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Okay guys, I'm here today with the great John Danner, huge honor for me as always. Guys, today John is gonna show us here how to build the perfect close guard game. Okay, so how should you build your close guard? And I think close guard is one of the best positions in Jiu-Jitsu because it's the type of position that everybody can do. It's not like a De La Riva or Biu and Bolo that you gotta be flexible. It's the type of game that you just have to close your legs and you have to close good. So I'm very excited to learn from John how to build this game. So, you know, it's a fascinating thing you said, Bernardo, that this is a game for everybody. I do believe that length and height is an important attribute for a close guard game. It can definitely help, but anyone, you know, I've got short limbs for my height but I can play a close guard game without a problem. I do believe it's a game that almost anyone can use. But there are some interesting elements behind the idea of a close guard. Have you ever thought there's a bit of a contradiction within Jiu-Jitsu insofar as we're always taught that in order to attack someone we have to get some kind of positional advantage first and then we attack people. That's probably the first thing you learn in Jiu-Jitsu. You get positioned first and then you start submitting people. Normally when we talk about getting position on someone we mean in an advantageous position. You get past their legs, you get the side control, get the mount, get the rear mount, then you start finishing people. The dominant positions in Jiu-Jitsu score points. But when it comes time to attack from bottom position, close guard in particular, you don't get any points from pulling close guard. If we start the match and I come out and pull close guard on you, I don't score any points. It's not considered to be dominant. And yet when we're in bottom position we get taught to attack out of a non-dominant position. By its very nature, by definition, close guard is a neutral position. That's why it doesn't score any points. And from bottom position we get taught to attack from a neutral position. And that kind of goes against the usual trend in Jiu-Jitsu which is to get to a dominant position first and then start attacking people. So something we need to do in this video is to kind of resolve this apparent contradiction. How do we work from bottom that we're supposed to attack out of a neutral position rather than a dominant one? Well the basic idea that we're going to throw at you in this video and also in the Go Further Faster Close Guard Instructional is the idea that in neutral positions we can make small adjustments to the position that start to confer mechanical or tactical advantage to the person using what would otherwise be a neutral position. So that even within neutral positions we can make small adjustments that will make it at least mildly dominant. And then from there, from mild dominance, you can go on to attack people with a high percentage rate of success. I think it's natural for most students in Jiu-Jitsu when they first start off to see close guard as a more or less defensive position. Because typically we get taught to escape out of pins, put the guy back in close guard, and hold on. And so most Jiu-Jitsu students have an unconscious reaction of seeing close guard as a holding position, a defensive position. For example, let's say I get out of mounted position. You're working and your first days in Jiu-Jitsu, the guy's in the mounted position, we go into a classic elbow escape and from here we capture a leg and come out on the other side. We go through, we capture the second leg, we come out and we close a guard. And mentally you start thinking to yourself, okay I got out of a bad position, there's some relief here, let me just hold on to this guy and see what happens. That mindset is something we've got to get over. And a big, big theme of the Go Further Faster Close Guard video is exactly that. To take you to see close guard as first and foremost an attacking position, where you take the fight to your opponent from bottom position. A big part of how we start doing this is to understand what are the central attributes of a close guard position. Now one of the most interesting to me, and one which I see very, very few people talking about, is the idea of who's really on top when you take a close guard position. This is something interesting. If someone walked into the room and saw a close guard situation and was asked a simple question, who is on top of these two athletes, who has top position? They're all gonna point to Bernardo and

