

= Matt Hughes (fighter) =

Matthew Allen Hughes (born October 13 , 1973) is an American retired mixed martial artist , two @-@ time UFC Welterweight Champion , UFC Hall of Fame inductee , and NJCAA Hall of Fame inductee . During his tenures in the Ultimate Fighting Championship , Hughes put together two separate six @-@ fight winning streaks , defeated all the available opposition in the welterweight division , and defended the belt a then @-@ record seven times . Hughes was inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame in May 2010 during the UFC Fan Expo in conjunction with UFC 114 .

During his reign , Hughes was widely considered the # 1 pound @-@ for @-@ pound mixed martial artist in the world . Hughes was also regarded by many analysts and several media outlets as one of the greatest welterweight fighters of all time , as well as one of the greatest pound @-@ for @-@ pound fighters in the sport 's history .

A long @-@ time member of Miletich Fighting Systems , Hughes left the Miletich camp in late 2007 to start Team Hughes . In 2008 , Hughes published his autobiography , Made in America , which made the New York Times bestseller list . In 2011 , Hughes became host of Outdoor Channel 's Trophy Hunters TV . Hughes has no nickname ; although because of his success against Gracie jiu @-@ jitsu practitioners such as Royce Gracie , Renzo Gracie , Ricardo Almeida , and Matt Serra , people often refer to him as " the Gracie Killer " (same as Sakuraba 's nickname) . His mastery of Brazilian jiu @-@ jitsu , and having trained with 18 black belt holders in BJJ are also the reasons why Joe Rogan thinks he deserved to get a black belt for BJJ , even when he probably won 't wear it .

= = Early life = =

Hughes was born in Hillsboro , Illinois . Hughes has two siblings , a sister and his twin brother Mark . During high school they both played football and wrestling . Hughes went to Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville , Illinois , before transferring to Lincoln College , in Lincoln , Illinois and then on to Eastern Illinois University in Charleston , Illinois .

= = = Wrestling = = =

Hughes was a two @-@ time 145 lb IHSA (Illinois High School Association) Class A state wrestling champion . He won in 1991 and 1992 while attending Hillsboro High School (Illinois) . During his junior and senior years , Matt went undefeated and won back @-@ to @-@ back state championships in the 145 lb class . Over the final three years of high school , he totaled 131 wins against only 2 losses , both during his sophomore year (sophomore 43 @-@ 2 ; junior 43 @-@ 0 ; senior 45 @-@ 0) .

His college career started at Southwestern Illinois College . Hughes placed fifth in the nation at 158 lb . After Southwestern dropped their wrestling program , Hughes transferred to Lincoln College , where he placed third in the nation , notching a 33 @-@ 3 record for the Lynx .

After graduation Matt continued wrestling at Eastern Illinois University , where he was a two @-@ time NCAA Division I All @-@ American placing eighth in 1996 and fifth in 1997 at 158 lb . He finished with an 80 @-@ 15 record for Eastern Illinois .

Hughes competed in the prestigious ADCC Submission Wrestling World Championship , in which he held a record of 2 ? 2 , beating Ricardo Almeida and Jeremy Horn , and losing to Jeff Monson and Tito Ortiz .

= = Early career = =

Hughes made his mixed martial arts debut on January 1 , 1998 . He slammed his opponent to the ground in just fifteen seconds , winning via KO . The slam became his signature move . He won his next fight via submission due to strikes . Hughes fought three times at Extreme Challenge 21 , on October 17 , 1998 defeating Victor Hunsaker via TKO and future UFC Midleweight Champion Dave

Menne via unanimous decision . In the third fight of that night he lost to then @-@ undefeated Dennis Hallman by technical submission (guillotine choke) at 0 : 17 of the first round . The result was announced as a KO . In the process , Hallman handed Hughes his first professional defeat .

= = Ultimate Fighting Championship = =

Matt Hughes made his promotional debut at UFC 22 : There Can Be Only One Champion , on September 24 , 1999 , defeating Bulgarian Valeri Ignatov via unanimous decision after three rounds .

