

Metadata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv212bmpGmo>

A very useful way of illustrating the concepts and techniques that we went over this weekend is to look at how they're applied in a practical fashion in top level competition. An interesting example we've pulled up is a match between Gary Tonin and Dylan Dannis at the ADCC World Championships in 2015. This was an interesting one for the reason that both athletes were skilled in leg locking and as a result this is an example of applying a leg lock on someone who's highly competent themselves in the art of leg locking. Sometimes when you go with certain athletes they're somewhat naive in leg locking and the finishes come easy, but this wasn't going to be the case with Dylan Dannis. He is also skilled in leg locking and so this brings out some of the subtle details that are necessary at the higher levels of championship fighting when it comes time to locking legs. The match started because both athletes are very talented in takedowns, mostly in the standing position. This suited Gary Tonin because his game is based largely around creating movement and scrambles. Whenever we have movement and scrambles there's going to be extension of the body, the arms and legs are going to be extended and as a result there's going to be a high rate of opportunity to go into our opponent's arms and legs and look for submissions. Gary Tonin plays the standing game exactly for this reason, to try and work his way in on his opponent. There's an overhook and that's going to create one of his favorite takedowns, Uchimata, with a one-handed grip. Holding on to the overhook he throws and you can see the extended bodies as they go down to the floor. Now something interesting happens here. Dylan Danis has inside position. His feet are inside Gary Tonin's. He's himself highly competent at leg locks. With inside position, and this is early in the match so there's no points to be scored here, you would think wouldn't he be going after leg locks on Gary Tonin. That's certainly what I thought when I was coaching from the sidelines. This is a perfect opportunity for him to go into Ashigurami. He has inside position, he's secured the space between his opponent's knees, he could easily go into legs from this position, but clearly he doesn't. That's obviously a tactical move on his part. He uses the inside position to generate a reversal rather than a leg entry. You can see at this point that he's respecting Gary Tonin's leg game. He didn't want to get embroiled in a leg lock battle with someone who he considered dangerous on the legs. So that immediately told me as a coach when I saw this action unfolding that we were going to have easy access to our opponent's legs, that they weren't going to try and fight us at the legs at all, that we would have our own way in any leg lock exchange. As they come up into neutral, Gary Tonin goes into another of his favorite Judo moves, Ouchi Gari. This is a very low level one, down by the ankles, and uses a hand assist to finish it. His opponent Dylan Dennis almost stepped out, but Gary used a grip on the leg to finish the takedown and get the knockdown to the mat. Now this is where things get interesting. We're getting some mat tactics here. We're very close to the boundary of the mat. And so Dylan could use this as a means to flee the mat and escape. So you'll see Gary Tonin has to get a secure grip on the leg. Whenever we want secure grips, always go back to the security of two on one. You'll see that Gary Tonin has two hands on his opponent's leg, and critically, his hand is positioned above his opponent's knee. Whenever an opponent goes to kick out of the single leg situation, it's absolutely critical that we control above the knee to limit the effect of the kick out. Now at this point, they've almost gone out of bounds. So Gary Tonin has to focus on a dragging motion. He's able to do that because he had that grip above the knee. But Dylan Dennis did a good job of tripping so that when they came back into bounds, Gary Tonin did not have the desired inside position that he was looking for. Right now, they're in essentially a neutral position. Neither one has a decisive entry on the other's legs. Now you can see what's happening. Gary Tonin just pommeled his left leg to the inside position on his opponent. He's starting to work his way into a situation where he could go in and enter the legs properly. Dylan Dennis moves away, but has left an entry for the left leg. Yeah, his left leg is... Gary Tonin is controlling above the knee. That's limiting his ability to kick out, and now he'll need a second grip. This will enable him to get both arms

