

DO NOT GO GENTLE

A WIMP2WARRIOR COMPETITOR'S JOURNEY

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FORWARD FROM RICHIE CRANNY

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF WIMP 2 WARRIOR

"I left school at the age of sixteen without a single formal qualification, not because I was incapable but because I wasn't stimulated or understood. My "success" in life stems from learning that fighting really is a metaphor for life. Finding martial arts at the age of 19 taught me so many life changing lessons, more than I ever learnt from years of sitting in classrooms.

Two of those lessons soon became mantras in my life.

-Nothing in life worthwhile is ever gained without struggle

-There is no learning without loss.

Today I'm the Founder and President of a multimillion-dollar company in Wimp 2 Warrior and my program is run in over fifty amazing gyms all around the world.

The dollar valuation of our business is truly irrelevant to me, its true value comes from the thousands of men and women my program empowers each year to no longer settle for a life of average.

The past, current and future Warriors now have the power to no longer choose that path of least resistance but instead embrace everything that comes with living a life outside of their comfort zone.

So, to all those that have conquered the Wimp 2 Warrior program, I congratulate but also thank you because without you my program would no longer exist.

For all those who are considering it, just take a moment to imagine a life where the fear of failure no longer holds sway to the choices you make".

Coach Richie Cranny

Believe, Achieve

INTRODUCTION

As I start to pull my notes and memories together 4 immediate thoughts come to mind:

1. If you are a lover and/or practitioner of MMA, Kickboxing, Jiu-jitsu, Boxing, Grappling, Wrestling, etc. you will learn absolutely nothing from reading this about MMA techniques and/or how to become a better fighter.
2. The Wimp2Warrior experience is definitely a physical challenge, however as my following notes and memories are testimony to, it is a huge emotional rollercoaster, with unparalleled highs, and devastating lows

Then if you have managed to stay awake and read this, and are thinking about doing the challenge, as Nike say, "Just do it"
3. This is a very personal account of my own W2W experience and in no way, shape or form am I writing on behalf of my colleagues or Wimp2Warrior.
4. I am struggling to put into words how much I admire and respect all of my fellow Wimp2Warrior competitors and coaches and I will forever be in your debt for the parts each and every one of you played in creating such a magnificent challenge and experience.

"Thank you" just isn't enough.



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WHY?

I have embarked on possibly one of my biggest (or craziest) challenges ever and signed up for the 21 week MMA Cage Fighting Program Wimp2Warrior.

W2W is a full contact Mixed Martial Arts competition which includes boxing, Jiu-jitsu, grappling, kickboxing and a range of other techniques and ends with a fight in the Octagon on December 6th.

My nickname is 'Fossil' because I am the oldest person in the World to attempt the W2W program and easily older than most of the others in the competition by around 30 years.

So the obvious question is Why?

Why would somebody of my age put themselves through such a massive challenge and commitment?

Why would we all put ourselves through so much pain and torture voluntarily?

For those of us on the mats now, those who have been before, and those who will follow on into the future, we know it's an opportunity to really test ourselves, to push ourselves as hard and as far as we can; to see in this 'soft and gentle' world we live in what our minds and bodies are truly capable of.

In the book 'Fear Bubble' by Ant Middleton, the former UK Special Forces soldier, TV star of 'Who Dares Wins' and Everest climber he talks about the difference between 'Pride and Ego'.

Most weeks I have posted on Facebook and Linked In an update on this 'Resilience Challenge' and I know some people might say how arrogant we all are but Middleton references 'Ego' as about how we want to be seen externally.

'Pride' is what drives us internally.

Pushing the limits day after day, session after session, punch after punch, never giving up, always going back.

Some days when the training is at its toughest, the pride in ourselves grows, not because we want pats on the back (especially as most of us don't even see the pain and the challenge that the others are going through as we are too busy focusing on surviving ourselves) but because we got back up again and continued to push, digging deeper in a way that Political Correctness and our 'everyone gets a medal', safety first, risk free society is slowly undermining.

Wimp2Warrior gives us all the opportunity to stand up and push back against the decline, against the normal 'soft and gentle' societal expectations and come out stronger.

The competitors come to Wimp 2 Warrior for a wide range of reasons: some looking for a new challenge; some to lose weight, to get fitter and stronger; others to overcome their insecurities and their demons or relationships that went bad; others because their lives, self-esteem and/or weight and health are spiralling out of control with too much

reliance on food, alcohol and/or drugs; plus a range of other challenges that we all face at different times of our lives. In another Series there was even a guy recovering from heart surgery and a lady recovering from cancer.

Regardless of our own personal 'Why', fear is a component consistent to us all.

Each competitor faces their fears of Will we get hurt? Will we make fools of ourselves? Will we let our coaches down? Will we embarrass ourselves? Will we lose? Will we fail to get through to the end?

And our 4 outstanding Coaches worked with each and every one of us to turn those fears into positives and help us all become a better version of ourselves.

For myself, at the age of 61, to most people the thought of actually committing to 5 months of getting battered and bruised and bashed around by guys half my age is potentially one of the most stupid things I have ever considered.

What am I trying to prove?

Since my 40th birthday I have completed 23 Ironman including the Hawaii Ironman; Run across the Sahara and Australian Deserts; represented Australia in 4 World Championships; built and sold multiple businesses; helped raise over \$1.25 million for charities; and have long and loving relationships with my beautiful wife, daughters and 3 Grandchildren.

So the easy and the most honourable answer would be my eldest daughter Beverley was planning to do the program again, back to back, and it will be amazing to support her and go through the next Series with her.

While it is maybe a bit extreme, what a wonderful opportunity for daughter/father bonding and spending time together.

And while that is definitely true, if the truth be known when my wife Ann and I got back from climbing Kilimanjaro in March, and after about 3 years of mountain climbing and adventure together in NZ, Nepal, Africa and Europe, our next mountaineering adventure in South America isn't planned for another 9 months and as I looked at our calendar I thought "What the hell am I going to do between July and March next year to keep my brain and body moving, and prevent me from sliding into the depressed, lethargic and bored mind-fuck that always happens when I don't have a major challenge to aim for?"

Ironman Triathlons, then CrossFit comps, Brisbane to Sydney charity cycle rides, and more recently mountaineering have kept fuelling the fire.

However, the thought of spending the next 9 months, training for a couple of hours at the gym with no target, no goal, no overall driving force, followed by a coffee then shopping, left me feeling ill and (I hate to use the word) it made me feel down and depressed and just rudderless.

I have worked the last 40 odd years in sales: chasing targets, chasing orders, chasing customers, chasing the dollar, chasing business, chasing payments, and constantly in the hunt to be successful and to survive and so the real answer of why commit to 21 weeks and potentially putting the few remaining brain cells and life at risk is I need the physical

challenge, I need something to give me drive, give me focus, give me a buzz and help me live a life not normal.

And then there is the real reason – a Welsh poet called Dylan Thomas....

I enjoy reading and in recent years have revelled in the exploits of fictional characters like Jack Reacher, Mitch Rapp and Sean Courtney.

I wish I could go back in time and join real life adventurers in books about Shackleton, Mawson, Hillary, Burke and Wills, Grylls, and a plethora of mountain climbers and adventurers.

But above them all stands a poem by Dylan Thomas called “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”.

Sometime in the next 25 years I am going to die, and above everything else, my driving motivation has become to squeeze as much life out of my remaining years that I potentially can. To burn out, not fade away.

So when people ask me why have I signed up for Wimp2Warrior, my best answer is to quote Thomas, who every day inspires me with his words:

**“Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”**

PRE-SERIES TRIAL WORKOUT

Before I signed up for Wimp2Warrior I felt really concerned about a couple of things so met with Coach Mick McSevney and asked him his opinion of 2 critical areas:

1. I'm not in my 20s or 30s and at 61 years old have gathered a range of physical injuries and breakages, including dislocated fingers from falling down a Himalayan mountainside last year; 4 inches of muscle missing from my left leg having been cut out to remove a tumour 6 years ago; major Achilles and calf issues from running 1,000s of miles in Ironman and Multimarathon challenges plus several 'old man' injuries and wear and tear that young guys have yet to experience.

Mick's simple reply was "Don't worry as we will adapt the workouts for you" (Yeah, right Mick, looking back of course you did!)

2. Beverley has been through some tough years and W2W is her safe place so did Mick think she would mind if I did the next Series with her?

Mick didn't think it would be a problem which was exactly the case as when I told her I had signed up and had been so worried yet her response was magnificent and to share this journey with her it's going to be such a great experience.

The thought of actually being on the same fight card on the same Fight Night in December will be just amazing.



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Before the Series started however, we all had to complete a 2 hour 'Trial' training session, which was similar to an extended CrossFit workout with a lot of running, push-ups, sit-ups, squats, assault bike, sand balls, red faces and sweat, as we all partnered up then careered around the gym trying not to bump into other partners racing from one workout to the next.

I would be interested in looking back through the previous 9 Series how many people have been 'cut' from the program after that Trial however we all felt under pressure to perform and demonstrate to the Coaches that we warranted selection.

Fortunately, none of us died from the workout so we finished the session with a Q&A before being sent on our way with a promise of a phone call in a couple of days to let us know if we had been selected or not.

Now at my tender age I would like to say that I was cynically indifferent either way and/or fully expected to get through.

However, that was actually not the case and when the call came saying I had been selected to join Series 10 starting in a weeks' time, I actually did a fist-pump and let out a shout, before proudly telling my daughters, wife, dog and anybody within earshot that I had got in!

Stupid old fart!

WEEK 1 - JETLAGGED

3 days in and I'm feeling permanently jetlagged.

Monday was a light training day and measuring glove sizes and then Tuesday the initial fitness test with Strength and Conditioning Coach Andrew "Bez" Berridge, a 16 times Australian Muay Thai champion, professional psycho, and one of the toughest bastards I have ever met.

Apart from another guy Adam Beales, aka Ruthless, who is 49, the guys and girls in the gym are all easily in their 20s and 30s so it was a chance for us all to measure our current state in terms of weight, burpee's, push-ups, sit-ups, rowing, assault bike and squats.

I did okay in the group of about 42 (30 blokes, 12 women) however I have been training hard for the last 50 years and for some it was their 1st workout in a long time.



In addition to the 'jetlag' it's interesting because we do a lot of training on mats as obviously if we're going to be rolling around wrestling in Jiu-jitsu (BJJ) it would be dangerous to train on hard ground on the floor.

However the mats are really soft and I'm finding that my calves are struggling, as if the muscles are being soaked up all the time, but hopefully they will adjust and improve as we go forward.

Push-ups are even more difficult. I have 'runner's arms' and shoulders and have never been great at push-ups so the soft mats make them much harder as there isn't much resistance (or maybe I am just a weak old bastard making excuses!!)

In the last few months since Kilimanjaro it left me wondering what the hell I'm going to do for the rest of the year.

Now hopefully this will put the spark back and every morning I can't wait to get in there and train with the Squad.

Looking around the gym we see how physically different everyone is and when I look at the other men, one of whom I will be fighting in 5 months, it will be interesting to see how we all progress going forward.

Personally I believe most of us 'mere males' go through life kidding ourselves into pretending we are tough, but never put the pretence to the test

- We grow our muscles in the gym by pushing weights that never hit back
- We read a Jack Reacher book and want to be the hero, or believe we can fight the world
- We work long hours, or in bad weather, or hit a KPI, or can use a power tool and crave respect
- We watch a Grand Final or the UFC on TV and see ourselves on the field so that we can feel the adulation of the crowd
- We revel in our Glory Days of years gone by reliving a moment in time over and over again But the reality is, we can't and we don't, and outside of our own minds, rarely if ever do we put ourselves into a situation where we have to go toe to toe with another man.

Fellow Warrior and human wrecking ball of muscle and energy Vince Costa put it so well when he said:

"W2W was a reset button to keep me on track and do it in a completely new skill area after doing XFit and other sports

While I'd played footy at a high level, and had a scrap or two on the pitch, I wanted to find out if I can actually survive in a real fight

I didn't have any 'demons' and my life wasn't out of control however I wanted to adapt my skills from others sports into the ultimate test

Most guys think they are tough but I want to find out how tough I really am, especially after I get punched hard by some of the other guys in training, and can't walk away

As in the famous Rocky quote

"It ain't about how hard you hit.

It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward"



WEEK 2 – BACK TO BASICS

One of the most basic boxing techniques we are learning is how to move backward and forward, side to side, around the mats, while throwing jabs and crosses into the imaginary heads of invisible competitors.

Sounds simple but we all regularly trip over our own feet and forgot which way is our left and which way is our right!

In addition to footwork, we also practiced a technique that most of us learnt when we were all about 12 months old, and that is how to fall over onto our backs.

40 years ago I had survived 17 solo free-fall parachute jumps, back in the day long before tandems and ‘handkerchief’ controllable parachutes, where learning to land safely was pretty important.

However, now we have to relearn how to land on our backs, arms out to break the fall, without damaging our necks, or dislocating a limb, and then being prepared to either defend ourselves or get up to attack.

Sounds simple enough yet most of us had sore necks at the end of the session so something else to add to the ‘need to learn list’.

By Thursday end of week 2 the niggles are starting and I’m double wrapping with tight compression socks, then Thermoskins on top to really hold the Achilles in tight.

On the way home from the gym Bev gets a coffee and I get in the water at Collaroy ocean pool to soak my legs in the cold water.



It is middle of winter and bloody freezing as the water makes my testicles disappear up into my throat so good job Annie and I are not having any more children!

I'll also have a protein drink and banana in the car then sit down for breakfast on ice bags of frozen Aldi peas on my groin and shins.

At this stage, by comparison I have previously trained much harder and longer for Ironman but this is very different.

The absolute highlight so far has been the drive to and from the gym early every morning with Beverley.

She says the BS we both come out with before the sun comes up needs to be videoed however it would get banned!

We just never stop laughing and bullshitting and it's just the best 40 minutes of the day.

She recently completed Series 9 and after a 2-week break has immediately gone into this Series 10, going 'back to back', which is no mean feat.

However, her journey hasn't been easy, and best explained by her friend Emma Page:

Bev struggled with her weight after having her 3rd child Billie, always on the go, doing all for her family and putting herself last. I had started CrossFit at my local gym and was loving it, and when she told me she had signed up for Wimp2Warrior I said she was crazy and should just come to the gym with me in daylight!!

Determined, she woke every day before the sun and trugged to the other end of the beaches to beat the crap out of strangers while we all slept.

Bev has had a troubled relationship for a while, highs and lows like the rest of us but her starting this journey for herself saw her not only shed kilos, but build her self-worth.

She confided in me how she was feeling her relationship was tracking a path to divorce and her partner had been less than supportive so I was always on the end of the phone or at her door with a bottle of wine to help her navigate this tough path until she made the tough decision to end her marriage in May.

July came quickly in amongst many teary days and nights navigating being a newly single mum, dealing with a less than amicable relationship breakdown all while training and focusing on FIGHT NIGHT.

I had never been to a MMA fight though had seen the bruises on Bev from training and while I fully supported her I was scared for my friend. The morning of, my kids and I painted a shoddy poster in support of Auntie Bev in her red colours and I was pumped!!!!

I was pumped for her to have made it through the training; I was pumped for her to compete because her ex had been so unsupportive. I was excited to experience the whole event and we all arrived hours before the event, super excited to not

only have a night away from the kids but to experience the buzz Bev had talked about for the last 22wks.

The first girls' fights were EPIC, (so much more oomph than the men!) and this totally pumped us up for Bev's fight.

Soon it was her turn and the emotions got the better of me. My heart raced, my bladder spasmed and my palms got sweaty.

'Woman' by Wolfmother started playing and I burst into tears as she walked out with fierce determination to the Octagon and I'm not sure if it was fear or pride, maybe a bit of both with a lot of concern for my friend.

No one wants to see someone who they're close to lose a battle they've been fighting months to win but this was more that winning in the Cage for Bev. This was solidifying that her sacrifices and decisions, much more so than everyone else, were worthwhile. That she COULD overcome. That she was worth more than what she'd been told she was worth.

I cried. I screamed. Like S.C.R.E.A.M.E.D. I chanted. I cried some more. I swore like a sailor on heat and I didn't care who heard me as I just wanted Bev to hear me and be spurred on by my encouragement.

SHE WON. I bawled like a baby. I'd even pissed my pants and I didn't care.

She did it. She FUCKING DID IT.

It was a huge relief – I hadn't doubted her energy and tenacity, I knew what she was fighting for and I believed she'd win. But when that reality came about I honestly hadn't been more proud of anyone in my entire life.

She dreamt it. She pursued it. She ached for it and she did it. She is The Warrior.

My Bev.

WEEK 3 - INTRODUCTION TO JIU-JITSU

Started Brazilian Jiu-jitsu with Thiago Braga, a BJJ Back belt from Brazil and what a coach.

Thiago's philosophy is

"Jiu Jitsu will teach people to always be humble and respectful. A kid that lives the jiu Jitsu life style will never have to worry about bullying as he or she will naturally NEVER be in the position of bullying or being bullied by others."

When he demonstrates a technique with Scott, or one of the Mentors (competitors who have done the program before), Thiago makes every move look simple, stylish and elegant.

Then when we all try it we look like giraffes and elephants wrestling!

1st impressions are Jiu-jitsu is a physical mixture of Chess and Twister and I'm finding it extremely complex.

Fortunately, Thiago is only giving us 3 or 4 'jigsaw pieces' but no overall picture so we can focus on the 'technique of the day'.

We learnt several BJJ techniques including lifts, holds, side controls 1, 2 and 3; plus 2 other moves including a submission arm hold called Americana which attempts to dislocate the other person's arm if they don't 'tap out' - a 'nice' way to pass the time of day!

At one stage we were told to 'mount' our opponent in what is best described as a missionary position, then on the count of three both try to gain the ascendancy.



So in a purely platonic fashion (even though it is now legal in Australia between consenting males) I mounted Michael Burgio, who is about my weight but a foot shorter than myself, and on THREE he thrust-twisted his hips, and flipped me off onto the ground next to him, then lay there smiling.

Faaaark! I was so frustrated that I nearly passed him a cigarette as I had no idea what he had done, or how I could combat his technique!

I then partnered with Remi Chalon, a young, lighter and very strong French guy and I came away feeling quite inadequate and lacking strength in comparison as he wrestled me into different positions where I again struggled to match his technique and strength.

Making myself focus on one day at a time and not overthink things as we are still 19 weeks and 95 sessions away from Fight Night.

Mid-week Richie Cranny the Co-Founder of W2W joined us on the mats.

He is an amazing bloke with a phenomenal pedigree in this sport, currently being President of W2W as well as President of the IMMAFF so it was a huge honour having him join us.

As a 4th Degree Black Belt he is a hell of a fighter and looks and moves like a 100kg bald ballerina, gliding across the mats like warm oil with smooth danger so we all hung on his every word.

(Hey Richie, if you ever read this the 'bald, ballerina' comment was meant to be a compliment, honestly!!)

Mick also introduced several punching techniques including a three punch combo of left jab, right cross and left hook.



We are not contact sparring yet but really enjoying the different techniques and I especially like the left hook!

I really enjoy the Tuesday and Friday fitness sessions and we sweated through several reps of a minute of Sprawls, then a minute of Level Changes, then Sit Outs, then Scrambles then a minute of planks and then a minute rest.

Started off and finished the last set as I did the first so am either very bloody slow or I'm consistent.