He returned to the promotion at UFC 26 : Ultimate Field of Dreams , where he defeated Marcelo Aguiar via TKO , throwing some elbows which cut Aguiar and forced the doctor to end the match . The stoppage came at 4 : 34 of the first round .

Hughes faced Dennis Hallman in a rematch at UFC 29 : Defense of the Belts . At this point in their careers , Hallman was the only man to have defeated Hughes in MMA competition . Hughes lost the fight via armbar in only twenty seconds . When the bout started , Hughes lifted and brutally slammed Hallman to the mat , but was caught in the submission after landing in side @-@ control .

= = = Welterweight championship = = =

Hughes won his first UFC World Welterweight title at UFC 34 : High Voltage on November 2 , 2001 . In a come @-@ from @-@ behind fight , Hughes was caught in a triangle choke by then @-@ champion Carlos Newton , but he lifted Newton in the air and slammed him to the mat , causing Newton to hit his head and lose consciousness just as Hughes was himself on the verge of blacking out from the choke . After the match Carlos stated that he felt the reason Hughes fell to the mat was because he was rendered unconscious from the triangle choke . This was confirmed by Hughes himself upon reviewing the tape of the match Hughes can be heard telling his corner after the fight " I was out " . The result was officially announced as a KO at 1 : 27 of the second round . The slam is considered to be one of the greatest in MMA history .

He successfully defended his championship belt at UFC 36 : Worlds Collide , defeating former Shooto Middleweight Champion Hayato Sakurai via TKO due to strikes at 3 : 01 of the fourth round . In the first round of the fight , Hughes spent all the time either clinching Sakurai up against the fence , or ripping his feet out from under him . In round 2 , Sakurai landed a right hand that sent Hughes to the mat ; despite this , Matt won the round by spending three minutes hitting Sakurai with elbows from the top position . At the start of the third round , Hughes quickly slammed Sakurai to the ground , again staying three minutes on top . He looked too strong for Sakurai . Hughes finished the bout in the 4th round , by taking down Sakurai and transitioning to full mount . After one minute of ground @-@ and @-@ pound onslaught , the contest was over as Sakurai had no answer for the champion .

Hughes faced Carlos Newton in their subsequent rematch at the main event of UFC 38 : Brawl at the Hall , in the promotion 's debut in the United Kingdom . He won the fight by technical knockout when he successfully trapped Newton in a modified crucifix position , which allowed him to rain unanswered blows on Newton 's face until the referee stopped the contest at 3 : 27 of round 4 .

In his next title defense , Hughes fought Gil Castillo at UFC 40 : Vendetta , defeating the former Middleweight contender via TKO . Hughes started the match with a big slam and then began to attack from Castillo 's guard with elbows and punches . Hughes easily avoided any submission attempts and looked far stronger than Castillo . As he passed to half guard , Castillo was bleeding above his left eye . The challenger 's only offense was a weak triangle choke that went nowhere . The round ended with Hughes on top , ground @-@ and @-@ pounding his opponent . Between rounds doctors ruled that the resulting cut was too severe to continue , and Hughes was declared the winner due to stoppage .

At UFC 42 : Sudden Impact , Hughes faced future UFC Lightweight Champion Sean Sherk , winning via unanimous decision . Hughes started the action by taking Sherk down immediately , passing to half guard . Sherk was able to stand for a few seconds before Hughes took him down

again . In round two , they started to trade punches , but eventually Hughes took Sherk down . Like the first round , they stood up for a moment . At the beginning of the third round , Sherk took Hughes down , while Hughes attempted a kimura from the bottom . A late stand up led to a second takedown by Sherk . Round 4 saw Hughes using his strength to control the challenger on the ground . Sherk took Hughes down again in the fifth round , but the champion controlled the rest of the time sprawl @-@ and @-@ brawling as he finished on top . With the victory , he became the first man to ever defeat Sherk .

