



Churning out champions

THE TEAM QUEST GYM MIGHT LOOK PLAIN, BUT ITS FIGHTERS ARE WORLD-CLASS.

by Kelly Crigger

The first lesson a visitor to Team Quest Training Center must learn is also the simplest: How do I get in? Adorned with large windows and a welcoming—albeit locked—front door facing the street, the gym entices you to enter through the obvious portal, but it’s a trick. The main entrance is around back, and pressing your face against the front glass and yelling, “Let me in!” will make you look like an amateur, something you will most likely go on to prove as fact when you step onto the mats with the Team Quest regulars.

Located in a blue-collar district of Portland, Ore., the Team Quest gym is a former used-car lot and garage. It still maintains that not-quite-new feeling, and that’s exactly the way they like it. Leased and renovated by Randy Couture, Matt Lindland, Dan Henderson and Robert Follis in 2001, the no-frills exterior gives no clue to the hardcore MMA experience taught inside by a plethora of professionals. There’s no cage or ring, but the space is large and split between the front and back sections for simultaneous classes. It also features a large bag room with 12 assorted bags and a small weight room with a few pieces of cardio equipment.



Top: Portland Wolfpack heavyweight Devin Cole sadistically punishes Team Quest co-owner Robert Follis. Above: IFL coach and Team Quest founder Matt “The Law” Lindland puts over 20 years of experience on the wrestling mats to work.

WALK THE LINE

The best benefit of training at Team Quest is the accessibility to a seemingly bottomless pit of MMA experience. “There’s no line between the professional fighters and the students,” says co-owner Follis. On any given day Ed Herman, Chris Leben or Lindland will show up and train for team practice alongside the newest student right off the street. Just two weeks before his fight with Wanderlei Silva at Pride 33, Henderson dropped by to guest-instruct the submission wrestling class along with his training partner Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou.

Like many gyms, the philosophy at the Team Quest facility is simple: train hard and have fun. With ample space in the front and back, the gym offers kickboxing, submission wrestling, MMA, strength and conditioning and kids’ classes. But despite a roster of nearly 400 students, the employees and instructors make sure no one feels like just a number. “There’s a fully trained, attentive staff who can meet anyone’s needs both out front and in the gym,” says Lindland. “We’ve instituted a year-long certification program, so you know you’re getting the best trainers and education in the business.”

Nearly all instructors at Team Quest are pro MMA fighters. Wolfpack members “Judo” John Krohn and Devin Cole teach judo and submission wrestling, while Chris Wilson teaches MMA and kickboxing. The MMA and kids’ class instructor is Sportfight middleweight competitor Greg Thompson, a former police officer who left the force to work and train full-time at the gym. “We teach only proven techniques that have practical applications,” says Lindland. “We focus on the fundamentals so we can build better fighters.”

The words of Lindland are supported with raw, inarguable numbers. In its short lifetime, Team Quest Training Center can be credited with five UFC and Pride championship belts and more than 200 combined professional MMA victories. It’s also the house where ground-and-pound was elevated from primal flailing to a precise science thanks to the wrestling abilities of Henderson, Lindland and Couture, which helped establish a formidable style that’s become a staple in modern MMA.

“THERE’S NO LINE BETWEEN THE PROFESSIONAL FIGHTERS AND THE STUDENTS,” SAYS CO-OWNER ROBERT FOLLIS.



Top: MMA fighter and Team Quest kickboxing expert Chris “The Professor” Wilson shows a student how to hit an opponent with an invisible chair. Bottom: Wilson helps another student who (at left) then tries out his new moves.





gym class

Right: A former Olympic Silver medalist in Greco-Roman wrestling, Lindland has developed a dangerous arsenal of submissions. Below: The talent pool at Team Quest is deep, with UFC veterans and the entire IFL Wolfpack team training side-by-side.



Team Quest Training Center

OWNERS Matt Lindland and Robert Follis
LOCATION 18206 SE Stark Street, Portland, OR 97233
OPENED 2001
OPEN TO PUBLIC Yes
FLOOR SPACE 9,000 total sq ft
MAT SPACE 5,000 sq ft
ASSORTED BAGS 12
RING OR CAGE Neither—on purpose
CLASSES OFFERED Kickboxing, submission wrestling, strength and conditioning, MMA, kids' classes
CONTACT (503) 661-4134; www.tqfc.com

NORTHWEST NATIVES

A unique feature of Team Quest is its local flavor. Instead of talent being imported from other areas, as is common among championship training centers such as American Top Team, all the fighters here are locally grown. UFC vets such as Chael Sonnen, Ed Herman and Josh Haynes, as well as every member of the Portland Wolfpack, lived in the area before training here. Gazing at the 3 o'clock practice session for professional fighters is like staring into a who's-who of UFC and IFL names, as well as notables from Sportfight and Ring of Combat contenders.

"There's a lot of talent in there," agrees Thompson, as he guides a wide-eyed new student through the gym. It leads one to wonder if there's something special about the rugged

Northwest that breeds tough fighters.

Completely lacking in Vegas-style neon flash or the color palette of Southern California, the success that comes out of Team Quest Training Center is equal to that of any facility in the country. Open to walk-in students, the gym is friendly and responsive to the needs of the athletes. But don't expect a move to a better neighborhood or even upgrades to the existing gym anytime soon. The spartan conditions suit the owners just fine. And with the success they've had, who can blame them?

"If anything, we'll start some more satellite schools like the one in Temecula," says Lindland, referring to Dan Henderson's Team Quest South gym in California.

Whichever location you visit, be sure to use the correct door. 🐾