say, well obviously, come on, he's on top, I'm on bottom. Is it really that obvious? I'll give you one thing, Bernardo's upper body is definitely on top of mine. His chest and shoulders are above mine, no question. But what if we go down to the lower body? If you look, you'll see that in fact my hips are on top of Bernardo's hips, and my legs are on top of his legs. So really what's going on here is Bernardo has upper body top position, but I have lower body top position. And interestingly, the way the human body is constructed, the lower body is typically the more useful of the two. So even though ostensibly I'm underneath my opponent, the most important part of my body, my hips and legs, are actually on top position. So that any reversal from a situation like this is going to end up with us in a true top position. So for example, if I broke my opponent's hands down towards the mat, and I started coming up to the side, and we knocked our team partner over, now this would be a true top position, because not only is my upper body on top of Bernardo, but my lower body, my hips, are on top of his hips. So my chest is on top of his chest, and my hips and legs are on top of his hips and legs. As opposed to a closed guard situation, where yes, his upper body is on top of mine, but my lower body is on top of his. The fact that our lower body actually has top position has big ramifications for the position overall. It means that I can create breaking or disruptions in my opponent's posture very very easily. Understand that your training partner, if we bring the camera in this direction, in the human body, the spine is the single longest lever that we get to work with. It runs from our training partner's tailbone, all the way up to the crown of their head. When we lock a closed guard, we're down here, low on our training partner's spine. But we can bring our knees together underneath his armpit, and employ a knee pull that goes through my training partner's defensive hands, and enables us to break posture forward. We can use this in any situation where our opponent's head is in front of his hips. The more the head comes in front of the hips, the easier it becomes to employ a knee pull to break our opponent down towards the mat. In conjunction with this, we control our training partner's hands, and keep the hands in close. We can employ a knee pull to break his posture forward. Even if my opponent goes to stand up, as he places one leg up, and then comes up to a second leg, we can knee pull to break him down to the floor. That vulnerable second step is a great time for us to employ a knee pull, even if he was so good that he did get up to his feet. When he tries to go up to achieve vertical posture, it's not an easy thing against a strong knee pull. And from here, it's not difficult for us to continue breaking him down to the floor, and back to his knees. Only when our opponent manages to get his head directly over his hips, is he, in a sense, invulnerable to a knee pull. But then he becomes vulnerable to having his balance broken backwards. So as the head goes up further and further away, it becomes easier and easier for us to start knocking people in backwards directions. Even if he gets up to his feet now, and brings his head vertically up, it's not a difficult thing for us to start knocking people down to the floor, onto their buttocks. So you can see, we can use the fact that our hips are above our training partner's hips, to severely impact our training partner's posture. If the head is in front of the hips, it's almost always a knee pull that brings them forward, and breaks their balance forward. If the head is above the hips or behind, then it's almost always a knock back that breaks our opponent's balance. So we can off-balance both forwards and backwards, because our hips actually have the top position, even though the rest of us is underneath, from a closed guard situation. Understand always, that when we work out of closed guard, everything we do is an attack on your opponent's posture and balance. It's very very difficult from closed guard situations, just to launch directly into an attack. If my opponent has knowledge of what an arm lock is, what a triangle is, it's hard for me just to break straight on through. But if you can break balance and posture first, the subsequent attacks come so much easier. So always there's this pattern. I observe where is my head, my opponent's head, in relation to his hips, and we employ either knee pulls to break his balance forward, or knockbacks to break his balance backwards. If we can reliably do these two things, all the subsequent attacks in Jiu-Jitsu from closed guard come relatively easily. Now, we talked earlier

about the idea that closed guard is a neutral position, and in general in Jiu-Jitsu we don't like to attack from neutral positions. We like to attack from dominant positions. From closed guard, there are a range of weakly dominant positions that we can work our way into. They confer some kind of tactical or mechanical advantage that are going to make our attacks a lot easier. So for example, let's run through one of them right now, the clamp position. From closed guard, where my training partner is still on two knees, we know that because our hips are on top of our training partner's hips, so even though he has upper body top position, we have lower body top position. If we could get our opponent's hand on the mat, that would be a big deal. We'd be putting them in a situation where a certain vulnerability has been exposed. Right now, Bernardo has excellent hand position. His hand on my chest makes it difficult for me to sit up. His hand on my hip makes it difficult for me to get effective working angles.