Beverly, OMG she is powerful and she's so fit now.

She might not be as light as some of the other women but is very, very strong.

She brings a real energy into the gym and is so good to be around even though sometimes it is difficult to not look at her as a father rather than another competitor.

Returning Warrior Paul Duroux told me one morning:

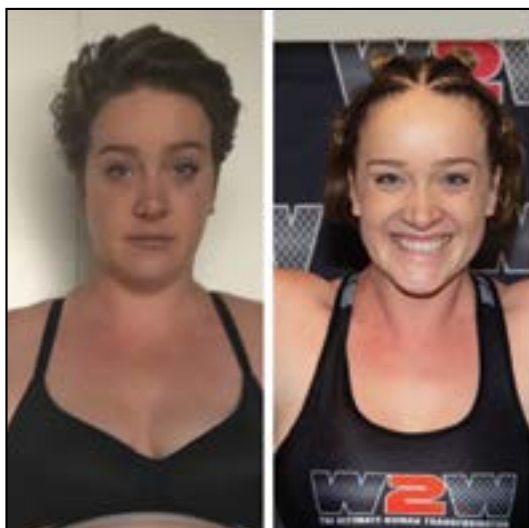
One of the highlights of competing in two W2W Series was watching Bev as a young mum of 3 become stronger and more resilient, and now, as a father himself, seeing the bond Bev and I share as we both take on this challenge together.

It was a big night last night for her as she finally got the separation document signed by her ex, so another big step forward.

It has been a tough few years for her in a 'turbulent' relationship and we are all so happy she is now getting a fresh start as this time last year she was out of control, struggling in a toxic relationship, 109kgs, going nowhere.

Now, through Wimp2Warrior and her own commitment, she is a different woman and even though we always have been, Ann and I are so incredibly proud of her and the changes she has made to her life as she is a shining example of how people in bad relationships can use this program to take control back of their lives.

Finished week 3 and the body is holding up well so bring on week 4!



WEEK 4 – REALITY CHECK

4 weeks into the Series, and with the 4am alarm every morning I feel constantly hungover, cloudy and fatigued throughout the day, every day, and it will be interesting to see how the body continues to adjust, especially as I'm in bed every night by 8pm!

We were all fitted out for our Rhino Mouthguard today as gone are the days of putting a \$10 gumshield into a pan of hot water then sucking on it for 5 minutes.

This was a very professional, full on mouth imprint and fitting that will take a couple of weeks to produce and will hopefully save us all some damage going forward.

They come in a range of colours and we could have anything we wanted printed on the front. Bev has "F*CK YEAH", Sally has "Silencer", Steve has the British Union Jack flag and I went for plain matt black.

The dentist pushed for something to personalise it so I had our family initials GA on the left side and BK on the right, both out of sight.

On the Tuesday fitness I buddied up with Big Bad Ben Gilroy and I seriously wish I had my mouthguard then!

Ben has done the program before and at about my height, slightly heavier, about 30 odd years younger, from Cumberland and he is a really good bloke and very, very strong.

We were doing some shoulder to shoulder pummels and then wrestling to gain a dominant position and he threw me all over like a rag doll, giving me a total reality check.



While I might have good cardio and conditioning fitness, I've got a lot of work to do and need to get stronger in my upper body but more importantly need to learn these BJJ techniques fast otherwise I will get broken in the Cage

Thankfully MMA isn't just based on Jiu-jitsu, and we are enjoying learning each different 'fight discipline'.

One of the small 1% I am working on is instead of picking a dot on the wall as an imaginary head to focus my shadow punches on, I position myself up against a back wall so that the whole group is in front of me.

Then when we all start our shadow boxing I look at the guys around me imagining that I am actually fighting them, aiming my punches and kicks at their legs, bodies and heads.

I'm not sure if they are doing the same, or realise, or care, as they are engrossed in their own workout, and when they turn around to face me I turn to shadow box another competitor.

My thought is instead of just throwing out air-punches, if I get my head into the sparing and focus on another small 1%, it might not make a huge difference now but might contribute down the track when we start to get physical.

A word from 'The Boss'

To my man,

Words cannot describe how I continue to be incredibly proud of you and all of our crazy adventures.

We have done so much together over the last 40 years, and now the latest challenge of Wimp2Warrior.

When you first mentioned that you were interested in doing it, my first thoughts were...

No way!

This is Beverley's domain and you have had so many other challenges.

After Bev's 1st fight, which was life changing for her, I could see that you were hungry for something really big. So with support and love I realised that it would be a wonderful journey for you both to share together.

When your new routine started, this is what I heard from my sleepy state at 4am: The alarm: not needed, because you were usually awake as you never sleep!

The shower: known to loosen up tired aching bodies.

The kettle: you slurping tea and crunching food.

The body: the funniest thing was, I could not work out what kind of stretch you were doing as I heard this strange sound, WHOOSH, WHOOSH, so one morning I got up and realised it was you swinging your leg backwards and forwards to warm up.

I left for England about 4 weeks into your training and you had to nurse your bashed up ribs, bruised body and early morning rises all by yourself for a while which I know you would have revelled in as I know just how much you love me

fussing over you (NOT).

People asked me how I felt about watching my daughter and husband fight in the cage?

It was very easy I said, because a wise old man once told me, why worry about things until it actually happens? Thanks Fossil X

Also, if you are bloody mad enough to get in the Cage in the first place, then you deserve what you get!!

A few months later, when I heard your walk-on song start playing, 'Bat out of Hell' by Meat Loaf, the song we used to blast out 40 years ago on a Friday night before hitting the town (before children), my heart pounded and I knew how much this challenge meant to you.

One of the best things that always comes out of your adventures over the years, are the friendships you make with the people around you, no matter what their age, and I had the pleasure of meeting some of the fighters at a few celebrations.

Then just when they thought you were a nice guy, you showed them a hit list you had on your phone of all the injuries they had in case you were to fight one of them. LOL.

So Dobson, what's next!

You are a wise man who built his house upon the rocks and when the rain tumbles down, you always have a plan. I love you so much xxxxxxxx

Always have, always will

All my love, Annie xxx

Foot note: Beware of injuries as a spectator, I jumped up and down so much, screaming and shouting for you, my hips were displaced the next day!

WEEK 5 - DON'T CALL SCOTTY A SOFTCOCK!!

Wednesday of week 5 and we practised our kicks today for the first time with Coach Scott Moran.

Scotty is a 24-year-old, 6ft 2 kickboxing champion and an outstanding coach, who with calm aggression and authority took us through the do's and don'ts of how to kick someone properly.

He demonstrated how to practise straight leg kicks, left leg kicks, round the corner kicks and every now and again one of the group would yelp then hop away like a broken emu as a kick had hit a nerve or soft spot (especially on the tender part inside of the thigh, just above the knee).

As defenders, Scott showed us how to block leg kicks with our own shins and thighs, by turning or lifting the leg under attack.

I was against a huge Maori guy Eric, about 130 kg and short legs so I'm realising that my long arms and long legs are a big advantage as there's no way I want him to get hold of me!

I've just got stay out of range and NOT get in the wrestle on the ground as the Jiu-jitsu will be a problem for me.



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At the end of the session Scotty made us all line up around the outside of the gym and then he and four or five of the other trainers/mentors went round and kicked everybody 4 times, once on the outside of each leg, once on the inside of each leg.

In this modern 'soft and gentle' world too many of us are trying to make life easier and yet I am revelling in the opportunity to challenge myself by making life harder.

So I thought I'd test myself and when Scott stood in front of me for my turn having just unleashed on 'returning Warrior' Michael Burgio I said to him "Come on soft cock, show me what you've got" and he unleashed his 4 kicks.

Faaark, HUGE, MASSIVE, BIG, F...ing mistake as I thought my leg was going to break!

UFC great Michael Bisping once said "Nothing hurts quite as vindictively as a solid kick to the leg - they are horrible" and he wasn't joking.

The brain is weird because as the pain came through like a sickening tidal wave, I was still thinking that he had another 3 kicks to go!

I really felt it, failing terribly at trying to shrug it off and show no pain.

It's now 8 o'clock at night and all day have been on anti-inflammatories, the ever dependable frozen peas, ice packs, spent 20 minutes in the ice cold ocean swimming pool, I've rolled it and a load of stretching and am still in agony!

Bev is limping like a one legged pirate and she's in a hell of a state (Though I have to admit, while a father never wants to see his daughter suffer, in this instance, is it wrong that that her limping around makes me feel just a little bit better?!)

It will be interesting tomorrow to see how everybody else pulls up after the kicking session but I promise that next time I am going to keep my big mouth shut!!

DEXA SCAN

Today Bev, Granddaughter Billie and I went to Crow's Nest and had a DEXA Scan which measures our weight, our muscle mass, BMI, fat ratio and a range of other measurements.

The DEXA scan was interesting and gives us all the plan for what we should eat and where we can all actually cut the weight with me personally needing to lose 3 kg over the next 5 weeks to hit the midpoint target Mick set me of 83kgs.

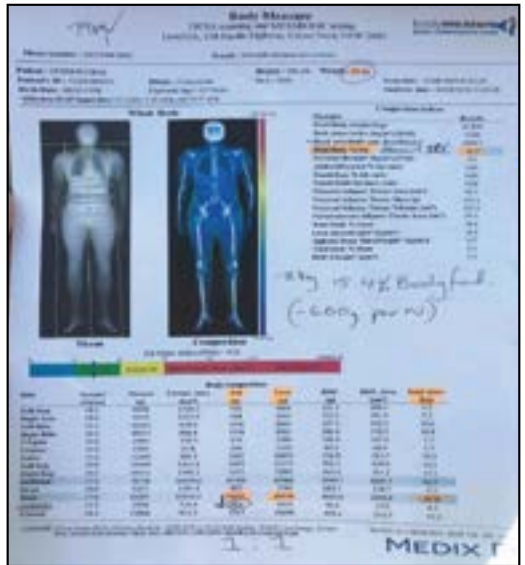
My results were good and my internal fats were excellent with not a lot of external fat though I can lose another 3 kg without losing muscle which isn't a huge amount compared to some of the other competitors who have to lose up to 30kg.

I'm trying to eat 1700 calories a day and have had two salads today though I'm starving, however as a friend Keith Nipperess said "as long as you are getting enough calories, so what if you are hungry, just means you got used to eating too much previously". Smart comment.

During my Ironman years I was very strict with what I ate and learnt to eat and drink while racing and training so every morning, as I warm up at home before we train, I have a banana on toast and cup of tea to ensure I have the energy to get through the session.

I also got used to entering all the food and drink I ate into a calorie counter app called My Fitness Pal.

W2W use My Net Diary so religiously I am entering everything I consume into the App to keep me on track as I don't want to get on Mick's "shit list" and not make weight



One simple example of how I have reduced the wasted calories is a large flat white coffee with full cream milk is 165 calories, Black coffee 5 calories and coffee with Almond milk 67 calories, so I have moved to almond milk and saved 100 calories

A small 1% change with a bigger long-term effect that isn't having a massive impact on my home life.

WEEK 6 - WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING

Getting up at 4am the mornings are cold and pitch black with only the changing moon and stars to light up the night sky.

I meet Bev downstairs and say "Morning adopted Daughter", to which she immediately replies "Hello alleged Father".

The roads are clear with barely a vehicle out to accompany a couple of hardy cyclists.

On cold, rainy, winter's mornings, street and traffic lights glow and glisten off the shiny bitumen as we swish through.

Going through Narrabeen we saw a typical Australian sight - at 4.30am a man walking his dog in the pitch-black of night, wearing baseball cap and thongs! Got to love Australia.

Most mornings we have Spotify playing and go through a range of different 90 second Walk-On songs for when we get to Fight Night.

In Bev's last fight she chose "Woman" by Wolfmother, such a great song considering her journey so far and is thinking about using it again.

I have come up with a few different choices including "Right Here, Right Now" by Fat Boy Slim – a song that they used to play before the Australian Ironman Triathlon Championships, as we were nervously treading water, waiting for the cannon to explode and race to start.

From the '70s Slade's "Get Down and Get With It", "Layla" by Eric Clapton and "It's Bad You Know" by RL Burnside.

Plenty of time to decide but good fun blasting them out as we rev ourselves up in preparation for the morning's combat.

After training, at this time of year we leave the floodlights of the gym and the sun isn't yet up, often coming up like a flaming orange ball out of the ocean as Bev and I get into the Collaroy beach pool to recover and prepare for the next day.

In the morning I eat and stretch for half an hour before Bev and I leave to make sure the body is pre-warmed up then when we get there I'll walk up and down the hill just to warm up the calves and ankles.

Throughout the day I stretch whenever I get the opportunity: at a bus stop, when picking up the Grandkids, in the shops, just doing whatever needs to be done to keep this old body up and ready to take on those young buggers.

We have had a good week of fitness, rolling and shadow boxing and my attitude is to take it to the other blokes every time.

Because of my age, rightly or wrongly, I feel I need to constantly prove I'm worthy of being on the program so don't back down, try to dominate and be aggressive every time we grapple.

I might be old but it doesn't mean I will give them the ascendancy as I am not there to make up the numbers.

As with my Ironman days I always try to push harder to get the most out of myself during every training session and now every W2W training session is a battle in my mind.

A good example is I was sparring with a great competitor Anthony Romeo, who had just got married during the Series and booked his wedding night hotel to be near the gym so he didn't miss a training session – what a guy!!

Romes and I were wrestling around the floor when Scott called time but neither of us would give in and just kept trying to get the ascendancy over each other (including me maybe having tried a sneaky knee to his ribs which I later found out was illegal).

Like 2 rabid dogs fighting over a bone we just kept going while the others stood back laughing until finally Scott threatened us if we didn't pull our heads in!

You're a good man Romes even if I am still coughing up fur balls from all of your hair I got caught in my mouth!

I feel physically strong when wrestling though am not sure if that is the best way forward especially as I'm still struggling with BJJ techniques and in particular the first seconds of the sparring sessions where I need to work out how to dominate through technique rather than get into a dominated position then try to fight my way out.

Final session of the week with another Fucked Up Friday, which is always taken seriously as we try to raise the bar.

Half way through we are all starting to struggle holding a 2-minute plank and I grunted just loud enough for a few struggling near me to hear....



"Bev"

"What?"

"I'm sleeping with your mother!!"

"F....ing idiot, I wish I was adopted!"

Gotta love that woman!

As a footnote to the week Bev also bravely 'poked the bear'

She ordered a pair of tights that has Mick's face printed on them, and I am not sure if I should be concerned for her and the punishment she will get, or if I should be concerned about his face being so close to my daughter's arse!!

WEEK 7 – FEELING THE BLOOD RUSHING THROUGH MY VEINS

Tuesday I had to miss training due to work so did my 100 Sprawls penalty at 5 o'clock in the morning and had to video it on Facebook live.

It's the 1st time I've used Facebook live and unfortunately sent the recording out to all my FB contacts who must have thought I was a lunatic in the shed at that time of morning.

Our training and fight gear arrived including shinguards, 16 oz boxing gloves, hand wraps and 8 ounce MMA gloves.

It was really exciting to get the gear and the feeling of the training ramping up and going full contact soon was palpable as we can't wait to put them on.

In training we practised 'slipping' techniques of how to duck or slip from a punch. I obviously need a lot more practise as received a cut behind my ear this week which Ann and Beverley think needs stitches, but because I can't see it I've just put cream on as "it's just a scratch".

This will sound really stupid but I love the feeling of the aches and pains my body is going through as the contact makes me feel alive.

I'm having to manage my hamstrings and my back and my hand and my Achilles and nearly everywhere else but it's a great feeling that I've missed since my rugby and league days.



This week we did a stomach punching exercise by hitting our partner with combinations in the stomach and how to breath while taking a punch.

At the end I tapped Mick on the shoulder and asked him to show me what it's like to be punched by a pro.

So he started his punch combos and built them up slowly, harder and harder, with me focusing on short breaths in and out, until I thought my stomach was going to cave in.

It was it was an amazing feeling and also sent a good message to the others in the group of the Old Guy is not going to be an easy touch.

Thank goodness for all of the sit ups and free punches I have given my Grandsons George and Harry.

In the back of my mind I'm not driven by fear of getting hurt but driven by fear of failure:

- fear of not making it through to the finale on December 6th
- fear of not stepping up
- fear of embarrassing myself
- fear of not being good enough and Mick tapping me on the shoulder saying 'enough'
- fear of when we start Fight Camp and full contact in week 12 that will I let myself down

But inside me I have got this burning rage, this feeling of betrayal and I'm hoping this anger is going to help me get through Fight Camp and onto Fight Night when things start to get tough.

I need to harness my rage and disappointments so that when I do get hit in the face instead of falling backwards, I step forward.

I don't have any tattoos however last week I mentioned to Ann that I had thought about tattooing the Dylan Thomas quote "Do not go gentle into that good night" on my arm.

She flew to England a couple of days ago as her 2 brothers, one 3 years older than me and the other 3 years younger, have had heart problems, and said she'd been thinking about it on the plane and if I wanted to do it then go ahead.

Amazing thought because she hates tats and while I won't get one, this whole feeling of "rage, rage against the dying of the light" is inspiring me every day.

I can't hide from being 61 years old but this week I felt like I wanted to fight every minute, of every day, and to push myself as hard as possible to see how far I can go.

We've just finished week 7 and it's now midnight on Friday night and I'm lying in bed and absolutely buzzing

I'm so excited I can almost feel the blood rushing through my veins

My whole body is sore but my brain is in overdrive!

I can't stop thinking about this challenge.

I think through the potential fight I'm going to have in 14 weeks.

I think through kicks and punch combinations.

I lay awake thinking about how I will grapple and wrestle with the better blokes like Jordan, Vince, Josh, Lyntin, Ben, Matt and most of the others and what techniques I need to use against them to give myself a chance.

My mind just doesn't stop as it's exciting and scary but it's bringing me to life in and so many ways

This is what I was missing in between mountains and it is exactly what I signed up for!

When I told friends what I was doing two of them Nick and Suzy Healey later said

"When a mate of mine told me he'd "signed up for Wimp2Warrior" my initial thought was unlike other feats of human endurance designed to whip corporate Australia into shape, this seemed different - people of all ages, shapes, sizes, fitness levels and genders were catered for by the Wimp 2 Warrior program.

The promise of "a real challenge that will push your life 10x further" seemed like something we should follow so my wife and I booked the final Fight Night into our diary weeks out in order to secure the chance to support our friend and experience something we knew nothing about.

20 weeks later, Fight Night came and it was amazing - it couldn't have been a more supportive and positive experience...not the testosterone laden bullish crowd we expected but entire families cheering on their mums, dads, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts - even the commentary from the fight referees and announcers was inspiring and positive.

It was a brilliant night - the event was filled with genuine, passionate, motivated and fight ready people brimming with anticipation and the joy of having achieved an incredible goal.

Win or lose it was just the same - a cliché but true - and one of the best nights of the year!

WEEK 8 – TIME TO CALL D.O.C.S!

One area that I am struggling with is sparring with Bev

It's not a male vs. female thing; it is just that she is my daughter, and one of the 3 loves of my life, so how the hell can I inflict any type of damage or pain on her.

Bizarre really as she has already finished a W2W Series and is so much better than I am in so many of the techniques. She is also bloody tough and smiles when she gets punched in the face, like some crazy, 'psycho assassin'.

One morning this week we ended up in front of each other where one partner had to cover up and the other attacked.