Hughes faced former WFA Welterweight Champion Frank Trigg at the main event of UFC 45 : Revolution . This event marked UFC 's 10th anniversary . After a tactical grappling match @-@ up early on , Trigg fell victim to a standing rear naked choke at 3 : 45 of the first round . The choke earned Hughes the Tapout of the Night Submission Award .

= = = Loss to Penn and regaining the title = = =

He kept the title until UFC 46 : Supernatural , when he was submitted by Hawaiian Brazilian Jiu @-@ Jitsu specialist B.J. Penn via rear naked choke at 4 : 39 of the first round , in a fight he was heavily favored to win . The title was vacated upon a contract dispute between Penn and UFC who promptly stripped him of the welterweight title , claiming Penn had breached his contract and that the signing constituted him refusing to defend his title . Penn filed suit against UFC and publicized his side of the conflict , claiming his contract had expired . Penn filed a motion to stop UFC from awarding a new welterweight title , but that motion was denied .

Hughes faced Penn 's training partner Renato Verissimo at UFC 48 : Payback , winning via unanimous decision (30 @-@ 27 ; 30 @-@ 27 ; 29 @-@ 28) . He was caught in a very tight triangle choke in the first round , but after winning the second and third rounds , was awarded with the victory .

Hughes regained the vacant welterweight title by submitting Canadian contender Georges St @-@ Pierre via armbar in the final second of the first round at UFC 50 : The War of ' 04 . The fight was competitive . Hughes took GSP down twice and landed a huge slam . Hughes was in trouble at the beginning of the bout as St @-@ Pierre unloaded a spinning back kick into his ribs . The submission earned Hughes his second Tapout of the Night . Obviously disappointed at the time , St. Pierre admitted afterward that he had lost before he ever stepped into the Octagon . He had regarded Hughes as his idol , not as someone he could beat .

Hughes successfully retained his title against Trigg in their historical rematch at UFC 52 : Couture vs. Liddell 2 . Accidentally hit in the groin early in the first round , Hughes looked to the referee for assistance ; however , the referee had not seen the strike and Trigg capitalized on Hughes ' distraction by staggering him with a barrage of punches . The fight quickly went to the ground , with Trigg ground @-@ and @-@ pounding Hughes , then attempting a rear naked choke . After nearly two minutes of struggling , Hughes broke free , picked Trigg up , carried him across the Octagon and slammed him to the ground . Hughes then ground @-@ and @-@ pounded Trigg before securing the victory with a rear naked choke of his own , in what is considered one of the greatest fights and comebacks in MMA history . This fight is UFC President Dana White 's favorite match in combat sport history . He was awarded the Tapout of the Night for the third time in his career .

Hughes ' next fight took place at UFC 56 : Full Force , where he was scheduled to fight Judo practitioner Karo Parisyan . After Parisyan suffered a hamstring injury and could not fight , Joe Riggs took his place . The match was originally scheduled as a title bout , but since Riggs could not meet the 170 @-@ pound weight limit , it became a non @-@ title fight . It marked the first time for the UFC that a title fight had to be called off for this reason .

Hughes defeated Riggs in the first round by submission via kimura from the half @-@ guard at 3 : 28 . The armlock earned Hughes his last Tapout of the Night award .

At UFC 60 : Hughes vs. Gracie , on May 27 , 2006 , Hughes defeated Brazilian Jiu @-@ Jitsu legend and UFC Hall of Famer Royce Gracie in a non @-@ title , catch @-@ weight bout by TKO (strikes) at 4 : 39 of the first round . Before the stoppage , Gracie was caught in an armlock from the side mount position ; although Hughes appeared to have the submission in place , Gracie would not

tap out . Hughes stated that he felt his arm pop and realized he would never tap , so instead of breaking his arm , opted to seek a different position . The event drew 620 @, @ 000 buys , becoming the best @-@ selling pay @-@ per @-@ view in UFC history , and was the first to break the \$ 20 million mark in gross PPV sales .