But if we were able to put hands on the mat, we could do something interesting here. So I'm going to work my hands inside and underneath my training partner's hands. If necessary, I could break ribs from positions like so. But ultimately, what we want is hands inside. Now, using that long lever of the spine, we're going to hit a knee pull where my knees come up to the armpits. We never pull with our feet down by the bottom of the spine. That's a short end of the lever. It's not very effective. I bring my knees high into the armpits. As Bernardo goes to posture up, you'll see we can easily break his balance forward and get hands to the mat. If we bring the camera in this direction now. Now we go in. We lock on our training partner. The next thing we need, we've broken his posture. Step number two is to get advantageous angle. I could do that naively by putting my foot on the floor. The problem with that is my opponent can step over my leg and start going into half guard. All kinds of bad things can happen. So let's try to avoid hands on floor so much as foot on hip, or even better, turning out and pivoting using just the movement of my legs without ever touching the floor. Now when we lock up our closed guard, you'll notice everything's different. We've now achieved an angle, let's bring the camera this way, so that my knee is behind Bernardo's head and my body is offline. If I'm directly lined up with my training partner in this position, it's very easy for Bernardo to stand up and to move my body weight and lift my shoulders off the floor, all kinds of things. But if I get to an advantageous angle, out to the side, now when I knee pull, my knee is directly behind the head, at the end of the lever. Plus, because I'm on my side, I have much greater mobility to move my head further or closer to my opponent. And now we can start bringing in the idea of a weakly dominant position within a neutral position. Getting to these advantageous angles doesn't score points, but it does give you mechanical and tactical advantage, particularly when I make the switch to a clamp, where I bring a knee in front of my training partner's shoulder and a knee behind the opposite shoulder. This knee here pushes and this knee here pulls. When Bernardo tries to come towards me, my right knee governs distance. When he tries to pull away from me, my left knee governs distance. So his head is stuck. When he tries to bring his hands together defensively, it's physically impossible. The hands are separated, as opposed to a situation in a neutral closed guard where he can easily bring hands together to defend arm locks, etc. If I go for a triangle here, it's very hard when the hands are locked defensively. If I try to go for an arm lock and his hands are locked, it's very, very hard for me to attack. But if I can split my opponent's two hands, shuffle out to the side, and lock in this position, when he tries to lock his hands and get a defensive frame going, it's so difficult. And from here, even though ostensibly you're still in a neutral position, you haven't scored any points, now you have mechanical and tactical advantage. And from situations like this, it won't be difficult for us and start bringing the legs through and going into our favorite attacks. From here, we obviously have Senkaku, the triangle. If he goes up and vertical on us from here, standing up. Standing up. It won't be such a tough thing for us to come around the corner and start getting into good attacks from triangles. Once we lock up from here, we're ready to win. Underneath our training partner from here, also all manner of arm lock attacks. If my opponent starts moving in a

direction where he tries to get away from us, it won't be a difficult thing for us to come up off the floor, start inverting, and find ourselves in Juri Gatali, upside down. It's not a difficult thing from situations like this to turn off our training partner and go through into Omoplata attacks. We'll be looking at all of these as we go further into the Go Further Faster video. Let's quickly run through this again. From a closed guard situation, essentially we're neutral here. The only real advantage we have is the fact that our hips are higher than our opponent's hips, so we have some height advantage. But he has upper body height, we have lower body height. It's only when we start getting some kind of tactical or mechanical advantage. One that we're looking at here is the idea of hands to floor. Hands to floor make it possible for us to move out to an advantageous angle. So our closed guard is not lined up with him anymore, but we're offline. Once we get to an offline position, our knee is right behind our opponent's head. So when we knee pull, he tries to posture up. You're right at the end of the lever. You're going to be very effective from here. Now we make a switch here into the clamp guard, where my opponent tries to move towards me. Very, very difficult. Tries to move away, equally difficult. And from here, not a difficult thing for us to start going into various forms of attack, we're going to be highly effective from body position. In this way, we get to see the idea that even though ostensibly we're in a neutral position, we didn't score points, we didn't get to dominant positions in the usual sense, we did get a measure of dominance out of a neutral position. We took a completely neutral situation. We just came in, pulled closed guard, and