So with large 16oz gloves held high, I am standing toe to toe, face to face with my beautiful daughter, who is scowling like Ronda Rousey on a bad night and ready to do some serious damage when a huge wave of pride floods through me, and I lose concentration.

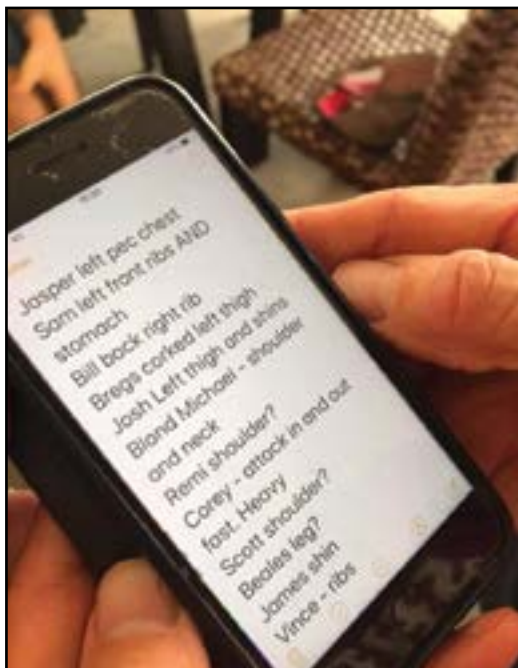
A split second later I am jolted out of my reverie as she throws a straight jab through the gap in my gloves and right onto my nose!!

As the famous quote by Mike Tyson said "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face" and from then on I started to treat her just like any other fighter (still love you though Bev and the Dept. of Community Services will be calling you for Parental Abuse!!)

Every morning I put my gumshield in and bounce onto the mats to start my warm up - excited, motivated and looking forward to whatever the coaches and my colleagues throw at us.



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I just love the training however I am not here to get fit

I'm here to fight and these guys are my team mates, sharing the highs and lows together and developing into friends.

Team mates that I will support and encourage to get better and stand up for, just as I did in the Army and footy teams I played for.

Yet the crazy part of this Program is come December 6th I am going to fight one of my team mates.

So one thing I do every morning during the warmup is as we shadow box or run round the outside walls of the gym I'm watching the other guys, looking them right in the eye, watching every move they make, imagining myself up against each

one and how will I psychologically prepare myself so that I don't lose the fight before I get into the Cage.

I have even started to make a list of all of their injuries so that I am aware when I fight one of them in December.

It's a 1%er that might make a difference later when we go toe to toe.

I've also made notes on the strengths of some of the men that I might potentially fight including:

- Jordan Coleman: experienced, calm, great boxing technique and very strong
- Daniel Kelly: experienced and good BJJ so keep my distance and kick
- Vince Costa: not my height but strong as a bull - use distance
- Ben Gilroy: strong, experienced, pressure him
- Lyntin Atkins: fast and dangerous, don't stand up, try to take him down and put him under pressure
- Jayden Malala: Very experienced, strong, keep my distance and kick
- Anthony Romeo: Good All Round MMA, keep the pressure on him
- Scott Butcher: currently heavy but losing weight fast and getting strong
- Ruthless Beale: Yoga and surfer, strong, keep kicking

- Jasper Heering: Agile, Good All Round, kick and put under pressure
- Sam Pemberton: southpaw, corporate, attack his injured ribs and chest, watch out for his jab
- Billy Bellew: very dangerous, fast, switches techniques, try to get in close
- Josh Cusworth: family-man, 'tradie strength', tough, Good All Round, 'hit and run'
- Michael Burgio: smaller but experienced. Don't go to ground with him
- Michael Lansdowne: tall, heavy, getting stronger, watch out for his long kicks
- Michael Bregenhøj: Keep my distance as getting stronger and quicker
- Corey Strozer: big and heavy but hits hard; attack in and out fast.
- Jono Coffey: smaller but fast, tough. Family-man, switches stance regularly, use length and distance
- Steve Tompkins: smaller but good technique, use length and distance
- Remi Chalou: getting stronger each week so keep pressuring him
- Sunny Ghedia: previous competitor; better than he realises so keep him under pressure

I'm trying to prepare myself mentally so that when Fight Night comes I'll be ready to go.

I will not let the outcome of the fight define me and will do everything I can to win as far I just love this whole experience.

Yet we still have 12 weeks before we get to North Sydney Leagues Club, which is in the back my mind, so I'm just trying to literally be like a footballer "one game at a time" even if sometimes it is hard not to overthink it.

Train, recover, stretch, make sure I can train hard every day, stay away from injuries, go again.

A 1% I have started is every time I finish a shower I turn off the hot water and turn up the cold. Part of me thinks it might help recovery but the real truth is it is another discipline to keep me on track and focused on the small decisions I need to make every minute of every day – if I can't decide to have a cold shower then how the hell will I decide to get up off the mats after I have been hit.

We received our Rhino Mouthguards this week and I immediately put mine in and trained with it.

We aren't getting punched in the face yet so the other guys probably think I'm an idiot being the only one running around the gym with a mouthguard in yet my view is it's another 1%-er

If I get used to the mouthguard now, and not when I start to get beaten around the head or in the stomach and struggling to breath, my tired lungs and body will have already adjusted to breathing with a mouthguard under stress.

We finished the week with what they call 'Fucked Up Friday' and one of Scotty's specials. Normally it's a mixture of Sprawls and then a minute of Level Changes, then Sit Outs, then Scrambles then a minute of planks and then mix it up and this time Mick ran it and really put the pressure on.

It was bloody hard work as Mick was in one of his 'Don't Fuck with me' moods, and even though the same exercises, it was longer and more intense and while I normally get through okay this time I was absolutely knackered.

The gym is so hot it would make our politicians start to consider climate change, as it is completely closed in, with just one narrow doorway entrance and no windows so pools of sweat make the mats glisten like small lakes as we slide around between each move.

There are metal roller doors that are rarely opened by pulling on a clanking chain that open onto a bus garage, plus a couple of wall mounted fans that are never turned on which begs the question, are the Coaches making the environment harder to make us tougher, or is the Scotsman trying to save a couple of dollars off his electricity bill? (and there's no way am I going to say that to out loud!!)

The coaches are undoubtedly some of the best I've ever met in my 61 years.

In the Army I experienced Coaches who used position, rank and power to bully their soldiers but couldn't lead from the front.

I've met Subject Matter Experts who are so academically and/or intellectually smart that they know everything about their chosen subject but when it comes to demonstrating or communicating they bore the shit out of their audience.



I've worked with Sales Managers and Business Coaches who coach 'by the book' from behind their computers and never get out from behind their desks to coach their people on the job.

Then there are Technical sports coaches who have an area of expertise but zero idea how to mentally get more from their Coachees.

Our 4 Wimp2Warrior Coaches are outstanding without exception.

They have this amazing ability of keeping us all in a permanent state of perturbation, on edge and open to whatever lesson we are being taught on the day.

They are able to balance the 'hearts and minds' of each one of us so that we don't over think things and never give us the big picture so that day after day we stay focused and improve.

They balance the various levels of fitness, physical and mental strength of each competitor and without ever publicly embarrassing or shaming us, they teach us to push ourselves harder than we ever realised we could, especially when we question our own capability or our self-worth

They help us all to get mentally stronger, to stand up to the challenge and overcome any insecurities we may have, resulting in us all wanting to prove ourselves against each other and prove that we are worthy but more so, we never want to let our coaches down.

They are also all battle hardened and have 'been in the arena', in the Octagon and ring so many times, that while they never physically intimidate us, if at any time we feel cocky and arrogant enough to test ourselves, they are quite capable, with great humility, to gently put us in our place!

Personally I am sick to the back teeth of political correctness and how it is undermining our society

- We spend so much time being superficial and lying to each other so we don't hurt someone's feelings that truth has gone out of the window
- Our children are over protected by helicopter parents and everyone gets a medal;
- Our Industrial Relations laws treat employers as the enemy, and non-performing employees are a protected species.
- People who eat 5 times their recommended daily calorie intake are no longer fat as "they have a condition",
- and the whole conversation around gender, culture and religion is an absolute minefield

So to walk into this potentially brutal sporting environment is a kick back to former times and I **absolutely love the direct honesty of the W2W Coaches**

With Mick, Scott, Bez and Thiago, not only is their language very aggressive, they just don't care about PC because if they lie to us, or we take short cuts and lie to ourselves, we will get hurt!

A prime example is Bez last Tuesday and oh my God I wish I had recorded as it as his pre-training speech was the best!

Quote "If any of you fuckers have got injuries don't come to me as I don't care It's not that I don't respect your injuries, it's just that I don't give a shit!

If you're offended

If you're hurt

If your emotions are fucking wrong, it's not up to me as that's not my concern

Talk to your Mentors; Talk to your coaches

Don't come to me for a fucking hug and sympathy

I'm here to get you fight ready so you don't get fucking hurt at the end and in the Cage."

Fellow Warrior Tina Lucey reinforced this when she said:

My overall experience from Wimp2Warrior was a real sense of achievement and pride.

I've never felt so proud of myself and the way the coaches pushed me to be the best version of myself as I was out my comfort zone the entire time and it really worked for me in the end.

I've made great friends who were with me hand in hand through the journey which was really unifying and because of them and the trust the Coaches engender, I constantly felt accountable for my actions and never wanted to let my team down which really pushed my mental strength.

One day I won't forget was the inner battle I had with myself fessing up to Mick that it was my birthday halfway through the series!!

I didn't really get an opportunity to tell him as it was a beach training day but I also didn't try very hard so I got found out and was kicked 35 times the next day! Lesson learned!

Another day that will stay with me was our last day training on Curl Curl beach before the fight, where Mick took us through a fight visualisation exercise where we had an opportunity to reflect on our journeys.

It was really moving and quite vivid but really touching and made me so proud of myself and the entire group.

The Coaches ability to bring out our bravest selves is truly inspiring and I'll be forever grateful for this experience!

HEAD COACH MICK MCSEVNEY

In the UK, Scotsmen, especially those from Glasgow, are renowned as being hard bastards, and as kids growing up in Yorkshire we had the perception that “Glaswegians played tig with hatchets”.

Coach Mick absolutely fits the profile.

Not only is he a proven and accomplished MMA Coach, who has been toe to toe in more fights than all of us ‘wanna-be’s’ put together, he reminds me of many of the Special Forces guys I met years ago when in the army.

Never the biggest body in the room; never the loudest; never the centre of attention, until they need to be; but when they speak you fucking listen, or suffer the consequences.

When he is pissed off with us all about the quality of our energy or technique (which seems to happen a lot!) he never embarrasses or belittles any of us in front of our peers.

Whenever he gets the group together he never picks any of us out or looks any of us directly in the eye when having a go at us however we all feel guilty and as if he is talking to us personally.

Like many top coaches he doesn’t waste words and there were times when we are all like schoolkids looking for a word of encouragement. Yet we soon realised that the less he said the better we were going and it made us want to train harder to get a word and be in his good books.

Throughout the whole Series I never saw him raise a hand to anyone, however his threat of being put on his ‘shit list’ has us all jumping around like school kids.



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- Be 5 minutes late for training – 100 sprawls
- Can't make training though work, illness or death – 100 sprawls, and record them live on Facebook Live (and whatever you do don't lose count, leave the screen or complain!)
- Not feeling well or injured, still be at the gym on time to watch and learn from your colleagues
- And for fucks sake, never, ever, no matter how bad you feel, throw up on his mats!

The whole principles of resilience, discipline, peer group pressure and public accountability is making us so much stronger and preparing us for the next 50 years, not just the next 12 weeks and Fight Night.

Oh, and on a side note, every time he shouted at us I couldn't get out of my head the last verse of **Pink Floyd's classic, 'Another Brick in the Wall'**, (though there was no way in hell I was going to say anything!!)

In a broad Scottish accent, I am sure Mick was backing vocals for Pink Floyd shouting at the end of the record:

"If you don't eat yer meat, you can't have any pudding".

Don't know what I mean? Check out the last minute of the song on Spotify or iTunes and then tell me that's not Mick!



WEEK 9 – ONE BJJ STEP FORWARD THEN HALF A STEP BACK

Week 9 and the intensity is ramping up.

The week started with Jiu-jitsu(BJJ) and Thiago and while I enjoy the physicality, I'm still not that good at it.

There's a well-known quote from UFC champion Michael Bisping who said "Jiu-jitsu is great; doing it when getting punched in the face isn't so great" and I feel like I'm constantly take one step forward and then half a step back though maybe everyone else feels the same way.

It's like a physical mix of chess and twister with punches and choke holds added and I'm not sure if I'm approaching this the right way but feel I need to be aggressive and am not holding back as I don't want to give the young blokes an advantage or have them think I am just some old, weak guy making up the numbers.

We practised a couple of BJJ submission holds today, one called The Kimura, which Rugby League fans will know as a "Chicken Wing" where we try to dislocate our opponents shoulder.

Also an Arm Bar, where you get your body into a position to gain a submission trying to break an opponent's arm by bending it back against the joint.

I made a dick of myself as when Thiago and Scott were demonstrating I asked if we could head butt, or knee them in the back, or a range of other unsavoury tactics, which I have now found out are not allowed.

We're not full contact punching yet as we are just trying to learn the holds and create space and by trying to dominate with technique to get out of the holds rather than strength.

BJJ is Cause and Effect and our ability to evolve our techniques as our opponents move and counter, especially as there are no fixed Katas to remember or follow like dance moves.

An additional component I like about the MMA training is (and I say this with total respect to all jiu-jitsu competitors as it is only my personal preference) we don't wear a Gi, with loose jackets, trousers and belts to get hold of, as I personally much prefer training with the rash vests and shorts (with no pockets or zips), and no footwear.

Having said that, whatever I wear currently isn't making much of a difference as I am getting bent all ways.

I found myself sparring with Gill ('The Guillotine') Cox today and I still have no idea what she did but I ended up with my body in a position I am sure it's not meant to go and I still have no idea how she did it!

I then tried to put choke hold on Bev until she twisted and nearly ripped my head off – damn, I've got so much to learn.



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I can't wait to start to do BJJ extras otherwise I'm going to get beaten or hurt if the other guys get me on the ground.

My boxing is also not that much better however I've got long legs and long arms so am going to make every effort to get up off the ground and start those long kicks which hopefully are going to be one of my main advantages.

I'm also starting to look forward to the infamous "Shark Tank" when I can put them into practice but it will be interesting to see if I can start to win a few sparring sessions by staying off the ground.

Trying not to over think the Jiu-jitsu however when I watch the coaches' demonstration it looks so easy but then when I get to practice it just goes out the window and I'm all arms and legs like an Octopus on Crack.

I am not sure if this is in Dana White's UFC Rule Book but at one stage Sunny had me in a hold that I couldn't get out of, so I tried a new tactic and kissed him on the cheek!!

We know that Sunny comes from an Indian heritage but I still reckon he went pale as he quickly released me and I was able to attack him!

I'll keep trying to spar with the guys who have done the program before as there are quite a few in our group who have completed a previous Series and it is noticeable how much more they know.

In addition, when I am up against one of the women I find I am really struggling with how to adapt myself physically and not use my extra strength or weight.

Mentor Karen Deane keeps telling me to focus on technique but I struggle with how much force I should use and what exactly is the difference between 50% and 80% impact, especially when she attacks and puts me under pressure?

I also don't want to disrespect any of the girls by just standing there and letting them hit me as that does none of us any good, especially as the girls in this squad are bloody tough and some of them are very, very good!

The problem is all mine and not theirs, so I am finding that by staying away from them it is easier for me to not over-think the situation.

One exercise we did last week though made me feel extremely uncomfortable and I am being very careful in how I write this as I don't want to be disrespectful in any way.

With a partner, who lay on their back in a missionary position, we had to get between their legs with them locking their legs behind the top person's back, then pretend to beat up on their heads and faces.

My male partner had to leave early so they put me with another partner, a beautiful, smaller, younger woman and I had to 'mount' her, before simulating punching her in the head.

I did absolutely nothing disrespectful or salacious but I felt SO uncomfortable, not because of the training but being so close to another woman. I couldn't even look her in the eye

I met my beautiful wife Ann over 40 years ago, and I have loved her every single day of each of those years and it just didn't feel right being so physically close to another woman, even though she was attempting to beat the crap out of me.



8 of the bravest, toughest and smartest women I have ever met: Michelle Boundy, Beverley Schultz, Maria Nenarokova, Gill Cox, Danie Hudson, Sophie Lee-Williams, Danika De Palo, Sally Heys

Again, the problem is with me and not my female training partners so by staying away from them it is just a lot easier for me to manage.

Ann has been in the UK for two weeks now and I've settled into my routine that hasn't changed that much since she left.

I'm still doing everything the same way as when Ann is here, it's just in the morning I can get up with lights on instead of by torch light, plus I guess I don't have to talk as much, especially when I am hurt or very tired.

When I am in pain I typically go into my cave and prefer to handle it by myself so must be difficult to live with sometimes (a lot?)

I hate sympathy of any sort and don't always demonstrate the right way of accepting Ann's care.

Sorry darling, the problem is with me not you.

My routine and diet is really strict, and I made my fight weight last week of 83 kg.

I'm not eating any crap or extra calories and log everything on My Net Diary, the calorie counter, however having said that on Saturday neighbour Penni, Beverley and I polished off a bottle of gin which while I wasn't hung over left me really sluggish on the Monday morning! (Shiiit, do you know how many calories there are in a glass of Gin and Tonic?)

I won't be doing that again I need to make sure that I'm on top form every minute of every day of this training to take advantage of this program physically and mentally, otherwise at my age I will get hurt.

I am still getting into bed at 8 - 8:30pm and asleep within 5 minutes of turning out the light, however most nights I wake up around midnight and am buzzing.

I can feel the blood racing through my body and am just so excited about this program that I almost want to be fighting today.

I'm doing the recovery well as I've got time in my day and looking forward to getting some extras in to try to get in front of some of the others.

I'm also still looking at the other guys and thinking who am I going to fight. At the moment I think it might be Josh who is about my height and weight. He is also a really good guy to train with and while quiet he is very strong.

I have this theory about what I call 'Tradie Strength versus Gym Strength' as I believe Tradies like builders, sparkies, gardeners etc. who do manual work rather than sit behind a desk or counter or steering wheel are naturally stronger, as every day they are moving, carrying, lifting, pushing etc., rather than working out in the gym. Josh definitely has that tradie strength.

A lot of the other guys are currently a lot heavier or a lot smaller than me however I'm probably overthinking because we are long way away from Fight Night and we will all change in weight and ability over the next few weeks.

THE START OF A NEW ERA

Another 'soft and gentle' observation Bez and Scott made this week is for most of the girls (and some of the guys) it is the first time they have ever been hit, and they are finding it very confronting.

Boys typically grow up (pre-'helicopter parenting' days) pushing and hitting and shoving and playing contact sport but for a couple of the girls when they got punched while sparring it has been a real shock for them as it was the first time they'd ever been hit in the face.

And yet each and every one of them took the hit, reset mentally, and carried on. They are amazing women and athletes to not only put themselves through this program but to keep turning up every day and pushing themselves.

One of the things I love about the 2020 era is the recognition of women's sports, including MMA, Boxing, NRL, AFL, Union, Soccer, Cricket etc., which when I was growing up were seen as 'men only sports' and girls just played hockey or netball (It's hard to believe that women's boxing was illegal in NSW just a few short years ago!)

