

Tireless Johnson is the yardstick for flyweights

UFC on Fox 6 served up some great and bloody action in the last week.

The main event was the flyweights, champion Demetrious Johnson defended his title against the hugely entertaining John Dodson.

As expected, the fight went the full 25 minutes and Dodson showed his power dropping the elusive Johnson on more than one occasion.

Johnson is so technical and tireless, his conditioning is second to none, he was able to come back from the knockdowns and continue to keep Dodson on the back foot.

For me the flyweights lack the power to ever be phenomenally exciting, but the speed and skill makes those who enjoy the art of MMA sit on the edge of their seats.

I struggle to see any of the other flyweights taking Johnson's belt anytime soon. Dodson has a bright future, but will need another couple of good wins to get himself back in the title picture.

The co-main event saw one of the all-time fan favourites Quentin Jackson take on a soon-to-be fan favourite Glover Teixeira.

There had been plenty of verbal sparring in the lead up to this bout. Teixeira said he would knock Jackson out and he nearly did in the first round, flattening his foe with a vicious left hook.

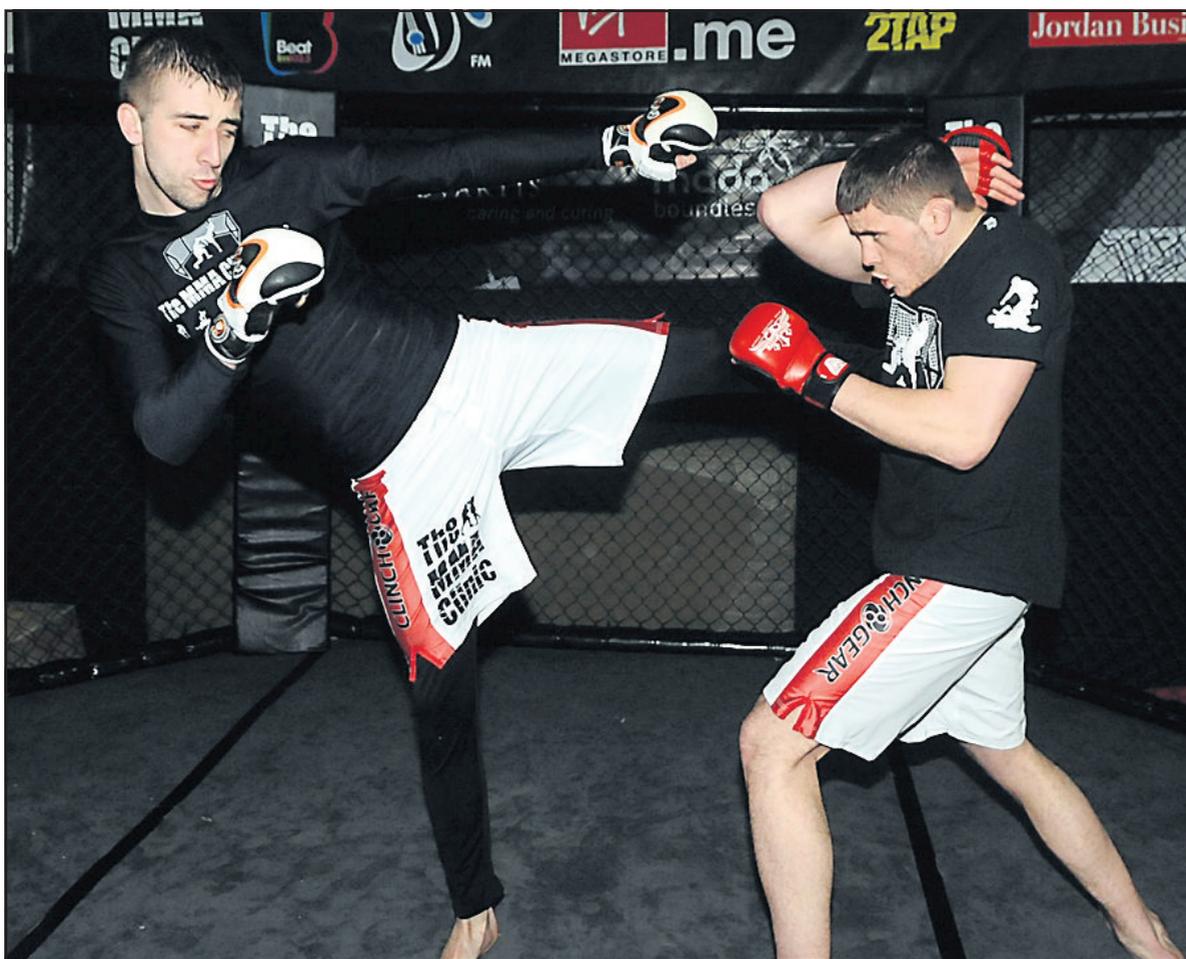
Teixeira is a Chuck Liddell protege and has the ability to follow in his mentor's footsteps.

Not only does he have great hands, but he is a BJJ black belt and can wrestle. He took Jackson down at will and punished him on the ground.

Jackson has a great chin and stayed in the fight, but he never really looked like winning it.

It was most likely Jackson's last fight in the UFC octagon and it is definitely not the way he would have liked to end his time in the world premier fight organisation.