Hughes was scheduled to fight Georges St @-@ Pierre in a rematch at UFC 63 , but after St @-@ Pierre sustained a severe groin injury , the UFC announced that B.J. Penn would replace him in the title fight . At this point in their careers , Penn was the only mixed martial artist to beat Hughes after March 2001 . In fact , it was Hughes ' only loss in his last 19 fights . In the bout , Penn controlled the first two rounds , but sustained a rib injury during the scramble to take Hughes ' back in round two . He was visibly different in the third round , appearing exhausted and missing punches he was landing earlier . Hughes was able to take Penn to the mat , and in side @-@ control crucifix position rained punches on Penn 's head until referee " Big " John McCarthy stopped the fight at 3 : 53 of the third round . In the process , Hughes became the first man to ever stop Penn in a fight . Both fighters were awarded the Fight of the Night bonus . In an interview on Penn 's personal website , Penn stated that by round three he could hardly breathe and had no " mobility in his core " . Despite the injury , Penn congratulated Hughes , calling him a great fighter and saying he deserved the victory .

St @-@ Pierre stepped into the ring to promote his upcoming title fight against Hughes , stating that he was glad that Hughes won his fight , but that he was " not impressed " by Hughes ' performance . According to both commentator Joe Rogan and Hughes ' own autobiography , Hughes was unhappy with St @-@ Pierre 's statement . Hughes said that they " had words " off @-@ camera shortly thereafter . St @-@ Pierre apologized , saying he had misunderstood something Hughes had said on the microphone and did not mean to offend him .

== = Loss to St @-@ Pierre == =

On November 18 , 2006 , at UFC 65 : Bad Intentions , Georges St @-@ Pierre defeated Hughes by TKO via strikes at 1 : 25 of round two , ending Hughes ' title reign . In the first round , Hughes sustained two unintentional kicks near the groin ; after Hughes went down from the second kick , St @-@ Pierre was given a warning by referee " Big " John McCarthy . However , Hughes stated in the post @-@ fight interview that the second kick mainly affected his legs , rather than his groin . Nearing the end of the first round , St @-@ Pierre landed a Superman punch , which floored Hughes . St @-@ Pierre then followed up with strikes on his stunned opponent . When it appeared that the fight would be stopped , the bell rang signaling the end of the first round . In the second round St @-@ Pierre ended the fight with a head kick which stunned Hughes and knocked him to the mat . He followed up with a flurry of punches and elbows that forced McCarthy to stop the contest with 3 : 35 left in the round .

== = Return == =

On March 3 , 2007 , Hughes returned to the Octagon for UFC 68 : Uprising , defeating Chris Lytle by unanimous decision , winning 30 ? 27 on all three judges ' scorecards . Hughes secured an armbar at the end of round one , but Lytle was saved by the bell . Hughes opened the second round with a quick takedown , moving up to side @-@ control and then landed an elbow that cut Lytle . Finally , Hughes mounted his opponent , but Lytle swept and was able to reverse that position . In the third round , Hughes unsuccessfully tried an armbar again before the horn sounded .

In late mid @-@ 2007 , Hughes left the Miletich camp with Miletich stablemate Robbie Lawler , longtime boxing coach Matt Pena , and wrestling / conditioning teacher Marc Fiore to form The H.I.T. (Hughes Intensive Training) Squad in Granite City , Illinois .

== = The Ultimate Fighter == =

In 2005 , Hughes participated as a coach opposite Rich Franklin in the second season of the Spike

TV reality television series , The Ultimate Fighter . This was the first season where the coaches did not fight each other after the conclusion of the show , because Franklin and Hughes were champions in different weight divisions . In 2007 , Hughes participated as a guest coach for long @-@ time friend and training partner , Jens Pulver during The Ultimate Fighter 5 season .

Hughes agreed to head coach again for The Ultimate Fighter 6 , alongside then @-@ UFC Welterweight Champion , Matt Serra . Despite the fact that after the preliminary round , Team Hughes ' record was 2 ? 6 , both Mac Danzig and Tommy Speer of Team Hughes made it to the finals . In 2011 , Hughes appeared as guest coach during The Ultimate Fighter 13 season for friend and former UFC Heavyweight Champion Brock Lesnar .