This change in attitude and opportunities is well overdue and long may this shift towards equality continue to grow and benefit our society, where ultimately equality in women's sport is seen as the norm and not the exception.

There is a saying that "Opinions are like backsides - Everybody has one".

And so in my personal opinion I just don't understand parents and friends (and of course social media keyboard wannabes) who still live in the past and undermine women's contact sport, especially boxing and MMA.

I am a father of two daughters and have always encouraged them to push themselves and follow their own passions, regardless of their gender.

But if I had a son and a daughter who both wanted to get into MMA, or any contact sport, why would I encourage my son, and discourage my daughter?

It's an archaic attitude that has been ingrained in society for far too many years by old school, sexist, dinosaurs and it is holding society back.

Surely we should be enabling and encouraging our daughters, as well as our sons, to be able to protect themselves, push themselves, be more confident, healthier and stronger, rather than holding them back by projecting our own old fashioned fears and insecurities onto our girls.

Sally "The Silencer" Heys

Wimp2Warrior is an experience that changed my life forever.

I went into the program for a few reasons. I had a rough few months and was at a very low point and I wanted something to help me rebuild my confidence and to help me find my spark again.

What I got out of the program I could never have imagined.

The program was gruelling both physically and mentally.

From the 4:15am wake ups 5 days a week for 22 weeks to pushing your body to the absolute limits, I had never realised how resilient my body could be as I spent an entire spring/summer wearing long sleeves to work to cover my battered and bruised arms and legs.

Regardless of the pain, it is hard to put into words how incredible this program is.

I met the most beautiful and courageous people all with a different story to tell. Every person was there to fight their own battle and as a team we helped each other through.

I will forever admire all my season 10 Warriors and hope they will be part of my life forever, especially Fossil, who became one of my biggest mentors.

From the beginning of the journey he was always there to provide support and he always knew what to say to help when I was doubting myself. Thank you so much Fossil.

Another great part of the experience was hearing about how it inspired others.

My big brother and sister in law wrote me a letter saying that I have shown my darling niece Sophie that:

- When you tell people you are going to do something brave and everyone laughs and says you are crazy,- let it fuel you*
- When you sign up, show up, - rain, hail or shine*



- ***Know and respect your boundaries - step back to rest and recover when needed.***
- ***When you get hit, get back up, shake yourself off and prepare yourself for your next move***
- ***You can challenge and transform yourself whilst still being true to yourself***

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to my fellow warriors, coaches, family and friends for supporting me every step of the way. Special mention to my boyfriend Jack. I would not have been in that ring without you.

Wimp2Warrior helped me regain my confidence and I was able to prove to myself that I can do anything I set my mind to.

I turned up every day, I pushed myself to my limits, I never gave up even when my mind and body wanted to.

I am and forever will be a Warrior

Xo - Sally Heys - The Silencer

Sadly, we lost Matt Poulter this week as he succumbed to a bad back injury.

In addition, there have been 6 or 7 people pull-out, some because it just wasn't for them, and some who got injured early, and there will be more when Fight Camp starts in Week 12

While I am looking forward to testing myself in Fight Camp, I'm also worried in case I'm overselling myself to myself, and either physically or mentally can't actually handle it, or get so badly injured that I don't get through to the end.

No one in their right mind really loves pain however I like the challenge of pain and seeing how far I can push myself, regardless of if it is on the side of a mountain, in an Ironman, and hopefully when getting belted by my current colleagues.

Fight Camp is what I signed up for as I've gone through all of these years with this insecurity of not being able to fight properly, not been able to handle myself when toe to toe.

Past fights in my life have been a few punches thrown on the Footy field; or a drunken brawl in a pub many years ago, even though 9 years ago, a couple of years after my 50th, I survived a 3 round Charity Boxing fight against ex- Australian Heavyweight Champion John Hopoate but that doesn't count as he looked after me and kindly let me use him as a punch bag, as he could have killed me anytime!

A few people have even asked me "Didn't I learn to fight when I was in the army" having served a couple of Tours in different trouble spots, however when I served we were taught to fight with a rifle, pistol and baton.

If things went wrong, and if we had to go hand to hand in the middle of a riot, we had bigger problems than BJJ could handle.

Fight Camp is going to be intense and I can't wait to get rid of a lot of the anger and the frustration I have but am also concerned about failing and not getting through to the end.

It's playing on the back of my mind but I guess I'm not Robinson Crusoe on this.

Most will be wondering what happens when we get hit however I see it as my personal test to see how much I can take and how brave I am or not and so far, except one day to work, I actually haven't missed any sessions.

A few of the guys are getting injured and one of the fellas Sam Pemberton posted an excellent post on Facebook about FOMO – the Fear of Missing Out.

One morning he was injured with a couple of others and, as we still have to turn up even if we can't train, sit on the side and 'watch and learn'.

Sam's article about FOMO highlighted the gnawing feeling that everybody else was getting so far in front and that his skills were falling backwards, especially as training and competing is such a big part of our health and mental well-being.

However, Week 9 is done and dusted, and the Old Man is still alive!

WEEK 10 – SUDDENLY FEELING VULNERABLE

Couple of things stood out in week 10:

First, Mick gave us all mid-Series weight targets at the beginning of the program with mine being 83kgs, having started at 88 kg.

I made it this week without too much of a problem having been there or near for a couple weeks and have been very strict with my diet.

I've noticed the girls in the squad are all really happy having lost the weight but the guys are all complaining that we've lost muscle, and especially in the areas that guys like to carry some muscle, on arms, shoulders and chest.

We don't mind the weight coming off everywhere else including the stomach but are all starting to look really skinny now.

For most of us it's about losing around 10kgs and in Beverley's last Series, there were a lot of really big heavy competitors. However, in our Series there are probably only two or three really big contenders including Sophie who in this calendar year has already lost over 40kg and Corey who has lost about 12 kg to just under 130. They look amazing and it is so life changing.

The glove work is great training and I absolutely recommend anyone includes it in their gym workouts however hand-held pads typically don't hit back, and we often hear grunts and groans as gloved hands stun a head; or the dull thud of shins hitting thighs; or a gasp of lungs emptying as a fist buries into someone's solar plexus.

Previously Scott had shown us how to wrap our hands, not to protect the opponents face, but to protect the 20+ small bones in our hands, and I wish I had learnt this wrapping technique years ago as it would have saved me several hand breaks and fractures.

The other thing that's happened this week is actually a real problem for me

On Monday morning we were wrestling Jiu-jitsu and I was doing okay but still relying too much on aggression and strength instead of technique.

Towards the end I was with Sam who is about 90 kg and we were both going hard at each other. He then lifted and twisted me and as he dropped his weight on me something tore under my left side ribs.

I don't think they are broken but the ribs are displaced and the muscles and rib cartilage, while not 'clicking', are damaged and very painful.

Suddenly I feel very vulnerable

Immediately I feel as if my major strength, my aggression, has evaporated instantly and what the hell am I going to do about the ground work in Jiu-jitsu?

I've spent the week on ice packs and packets of Aldi frozen peas and am popping Voltaren, Diclofenac and anti-inflammatories to the daily limit in an attempt to get this under control (the downside of which has blocked me up so I'm now also having to take laxatives).

Yet the big problem is how it's impacting on me mentally.

The gym is made up of 2 main areas with Red and Blue mats and the Squad has 'self-sorted'.

Most of the more experienced, stronger competitors have moved themselves to train in the smaller hotter Red area and the majority of the women competitors are on the Blue mats.

It is not gender specific, it's just the way things have worked out, and I've made myself train on the Red mats as they are all better than me.

However, this week I moved myself as far away from the Red mats as possible, and am training in the farthest corner away from the other male competitors and away from some of the blokes I expect to fight, doing my own adaptation of the day's session by swapping sprawls for squat jumps and planks for lunges.

Asking around it could take 4 – 6 weeks if I just rest them but obviously that's not going to happen so a major case of FOMO dictates that I have got to keep practising and doing whatever I can.

On the bright side, the week finished off really well when Beverley, my other daughter Kate and I went down to Canberra as Jayden Malala was fighting on the Saturday night in W2W Canberra..

Jayden is a hell of a fighter to train with and as well as watching him in action, it was good to experience a Fight Night again and put myself into the mindsets of the fighter's Weigh-Ins, the music, the crowd, the fireworks and then the different fights.

I booked a couple of nights at the Vibe Hotel arriving around 9pm Friday night and we quickly sampled some of the American Honey whisky we had taken, even if Bev and I fell asleep after only a couple of glasses!

It was so good to be with my two girls, just spending time together.

Of course they cost me an arm and a leg wandering around H&M buying lots of clothes however we had a load of laughs and even though Ann wasn't with us, had a fantastic weekend.

Plus, not having the kids with us meant Beverley got a lot of unbroken sleep which she desperately needed.

On Fight Night there was a guy called Russell Heaton who is 60 and a lady Joanne Tillbrook who is 57 who started the evening off.

Russell and Joanne were phenomenal and had outstanding fights and currently hold the mantle of being the Oldest W2W Competitors in Australia.

If I can survive that long my goal is to take that 'title' away from them in December.

WEEK 11 - SLIDING INTO A DEEP DARK HOLE

This week has not been a good one as I fell into a really deep dark hole because of the injury to my ribs.

Over the years I've had a lot worse having completed a 13-hour Ironman Triathlon with a broken hand; had surgery to remove 4 inches of my leg; been hit in the mouth with a brick during a riot; even a boil lanced and removed off my arse before cycling 180 kms, plus a multitude of other damage collected over the last 61 years, so the actual physical pain isn't a major problem.

It's the psychological/mental challenge that I'm struggling with of being injured and not being able to train as hard as my team mates.

It's been over a week now and while I am managing the treatment religiously, I'm struggling with the mental side of the injury finding myself continually anxious and worrying that there is only 10 weeks to go; mustn't show weakness in front of the others; can't train as hard as I want to; feeling physically vulnerable; will Mick or Scott think I am soft or worse, stop me fighting and cut me from the program.

BUT it is all in my head as I am getting absolutely no pressure from any of the coaches or other competitors, most of whom will possibly be facing the same over the next few weeks.

And while that sounds fine logically I really need advice on how to be smarter and handle the mental side of the injury by readjusting the way I am approaching this challenge and my own self-expectations.

I am possibly trying too hard to stand up to the younger guys and prove myself to them and the 4 coaches as my thought process to date has been "I might be old but if they want to beat me they will have to come and take it as I am not going to give it to them without a fight".

Every sparring session; every training session; always trying to get a psychological edge; always trying to prove myself worthy of being in this Series, and in preparation for Fight Camp and December 6th.

In everything I have done in my life, be it growing and selling businesses, competing in sporting challenges, living life in general, I have lived a life on the premise of don't show weakness, don't show doubt, and **'Attack is the Best Form of Defence'**.

I need to work out how I should handle the next 10 weeks and how I can mentally train smarter as well as physically.

Bev spoke to me yesterday and helped me through a few things - highlighting that I am worrying about what I can't do, and how will it affect Fight Camp, and through her help I have started to ignore the pain and potential damage in my ribs and focus on what I can do.

I also reached out to our Returning Warriors and Mentors Paul Duroux, Karen Deane, James Andrew, Daniel Kelly and Matt Duffy and asked to wrestle with them when my ribs are okay, where because of their experience and size difference I can allow myself to focus more on technique than strength and trying to prove myself. (Paul especially understood as he had previously cracked his ribs 6 weeks out from his last fight and was able to give me a few stern words and tips in how to train smarter).

So today instead of hiding in the far corner of the mats or sparing with Bev I actually picked out one of the biggest and best in Jordan Coleman and told him not to hit me in the ribs.

He was totally cool and in no way belittled me for not going hard enough, which is testimony to his capability and quality.

Bottom line is I need to work through this feeling of vulnerability and focus on what I can do (and dare I say it, start to act my age!!)

DICKHEAD NEWSFLASH

I have just realised that I am an absolute dick head!

Yes, I know for some of you it will not come as a surprise however going back three months why did I actually sign up for Wimp2Warrior?

The answer was because I looked at my calendar and need a major challenge before Ann and I go away again mountaineering again and with nothing planned I felt like I was coming to a standstill.

So I signed up for Wimp2Warrior

- I signed up for a Physical and Mental challenge
- I signed up for an adventure
- Something totally new to me and different
- Something that would potentially stretch me and keep me out of my comfort zone
- A challenge that would help me unleash all the anger and the aggression that I've got against the world around me and the betrayal of my ex-son-in-law

And guess what - that's exactly what I've got!!

The first 9 weeks I'd be going to bed knackered and have two or three hours sleep then wake up absolutely buzzing.

The last two weeks all through the day I've been worried, I've been scared, I've been down, and I've been in real pain both physically and mentally.

I've been fighting Demons of my own making; I've been fighting myself; I've been questioning if I will get through; I've been questioning the process; questioning how the hell can I keep doing the Jiu-jitsu if I can't even breathe or bend properly?

And I just realised tonight lying in bed, **holy shit, this is exactly why I signed up:**

All this nervousness and anxiety

The 4am alarm

The injuries and the pain

The painkillers and laxatives

This obsession,

The emotional high and lows

This constant buzz, the cloud, or whatever it is I'm living with is absolutely what I wanted.

I can't stop thinking about this thing, both good and bad, almost every waking minute, of every day, and **I'm a total dick head as it is exactly why I signed up.**

Talk about changing my mindset - holy shit, **I have got exactly what I wanted!!**

I am always conscious that I am only one of 35 competitors and Mick has got a huge amount on his plate with 2 gyms, a family and pregnant wife (due Fight Week) plus having to train us and keep us on track with weight, medical certificates, turning up etc., so I have tried not to hassle him with my own insecurities.

However, when I finally spoke to him and explained how I felt I was doing the wrong thing and not fulfilling my obligations by not training hard and sitting on the side, Mick's response was I'm looking at it the wrong way.

He said, *"If I take one or two days off from training, or train smarter and not get all competitive and aggressive, that means I can train at 80% rather than not at all*

It also means that I'm fulfilling my obligations to the other competitors as they are not a person down long term, so I'm actually helping them train by being on the mats"

What a great way of thinking about it and Mick helped me overcome my own concerns about what I can't do rather than what I can.

To help things, it's also the end of Week 11 and we've got a 4-day rest

4 days of no training and I can't bloody wait as I am/we are tired and sore and the rest has come at the right time, especially as next week we start Fight Camp.

Just passed midpoint and the clock's ticking but I am still hanging on in there!

WEEK 11 – COMBAT SPORTS CLEARANCE

There is an emotional intensity about this sport, an intensity that has become all consuming. Every day starts at 4 am when the alarm goes off and the body's circadian rhythm is at its lowest ebb. Then by torch light so I don't wake Ann up I 'warm up for the warm up' and stretch and eat before I get to the gym.

Like a military manoeuvre every night I make sure I'm prepared for the following day and not stumbling around in the dark searching last minute for gear, drinks, keys.

Injuries are starting to affect a few of us however FOMO, the Fear Of Missing Out on a session, drives us to train through.

As soon as the training is finished I have three or four hours of when I actually feel relaxed and by then it's 9-10am and we've already been up five or six hours.

I remember with Ironman training, on a Friday night before a 6-hour early morning ride and run, I always felt nervous/anxious with the early start and pushing myself, and now it's transferred onto Wimp2Warrior.

It's consuming almost every minute of every day with me thinking about

- everything I eat and drink and my calorie intake
- everything I drink
- getting enough rest and recovery, icing and stretching
- icing and stretching
- where I need to be at a certain time of day so I can eat and sleep
- picking up the Grandkids and making sure I have the energy to actually be with them

Then it gets to about 6 pm and I'm thinking I've only got a couple more hours before bed and the day is nearly done where as in the past we'd be watching TV or going out until later.

And this is all around somebody who is semi-retired and not working full time!

For the competitors who are working maybe their work takes their mind away from overthinking the process however they will have to contend with massive fatigue where as I can often have a snooze in the day time when tired.

In the first 8 or so weeks I was waking up in the middle of the night buzzing, excited, planning the fight, and looking forward to the next session.

Now though in the last couple weeks I've been feeling physically and emotionally vulnerable, concerned about how bad the injury is and if I'm going to make it to the end or not.

The anxiety has also been compounded because Mick has been riding us to obtain the New South Wales Government Combat Sports Authority to get formal authorisation to fight.

- This includes a Proof of Identification document signed by a JP;
- Then a Blood Test and Serology Clearance Certificate signed by a GP, stating we don't have HIV or hep B or any other blood disorders;
- Plus, a full doctor's medical examination to supply a health and Fitness document
- All of these then need to be submitted to the New South Wales Government Combat Sports Authority to get formal authorisation



It's been a hell of an experience for all of us, especially as apart from the time waiting to see a doctor each visit, the NSW Combat Sports website is so hard to use.

The application can then be refused for a minor detail or inaccuracy so we head back to the doctors to get it rectified

To make it worse I couldn't ask the doctor about my ribs as he/she might say I couldn't fight and/or wouldn't sign the Fit to Fight document!

Finally, after a couple of weeks of toing and froing my application has been approved so something else to keep me off Mick's Shit List and I totally get why he has been riding us all so hard to get this done early in the program as it is a pain in the arse.

Now I've just got to make sure Bev has her documents completed, as last time she was panicking the day before her last fight!

WEEK 12 – PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

We all started the week with anticipation and concern for what is to come and Tuesday morning we trained down on Curl Curl beach instead of on the mats. A long run to get warmed up, then bear crawls, shuttles sprints, pummels and interlocking arms hill repeats.

I feel embarrassed in front of my team mates that I can't do the same warm up as them, still not able to do a sprawl or a basic forward roll as my ribs are so bad, however it was such a good session in a different environment just as the sun came up.

Jasper Herring and I saw Filippo Guariglia, the combat sports physio, on Saturday and he worked on us for a while including some weird long leg boots that grip, ripple and relax our legs from toe to thigh, followed by acupuncture, electric pulse tens machine and massage.



I think the pain has subsided a bit and with that my mindset has lifted.

However, it's not so much the pain, it's more about the worry about what could happen if I get twisted, punched or kicked as it could be totally debilitating.

If I can't do such basic manoeuvres like a forward roll or sprawl now, then how the hell will I be able to get through Fight Club and Shark Tank, never mind the Finale?

So I've made this pledge to myself and I'm going to try to be smarter, stop worrying about what I think everyone else is thinking, back off a bit with my aggression and intensity, tap earlier and openly ask my training partners to stay away from my ribs.

As Mick said 80% of something is better than 100% of nothing.

I often compound the pressure I put on myself because I believe that a goal without Public Accountability isn't a real goal.

We all meet people who want to run a marathon, or lose 10kgs, or save an amount of money, but they keep it to themselves, or don't commit to doing it, as they are more concerned about what people might think of them in case they don't achieve their goal, than actually striving to achieve the goal.

No one wants to look like they have failed in the eyes of their friends so in life, in business and in sport I have always used Public Accountability as motivation to work harder, to train harder, to set my expectations higher and to move away from failure as far as I can and do that little bit extra to potentially give me an edge.

Letting all my clients, family and friends know when I set a major goal, like climbing mountains, competing in a major event, or entering a Cage Fighting comp puts extra pressure on me so I leverage it to move away from fear, which in turn makes me move towards my goal.

20 years ago in my Ironman Triathlon days Ann and I started our Corporate Sales and Management Training company and we called the company KONA Group after my goal to qualify for the Hawaii Ironman, in Kona.

