his father 's fatal heart attack . The incident made Johnson want to exert his anger physically . Johnson later said , " I lost something , a huge part of me Fighting was my way of not dealing with my dad 's passing . Now that I think of it , of course , it was the wrong thing to do , especially putting all that burden on my mom having to deal with it . " Athletic , Johnson was a three @-@ sport varsity athlete at Marquette High School in Chesterfield , Missouri . Johnson later received a full scholarship to play football at Central Methodist University , but transferred after one year to Meramec Community College where he was one of the top NJCAA wrestlers in the country .

= = Mixed martial arts career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Johnson is a former Midwest Fight League and Xtreme Cage Fighting Champion who won those titles in July 2008 and October 2009 respectively .

= = = The Ultimate Fighter = = =

Johnson then signed onto the Ultimate Fighting Championship circuit to appear on The Ultimate Fighter : Team GSP vs. Team Koscheck .

Johnson 's entry onto the show was , in part , due to his persistence in attending tryouts for the show . After making the final interview round of The Ultimate Fighter : Team Nogueira vs. Team Mir , Johnson was told that he wasn 't the right fit for the show . Johnson then tried out for the ninth season of the show , before finally becoming accepted onto the twelfth season after telling the producers , " I 've been getting tired of chasing you [expletive] around the country . I 'm here ; I 'm not going to go anywhere . If you guys don 't pick me , I 'm going to try out again . " Finally , Johnson was signed .

Johnson 's first fight took place on the debut episode of the season , where he faced unbeaten Pablo Garza . Johnson scored a unanimous decision victory , which moved him into the house .

In the second episode , both St @-@ Pierre and Koscheck had Johnson at the top of their lists when it came time to select fighters . During the team selection process however , St @-@ Pierre created a fake list which did not have Johnson among his top selections , and subtly showed it to Koscheck to fool him into believing it . This seemed to manipulate Koscheck into picking Marc Stevens , as he may have believed he could take Johnson later . This allowed St @-@ Pierre to choose Johnson with the second overall pick .

Johnson competed in his preliminary round matchup against Aaron Wilkinson in the third episode . After some early striking exchanges in the first round , Wilkinson was able to take Johnson down and utilise ground @-@ and @-@ pound punches and elbows . In the second round , Johnson landed an early superman punch , as well as a takedown . After takedowns were achieved by both men , Johnson stuffed a final attempt and took the second round on the judges scorecards . In the sudden victory round , Johnson attacked quickly , which allowed him to end the fight via a rear

naked choke .

In episode 8 , Team GSP had to pick which team members would fight each other (considering they had 5 members in the quarter @-@ finals) . St. Pierre asked each member to pick the fighter they wanted to fight . Johnson and Alex Caceres picked each other and a fight was scheduled . Johnson won by unanimous decision after two rounds , earning himself a spot in the semi @-@ finals .

In the final round , Johnson faced the one remaining Team Koscheck member , Nam Phan . In a back @-@ and @-@ forth fight , Johnson scored takedowns . The consensus after the fight was that Johnson won the opening round , and Phan the second . The third was in dispute however , with each fighter 's coach convinced they had won the round . Johnson was declared the winner via split decision .

= = = Ultimate Fighting Championship = = =

Johnson made his UFC debut in the The Ultimate Fighter : Team GSP vs. Team Koscheck Finale against Jonathan Brookins . That fight determined the winner of The Ultimate Fighter 12 . After an impressive first round , Johnson lost rounds two and three ? and subsequently the fight ? via unanimous decision , leaving him the runner @-@ up .

Johnson was looking to take a fight outside of the UFC before returning to the promotion . The fight was to headline the North American Fighting Championship card against Jim Bleau . However , after obtaining a UFC fight , Johnson pulled out of the NAFC bout to focus his training on the UFC bout . Johnson faced Edward Faaloloto on June 26 , 2011 at UFC on Versus 4 and won the fight via TKO in the first round .

Johnson faced Paul Sass on October 1 , 2011 at UFC on Versus 6 . He lost the fight via submission in the first round .

Johnson was expected to face Cody McKenzie on January 28 , 2012 at UFC on Fox 2 . However , McKenzie was forced out of the bout with an injury and replaced by Shane Roller . Johnson defeated Roller by unanimous decision , with all three judges scoring the bout 29 @-@ 28 .

Johnson faced Tony Ferguson on May 5 , 2012 at UFC on Fox 3 , replacing an injured Thiago Tavares . He won the fight via unanimous decision .

Johnson was expected to face Danny Castillo on September 1 , 2012 at UFC 151 . However , after UFC 151 was cancelled , Johnson / Castillo was rescheduled and took place on October 5 , 2012 at UFC on FX 5 . After almost being finished in the first round , Johnson survived and came back to win via KO at 1 : 06 into the second round . Johnson was awarded Knockout of the Night honors for his performance .

Johnson fought Myles Jury on December 29 , 2012 at UFC 155 . He lost the fight via unanimous decision .

Johnson faced Reza Madadi on April 6 , 2013 at UFC on Fuel TV 9 . Despite almost finishing Madadi with a head kick in the first round , he eventually succumbed to the wrestling of Madadi and lost the fight via submission in the third round .

Johnson faced Joe Lauzon on August 17 , 2013 at UFC Fight Night 26 . He won the fight via unanimous decision after outstriking Lauzon for all three rounds .

Johnson faced Gleison Tibau on December 28 , 2013 at UFC 168 . He won the fight in impressive fashion ; winning via knockout in the second round .

Due to an injury to Ross Pearson , Johnson stepped in to face Melvin Guillard at UFC Fight Night 37 . Johnson won the fight via unanimous decision .

Johnson was expected to face Josh Thomson on July 26 , 2014 at UFC on Fox 12 . However , on July 11 , the UFC announced he had been pulled from the bout . It was later revealed that Johnson was pulled from the bout and would not compete during the remainder of 2014 following his arrest regarding a domestic dispute in Palm Beach County , Florida in April 2014 .

Johnson faced Edson Barboza on February 22 , 2015 at UFC Fight Night 61 . He won the bout by unanimous decision .

A bout with Benson Henderson was initially linked as the event headliner for The Ultimate Fighter

21 Finale on July 12 , 2015 . Although never officially announced by the UFC , the bout between Henderson and Johnson will not take place at this event .

Johnson faced Beneil Dariush on August 8 , 2015 at UFC Fight Night 73 . He lost the fight by split decision . Every mainstream MMA media outlet polled by MMA Decisions scored the fight as decision victory for Johnson .

Johnson faced Nate Diaz on December 19 , 2015 at UFC on Fox 17 . He lost the fight by unanimous decision . Both participants were awarded Fight of the Night honors .

A rematch with Tony Ferguson was expected to take place on March 5 , 2016 at UFC 196 . However , on January 27 , it was announced that Johnson withdrew from the bout due to injury .

Johnson is expected to face Dustin Poirier on September 17 , 2016 at UFC Fight Night 94 .

= = Personal life = =

Johnson trained at Springfield Fight Club , which is an affiliate of Gracie Barra based in Springfield , Missouri . Johnson also worked there as the assistant mixed martial arts coach .

= = Championships and accomplishments = =

Ultimate Fighting Championship

Fight of the Night (One time)

Knockout of the Night (One time)

Xtreme Cage Fighting

XCF Lightweight Championship (One time)

Midwest Fight League

MFL Lightweight Championship (One time)

= = Mixed martial arts record = =

= = = Mixed martial arts exhibition record = = =