



COVID-19 with a positive spin

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It's time to realize just how serious the COVID-19 pandemic truly has become. Everyone is practicing social distancing. Numbers of those infected is on the rise and seemingly know one knows when the curve will flatten and when this scary time will end. In the sports entertainment world we have seen everything between the Masters Golf tournament postponed, Major League Baseball suspended indefinitely and Wimbledon cancelled.

In combat sports, we are seeing the very same measures being taken. The UFC is still offering a glimmer of hope that UFC 249 will still happen. Bellator MMA has postponed all of their May fight cards with no official word on Bellator 244 in Chicago, IL on June 6 featuring the highly anticipated rematch between Michael Chandler and Benson Henderson. Even world-renowned boxing executive Bob Arum has cancelled all fight cards for the foreseeable future.

For us sports writers, the only thing we can do is look for that light and the end of the tunnel while maintaining our relationships with fighters, promoters, etc. So I sat down with EVO Combat and EVO Entertainment Managing Partner, Greg Costello. His business, like all sports affiliations, has been put on hold. Yet despite the feelings of angst and nervousness, Costello has remained refreshingly optimistic about the pandemic. Costello talked with us about what fighters can do during this troubling time.

"It looks to me like everything is going to be postponed," Costello stated.

"It means a very busy end of this year and beginning of next year. Will (that money) be made up? Yes. In the long term its not going to be as many cancellations as we are all seeing ... I think the real problem is finding dates for all of these events when we get back," he continued.

So while we all know which fight cards have been cancelled or postponed, it doesn't mean that those individual fights are gone forever. Costello makes an excellent point about rescheduling fights for later dates, and how we could find ourselves in for a very busy third and fourth quarter of the year.

Furthermore, Costello sees a silver lining in this break for fighters to take this time to relax and heal. We are aware of how the fight game takes its toll on athletes. We also know how many fighters continue to compete through nagging and, sometimes, long-term injuries. While staying in a positive mindset is essential, he recommends the athletes take this time to recovery from any injuries they may have sustained.

"I think fighting is an individual sport and it's not like when you are part of a team and your teammates are cheering you on," Costello mentioned.

"It, being an individual sport, these guys will come out of this. A lot of these guys are training hurt all the time. This gives them the time to heal their bodies. That's a silver lining. I would put the positive spin on it, but think about how your body feels right now. Does it feel better? I'm sure it does. When you get your edge back and heal your body, that's a great thing for this sport," Costello finished.

I suppose the most important thing that Costello mentioned here was exactly what this virus is doing, and how it could impact anyone infected with it, using fighters as his prime example.

"This is a lung disease," he clearly stated.

"If you get this disease, it could cause you to have less lung capacity. It is very important to follow the guidelines and NOT get it. Athletes should be taking extra care to not get this virus because there is evidence to support it could damage your lungs for a long time," he finished.

So while we are all eager to get back to a normal life, which for a lot of us means regularly viewed sporting events, Perhaps Costello's advice could be just what we need to get through this and take a deep breath.

EVO is a revolutionary athlete-development company that is focused on funding, supporting and building tomorrow's champions. Money is the biggest obstacle for any athlete, but led by a team of industry veterans, the mission of EVO is to scout athletes for their extraordinary skill and fund their development through fan investment.

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