The company is still going today and it took me 12 years to qualify for the Ironman World Championships, yet every time I handed over a business card, or did a presentation, or told the story, our KONA logo stood out to remind me to stay on track, train hard, be resilient and one day I would get there.



When I've told people about Wimp2Warrior I know Public Accountability will help them to hold me accountable but it just makes the whole fear of failure even harder to deal with.

One day at a time and let's see what tomorrow brings.

WEEK 13 – CENTIPEDE IN A BLENDER

End of week 12, I went to the Saturday morning kickboxing session and just by doing the extra session it gave me a feeling of getting in-front.

We did a series of combinations and OMG I think I've already got early onset Alzheimer's as I can't bloody count!

Kick, Jab, cross, left, right cross, left hook, straight, cross, right kick, move.

My bloody arms and legs were everywhere, like a centipede in a blender, though I can see a huge advantage of being able to put a combination of a few punches and kicks together.

I've just got to learn how to do it without knocking myself out!

I've also been consuming a lot of painkillers and anti-inflammatories, the downside of which is they block me up, so I am also taking laxatives.

Unfortunately, this week I took too many and was worried about running to the toilet in the middle of a session!

Never mind Mick shouting "Don't throw up on my mats!", how about "Don't crap on my mats"?

Not sure if it is in Dana White's rule book however trying something different today and before we started I grabbed a cricketer's thigh pad I'd bought at the weekend and, adding a big, car-wash sponge underneath, strapped the two things together over my rib, and did the Jiu-jitsu session.

Phenomenal!!

My technique was still crap but being able to train back on the mats with the thigh pad made such a difference and I literally felt the best I've felt in ages because I was able to complete the session.

I felt so good after training and drove over to Penrith to facilitate a day's Sales Training with a client feeling like I was back on track.

Tomorrow could be a totally different ballgame depending on what we're doing but crazily all it took is a cricketer's thigh pad and a carwash sponge and all of a sudden life is good again

Wednesday and Thiago came in for another Jiu-jitsu session and my plan again was to not get involved – but I strapped the sponge and cricket pad back on and eased into the session doing one on one techniques with mentor Karen who is technically so much better and made me practise the techniques a lot slower without resorting to strength and extra weight.

The morning was going really well until once again, and it shows what a stupid bloody idiot I am, we got to the last 10-15 minutes and swapped partners where I partnered up with big 105kg Michael Lansdown.

I should've just made myself sit down or stopped five minutes earlier as under his weight I could feel my ribs straining and about to pop again, but it is just so good to be back on the mats.



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions

I enjoy the training and the contact and the aggression so much but seriously, I've got to stop getting so carried away and be smarter as I'm just not managing this well.

On a positive note, to make a good week even better, yesterday my beautiful wife came home from 6 weeks in the UK and straight away there was a calming influence on the family so bring on week 14.

WEEK 14 – FIGHT CAMP – “DROWNING IN A SEA OF AIR”

It's Thursday of week 14 and my comeback continues

On Monday Jiu-jitsu with Thiago, still with a cricket thigh pad and car wash sponge strapped on, I managed to complete most of the session without any further damage however there are about 5 of the blokes sitting on the side line also injured as the training continues to ramp up

Tuesday and Wednesday was contact sparring and takedowns and it was so good to be back training hard at about 90% of where I was before

I then facilitated a 2 days Sales Training Conference at Rooty Hill so straight after training showered and fought the traffic to get over there on time

Arriving at the 'Vegas of the West' 20 minutes early I was able to put the car seat back and have a power-nap before running the Sales Training, however with the drive and late finish I got home absolutely whacked and was in bed by 7.30pm to be ready for the next day.

I do admire and respect my fellow competitors who are balancing a full 5 days a week of work, with families and training as I'm feeling really fatigued even though I can steal a mid-day nap most days.

For many of the Squad we were at our best at the start of week 14.

Our fitness levels have rocketed, our excess weight had been burned off and our niggles haven't turned into debilitating injuries.



Some of the team had even set Week 14 as their finish date, having come into the Series with the intention of losing weight, getting fit but not fighting, but yet nobody has left.

Then Fight Camp started for real and everything changed.

Thursday was potentially the hardest training session I have done in years

It is noticeable how we all move and walk differently when Scott or Mick shout out "Hand wraps on".

We have all seen boxers wear them on TV but when we wrap our hands it makes us feel tougher and more ready for contact, though maybe we have seen too many Rocky movies and we will get a reality check come Shark Tank?

Also obvious is the change in all of us, mentally as well as physically.

We might be tired and in pain but we are all more self-assured and more confident to stand up to whatever the world will throw at us outside of the gym as well as inside on the mats.

Thursday we ramped up the contact with basic shadowboxing to start with then some combinations at 80–90% full contact, before about 12 one minute rounds, with 12 different partners, spar, change partners, go again, another one-minute round, change, go again.

I got to the 7 or 8th round and the energy just started to drain right out of me and literally found it hard to move forward and to keep my hands up because I was so knackered.

One of the other competitors is an awesome bloke called Michael Burgio and I read an interview about him in the Sydney Morning Herald when he completed his first W2W Series and his journey to lose 50kgs.

In the interview it referenced the bestselling book 'The Professor in the Cage' by Jonathan Gottschall who wrote:

"Unless you've fought in the cage, it's hard to grasp how exhausting it is".

"MMA fans know fighters have to be strong and skilled, but few really appreciate how freakishly fit the best guys are.

MMA demands a sprinter's explosiveness and a marathoner's stamina. When the pace is hot, when the match mixes the constant footwork of striking with the heavy exertion of grappling, the experience feels like sprinting uphill, like drowning in a sea of air."

"Fighters call it gassing out. And when you gas out, that's it; you're done.

Your brain sends commands, but your body can't respond, or it responds so sluggishly that it's useless."

"In MMA, as in other sports, it is conventional to speak of 'heart'. A man/woman with a lot of determination and fighting spirit, a man/woman who never quits, is said to have a lot of heart.

This is meant as a metaphor, but it's also literally true. The quality of the physical heart - its ability to push oxygenated blood through the veins - is the best indicator of fighting spirit."

I literally felt like I was “drowning in a sea of air” and the last time I felt like this would’ve been at the end of an Ironman Triathlon

I also realised I’ve got a bad trait when under attack as when the pressure is on and someone puts a good punch on me I actually look through my gloves and smile.

However, I then cover-up and go towards the attacker in a bent over, head down, footy/rugby player’s stance instead of jab the left arm out and move.

It’s a bad trait because in the cage it could be dangerous as they will hit me then uppercut me before taking me down.

Or worse, get my low-head in a Guillotine choke hold which could end the fight badly.

Something else I need to change is I went back onto the Red mats with some of the better Fighters but got battered by Lyntin, Scott, Ben a couple of times, Jordan and Josh a couple more times.

Those boys are big, strong, technical and fast and while I’m just so happy to be back in the middle, they took me apart.

Some of the other guys also suffered, with one down on the deck doubled over in agony but as he wasn’t dead, just struggling to breathe, we continued sparring around him.

A couple of the women were upset and Michelle was sparring with one of the guys when he buried a punch deep into Michelle’s solar plexus. Then, still winded, she staggered forward to go toe to toe with Sally, who punched her again in exactly the same place.

Choking for air, like a deep sea diver with her air supply cut off, she raced out of the gym, and leaning up against a car parked in the street, proceeded to vomit up the remains of a banana she had consumed earlier that morning before training.

Her entangled hair was askew, her face bright red, her fight gear glistening with sweat and smell, just as a young businesswoman walked by in high heels and corporate attire, straight out of the song “Short Skirt, Long Jacket” by Cake.

And all Michelle could think about was Mick’s face and him screaming “Don’t puke on the mats!”

Then, wiping her mouth on the back of her gloves, she pushed her shoulders back and re-entered the ‘coliseum’ going straight back onto the mats and attacking one of her colleagues.

Now there is a woman who is living her life to the full, even though there is a reality starting to come through for some of the women, and some of the men, as quite a few of them have never been physically hit/assaulted in their life.

Guys typically play contact sports, or simply just push each other around in families or school, however for some of the group this is really new and it is challenging.

And yet I do admire the girls as they are so tough and will all get back up to fight another day, starting tomorrow.

Speaking with Michelle after she said:

"All I can say is holy shit!! I got hammered. I need A LOT more practice with my blocking. I knew/know that, the only problem is time. When can I do it?"

I'm already flat out with work and family but I'll have to forgo on some sleep and make the time I suppose.

This morning was a BIG wakeup call and I don't know how in the world I'll be ready to step in a cage in 6 weeks' time. Like I said, holy shit!!"

The second to last round I was with Vince and he got me good in the solar plexus and winded me. Then I moved straight on to Sally for the last round who, first shot, got me in the exact same spot (like I said I need more practice with blocking!) and I couldn't breathe then I was like uh oh there's my banana and ran outside and spewed

Was feeling quite deflated about the whole morning but am determined to remain positive, will turn up tomorrow and continue on!"



What a great day and I'm just glad to be back as the Old Bloke is not dead yet!

PS I think I have discovered the secret to my happy retirement:

Get up at 4am, have the shit beaten out of me, then spend the rest of the day recovering before going to bed early!

On a side venture, at the weekend, I joined the team from Autism Charity Spectrum Support, an amazing charity dedicated to those living with or caring for a loved one with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Over the last few months I have been helping Spectrum Support organise a 3-day motorbike ride around NSW to raise funds to buy a unique 'Talisman' which will be worn and instantly recognised as someone living with Autism.



With 1 in 70 Australians now affected by ASD, the Talisman will also help law enforcement, emergency services and the general public to recognise and manage challenging situations with understanding.

During the 3 days we covered 100s of kms and went West to Mudgee, then North to the Hunter Valley, before heading back to Sydney, raising over \$22,000 in donations.

Plus, we had the added bonus of swapping bikes and getting the chance to ride something else including my Kawasaki Vulcan 1600, a Harley Davidson Softail Fat Bob, a Suzuki V-Strom, and one of the guys had a Ural motorbike and sidecar, a real kick back to the olden days when I was at school.

A great weekend away and total distraction from Fight Camp and the best part was..... I didn't get punched in the head all weekend!!

WEEK 15 – THE ‘HULK’ IS BACK

Week 15 started with a bang

On the Monday I finished a full session of Jiu-jitsu for the first time in a long time and have cut the cricket thigh pad in half, just enough to cover the damaged rib.

I took a few direct contacts, and while still worried about twisting the muscles and cartilage underneath, the session went well (though my BJJ technique is still crap!)

Then Tuesday was a big day

Right from the start Mick is shouting “wraps on, 16 ounce gloves on, shinpads on” then into groups of three and one and half minute with one guy, then change partner for another minute and half, then you get a 90 seconds off

Keep rotating and we went on and on and on, sparring full on for about an hour

I was up against Vince Costa who is as strong as a bull, and Jono Coffey who has really fast hands and keeps confusing me as he constantly switches his stance from Orthodox to Southpaw which did my bloody head in!

Each one put some great shots for me and as crazy as it sounds initially when they hit me I smiled and went for them.



However, they would then hit me again and I would get frustrated and angry, then start to lose technique and throw everything I had at them, leading Jono to say later *“I enjoyed seeing Fossil turn into the Hulk anytime someone landed one on him- The look in his eyes was terrifying!! ”*

I need to work more on my technique, keeping my left arm out and kick more however sometimes instinct just takes over.

Vince wrote on FB *“Glenn Fossil Dobson kin oath! At the end of the day mate I learnt a whole lot this morning and that’s the point of this isn’t it? Leg kicks from you woke me up real quick and Jono Coffey pumping me with jabs! Loved it! Success should be lessons, never a failure.”*

Spent the afternoon recovering and being lazy on ice packs and anti-inflammatories to get myself ready to go again tomorrow

Wednesday back on the mats and did forward rolls again which is a big ‘rib step forward’

Richie Cranny the Founder of W2W turned up again and showed us several choke holds – all frighteningly simple and dangerous.

For a big man he moves so elegantly and smooth and what a presence.

Thursday and Friday faded away a little bit as we had psyched ourselves up for another tough, physical session but as it happened we did revision on some of the technical skills, yet I'm not complaining as it was so good to let the body recover.

I don't know about the younger guys but I have to prepare myself mentally to go full on so it was a nice way to finish off the week even though we still got up a sweat

Unfortunately, my Seniors Card is no advantage as I've been kicked, punched, choked and twisted in all directions in a mixture of kickboxing, boxing, Jiu-jitsu, grappling and God knows what else

I'm covered in bruises; my throat is sore from a choke hold by Michelle Boundy, a woman half my size; Beverley opened up a cut on my nose and behind my left ear from a straight jab, left hook combo; and I've been twisted into positions by hot sweaty men that you typically only find in a Bangkok brothel or Men Only bar in Oxford Street!

However, 5 weeks to go and the old man is still alive and kicking!

Michael Lansdown, Warrior, Freshwater Series 10

Day one you could feel the anxiety in the gym. Some of us (including me) had only days prior decided to do this and it all felt a bit crazy.

That Monday morning it was suddenly real and I had never been so awake at 5am.

I looked around at my new team mates and some of them were already wearing branded gear - "Must know what they're doing" I thought, "what am I doing here?!" I was so far out of my comfort zone.

On that first day after some admin, we had a simple drill. Don't let your partner touch your knees.

Simple enough in theory yet within seconds we were all jumping around like monkeys, as I partnered up with one of the guys who immediately reached for my knees like his life depended on it.

It was day 1 and he was giving 100%. Why wasn't I? What was I saving the remainder for?

15 weeks later the whole gym was different

Novelty had given way to hard work; everyone had lost a lot of weight; and not everyone was still there as many were injured

Despite what was going on every morning, the gym had become a happy place even though we would all be fighting soon, and excitement hadn't turned into panic, yet.

One particular morning we were all contact sparring, and practicing our set pieces.

Double jab, cross, leg kick was mine.

We changed partners and I was toe to toe with one of the blokes who had an intimidating hook and knew how to find my ribs.

Trying to regain my breath from the last round, I tucked my elbows in, we tapped gloves and as he came out flying, applying pressure, I had to step forward and meet him as fighting has a way of radically prioritising your focus!

Though MMA seems violent from the outside, on the inside the most intense thing is your own focus, working to create something - for everything else there is no room.

The only way to improve is having someone give their 100% and forcing you to decide what is worth prioritising.

This is a gift from your opponent, and while I might not have known it when I first walked into the gym, I definitely knew it when walking out.

WEEK 16 – SHARK TANK

Week 16 and it's hard to imagine that we are 3/4 the way through the program even though the next five weeks are going to be intense

When I got injured I went onto the Blue mats and hid in the corner doing whatever I could but now I am working my way back onto the Red mats and it is good to be back training with the guys who have done W2W before.

Monday started off slightly differently where we did Fucked Up Monday (no idea what the acronym is) but then Monday night at 9pm, Mick sent a Facebook message out to everybody saying bring hand wraps, gloves and shinpads and be on the mats at 5:10 tomorrow morning

Everybody has heard of 'Shark Tank', but it's always been like a dark cloud or spectre off in the distance which we have been worried about with anticipated anxiety.

It finally happened Tuesday morning and it was exactly as the name 'Shark Tank' suggests - Not a place for the faint hearted

I was partnered with Romes, Steve Tompkins and Ben and what followed was an intense 3 rounds of 2 and a 1/2 minutes with each guy, with a minute in between to change gloves.

1st round - stand up, toe to toe striking

2nd round - striking and evasion while the other guy tried to take you down

3rd round - taken to ground and you've got to get yourself out of a Jiu-jitsu hold or submission



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions

One proviso was that when you're on the ground the person on top is allowed to beat the shit out of you, which Ben promptly did!

Mick threatened if anybody walks off the mats; if anybody starts crying and walks off the mats; if anybody's bleeding but doesn't get permission to walk off the mats; if anybody can't do it; can "fuck off now and get off the mats".

We are at the serious end of the Series!

Mick is always talking about how the mental challenge of this program is tough but I am revelling in it

It's not easy and I'm anxious and concerned about what's next but I love the physicality and move around like an old lion in aggressive anticipation between rounds, waiting my turn

However, I got gassed after about two minutes in the first round and still had the rest of the round and then the other two guys to take on

I need to manage my energy better as while I have the aggression I don't have the technique and a few times I almost turned into a bit of a bar room brawl with my head down, just swinging and all technique went out the window

Scott and Mick keep saying "slow down, long jabs, long kicks, then move and keep the opponent at arm and kicks length, instead of being so tense".

While the thought of just keeping my long arms out and kicking, keeping on my feet and then picking my time to attack is logical, I am concerned that I'll look a dickhead in the Cage if I look like I'm not getting stuck in, and trying to take my opponent down in the way we've been taught?

And what will I do if he comes at me like a bull trying to dominate me in the 1st minute of the fight?

The longer the session went on the more everybody else started to get worn out with one of the squad in tears and a few of the guys getting battered (Jono had a cauliflower ear the size of a baboons swollen arse and which later needed to be drained, and Michael Bregenhoj got dropped as Vince went at him and had the eyes literally spinning in Breg's head before he shook himself down and continued).

But what an experience and the pride we all felt after having been tested and survived glowed like a fire in all of our chests.

Wednesday at training everybody was suffering - fatigued, battered and bruised

Mentally it was a really tough day to get ourselves up for so we did some 'against the cage' take downs and defensive positions; low heart rate strength work, but I'm bugged, absolutely knackered through-out the day.

Most of us can take a punch with the 16 oz. gloves and like Beverley does, when I get punched I shake my head, smile creepily and then go again.

However, yet to be confirmed is how much harder do we get hit with the 8oz MMA Gloves?

Later one of the guys said he thought "it seemed counter intuitive to focus so much on the race to lose weight at a time when we were injured and feeling at our lowest however it is all part of the mental and physical discipline the coaches engender to hold us accountable to ourselves that we can lean on well into the future"

At the beginning of the Series I was so keen to do extra sessions, looking to do extra Jiu-jitsu, extra kickboxing, extra boxing, whatever was available to improve my skills.

Now the sessions are available and we are allowed to do them I just can't get myself up and am spending so much time just focusing on rest and recovery and diet and conserving my depleting energy resources.

I'm still in it though think I'm going to have to give the extra sessions a miss and keep focusing on being prepared for tomorrow, one day at a time.

Only 20 training sessions to go to Fight Night.

WEEK 17 - F.F.S. RELAX

Shark Tank by Steve Tompkins

The most infamous pinnacle of Fight Camp is Shark Tank.

We'd heard about it from the start as the Coaches had said Fight Camp would be like going through hell, as it was necessary to go through hell to prepare for the Cage - like blades being forged in fire.

The theory of Shark Tank is that when you walk the long walk on Fight Night, up the stairs and the Cage door shuts behind you, what awaits is not as bad as what you've been through before. It's not as bad as Shark tank.

You will have been through worse and you survived. You are prepared.

I remember our Coaches' speech.

"Your fellow fighters, the people you have trained with for the last few weeks, your friends..... if you are not going at them with everything, if you are pulling punches, if you not kicking hard, if you are not hitting to hurt them, then you are not preparing them."

The structure of Shark Tank is:

3 consecutive 3 minute rounds - the fighter in the middle facing a "fresh" opponent each time.

Round 1: Thai boxing and kickboxing

Round 2: Thai boxing including takedowns

Round 3: Ground work with striking

And if you weren't the fighter in the middle, you were a Shark.