= = = Interim Welterweight Championship bout = = =

Following a championship win by Matt Serra over Georges St @-@ Pierre at UFC 69 , UFC President Dana White announced that Hughes would fight for the World Welterweight title in November 2007 against Serra . This fight was later changed to December 29 , 2007 , in Las Vegas , at UFC 79 : Nemesis . On November 23 , however , Serra sustained a herniated disc in his lower back and informed UFC that he would not be able to compete for an indeterminate time . As a replacement for the title match , the UFC quickly signed a rubber match between Hughes and St @-@ Pierre that would also be for the Interim UFC Welterweight Championship . Despite his best efforts , Hughes was unable to mount a serious offense on St @-@ Pierre , who easily avoided Hughes ' takedown attempts , while taking Hughes down at will and using Hughes ' own ground @-@ and @-@ pound style against him . Near the end of the second round , St @-@ Pierre attempted a kimura on Hughes ' right arm that he escaped , but in a reversal of their first fight , St @-@ Pierre was able to twist it into a straight armbar with fifteen seconds remaining in the round . Hughes fought the extension , but with his left hand trapped between the mat and St @-@ Pierre 's legs , was forced to verbally submit at 4 : 54 of the second round . In the post @-@ fight interview , Hughes praised St @-@ Pierre as the better fighter :

= = = Hughes vs. Alves = = =

Hughes fought Thiago Alves at UFC 85 : BEDLAM on June 7 , 2008 . Hughes lost to Alves by TKO at 1 : 02 of the second round . After receiving a powerful flying knee , he dropped to the ground with his own left knee pinned behind his hips , ultimately leaving him with a torn MCL and partially torn PCL . Hughes took the fight on short notice as a favor to UFC . Alves failed to make weight for the match , but Hughes elected to fight him at a catch weight anyway . He stated in his blog :

= = = Hughes vs. Serra and future = = =

Immediately after the Alves fight , Hughes stated that he had " one more fight " left in him , and that he wanted to fight Matt Serra . Their rivalry stemmed from the time when Serra was a contestant on The Ultimate Fighter and Hughes was guest coach . Serra did not like the way Hughes criticized other contestants on the show and was disgusted when Hughes constantly picked on Georges St @-@ Pierre during a lunch break and bragged about his submission victory . On January 9 , 2009 , Hughes confirmed on his blog that UFC 98 would likely be the day he and Serra met in the Octagon . UFC confirmed the fight .

Hughes won the grudge match against Serra at UFC 98 : Evans vs. Machida via unanimous decision . In the first round , both fighters collided heads , and Hughes got the worst of it . Despite this , Serra could not finish the fight and Hughes recovered rapidly . In the second stanza , Hughes controlled his opponent on the ground with his wrestling skills . The final round saw the former champions taking each other down and exchanging punches . The back and forth action rewarded both competitors with Fight of the Night honors . After the fight Hughes and Serra embraced each other and ended their feud . Hughes posted on his blog : " When the fight was over , I was pretty confident I was going to get my hand raised . Some people have asked why I raised his hand at the

end . Actually I didn 't , he raised mine . He also told me that , no matter what the decision was , he was done with the rivalry " . After the fight Hughes said , " I think I have a few more fights left in me . "

= = = Hughes vs. Gracie = = =

Hughes then signed a multi @-@ fight deal with the UFC . Hughes defeated Renzo Gracie , the 1st cousin once removed of his opponent at UFC 60 , via third round TKO at UFC 112 : Invincible , setting the record for most UFC wins with 17 . Both of them seemed very comfortable fighting on their feet in the early going , with Gracie landing the cleaner and more effective punches and also landing a couple of kicks . Hughes started the second round with powerful leg kicks , but after that Gracie returned to his in @-@ and @-@ out punching style . Hughes got double underhooks and managed to take Gracie down briefly . In the final round Hughes connected with a right hook to Gracie 's chin , then connected with a leg kick and another punch . With two minutes to go he knocked Gracie down with a leg kick . Gracie took all the time he could before Hughes helped him up and then dropped him with a second leg kick . Gracie stalled again , but when he finally stood up Hughes floored him with a punch , let him get up and then attacked again . Hughes knocked Gracie down again with a fourth punch , when referee Herb Dean ended it .