Only he knows his next move and there is no love lost between him



Two fighters, who will take part in the MMA Clinic Cork Amateur Fight Night 111 on February 2 at the Silversprings Moran Hotel, Kieran O'Brien (left) and Ciarán Daly. See feature in tomorrow's Cork Sports World. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

MMA

By BEN VICKERS

Another grudge match on the main card was Donald Cerrone v Antony Pettis.

Cerrone has accused Pettis of dodging him in the past, but Pettis always said he had bigger fish to fry.

Cerrone is as tough as they come which made the way Pettis dispatched of him even more impressive, Cerrone didn't even make it out of the first round, it was body kicks that brought about his demise.

Pettis, standing southpaw, opened up Cerrone to the body kick and he

used it to devastating effect.

The first kick that landed was the beginning of the end, Cerrone visibly tensed his abs as he tried to shake it off, but Pettis knew he was hurt.

Up against the cage Pettis, widely known for his kick of the cage in his victory over Benson Henderson, used the cage again this time to throw a knee to the head of his opponent.

It was another clean body kick to the liver that spelled the end for Cerrone. He tried to stay up, but the

pain was too much and he hit the canvas where Pettis landed a couple of shots for good measure before the referee waved off the action.

Pettis will get his title shot and it is well deserved, but he will have to wait until Henderson defends his belt against Strikeforce import Gilbert Melendez.

Cerrone finds himself a good few wins away from being in contention.

Erik Koch and Ricardo Llamas squared off in another number one contender eliminator.

Koch was due to get his shot at Jose Aldo's featherweight crown earlier in the year until the UFC's injury curse struck.

First Aldo was injured and the match was postponed then Koch got injured and Frankie Edgar got his slot. So Koch needed to beat Llamas in order to get back to a position he had lost without lacing on a glove.

Llamas had other ideas and when he managed to take top position on Koch early in the first round he made his position clear, he wanted to face the winner of Aldo v Edgar next weekend.

He landed one of the most devastating elbows I have ever seen, it opened Koch up to the point blood was spurting out of his cheek.

A couple of more huge shots and the octagon looked like an abattoir which left the referee no choice but to stop the contest.

Llamas will more than likely be the next guy to get a shot at the title, Aldo faces Edgar this weekend to defend his featherweight strap.

Now there's a fight, two of the best pound for pound fighters in the world facing off.

Edgar won the lightweight title despite being on the small side at the weight and now we will see how he does at a more natural weight for him.

Aldo is a powerful feather and it will be interesting to see how he deals with the mesmerising footwork of Edgar.

Beguiling Ravens are my fancy to have you smiling

ANOTHER Super Bowl rolls around this Sunday evening, another occasion where I sit alone at home on my couch while friends throw American-themed parties that I haven't been invited to. They'll try to change the subject when I ask them what they are up to on the night in question or say they are doing nothing, but social network updates in the early hours of the morning will confirm they are together, sharing six-packs and throwing popcorn at each other.

And I'm not on the guest list just because I attacked someone with a tube of Pringles during the Bears-Giants game a few years back.

There are no second acts in American lives said F. Scott Fitzgerald, but he must have said a load of other stupid stuff too because US sports fans are far more forgiving than my so-called buddies.

Every US athlete (and you can probably include Lance Armstrong in this) has a get-out-of-jail-free card. It's called 'finding God'. It's one of the reasons you shouldn't actually be too religious when you start out if you are a talented American sports star, because while the Yanks seem to lap it up if you discover the higher purpose, they can be less forgiving if you meander from the path.

Ray Lewis, who will retire after Sunday's game, is a perfect case in point. The Baltimore Ravens linebacker is considered one of the legends of the game, winning two defensive player of the year awards and a Super Bowl MVP title. He is also part of a Ravens outfit who are the only side to have won twice in Boston against Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, the most successful team in recent play-off history.



One of the Pats' players wives wasn't too impressed with Lewis though, saying after her spouse's defeat: "Six kids by four wives, acquitted for murder, paid a family off, what a role model!"

On Super Bowl night in 2000, Lewis (who didn't play in that final, but attended it) and two friends became embroiled in a double-homicide investigation after leaving a post-game party in a limo. Lewis was acquitted but pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice for giving

the police a misleading statement.

Lewis then found God, devoted much of his life outside the NFL to charitable works and became an all-round good egg.

On the pitch he is as fearsome as ever and made 44 tackles in these play-offs, which puts him on the threshold of becoming the leading post-season tackler of all time. (Joining him in the Ravens rearguard is Michael Oher — who is an offensive rather than defensive linebacker — the man at the centre of *The Blind Side* movie from a few years back).

As well as finding God, Lewis found deer antlers this season. He won't be wearing them instead of his helmet, rather after he was sidelined for much of the campaign after sustaining a triceps tear in October against the Dallas Cowboys, he allegedly used a banned sub-

stance during his swift rehab. Lewis took a supplement called *Ultimate Spray* — derived from deer antlers (it seems fitting it was used to help someone run headfirst into other people) that you shoot it in your mouth to speed muscle growth. Although a confused Lewis apparently sprayed it on his elbow first.

Will he be appearing on Oprah for a heart-to-heart before long? Not much chance, as while drug use among top gridiron stars is frowned upon, everyone accepts it goes on. Tactics are thought to outweigh grunt on the pitch and on Sunday two brothers go head to head, with John Harbaugh of the Ravens (13-8) pitting his wits against the San Francisco 49ers Jim (4-6).

Recommendation: Take the Ravens to win between 7-12 points with William Hill at 7-1.