It was relentless. I can still tell you who gave me my only black eye of the series (Fossil) and I can tell you who gave me my first concussion (Vince) as round after round, we hit each other until we could hardly raise our arms to punch, while continuously being hit in return.

Shark Tank left the group gasping for air, bloody, and starting the day like we could conquer anything it would throw at us.

Fight Camp left every one of us injured, but it left most of us stronger and more focused than most of us had ever been. And we hadn't even stepped in the Cage yet.

Then, it's over, at least for today.

One of the hardest days of the toughest weeks of the most challenging 5 months of our life.

My eye was already going black before I got to the car, I had a pounding headache, could taste the blood in my mouth and I was grinning from ear to ear.

Week 17 and I've noticed a shift in mindset on the way I'm approaching the final stages.

First is that I'm slowly starting to realise I just need to relax more when sparring.

I asked Mick this week to look at what I was doing and he said just keep the jab out and leg kicks going, keep backing off but relax more.

Relax the shoulders, relax the arms, relax the neck.

Still be aggressive but without being so uptight.

So this is the week I finally focused on technically starting to put that into practice.

The 2nd change, as always with this sport, is a mental/emotional shift.

As of Monday we only have 4 weeks to the Grand Final and the big fight, so any major wounds now will be touch and go in terms of recovery for any of us.

We lost Georgie this week and I noticed there were quite a few of the team getting shoulder, knee, rib and back injuries because the intensity of the training and contact has picked up again.

Tuesday was Shark Tank, Thursday and Friday were full contact sparring, and none of us were dancing around or posturing in the way we might have done at the very beginning.

The contact is increasing and with that so is the technique and the ferocity.

We are all covered in cuts and bruises and this week a punch cut my forehead open so I stuck a paper towel over the cut and held it in place by wrapping masking tape round my head, then back onto the mats hardly missing a round.



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions

(Bev says I have "Old man's skin" so thank goodness I am not on Warfarin like my Dad was otherwise I would have bled to death by now!)

We are all so tired, and there is that little question mark in the back of all of our minds of how do we all balance this knife edge of getting through the sparring without getting hurt because if we back off sparring now there is a danger that we could get injured?

16 weeks of early starts, plus the physical and emotional battering we are all getting is taking its toll and I so respect the others balancing work, kids, training and recovery as they keep showing up every morning.

My body is crying out for a break and I'd love to take a day off, or sit on the sideline and just watch, just to give my body and my soul a break, but that's not going to happen.

I won't be letting my guard drop as that would open up a small chink in my mental and physical approach so I'm still focusing on the 1%-ers and the disciplines that will keep me on the front foot.

With just over 4 weeks to go I can't fuck up now so close to the end.

Friday afternoon I sent out a video to all my Facebook and Linked In contacts as ***Fossils Fight Night Invite***

A bit of self-promotion but also aimed at selling tickets to the event for Mick and the W2W team and the post had a great response with even Richie Cranny sharing it to his International team.

I will keep promoting this challenge but have to make sure I get through to the 'Big Dance'

This week has been a strange week as Monday was a lot lighter than expected

Tuesday we did promotional videos and photographs

Wednesday we expected Shark Tank and ended up with some tactical technique work

Today Thursday though Bez came in

Big, bad, fucking, hardarse Bez and after we did some boxing technique work we spent the rest of the session in full contact sparring with different partners.

I ended up against Jordan then Sam, Josh, James, Matt, Adam, Corey, Michael as partners, spending 2 minutes sparring with each one

Man, I got battered!!

Bez and Mick keep saying put yourself with somebody better than yourself, with someone stronger (which in my case gives me huge choice!) and I keep doing it and my God I'm getting killed.

Josh is so bloody strong; Jordan is strong and has great technique; James might be smaller than me but bloody fast and it's like hitting a ghost as every time I throw out a punch there is a space where his head used to be; Big Sam is a southpaw with long jabs and kicks; Matt is like a silent assassin and while not speaking much is very technically strong; then after about the 5th round my energies were dying and I could hardly lift my arms

when Ruthless kicked my bloody arse!

Then I found myself in front of 6 foot fucking 4 and 130 kg Corey Strozer.

Jesus, he is a big, big unit and hits and kicks like a sledgehammer (without getting a gelled hair out of place!)

At one stage I was so frustrated getting hammered by everybody else I'm head down and swinging, chasing him around the mats trying to beat the crap out of him!! Sorry Coz

Spoke to Scotty at the end about why I blow up and get so wiped out and he told me to "calm down as everything you do including the warmup, has you wasting energy.

You need to settle down and focus the aggression on techniques when needed"

And here I was thinking I'm training a bit smarter than at the beginning so I think I might need 40 weeks not 20 to get this into my thick head.

EBONIE BRIDGES

Saturday we had a professional female boxer Ebonie Bridges come in to present and train us.

Ebonie is an amazing woman; a very tough boxer, sports woman, university education, gorgeous and a real go-getter.

She spoke a little bit about what she had achieved and her life-style then ran a contact training session that went full-contact really early

Shhhiiiiittttt!!

We were all expecting a calm, relaxed seminar where she spoke a lot but next minute we were doing a full-on sparring session!

The final part was 5 rounds of 30 seconds of sit-ups and then 30 seconds of punching a partner hard in the stomach.

I was up with Paul and he hit me for 30 seconds and I hit him for 30 seconds then we went back to sit-ups and oh my god, I'm back on the Aldi frozen peas again as my stomach is black and blue.

Having said that, I don't know who hit Sam as his stomach literally extended like it's ruptured, popping out in front of him, with 2 massive bulbous swellings.

He quickly put an ice pack in it but Mick had a problem trying to push them back in!

Beverley's stomach is all bruised and Sophie, the woman who was hitting her, had bruised knuckles.

Man, it was a full-on session so thanks again Ebonie Bridges, good one.

Don't call me, I'll call you!

Oh, and then right at the end, Mick pulled a huge, bearded 105kg monster over called



Josh from the Chippendale team and said "Josh and Corey, you two are fighting each other

Corey's world just came to an end!

He later posted on Facebook:

*"So... who else is nervous, anxious or a bit (a lot) stressed about Fight Night?
Asking for a friend ☺"*

Bugger off Corey – you fight the monster from Chippendale, I'm not!!

This whole program is unbelievable, and it's been one of the most amazing experiences of my sporting life and we've now only got 4 weeks left to Fight Night, 3 weeks left of training, of which 2 1/2 weeks will be sparring.

It has affected us all in so many ways and has been unbelievably emotionally and physically tough and I'm proud that at 61 years old I'm still in it, especially when most of the guys are so much better, faster and/or stronger than me.

James Michael sent me a text saying "Be careful and watch out" and I said in my response I'm living the Dylan Thomas poem "Do not go gentle into that good night" and it has become the mantra for my life.

A client said:

"You have a 'death wish'" to which I replied,

"No, I have a 'life wish'" and want to keep pushing every last ounce of myself for however many years I've got left

It might not be smart at my age but I'm loving the physical and mental challenge

"I won't be doing it again" as I've mentioned to Ann probably a dozen times but what a way to go.

Plus, the joys of seeing Beverley and how strong and healthy she's become.

Today she had some bad news about her ex and was in tears, however the good news is she is down to 80.3 kg and we are so proud of her.

She got a coffee this morning on the way back from training while I was in the ocean pool recovering and the coffee shop owner asked her "Are you a fighter?" to which Bev replied proudly "Yeah, I'm an MMA Cage Fighter" as that's how she sees herself.

I remember many years ago when I was walking across the Darling Harbour bridge in Sydney in full corporate attire of suit and tie, and a charity worker selling raffle tickets or something stopped me and asked "What do you do?".

I replied "I'm an Ironman".

It didn't matter which company I owned or how I earned a living, I referred to myself as an Ironman triathlete as I had embraced it so much.

Beverley is now embracing being a fighter and my God she is so technically strong and tough.

She has also got the light back in her eyes, the colour in her skin, and the strut back in her step and I am so proud of her.

The time we are spending together every morning is the best, with our stupid jokes about rechargeable coffee cups and range of things but what a great experience.

4 more weeks to get through then we will be on the same Fight Card together.

WEEK 18 – R.I.P. DWIGHT RITCHIE

I read in the news today that another boxer Dwight Ritchie has died at the end of a training session.

There have been quite a few boxers who have died recently from injuries and it leads me to a conversation Beverley and I had a couple of weeks ago about the potential impact of somebody my age doing a contact sport like this, especially when I am carrying heavy knocks and body injuries which have the potential to be a problem long-term.

I guess rheumatism, arthritis, osteo etc. could be a problem and we are all only one punch, knee, elbow away from a bad and potentially dangerous blow, but as I said to Beverley, I would much rather be pushing life and doing what I can to squeeze the most out of every remaining day I have alive.

I have a lot of trust that the coaches will put us all up against someone reasonably equal to each of us, and the referees know that we all go back to work on Monday, as this is not a title fight with our careers and livelihoods depending on the result.

An example of which is if you are taken down and the other person puts 5 clean shots on you it's fight over, while in the UFC it goes on for a lot longer, so I actually don't have any major concerns about the long-term impact

Also, after the intensity of some of the hour long Shark Tank fights, how much more physical or dangerous can the 6-11 minute fight be?

Thiago spoke well today when he said we are all scared but not of getting hurt on the night.

Primarily we are all scared of actually not making it to Fight Night because of being injured.

And on Fight Night we will all be scared of getting embarrassed or beaten in front of our friends and families, when the reality is they are proud of us being there in the first place.

I've been out on my motorbike today and there are motorbike crashes every day where people die.

Cyclists, people crossing the street too busy looking at their phones, cancer, heart attacks, people are dying for little or no reason and many of them have just never lived a life.

They have never tried anything, pushed themselves hard, or as in the famous Theodore Roosevelt quote, gone 'into the arena'.

Sure, if I end up with Alzheimer's I'm sure people will point the finger 'it is because he got hit in the head while he was doing MMA' but you can't live a life based on what could, maybe, possibly, go wrong.

Having said that 'Rest in Peace' Dwight Richie, 27 years old and in his prime, but who died doing what he loved.



Week 18 and only three weeks and 4 days to go and there are just some mornings when you wake up and you just don't feel like being punched in the head!!

Monday started off with Thiago's Jiu-jitsu and I was back on the mats doing okay however am still not very good at it so don't plan to go to ground on Fight Night (especially as I have never been that good at Chess or Twister!)

Tuesday was another big morning and another Shark Tank

This time we were in groups of three and I was up with Remi and big Michael Lansdowne, all 6 foot 4 and 102 kgs of him.

Remi is about my size my weight and it was 90 seconds on, then switch partner for another 90 then rest for 90.

I completely changed my tactics and tried to stay away from them then attacked when I saw an opening and it worked as I lasted the full 5 rounds with each partner

Also tried keeping my hands low at stages to save strength however got smacked on the nose which caused a bit of blood so I won't be trying that again!

In the last round Mick yelled "STOP" as there was blood all over the mats

Initially I thought it was my nose but it wasn't just a couple of spots, there were literally pools of blood in different places and when I look down I realised that my right foot, big toe was pumping.

I had obviously kicked one of the guys so hard and damaged my foot, so moving my feet around sparring, every time I put my foot down it left a pool of blood.

Mick said stop moving and went to get a load of tissues to stem the bleeding and Karen got the washer buckets to clean down the mats as it was everywhere.

Rule # 2 "Do NOT bleed on the mats".

Having stemmed the flow, I went to the desk and got some blue gaffer/insulation tape and a bit of a clean tissue to wrap my toe in and within 5 minutes was back on the mats and moved straight into the Jiu-jitsu part of Shark Tank.

As we used to say to the kids "just a scratch" even though it bloody wasn't!

Looking at the foot now 24 hours later the toe is still cut up around the nail and now starting to get really badly bruised and swollen.

I'm not sure if it's broken but the nail has cracked and also ripped out of its roots around the base - it's not good.

Back home Ann helped me clean then tape it up so going forward now every evening I will have to redress it then wrap it up with a load of masking tape to keep training as we are too close to the Finale to stop.

Wednesday we were doing takedowns off the cage wall, which needed a lot of weight on my foot to counter the attack, and unfortunately I didn't get through the whole session, especially when one of the guys stood on it!

I guess one small benefit is I reduced any risk of being squashed up against the Cage and damaging my ribs further however my foot is extremely painful and not great but that's the advantage of 3 1/2 weeks to go

At one stage on Thursday, I was up against Michael Burgio and we laughed at each other as we looked like two people escaping from the hospital casualty ward.

Michael had previously broken his neck playing rugby and was still carrying the post-surgery injuries into sparring; I had a cricketers pad on my ribs, gaffer tape holding my toe together and a paper towel strapped to my bleeding head.

The laugh didn't last long though as we then proceeded to attack and beat the shit out of each other.



Some of the other guys however have not been as fortunate.

Matthew Poulter pulled out maybe three months ago with an injured shoulder and we found out yesterday that sadly Billy Bellew, who is absolutely one of the best in the Series and a totally committed athlete unfortunately had to pull out with a major rib, back and cartilage injury

Georgie Furze and Corey Strozer also chose to stop having made phenomenal changes to their weights, health and lives, and when I asked Corey about his experience he said happily:

"The journey I endured were memories I'll remember forever.

I wasn't sure what Wimp2Warrior was until a previous trainer of mine mentioned it to me as I enjoyed her kick boxing classes. I signed up for a tryout and got in the following weekend! The tryout was intense! I thought I was going to die! How was I supposed to do 20 weeks of training if I couldn't even last through this?

Nevertheless, I decided that being over 140kg in my life was bullshit! When I started Wimp2Warrior I weighed in at 141.6kg. Embarrassing, depressing and motivating all in one moment. It was time to push new limits.

My highlights of Wimp2Warrior then began and I was testing myself physically and mentally in areas I never knew I could.

Eating was one challenge. Learning to avoid foods I loved to eat that got me fat! I was not able to sneak those foods in with a traditional Monday weigh in!

Each Tuesday we would go up to North Head Fitness and encountered extremely hard sessions. I remember running in the rain holding a rope with the rest of my team. It was the hardest run I've ever done.

I'm a big guy and I can only run at one pace, however, I was running with what felt like Olympic Athletes as they ran at a pace I could barely do!

I wanted to cry and smash all of them in the face for making me run that fast, but after I finished it I hugged them all and thanked them for doing it with me.

Running soon became a hobby of mine. I was able to run 4-5km all of a sudden. At a slow, steady and comfortable pace, but I was running!

My weight was slowly dropping off and my fitness was slowly improving! This was what I wanted!

Mental challenges for me included being in bed by 9pm and waking up by 4am!

Putting myself in a strict body clock system was hard!

At times it would affect my social life. Whether it was saying no to events with friends or not socialising with my family members on the lounge watching TV like I normally would.

When it finally got time for Fight Camp, this was the make or break moment for me.

All non-contact, gentle, non-physical and practice sparring went out the window.

Now we were at the stage where we needed to fight properly.

To me, it was hurt or get hurt and personally, I'm a lover not a fighter.

This was the time when I really understood what Wimp2Warrior was really about.

We were put in situations where you could really get hurt if you weren't 100% alert. I remember over the weeks getting a nose bleed, 3 cuts on my face, a punched jaw and bruised stomach, arms and thighs.

I asked myself what I wanted and every-time I answered "healthy life".

I realised that getting into a cage wasn't going to prove to anyone or myself that I was a strong person. I already know that I am. I decided that fighting wasn't really what I wanted to do. I loved the safe aspect where I can still learn to punch and kick, but not to inflict pain on anyone.

I still currently train at Warrior Academy with Mick, Scotty and Thiago. I have all the respect in the world for them and thank them and Bez for all they've helped me accomplish.

I've managed to drop over 20kg with their help. Now it's time for me to continue my journey and get under 100kg!!"

Most of us are all now carrying some sort of injury and when that starts to get on the mend another injury happens which takes away the focus from the original as they circulate around our bodies!

I had a Client Meeting in Leichhardt later in the day and wore the Corporate suit/uniform but couldn't fit my feet into my shoes as they are so swollen, so had to wear big hiking boots which is not the most Corporate of dress codes!

I guess we are all tired and our bodies are starting to break down but we've only got 3 weeks and two days to go and we'll be there.

On a very personal aside, Bev you were amazing today.

I am so proud of you darling, not just for what you did today but more so because the tears you shed are actually good tears.

I know you're hurting, you're tired, you're in pain but this is actually living a life the right way.

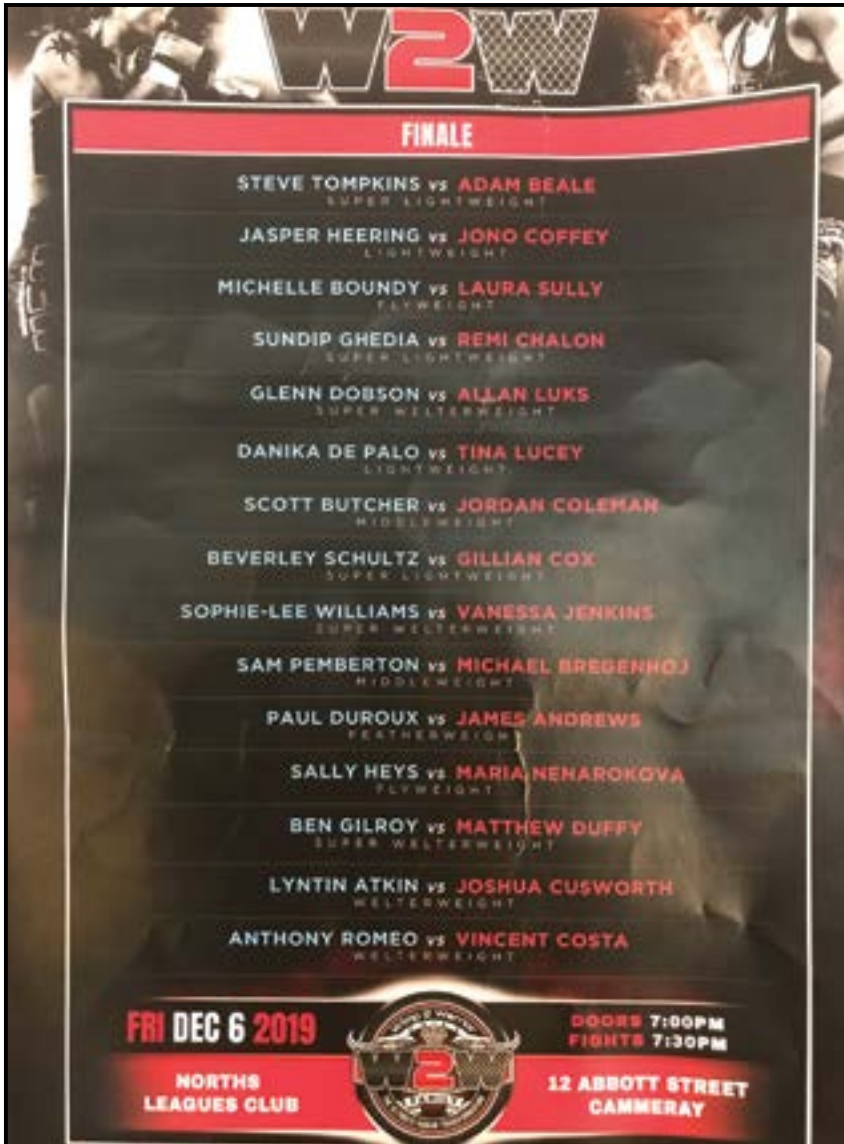
After tears of frustration and sadness over the last 9 years, these are tears of a woman who is performing at her best in 'the arena'

I am very very proud of you and love you so much and to have shared this journey with you has been a wonderful experience.

