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May 10, 2013



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Toti martial artist rules

>> 'Nemo' signs with Africa's premier MMA promotion

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YEARS of dedication and perseverance has paid off for Amanzimtoti mixed martial arts fighter Craig "Nemo" Ninow as he has earned a contract with the Extreme Fighting Championship (EFC).

The EFC Africa hexagon is home to the continent's leading mixed martial arts fighters and after three years of paying his dues and dominating in feeder promotions, Ninow has officially arrived.

"I am thrilled and excited to have signed a contract with the EFC. It feels as though my career is finally taking off. All the hard work, dedication, discipline and sacrifices are all paying off," Ninow told the *Fever*.

The 23-year-old trains under Morné Swanepoel at the Combat-Coaching.com gym headquarters in Amanzimtoti, where he forms part of the gym's elite Team MMA Fighter stable. As Africa's premier mixed martial arts promotion, EFC Africa fight cards are broadcasted on e.tv and to more than 100 countries worldwide.

Ninow will make his debut when he squares off against Charlie "Silkysmooth" Weyer at EFC Africa 20 at the Carnival City Big Top Arena on June 27 and he is relishing the occasion.

"I am proud to represent Team MMA Fighter - we all put a lot of hard work into our training. Toti has been supporting me since my first fight, so I can't wait to represent my hometown on the big stage where the exposure will be huge for my career."

Swanepoel said the opportunity is

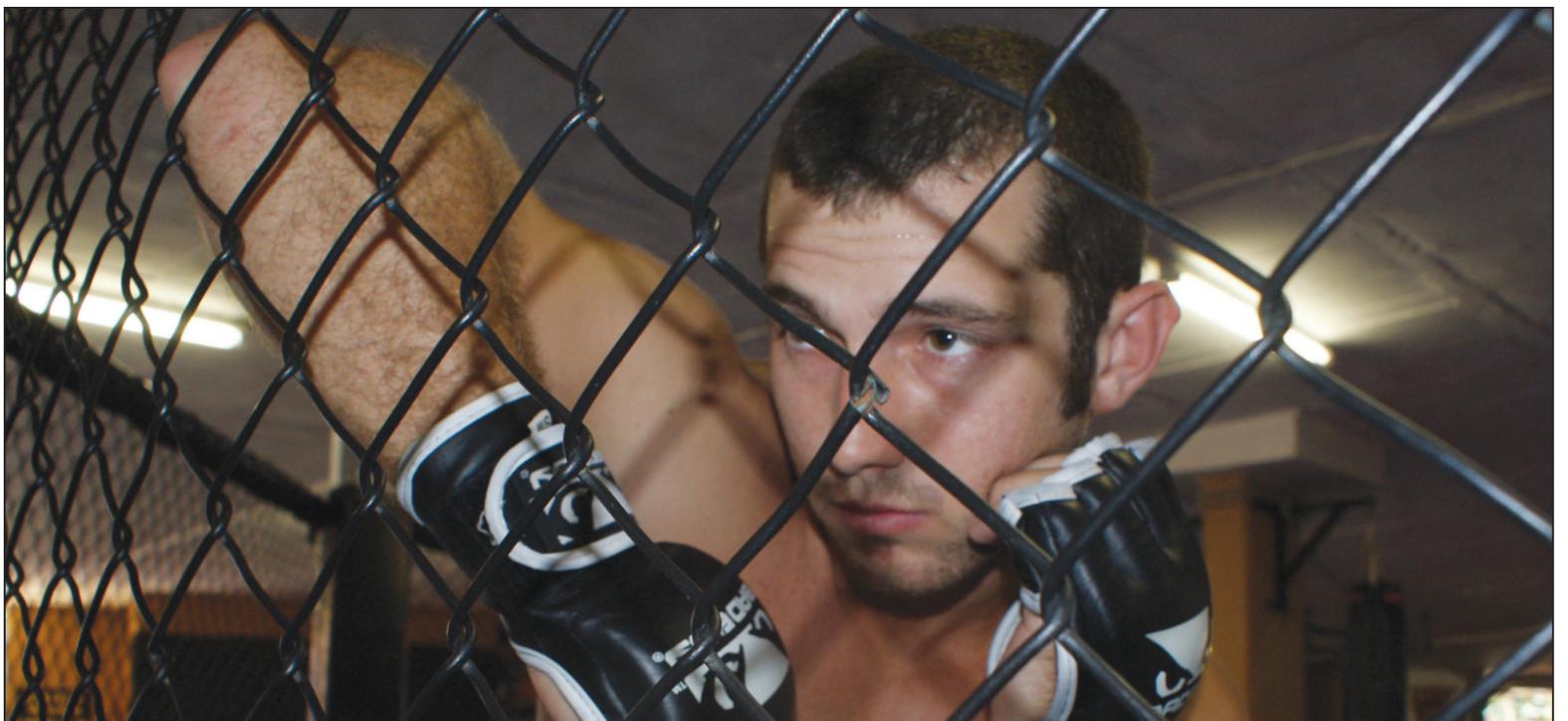


PHOTO: COMBATCOACHING.COM

Amanzimtoti mixed martial arts fighter Craig "Nemo" Ninow has signed a contract with the Extreme Fighting Championship.

just reward for Ninow's dedication to the demanding sport.

"So many guys walk into our gym and want to be fighters. They say they got what it takes and start off with a bang until they realise how much dedication and commitment being an MMA fighter actually takes, and crumble under the pressure.

"It takes a certain type of person to become a MMA fighter, a modern day gladiator... Nemo is one of those guys. I can't wait for the world to see him in

action, and thanks to EFC Africa it has now become a reality," said Swanepoel.

Ninow's call-up to EFC Africa follows the promotion's introduction of a new bantamweight division, a weight class in which Ninow has been nigh-unstoppable. He won the Kwa-Zulu-Natal amateur bantamweight title in Fight Force, which he vacated with a flawless record when he turned professional before he captured the Megalodon Fight Club South African

bantamweight championship last November.

His performances have not gone unnoticed by Dirk Steenekamp, editor-in-chief of *Fighters Only South Africa* and one of the most educated and respected figures in African mixed martial arts.

"I've been following his career since he started as an amateur and of all the guys coming out of Morné's stable, he's leaps and bounds ahead of the rest. Finally with EFC having a

bantamweight division, which is the perfect weigh division for him, he will be a contender," said Steenekamp.

"If he comes out and performs the way he should be able to he's definitely someone who's going to be noticed quickly. It's a massive step up to the EFC, fighting on the big stage, under the lights, in front of the cameras and at altitude, so it'll be interesting to see how he handles the added pressure but I'm looking forward to seeing him in the Hexagon."

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