around his opponent's leg. Once he gets both arms around the leg, he'll be able to elevate his hips and kick this leg all the way through and around, and start to entangle his opponent's legs. There's the catch. Now he has an ashigurami of sorts on his opponent's leg, but it's far from a preferred ashigurami. So what does he do to make up for the failure in the ashigurami? He makes sure that he connects his opponent's shin to his chest. That's going to be extremely important. He has a solid 2-on-1 grip that forms wedges around the calf muscle, and he's using his own chest as a wedge on the shin, so both sides of the lower leg are being controlled. He does not have a decisive control of his opponent's upper leg at the hip, but he does have a decisive control of the lower leg through the 2-on-1 grip and the wedging effects of his chest and his forearms. Now Dylan Dennis did a good job of trying to generate space by getting away from his opponent. He understands very well that the further his hips go away from his opponent, the safer he's going to be. Unfortunately, Gary Tonin understands the same thing. If we take it back just a fraction. So Julius tried to take out his knee, right? Watch Dylan Dennis' left knee. That's the critical battle that they're fighting over. Dylan Dennis needs to take his knee and move out so the knee is free from Gary Tonin's hips. Gary Tonin knows that. He's got a 2-on-1 grip with his arms. He's going to use this 2-on-1 grip to slingshot his hips to Dylan Dennis' hips. What's interesting is that Dylan Dennis' hips are moving away, but Gary Tonin will get his hips to move faster than Dylan Dennis' hips moving with him. To keep Dylan's knee above his hip. Correct. Now, he's backheeling. His heel comes back towards his own buttocks. That forms a tight bite upon his opponent's leg. That's going to be important as Dylan Dennis goes to escape. Watch Dylan Dennis' upper body turn away as he goes into his escape sequence. Unfortunately, the 2-on-1 grip connects the shin, the lower leg, to Gary Tonin's chest. Gary Tonin will now catapult his hips up into the air and catch up to Dylan Dennis' hips. Gary Tonin's whole back is on the ground, so it functions with tremendous drag like an anchor, which is slowing down Dylan Dennis' attempt to flee the mat. Now, having slowed him down with his body weight and the friction of the mat, Gary Tonin's going to have to throw his hips to his opponent's hips and then form a solid connection by locking his legs around the hip line. There's the catch. You can clearly see now it's hip-to-hip contact. He's established the critical hip-to-hip contact that he'll need. This motion is what we, when we train with each other, we refer to as climbing the leg. We have to take our hips and climb up towards our opponent's hips. Every time our opponent tries to generate space between his hips and our hips, we have to physically climb his leg and make sure there's hip-to-hip contact. You can clearly see in this still frame, there is 100% hip-to-hip contact. Gary Tonin's hips are in direct contact with his opponent's hips. When both hips are not connected, it means that the knee is getting out. It's relatively easy for your opponent to escape. They've gone down to the mat with strong hip-to-hip contact, and Dylan Dennis is doing a good job of trying to increase the space between them. Gary's initially interested in a knee bar. You can see he's put the foot in his preferred position on top, on his right bicep. That's the method of knee bar which I teach my students, and I prefer of the classical methods of knee bar. We generally put it on the bottom shoulder. I prefer top shoulder finishes. Now, as he goes into the knee bar, there's still some danger of the knee line slipping as Dylan Dennis is going to come up on his elbow and start pushing away and generating space. Now, he's doing a good job of coming up to an elbow, misaligning his body, and Gary Tonin's Ashi Garami is respectable, but it's not perfectly aligned with the leg yet. He doesn't have the alignment he needs to go into either a heel hook or a knee bar. He's in a world between the two. He needs to either have his opponent's knee cap positioned precisely in the middle of his pelvis for a knee bar, or he needs to have the knee on one of his hips for the heel hook. Currently, he doesn't have either. He's in a tricky situation between the knee bar and the heel hook, but doesn't have either. Now, Dylan Dennis is turning with the pressure and is interested in coming up to his knees. He knows it's a bad idea to be sat down on his hip, so he's trying to get to his knees so he can more easily move away. And he's also trying to kick the butt here to get a leg free, right? Yes. Gary Tonin