MATCH UPS

At the end of Shark Tank today Mick got us all together and did the fight match ups.

He has put Beverley in with Gill Cox which will be a great fight as Bev is so strong and aggressive while Gill is just as strong and has phenomenal technique.



The poster features a dark background with a grid of fighter names and weights. At the top, the 'W2W' logo is prominent. Below it, a red banner reads 'FINALE'. The fight card lists 15 matchups, each with the fighters' names and their respective weight classes. At the bottom, there is a red banner with event details: the date 'FRI DEC 6 2019', the venue 'NORTHS LEAGUES CLUB', the location '12 ABBOTT STREET CAMMERAY', and the start times 'DOORS 7:00PM' and 'FIGHTS 7:30PM'. A circular logo for 'W2W' is centered at the bottom.

W2W

FINALE

STEVE TOMPKINS vs ADAM BEALE
SUPER LIGHTWEIGHT

JASPER HEERING vs JONO COFFEY
LIGHTWEIGHT

MICHELLE BOUNDY vs LAURA SULLY
FLYWEIGHT

SUNDIP GHEDIA vs REMI CHALON
SUPER LIGHTWEIGHT

GLENN DOBSON vs ALLAN LUKS
SUPER WELTERWEIGHT

DANIKA DE PALO vs TINA LUCEY
LIGHTWEIGHT

SCOTT BUTCHER vs JORDAN COLEMAN
MIDDLEWEIGHT

BEVERLEY SCHULTZ vs GILLIAN COX
SUPER LIGHTWEIGHT

SOPHIE-LEE WILLIAMS vs VANESSA JENKINS
SUPER WELTERWEIGHT

SAM PEMBERTON vs MICHAEL BREGENHOJ
MIDDLEWEIGHT

PAUL DUROUX vs JAMES ANDREWS
FEATHERWEIGHT

SALLY HEYS vs MARIA NEHAROKOVA
FLYWEIGHT

BEN GILROY vs MATTHEW DUFFY
SUPER WELTERWEIGHT

LYNTIN ATKIN vs JOSHUA CUSWORTH
WELTERWEIGHT

ANTHONY ROMEO vs VINCENT COSTA
WELTERWEIGHT

FRI DEC 6 2019

DOORS 7:00PM
FIGHTS 7:30PM

NORTHS LEAGUES CLUB

12 ABBOTT STREET CAMMERAY

- Michael Lansdown has replaced Corey and now has the dubious honour of fighting the bearded monster from Chippendale
- Sophie-Lee Williams and Karen Deane, in her 3rd fight, are also up against two opponents from Chippendale

My matchup is also against a guy from Chippendale called Allan Luks. I don't know him at all however am still on the same Fight Card on the Friday night with Bev and all the team.

I'm cool not knowing him and don't plan to stalk the guy on Facebook as I don't need to know anything about him for the next 2 weeks.

At this stage I don't want to be overthinking and don't want to look at his picture as I might start worrying about if he looks bigger, harder, younger, faster, heavier, or whatever.

My plan is just to get through all the training, day by day, week by week, and then I can start to think about my opponent after Fight Camp

Finished the week off with a recovery session with Felipe Guariglia the MMA physio acupuncturist and general magician

He is a good guy who knows the MMA game and will hopefully add his magic onto my toes through acupuncture, heat and electricity through a tens machine

With better news, Mick said my Fight Weight is now 79kgs Super Welterweight, not 77kgs.

Hoo Haa!

I only had 1400 calories yesterday and now I can eat a bit more as I am currently 78kgs and starving! (Though I am over this bloody calories counting all the time!)

Today I was dreaming of a slice of linseed and rye sourdough bread Ann had bought, followed by a cold beer in a freezing and frosted glass schooner, with a small pool of moisture running down the outside.

3 weeks to go; 6 more tough training sessions; 11 in total.

Then back to whatever is normal in our lives.

It has definitely turned into the challenge I was looking for!!!

WEEK 19 – WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER

As soon as week 18 Friday's session finished my outlook changed.

No longer was 'the end' some distant ethereal goal or a number of count-down weeks.

The feeling is one of only 3 weeks to go and this week will be the final really tough week with lots of sparring, pain and angst.

The week after that, week 20, will be a light week refining our technique and then week 21, the week of the fight we actually aren't allowed into the gym.

This realisation has left me with this feeling of 'I can get through this' and almost a feeling of levity as we are nearly at the end.

So good as we have all come so far and yet now it's now getting real and I will start to think about the fight and about my opponent in the final week.

Week 19 started with a Thiago and Scott Jiu-jitsu workout and I was sparring with Michael 'Bregs' who overpowered me so my only course of action was to hook my legs and arms tight around his body.

Unable to get a punch in Michael then proceeded to lift me up and body slam me to the ground where with every impact I moaned out loud in true 'Harry Met Sally' fashion

"Yes, yes, ohhhhh yes, do it again Big Boy!!"

To which he did 3 more times and dropping all of his bodyweight onto me each time

Not quite sure if groaning seductively is a tactic used by Conor McGregor in the UFC but it certainly disrupted Michael's concentration!

A couple of things have occurred to me

1. I feel that I am not that much further forward with my BJJ technique, especially with my attack. I'm a lot calmer and more patient compared to the first 8 weeks but still haven't got as much idea as I would have hoped

My 'growth' curve is a slow steady increase however a lot of the others had started at a far lower base level of fitness and health, and their 'growth' is on a really sharp upward trajectory that soon passed me

2. I measure my success following a BJJ session not by the number of submissions or takedowns I put on my sparring partner, but if I leave the mats uninjured!

Seriously.

When on the bottom and the guys add their weight I can feel my ribs screaming and about to pop so I spend my time trying to protect them before I try to make a move

I've got a massive headache from Burgs banging my head off the floor, and my right big toe is still in a world of pain so just to get me onto the mats I have it strapped and 'buddy wrapped' tight with gaffer tape, holding it to my #2 index toe

Not the prettiest look but got me through the session again

Tuesday however was a very tough day for me and the truth be known I'm struggling.

I'm hanging in there but feel like am hanging on by my fingernails and not feeling in a great place at the moment, even though we've only got 3 more big sessions to go.

But today I got battered.

Because of my toe injury I've lost my mobility and lateral movement that gives balance and to power off when stepping in to attack, and back to get out of trouble, so literally I had to stand there and give it and take it, but unfortunately it was lot more taking than giving!

There are maybe 3 or 4 guys I have a realistic chance against so this puts me at the bottom of the pile and it feels like everybody else is just so much better.

I'm also worried about my attack as I just don't seem to have the attack to actually knock anyone out and especially as I can't kick with my right leg, plus my ground game is crap.

Part of my problem is because I keep putting myself up against some of the better guys and when they put me under pressure I drop my head which makes me open to an uppercut or take down.

Bottom line is I got the shit beat out of me each time we changed partners every two minutes and it went on for an hour!

In hindsight I might have won 3 bouts and I didn't really win those because:

- #1, I accidentally kicked Jordan in the balls which 'calmed him down' for a minute, but I'll claim that as a win!
- #2, with Pauli, he tripped over another group and I fell on top of him but have no idea how the hell I did it!
- #3, Sam kicked me so hard he thought he'd broken his foot on my thigh but I stayed on my feet and he went down I'll take that as another win!

While this was going on, one of the biggest and toughest amongst us had a meltdown and walked off the mats in a really tough mental state.

Sometimes I watch and listen to Coach Scott and can't believe he is only 24.

Very calmly, and with amazing maturity and empathy, he worked through the Competitor's demons, totally understanding we all get days like this, where the pressure, the anxiety, the pain, just compound and it all comes to a head.

5 minutes later our team mate had got his head together and was back on the mats, gloved up and ready to go and it is this mental strength and resilience that makes us all take such a big step forward in life.



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions

Later in the week, I went through the same thing and when we came off the mats I was in a very dark place.

I felt so tired, beaten-up and worn down that I had nothing left to give and after we all got off the mats I quietly sat down, covered my head with a towel so nobody could see or hear me, and quietly, calmly, broke down and shed a few tears.

Everything I had tried had ended up with me getting physically assaulted and I felt like I was getting close to my limits.

Then to compound the issue, after a few minutes as I stood up to leave, my right hand started to shake uncontrollably, as if I had Parkinson's.

I couldn't control it so put it down to the adrenaline and emotions working their way out of my system, plus I have just got to stop heading butting everyone else's fists!

I'll be okay and I'll get back up and go again tomorrow and I just need to focus on what I need to do to get through to the end.

Bev keeps saying maybe sit this one out, and I will if I get damaged again, but to intentionally walk into the gym with the intention of not training is an anathema for me.

Thursday I realised that one of the reasons I am getting such a beating is I haven't been able to kick for 10 days and so everything is a fist fight.

We sparred 2x3 minute rounds then changed partners and I was exhausted by the 4th partner, even though I didn't throw anywhere near enough attack combos.

At one stage I stepped right to evade a Jordan right cross, as he put a clean left hook flush onto the right side of my head which literally stunned and stopped me dead in my tracks.

I staggered and just managed to stay upright as we kept going as it was my fault for not blocking it properly, however Jordan and some of the other young guys are taking me apart every sparring session.

I am so physically tired and exhausted and the challenge of having to mentally get myself up to train or spar every day is so tough knowing that I'm going to get hammered.

Today after the 8th round I physically couldn't hold up my gloves anymore but have to keep pushing as hard as I can, for as long as I can.

At the end of the sparring, Mick debriefed the session and the old man stood at the back listening but fighting my demons, barely able to hold my head up and desperate to sit down.

I guess the old saying 'what doesn't kill us will make us stronger' rings true so was Thursday's session with Bez our last sparring session (oh my God I hope so) or was it just a last session with Bez and we have one more tomorrow?

On a lighter note, it's not a tattoo but I have written with a marker pen "4X" on my left forearm to remind me to put together 4 strike combos.

Now all I have to do is find the strength to actually put the 4X combos together as the more I spar the more my arms feel like lead

After the Friday session there was a sense of relief amongst the group and the start of a transition into prefight mode.



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions

No sense of achievement yet until I received a text from a fellow Sahara Desert competitor Justin Gallagher who simply said "You made it!!"

And with those simple 3 words it made me realise that I had overcome 20 of the toughest physically and mentally challenging sporting weeks of my life, and a small sense of pride flooded in.

It is an achievement for all of us and even though the job isn't finished yet, many have previously tried and not got to this point of the program so regardless of the final fight outcome, win or lose we have all achieved something that we are all extremely proud of.

Finished the session with Mick telling us to stay away from well-meaning friends this last week who want to "help us with some extra sparring and advice".

Bez also talked us through Fight Week and one thing that stood out was when he said "the version of you who gets into the Octagon in 2 weeks will be a very different person" which made me feel a huge amount better as I can feel my injuries compounding and my body degenerating daily.

Everyone has been so strict with their diets, mainly because we don't want to incur Mick's wrath of not making fight weight, and we weighed in on Friday again with me just under Fight weight at 78.6.

Daily I've eaten around 1400 calories up to 2100 depending on which week it is including

- Starting the day with half banana and peanut butter on toast before training
- Then protein drink and banana immediately after training
- Eggs on toast or tinned tuna and rice around 12
- Salad around 4
- Salmon or chicken and salad for tea
- Maybe a half bowl of cornflakes before bed IF I have enough calories left

Bev has broken 80kgs and is now 79.4kgs - she was so happy and I am SO proud of her as she looks amazing.

Footnote (literally):

I went to a podiatrist to get my toe checked out and she was very positive.

Probably fractured and a break across the middle of the nail, plus the nail has been ripped out at the roots.

It is still very painful but she said it will be fine for Fight Night as long as I tape it up to stop it spraying blood again.

Good to finish the week on a high.

WEEK 20 – FIGHT PLAN

Saturday morning I woke up at 4.45 again as my inner-clock has become tuned into being awake at that time.

Sluggish with deep fatigue I shuffled into the kitchen, my body stiff and sore remembering that I said to Bev and Ann yesterday that I am “looking forward to a different type of training when I wake up and my first thought isn’t I hope I don’t get punched in the head again today!”

Big difference this time is I woke thinking about the upcoming fight.

Since Fight Camp started I have been able to block it out and focus on just getting through the next training session, but now I can feel a mental shift as a different type of nerves kick in - more of a competitive nervousness instead of the ‘survival anxiety’ of the last few weeks.

Some of the nerves are because I still don’t have a fight plan.

Part of me wants to just go 100% attack right from the 1st bell but I now know that after a minute I could be dead on my feet with fatigue.

Another part is follow Mick and Scotty’s instructions and stay away, jab, jab, cross, kick, move.

This seems to be the most logical way however I am concerned that a) I don’t have a knock out combo worked out yet and b) feel some pressure that I need to show aggression in front of family and friends watching as I don’t want to get knocked down without having made a physical statement.

In Week 7 I had someone to focus my aggression on and was in such a different head space writing:

“Inside driving me I have got this burning rage, this anger, this feeling of betrayal, this sad feeling of being let down for the last 10 years.”

Over the last few weeks some of the anger of betrayal, that has ferociously burnt away in my gut for far too long, has dissipated a little bit as I have become more and more fatigued. So one thing I must do in the next 2 weeks is rekindle that anger and aggression, then turn it on to my opponent.

I watched the Frank Grillo program on Netflix last night called Fightworld and he used a great quote of:

“You don’t play boxing or MMA or fighting”

Conversely, for the first time in a long time I was actually quite relaxed on Sunday and then Monday really relaxed.

It’s now 6:30 pm and I’m just about to eat but already thinking I’ve got to be in bed by 8 o’clock so any socialising, any TV or films, or any plans to do something in the evening have been put to one side for 20 weeks because the focus has to be on being up bright

and early.

Saturday and Sundays are fantastic where the body wakes up naturally at 4.45 but then I can roll over and go back to sleep, though I'm looking forward to next week and returning to normal sleeping and waking hours.

The anxiety and worry I've had for weeks has dissipated a lot, because this is the last week of real training and I guess we're not going to get beaten up this week!

At Jiu-jitsu this morning we rolled and put grappling moves on each other reasonably safely.

Having said that I accidentally smacked Bev in the eye with an elbow giving her a black eye, Jono accidentally kicked me in the head while wrestling with Jordan, and I had both Lyntin then big Michael dropping their weight on me, so safety first this week and be sensible to make sure I get through 4 more days of training then the fight next week.

I still don't know anything about the guy I'm fighting except for Jordan who sent me a message over the weekend saying something about "You'll beat the long lanky nerd who you're up against"

I haven't googled or Facebooked him however my assumption is that he is taller than me which Bev confirmed and Mick says it's going to be a great match up as he is identical shape to myself.

However, at this stage I still don't need to find out anything else about him yet.

Our last Tuesday and practised our individual warm ups.

With 30 fighters needing to be hand-wrapped, prepared, walked out and seconded, all on time, the coaches will have their hands full so a lot of our warm up will be down to each fighter personally prior to their allocated fight times.

We all weighed in again and I am spot on 79.1.

Bev was the same weight but needs to get down to 74 which is creating real stress for her and the family as instead of celebrating how well she has done and how good she looks she is anxious about how to lose 5 kgs in a week. Mick has rightly put the hard word on her saying lose the weight or don't fight!

Over to you Bev as you have had 20 weeks to get there (Please hit the weight as I would be devastated if we don't finish this together)

Had (before and) after photos taken by Skyline Productions and will be interesting to see the comparisons for us all.

Then light technical training including how to escape from being cornered, ring management, and how to score judges points.

Been thinking more about the fight and how I need to approach it so with 10 days to go I've come up with 5 key points of focus:

- Leverage strengths, 3 punch jab, big right and long right kick on the way out

- Duck as if going for a takedown then throw an overhead cross, followed by a stomach punch
- Visualise how I move in and out but try to take him out early in the first 30 seconds
- Don't let him embarrass me - have an angry, aggressive mindset
- Mindset must be I am going to 'fuck you up', not 'I hope I don't run out of energy' "I don't have time to gain experience".

Wednesday night at around 7.30, Mick had posted "5am at Curl Curl beach" - oh shit, not a beach session!

I lay awake most of the night as am so concerned about particles of sand getting under my damaged toe nail and, if I am really honest with myself, I am absolutely running on empty mentally and physically.

Mick arrived at 5am with scales in hand and you could almost hear the groans.



I weighed in at 78.8 even after tea, toast and a banana though several others felt heavy after a big birthday meal last night (Josh) or pints of pre-training water this morning!

Gotta give it to the coach, he creates such an environment of total commitment and no excuses.

Did a small beach run that had me limping in almost last, a bit of grappling then tops back on and into a visualisation session.

Calmly sitting on top of a sand dune just as the sun was coming up out of the vast Pacific Ocean, we sat side by side with people we have sweated on, punched, kicked, choked, supported and respected, for the last 5 months.

Then, with our eyes closed, for about half an hour Mick took us through Weigh-In, Fight Day, Fight Night and post event.

Some fell asleep, some relaxed, I sat, moving, ducking and weaving with imaginary jabs, adrenaline and real emotions racing through my body.

It was another memorable experience in this amazing program and helped us all prepare our mind set for the big night next week.

Key outcome for me is I need to work on hating my opponent, just for 11 minutes, and do everything I can to attack him and beat him up.

One more 4am start then that's it!

Friday morning and after yesterday's calming Visualisation session, we were lulled into a false sense of comfort and hope that our last day would be easy - true to form it wasn't and Scott took us through a tired hour of shadow boxing, pummelling and squat jumps/sprawls.

And true to form, I ended up injured, with blood dripping from a cut on my cheek from Jono, that had me taping another paper towel to the side of my head and binding it up with adhesive tape.

Then finally after 20 weeks of some of the most intense physically and mentally challenging training I've ever faced, without celebration or fanfare, we finished our Wimp2Warrior Cage Fighting program and are now only 7 days to Fight Night.

Mick, Scotty and Bez gave us all Fight times with me scheduled as Fight #5 and Bev #8, both in the Blue corner, with Mr Angry #1 & #2, Mick and Bez, in my corner as seconds.

Back in July when Beverley and I signed up there were about 40+ of us and amazingly we are still 32 competitors left which shows the resilience of the men and women that I've had the pleasure to train with these last 5 months.

For over 50 years I have trained with many teams including Military teams, Footy teams, Ironman and Ultramarathon teams but have rarely experienced the daily intensity, physicality and emotions that this program has brought out of all of us.

It is an old cliché however we have all sweated litres, spilt blood, and (I'm not embarrassed to admit) a quiet tear after one of the early morning sessions.

Our bodies are damaged, aching and completely fatigued, however we all know that after a few days of rest and recovery we will all be ready to step into the Cage next week for our final test.

Fight Night next Friday at North Sydney Leagues Club is sold out and the venue will be packed.

Now it is so close I'm starting to really look forward to the experience of Fight Week and stepping into the Octagon and, regardless of the result, will put the last 5 months down as one of the most amazing experiences of my life.