suddenly we had definite mechanical and tactical advantages just by minor movements and body weight. Everything began with breaking our opponent's posture. Everything began with the insight that even though ostensibly you're underneath your opponent, your hips are on top of him. It's a huge, huge biomechanical advantage. And as a result, we could break our opponent down. We saw one method of breaking down is get hands on the mat. That's one form of advantage that we'll be investigating in this video. There are many others that we're going to look at, some of them even stronger than this. Once we get hands to the mat, it's all about getting that angular advantage. We shoot our hips out to the side, and we convert what would ordinarily be a neutral situation into a weakly dominant one. Then we convert to clamp guard, where you can truly govern the distance between your head and your opponent's head. You can exert a pushing and a pulling force and separate your opponent's arms, so we can't use one arm to defend the other. And from a situation like that, the conventional attacks, triangles, armbars, homopadas, etc., etc., become so much easier to apply on a resisting opponent. In this way, you can take a neutral position, which may not seem particularly promising to attack a talented opponent, and turn it into a dominant one. Not dominance in the usual sense, insofar as you've done some kind of major transition to a new position that scores points, but rather a subtle sense of dominance, where your separated hands govern your ability to push and control your opponent's head. It's a subtle, fascinating form of dominance within a neutral position. But that is the kind of dominance which so often wins at championship level. It's not so easy to observe from the outside, but it's readily felt when another athlete puts it upon you. We'll be investigating a ton of these kinds of themes. You've seen him as in film, Bernardo, throughout this go for the fast and close guard video. So guys, one of the things that caught most of my attention is this fact that I'm on top, but your hip is on top. I had never thought about it. Of course, I have been to this position thousands of times. Close guard is a very popular position in Jiu-Jitsu. But I never thought that somehow John is on top of me, because his hips are on top of my legs. While you were doing the techniques, I was thinking about it. Most of the sweeps from close guard, that's exactly the reason the sweep happens, right? Because your hip is on top of my hip. It's amazing, because superficially, you look at the position, you go, this guy is on top. It's obvious. But the person on the bottom hip is on top of my hip, which is going to make a huge difference for the leverage. And another thing as well, John, I had seen before the clamp guard, clamp, right? Yes. But I had never thought that the reason it works so well is because you take out all my chances to connect my hands. Think about it.

Let's say I'm in your close guard position. Let's bring the camera in this direction here. When I'm in your close guard, my arms, shoulders, scapula, upper back, down through the other arm, form a circuit, a circle. It's a circle of power. So if you went to apply an arm bar on my right arm, it forms a circle of power, which as you go into the arm lock, creates a closed circuit from where defense is quite easy. If you go to attempt a triangle from here, it's hard for you to work against. Again, it's very different. You sometimes need your advantage first. However, if you separate my hands, which almost always starts with you putting a hand on the floor, now I can't join one hand to the other. As you occupy the space inside my arm, it's so easy for you. Where do your favorite attacks come in? Arm bar. Exactly. That makes a lot of sense. So learning to separate your opponent's hands and getting that mechanical advantage first before you perform the basic attacks of jiu-jitsu, triangle, arm bar, arm platter, it doubles, triples, or quadruples your percentage chance of success. Don't work out of neutrality. That's the key thing that we all learned on our first day in jiu-jitsu. Don't attack from neutral positions. Get advantage first. But closed guard is a neutral position by definition. You go out and pull closed guard, no one's getting points for that. It's neutral. So it's up to us to find small measures of advantage within a neutral position and then start doing our attacking. And that was one good example that we took from that. I think that's going to help a lot who is watching, because now when you play closed guard, if you start with this concept that you want to find a way to separate the guy's hands, it's going to be a huge step. It gives you a direction to work with. Yeah, that was awesome, John. And guys, we just shot an entire instruction with John all about closed guard. That's going to be part of the fundamental series Go For The Faster. And we're going to launch it soon on bjjfanatics.com. So there's a chance that by the time you are watching, it's already launched. So make sure to check it out on bjjfanatics.com. And we also have all the other instructions from John as well. And also this fundamental series. It's been amazing, and I think it's changing jiu-jitsu. I hope so. Thanks so much, John. Great stuff. bjjfanatics.com Use the promo code YOUTUBEFARIA to get 10% off any instructional video. Improve your jiu-jitsu faster.