tries to put what we call a lat knee bar in effect. It's always a risky gambit to do a lat knee bar on the bottom side. It can be done, but it's not the preferred way of doing things. We generally prefer lat knee bars on the top side. In this case, the right arm, right armpit, right lat muscle. But it's a wise thing for him to do, because he knows even though the knee bar is unlikely to succeed, it will keep his hip-to-hip contact with his opponent and prevent slippage. So as Dylan Dennis is trying to kick out, there's a lot of force on Dylan Dennis' part going away. The knee bar is not being used as a submission threat. It's being used as a method of controlling the distance between Gary Tonin's hips and Dylan Dennis' hips. This means that even as Dylan Dennis is pushing on the Ashigurami itself and trying desperately to move in this direction, Gary Tonin is holding firm and keeping his opponent's knee inside his knee line. Unfortunately, because of the camera angle, we can't see the knees on the far side of the body. But as you can see through the close hip-to-hip contact that the knee line, knee relationship is being preserved. Now the great benefit of Gary Tonin's decision to put in the knee bar on the bottom arm is that if the angle between the two athletes should change, this is going to change from a knee bar situation into the strongest of all the heel hooks, the inside heel hook. That's exactly what he's looking for. Dylan Dennis is trying to rotate. And rotation generally helps the effort to free the knee. If he simply stays static, it's hard just to move out against the pressure of both of his opponent's legs. But by combining small rotations of the body, you can sometimes finesse your knee out of even a tight Ashigurami. That's what he's aiming for. But there's a risk involved. There's a risk of over-rotation where he can rotate himself from a knee bar danger into a heel hook danger. Good composure by both athletes at this point. This is a nerve-wracking situation to be caught in. Now this is where things get interesting. Dylan Dennis was facing out in this direction, to the right of the screen. He's made a decision to start turning his body in the opposite direction. What happens for the heel hook, right? Yes, unfortunately that's starting to turn in the direction that will actually facilitate Garitona's switch to the heel hook. He did this to apply more force to the buttocks to try and pop his leg out in this direction. Now I'm not going to criticize Mr. Dennis on this, because it's actually working. You can see that the space between the two athletes' hips is increasing. What Dylan Dennis is doing is working. It was a good strategy on his part, but unfortunately the angle is starting to shift and he hasn't moved far enough. Garitona does a wise thing here. He takes his hips off the mat. You can see there is no contact of his hips to the mat. That means a large percentage of his body weight is going down into his opponent's leg and immobilizing the leg. He's controlling the rate at which Dylan Dennis can rotate and move away from his body. In addition, you can see the angle of the leg is starting to go more and more into an alignment of the inside heel hook. That's it, right there. Dylan Dennis went from facing the right-hand side of the screen to a complete turn to the left-hand side of the screen. This change in angle has facilitated the switch from a knee bar into the inside heel hook. And there's the pressure. This is an unusual Ashigurami. You'll notice that Garitona's hips are completely off the mat. That means his body weight is pressuring down into the outside of the knee. Both of Garitona's ankles are visible. That means there's an enormously strong back-heeling force, where his heels come back towards his own buttocks, controlling the inner thigh of his opponent. So his lower legs are pulling his hips into the side of his knee, as at the same time he's bridging forward into the outside of the knee and applying a twisting lock. You can see his body is in a straight line. And the heel is towards the other side? Yes. So there's a huge rotation in the leg here. This was a very, very strong, strongly applied lock. Dylan Dennis is a very, very tough and professional athlete. To get someone like him to tap, there has to be enormous breaking pressure. Yeah, I used to train with Dylan. And super, super tough. Great Jiu-Jitsu. And he has great leg lock attacks and great defense, too. Yes, he's not an easy person to leg lock. I'm very bad with leg locks, foot locks, and he was the one who used to help me out with that. That's interesting. And I used to love to train with him because he would attack my legs in all ways and would help me to prepare for my tournaments as well to make sure when

someone got close. I've seen him in competition finish people with heel hooks and they were very well applied. His Jiu-Jitsu is amazing. He's super dangerous. He's that type of guy that every position is dangerous. When he's on board, he's dangerous. When he's on top, he's dangerous. That's what makes this such an interesting match to look at precisely because this is not an example of someone who's very good at leg locking, someone who's not good. This is two good leg lockers going against each other. And that's why there's such an exchange of interesting technique here. As they go into that finishing position, you can see someone who's defending in all the right ways still getting finished. That's what makes this an interesting match to look at. I always say that in Jiu-Jitsu, it's a lot about timing, whoever has the best timing. And of course, if you have the right technique with the right timing, because at some point, one person has an attack. The other person has the counter for that attack. Then you have your counter and your counter and whoever. But it's so cool to see the technique being applied perfect using your entire system that I just saw today here during the filming. So it's amazing because you almost have a curriculum for leg locks. And I can see the curriculum working on this match, going from this to that. Many of the things we talked about over this weekend, you can see them clearly in evidence. The whole idea of the relationship between knee and knee line, for example. And how there's always a demand on the part of the attacker to keep his opponent's knee within the knee line. You can see that the single clearest signal to someone who's watching from the outside as to whether or not the leg lock attack is going to work is always going to be hip-to-hip contact. All the defenses on the part of Dylan Danis are always moving the hips away. All of the offense on the part of Gary Tonin are about pulling the leg back in. The so-called action of climbing the legs. As he works to climb towards the hips, secure an ashi garami that creates maximal breaking pressure. And in this case, it really was a very, very strong breaking lock. Cool, yeah. It's a different view for me because I think leg locks are not very explored in the jiu-jitsu world yet. You were bringing this up. And so many times when I watch people attacking the legs of each other, I don't have this view of the hip, of the knees, of the legs. For me, it's just two guys attacking each other's legs. So now it's way more clear for me to understand what's going on. That's fun. That was amazing, John. Thank you.