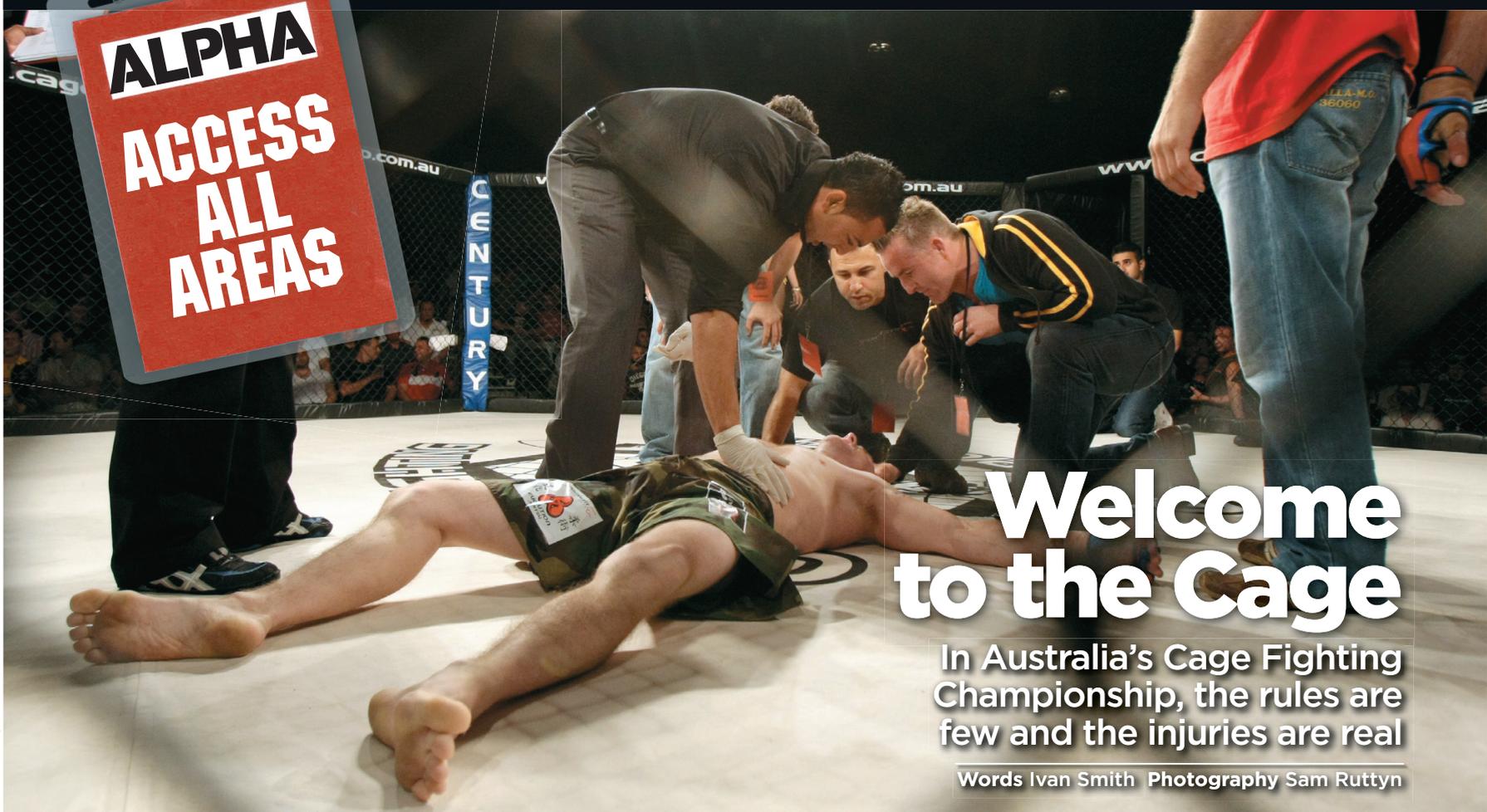
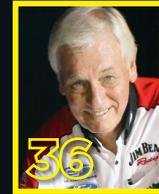


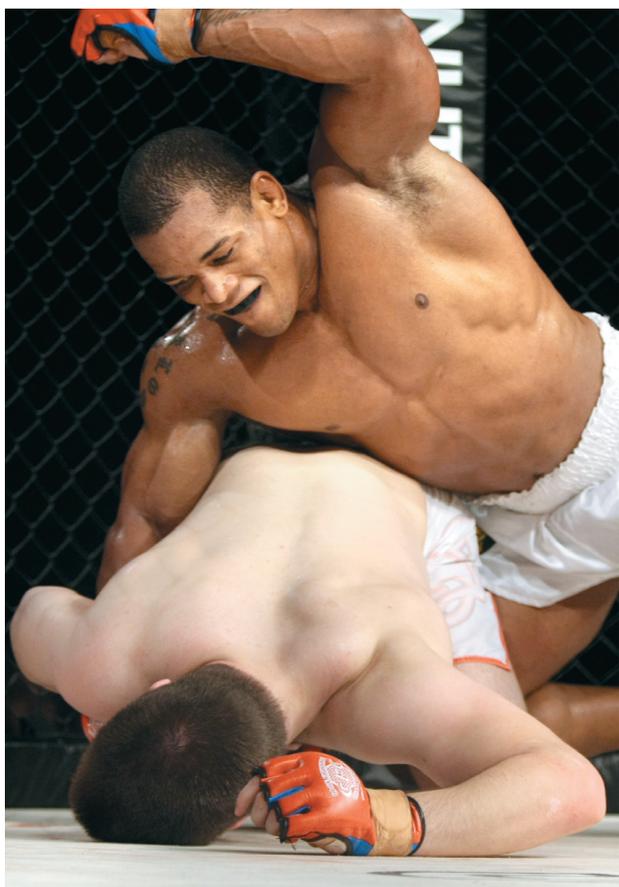
Insider



Welcome to the Cage

In Australia's Cage Fighting Championship, the rules are few and the injuries are real

Words Ivan Smith Photography Sam Ruttyn



My notes for Cage Fighting Championship 3 heavily feature the following words: **blood, broken, unconscious, dislocated, hospital, doctor.** In America, the multi-discipline Ultimate Fighting format is so huge it's threatening the popularity of boxing, and this Australian version (www.cfcworld.com.au) is growing fast. Its rise may say something about us or about society, because it's for certain that many of those taking part get hurt. A lot. Fights are only three rounds, but most are gruelling affairs, featuring heavy punishment to both fighters, often punctuated by displays of violence that end the action early. A range of fighting styles are used, including wrestling, kickboxing and Brazilian jujitsu. On a pleasant late-summer night, 1800 men and women gather at Sydney's Luna Park to witness nine bouts of barely controlled brutality take place within a padded hexagonal cage. Some fighters lose with a submission, some with their senses scattered and, one, well, the word hospital doesn't get scribbled down for nothing...

» **WAITING GAME** Nick Pudney, in the under-62kg category, tries to keep himself focused; he's fourth bout on. Meanwhile, Matt Burcher (above) finds himself on the wrong end of fight two. A tough wrestling match against Andy Kappas leaves him nursing a damaged lower back.

« **CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS** Late of Cuba, but now a naturalised Australian, Hector Lombard lowers the boom on American Tristan Yunker. Not long after this attack, Yunker's corner throws in the towel. Many of the night's fights end this way: a pinned contestant taking big punishment.