= = = Hall of Fame and Hughes vs. Almeida = = =

On May 28 , 2010 , Hughes was inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame .

Fighting Renzo Gracie student and 3rd degree Brazilian Jiu @-@ Jitsu black belt Ricardo Almeida , Hughes rendered him unconscious with a Dave Schultz front headlock at 3 : 15 of round 1 , on August 7 , 2010 at UFC 117 : Silva vs. Sonnen . Hughes landed a huge left hook that knocked Almeida down , sinking in the very deep choke which earned him the Submission of the Night honors . Almeida requested the fight after watching his mentor lose to Hughes at UFC 112 back in April . Hughes now had four wins over mixed martial artists with ties to the Gracies , including UFC pioneer Royce Gracie , the prior mentioned Renzo Gracie and former champ Serra .

= = = Hughes vs. Penn III = = =

Hughes faced BJ Penn on November 20 , 2010 , in a rubber match at UFC 123 : Rampage vs. Machida , after their previous two fights at UFC 46 and UFC 63 . Penn came out strong in the first few seconds of the opening round , catching one of Hughes ' kicks and knocking him off balance with a counter hook . Penn then connected with an overhand right that dropped Hughes , following up with three clean shots to the jaw . The bout was ended at 21 seconds into the first round , with Hughes trilogy against Penn ending at 1 @-@ 2 . The fight marked the first time Hughes had been knocked out (he had previously lost via technical knockout) . Post @-@ fight Hughes hinted that the loss moved him one step closer to retirement .

= = = Hughes vs. Koscheck = = =

Hughes was expected to face Diego Sanchez on September 24 , 2011 at UFC 135 : Jones vs. Rampage . However , Sanchez missed the bout with an injury and was replaced by Josh Koscheck . Hughes suffered a KO loss to Koscheck at 4 : 59 of the first round . Hughes showed improved striking , but ultimately succumbed to Koscheck 's power punches .

= = = Retirement = = =

The UFC announced on January 24 , 2013 that Matt Hughes retired from fighting and was named a Vice President of Athlete Development and Government Relations .

== Theme music ==

In the UFC , Hughes frequently used the song " A Country Boy Can Survive " by Hank Williams , Jr. as he made his entrance towards the Octagon . At the UFC 56 live broadcast , Joe Rogan said : " My favorite walk @-@ out song in all the UFC , ? A country boy can survive . ? "

== Autobiography ==

Hughes released his autobiography , Made in America : The Most Dominant Champion in UFC History , co @-@ written with Michael Malice , on January 1 , 2008 . The book debuted at # 21 on the New York Times bestseller list .

== Television Series ==

== Trophy Hunters TV ==

Since January 2011 , Matt Hughes is the host of hunting program Trophy Hunters TV , which airs in Outdoor Channel three times a week . The show is closely related to the Texas Trophy Hunters Association .

== Uncaged with Matt Hughes ==

On July 4 , 2014 , Matt Hughes became the host of Uncaged with Matt Hughes , which airs Saturdays on the Sportsman Channel .

== Criticisms ==

Matt Hughes has been criticized by animal advocates , including UFC fighter Dan Hardy , for his trophy hunting . In response to outrage over trophy hunting pictures posted on his Twitter account in 2012 , Hughes called some of the commenters " PETA idiots " and told them to stop following his page .

== Personal life ==

Matt Hughes is a born again Christian and regularly posts Bible verses on his website . Hughes and his wife Audra have two daughters together and they each have a son from a previous relationship . The couple 's second daughter was born on January 2 , 2010 . Matt and his twin brother were born on their father 's birthday . Hughes is a close friend of professional wrestler Mark Calaway , best known by his ring name The Undertaker .

== Championships and achievements ==

== Mixed martial arts ==

== Mixed martial arts record ==

== Filmography ==

=== Video games ===