Thank you #Wimp2Warrior, Coaches and to all of my fellow Warriors

***“Do not go gentle into that good night;
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”***

WEEK 21 – FIGHT WEEK

Over the weekend I didn't do anything except a leg massage and short walk to get some rest and recovery.

Woke up Monday morning at 05.15 and sadly no sense of achievement or relief that the training and early starts were over. My 1st feeling was of "What on earth am I going to do with myself today", which got me into this program in the first place back in July!

One big emotion that is really starting to creep in now though is pre-fight nerves.

I lay in bed at night and have been visualising Fight Night for months and can feel my heart rate increase and pound in my chest.

I am imagining the walk from the changing rooms, out through the crowd, entering the Octagon then moving as my opponent comes in.

I'm in the Blue corner and will enter before him so will 'own' the Cage and have a couple of minutes more to settle and get my heart rate down.

Then the introductions, touch gloves and "it's time"

I cut my visualisation down to the next 30 seconds as everything else is clutter.

*Left jab, jab, jab, duck, up and right overhand cross to his left ear
If he puts out his left arm, pull it in and right hook to the ribs, then kick wherever possible
If my toe is fine keep kicking; if it isn't, kick selectively
Stop worrying about will I run out of energy before the end of the round
Try to finish him early and don't let him put me down*

Like a huge balloon, fatigue and shortness of breath swells in my stomach and chest.

Breath deep and focus on pushing it down.

Focus on my jab and keep moving and attacking.

I visualise it over and over throughout the night, each time trying to push down 'the balloon' and control my breathing.

Best case scenario, I overwhelm him and beat the shit out of him inside a minute.

2nd best, I win over two rounds having kept up a consistent attack for 6 minutes.

I don't consider any other scenarios as they are out of my control.

In the day I walked to the Narrabeen ocean pool, shadow boxed for 10 minutes, then swim 500 metres, and I feel better from having got my body moving again.

I weighed 77.6kg at 8am and 78.6 at 5pm so am planning my Weigh-In nutrition and fluids early as I don't want to be over on Thursday night.

I'm feeling really calm and relaxed throughout the week, though it's probably because of 23 Ironman and being on the start line of nearly 100 other races, my mindset is this is only

going to be a maximum of 11 minutes where an Ironman can be anything up to 16 hours of pain and fatigue.

Conversely, as always Bev is stressed.

She has left her weight cut late to lose 5kgs and make the 74.8kg in the final week so is having Epsom salt baths, going for runs to sweat it out and eating next to nothing, and she's a bloody pain in the arse!!

This whole program has been stressful yet she has just added extra pressure and anxiety on herself as she has once again left it to the last minute and Mick rightly is being mercenary in his attitude to making fight weight.

Come Thursday night and Kate, James, Ann, Bev, the kids and I all went to North Sydney Leagues club for the Weigh-In at 6 o'clock.

I've been weighing myself morning and night throughout the week needing to be under 79kgs maximum for Super Welterweight so today I've had hardly anything to eat or drink consuming under 900 calories – there's no way I am getting onto Mick's shit list this late in the program!

It's only been 6 days since we were all together training but it's so good to get back with the team and see everyone again especially as the change is amazing.

We all look strong and lean because of the weight-loss target Mick strictly set us and in some cases really skinny compared to where we were 5 months ago.

Some of the girls (and Romes) have had their hair braided and one of them, Sophie Lee-Williams, has totally transformed herself over the last few months and is now strong, healthy and happy having lost an incredible 65kgs through the W2W program.



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions



Thankfully Beverley easily made weight under 74 kg and she looks absolutely magnificent.

With her hair braided she is back to the strong and confident Beverley we knew before she had the sunshine taken away from her.

Entering North Sydney Leagues Club, they were just finishing building the Cage when we got there and it looked like a silent monster waking from its slumbers in preparation to devour us the following night.

The spot lights shone down, 2 huge video screens played W2W videos, and music played in the background in front of 100s of empty seats that would be packed out in 24-hours' time.

None of us had previously trained in a Cage so before Weigh-In started we were able to get into the Octagon for the first time.

It was an incredible feeling as we all bounced around, feeling the smooth texture of the mats underfoot, and the wire fencing on our backs, shadow boxing or doing forward rolls as we all started to feel like World Champions preparing for a title fight.

Mick stepped up onto the stage with a couple of officials and called us up in pairs in Fight Night order, as we got on the scales; took some photos then the next Fighter goes up, weighs, photo and then we face each other.

Quietly in amongst the crowd a guy in an orange tradie polo shirt walked in, looking slightly lost but obviously in the right place, and I knew immediately it was Allan Luks, my opponent.

It was the first time I've seen him and he's a little bit taller than me, about a kilo lighter and looks really thin but I have got to treat this guy with respect.

Anybody who's got through the W2W program is no fool and he obviously has the resilience and the technique to get to this stage so there's no way I will be disrespecting him

He will also have what I call 'tradie strength' - a strength not gained in the gym, but daily, at work on the job and not from behind a desk, which made me feel concerned.

Having said that he walked up to me on stage all smiley and I gave him the cold look.

I don't want to be his friend; I want to fuck him up; I want to put him down, I want to do it quickly and as hard as I can, because if I don't he will do it to me.

So I gave him a look as I want him to go home Thursday night concerned; to be thinking what the hell have I got myself into; this old guy is 61 and is fucking dangerous.

Mick went through all of the International Federation of MMA rules of what we can and can't do in the Octagon, (as long as you don't bite, head-butt, elbow or knee, pretty much everything else goes!) then that was it, evening over, get dressed and go home and wait.

But not before the best part - as soon as I got off the scales I had a massive bowl of rice, tuna and sultanas, my favourite meal, before we left the auditorium and arrived home to a big bowl of cornflakes then a jam and peanut butter sandwich and lots of water.

Woke up at 1am hungry so had another jam and peanut butter sandwich and am just enjoying being able to eat and drink again.



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THE MAN IN THE ARENA

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt

Excerpt from the speech "Citizenship in a Republic"

Delivered at the Sorbonne

Paris, France

April 23, 1896

©CAPS

FIGHT NIGHT

Fight Night, by Shona George, former Elite Gymnast and Rower

The whole concept of MMA fighting has always been lost on me.

As a former elite athlete, I can absolutely appreciate the dedication, training, effort and sacrifice that went into the 21 weeks in the lead up to Fight Night. But having grown up in a family of pacifists, the thought of watching anyone, let alone people I love, attempt to beat the shit out of each other has never really appealed to me. So the invite to attend Fight Night had me a little torn.

I am endlessly inspired by and proud of Glenn and Beverley and I consider them family, so of course I want to be supportive of the final step in this amazing adventure they have been on.

But the 'averse to violence' paramedic in me wasn't quite sure how I would deal with watching two people I care about, throw and receive punches while locked in a Cage.

However, Fight Night comes around and I'm met with the most incredible atmosphere.

There are bright lights and booming ringside announcements and short bios of each fighter's journey to this night high up on the giant screens. There are coach's pep talks and an auditorium filled with proud and supportive families and friends, and the energy is almost palpable as, with my glass of wine in hand, I found my seat ringside and thought perhaps I was wrong, this was going to be a fun night!

There were a number of fights on the card and to say I was impressed by the skills and the focus and the determination every fighter showed in the Octagon that night is an understatement.

Watching someone you care for being attacked by someone you don't know is brutal. But Fight Night gave me a whole new level of understanding of this sport.

The respect that each fighter has for the space that they compete in and for their opponent was something I had never considered.

Seeing the support each fighter gave their opponent at the end of each fight, regardless of who had won or lost was one of the most beautiful and unexpected experiences I gained that night and I am incredibly grateful for the whole positive and eye opening Wimp2Warrior Fight Night experience.

Cage fighting goes against the acceptable laws of society; a society that legislates you don't attack or beat up another person under any circumstances.

You just can't hit another person regardless of how brave or intimidated or challenged you feel.

It's the law and if you do attack someone you can go to jail.

So after 20 weeks of preparation, the highs and lows, and some of the toughest mental and physical training I have ever done, Fight Night was finally here and we all had to 'press the switch'.

A loud, sold out crowd packed North Sydney Leagues Club, with pounding music; bright, dazzling lights; 15 wild and crazy cage fights; and each of the 30 fighters handled Fight Night in different ways.

Some becoming more extroverted, some going into their cave, others listening to music or watching the other fights or generally moving around in their own head space.

I guess even though this is my 1st Cage Fight it isn't my 1st big event so on Fight Night I was really calm up to about 2 hours out.

A Past Warrior Fraser Chapman wrapped my hands in a totally different way we are used to in training, using a lot of individual strips of tape and padding, instead of the 2 metre training wraps of cloth.

Then a final medical check by the doctor, before starting my warm up drills with a couple of Former Warriors Rebecca Bowman and Aaron Miller.

Bec then Fraser took me through several punching combos on the hand-mitts and kicking pads, trying to get my heart rate up, then let it drop, flushing out the adrenalin, before doing it again, so I didn't blow up as soon as I entered the Cage.

Aaron then took me through several BJJ drills on the ground, constantly encouraging and saying "that's good; great technique; yes, nice; well done, that will hurt him" boosting my confidence and getting me to fight mentally.



At 6.30, an hour before the 1st fight, we could hear the murmur of the crowd growing louder as the queue grew outside our warm up rooms.

I opened the door and went outside to be greeted by hundreds of people all crushed together on the winding steps waiting for the doors to open and get into the auditorium.

By now I was in fight gear and wrapped so was able to say a few quick hellos then an hour out I needed to press a switch in my head that gave me permission to go out and attempt to literally beat someone up.

Adrenaline and motivation is one thing but that evaporates very quickly once you start getting punched in the face.

Earlier in the week I had to come up with a phrase or switch that I could use to give myself 'permission' to attack him and a 'go to' if things started to go wrong.

And as basic as it sounds that phrase was simply "Fuck him up".

Crude, not polite, but in my mind it was the switch that reminded me I had to get into the Cage and fuck him up because if I didn't, if I showed any patience, or hesitation, or any hope that we're going to be gentle, then it was all going to go wrong, very, very quickly.

So in the warm up room, as the other Fighters warmed up around me, I mentally picked up the pace and started aggressively talking to myself as if I was talking to someone else.

My hands are bound, I'm gloved up, I'm going through the warmup drills, and I'm saying to myself "You've got to attack him from the first bell; you've got to fuck him up; don't give him an inch, enter the Cage and watch him as he walks in, touch gloves then attack, attack, go hard from the start, go for it regardless of the outcome, you have got to fuck him up"

Outside I could hear the crowd chanting and cheering as tension was mounting and Warriors came and went, first Steve, then Jasper, followed by Michelle.

Then suddenly the music roared, as the changing room doors crashed open and the dazzling lights of the cameraman entered.

Fight #4 had just finished and Sunny came back into the warm-up room and it was time for my fight

I was ready and after one final word from Mick we left the safety of the rooms.

Standing behind the big doors next to two huge Maori bouncers waiting I was focused and relaxed and joked with Bez and Mick about who was going to give me the kiss of life if I had a heart attack out there!

I could hear the music and the crowd chanting and cheering as I put on my fight face and was ready to go as the double doors flew open and the opening blast of Meat Loaf's "Bat Out of Hell" reverberated around the auditorium,

The venue had transformed into a living breathing screaming mass as the crowd erupted, lights dazzled and music blared.

With cameras in my face and Mick and Bez behind me I slowly walked the narrow path towards the cage, feeling rather than seeing the crowd around me as they screamed and cheered encouragement.

2 huge video screens caught every step of the way though I never saw them I was so determined.

Some of the fighters before and after me acknowledged the crowd, some danced, some shook hands, others carried country flags, I kept my mind focused and chewing on my mouthguard slowly moved forward.

Adrenaline was racing through my body and my bottom lip was quivering with emotion as I stopped just under the towering octagon and an official patted me down, checked that I had a box in place, and added extra Vaseline around my eyes, ears and cheeks.

Then climbing the 4 metal steps I respectfully bowed, stepped through the gate and into the Cage where I could hear in amongst the noise and music our friends chanting "Fossil, Fossil, Fossil"

I bounded around the Cage walls then stood in my corner revving myself up as Allan Luks then entered the Cage and I stared at him trying to psyche him out and myself up.

With 30 seconds to go the MC introduced us both, the referee reminded us of the rules, then the cameras and ring announcer left the Octagon and it was just me, the ref and my opponent literally locked in a Cage ready to attack each other.

I once read a famous quote by a Greek philosopher:

***"If you really attack a fire, you put it out.
If you attack it cautiously and fearfully, you get burned"***

And my plan was to put out his fire

For months I had been planning my 1st 30 - 60 seconds and for weeks Mick and Scotty have been telling me to jab, jab, jab, cross then get out; do it again.

Pick a combo and just do it.







Use my height and long legs; don't get in and brawl.

Then, after 21 weeks of the most arduous and challenging training, it was on!

Final instructions, touch gloves, back to our 'corners', bell rings and without hesitation I went for him...

Subconsciously I now realise that my greatest fear was not of losing or getting hurt, but scared of losing without putting up a fight

Fear of failure is a great driver and failure meant getting put down early or worse still, 1st punch

I had lain in bed most nights going over my combo, time and time again, but as soon as the bell went my greatest fear of going down without a fight took over, my instincts kicked in and my planned approach evaporated into action

And what do I do - the total opposite to the Coaches instructions and go straight onto the attack, because "attack is the best form of defence!"

Unfortunately, Allan had the same idea and returned everything I sent his way but with more strength, at one stage pushing me across the Octagon and into the Cage Wall.

For much of the round, we took turns wrestling against the fence and I tried to take him down but then he had me up against the fence again, holding my right arm low and peppering my ribs with short punches, not doing any damage or causing any pain but accumulating scoring shots for the judges' scorecards.

In hindsight my body position was wrong and too low as my head was down in an old rugby tackle position, rather than standing up, punching and kicking, and I could feel the mesh pushing into my back but it gave me a feeling of security as literally 'back to the wall' I had only one way to go.

The 3 minutes went crazily fast with him gaining the ascendancy however one goal I had was to get through the 1st round.

I wanted to sit on the stool and be on the receiving end of one of Mick and Bez's mid-fight pep-talks, and in their 'delicate and gentle' style they didn't disappoint, including Mick's often repeated instructions of use my length, jab, jab, cross, kick, move

Struggling to see out of my right eye, the doctor came across and asked me where we were and what day was it – and I thought

“Shit, who does he think I am, Siri?

If he didn't know where we are then how the hell would I?!”

In training, my main attack weapon until I damaged my toe, has been my right leg, cross kick but looking back at the fight I only kicked him once.

Into the 2nd round and he got me up against the Cage where my tactic of hitting his gloves with my face was starting to pay off as at one stage we wrestled and somehow I managed to twist him and pull him to the ground getting myself into the Mount position to start the ground and pound

Perfect positioning with muscle memory making me get my knees up under his armpits and start to try to pound his head.

1.....2.....3

I remember somewhere Mick had said hit them with 5 clean shots and the referee will jump in and finish the fight

5.....6.....7

Come on ref, quick, stop the fight, because the guy was bucking like a wild horse, trying to throw me off, twisting as I kept trying to hit him in the head.

Unfortunately, with a thrust and turn of his hips I missed my opportunity and he threw me then twisted and landed on top of me as he then started his own ground and pound attack to my head.

Suddenly the weeks of training and technique kicked in and I pulled him in, locking my legs behind his back and my arms tight around his neck.

Then I slowly remembered to get my feet in against his hips to create space until I was able to push him off and jump to my feet where we again traded blows.

At that time the #1 thing I should've done was circle away from him and keep out of trouble. Do as Scott and Mick have repeatedly told me to do for the last 12 weeks of Fight Camp, and move away from him and regroup; get my head back on track and think about kicking; to move around and pick my punches and kicks as he also would have been tiring, then try to take him in round 3.

But some basic primeval instinct lurking in the back of my mind prevailed and I looked up, put my head behind my gloves and went for him again.

And that was the start of the end as we wrestled, then he caught me with a hard right and I staggered, taking a big step to the right to keep my balance.

I turned back to face him and go again but he moved in quickly with a couple of solid blows before hitting me with a powerful right cross and I went down like a tall timber, crashing slowly to the ground.

As I'm going down I remember thinking "this isn't good, I'm done" and as I hit the canvas the referee jumped in and called it time.

Not quite the result I was hoping for but I was beaten by a better fighter and Allan definitely deserved the win as he was stronger throughout, **but what an experience.**

Mick and Bez helped me back to my stool while the cameraman and MC interviewed Allan, then Bev jumped into the Cage and we hugged for a long time, both in tears and proud of what we had achieved together, before the MC interviewed me.

I have no idea what I said except thanking my coaches, team mates and Bev for such an amazing experience.

Then, as the oldest person in the World to ever complete Wimp2Warrior, I added "Oh, and I am now officially retired from this crazy sport!!"

Back in the changing rooms the atmosphere was buzzing with the feeling that each one of us on our return, regardless of result, had passed our rite of passage to join an exclusive club of those who have done the walk, and I felt proud to be sharing this with my tough and courageous team mates and coaches.



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The commitment from the Coaches was magnificent as they raced from preparing, walking in and coaching one fighter to the next on the Fight Card, treating each one of us as if we were the only fight of the night.

I cleaned myself up, got my head together and then watched Beverley go through her warmup drills.

She had her 'fight face' on - tough and focused and in a totally different league to myself.

She is so much more proficient than 6 months ago when she had won her 1st fight and as she made her entrance my heart followed her every step of the way.

Entering the Cage to Wolfmother's "Woman" my beautiful daughter looked relaxed and even managed a couple of suggestive 'nipple rubs' before she turned to face Gill.

Gill looked magnificent, strong, lean and athletic and straight after final instructions from the ref, they went at each other.

I had previously joked with Gill that because of FACS (DOCS) laws we are not able to smack our kids nowadays so I would give her \$50 for each punch she planted on Bev and she didn't hold back!

Gill is extremely tough and has outstanding BJJ technique so beforehand Bev had been concerned about if the fight went to ground so she kept Gill at a distance with kicks, jabs and crosses as they both stayed on their feet, trading blows.

Good strong, straight punches, with both women soaking up each punch with their heads and faces, as the ascendancy flowed backwards and forwards.



© Courtesy of Skyline Productions

Suddenly, Bev caught Gill with a right that made her stumble. So Bev chased her and punched again, making Gill stagger backwards and sideways before Bev put one more into her face that made Gill turn and the referee jump in and stop the fight after 57 seconds of the 1st round.

Once again my beautiful girl proved she is the toughest fighter in our family!

After Bev and Gill's fight we all watched the remaining 7 fights, enjoying the congratulations and slaps on the back, as cuts and bruises started to develop on our faces and I looked a mess with black eyes and grazed cheeks.

Ann and I hugged for a long time but I think she actually held on because she had been jumping up and down so much during the fights she thought she had put her hips out!

Then all of a sudden, after Vince and Romes had put on one of the best fights of the night, it was over.

With energy still buzzing around the auditorium, the crowd slowly emptied, the lights came up, the music stopped, and that was it.

The end of an unforgettable experience and time to move on.

WHAT'S NEXT

Back home at midnight still buzzing, and while it didn't exactly help our recovery, Bev and I finished off a bottle of American Honey Whiskey for a good end to a great night

Day after Ann and I went to Tina's place in Manly for post-fight drinks and Romes and I stood next to Tina, Laura and Maria, all bruised and battered while the girls looked beautiful and didn't have a mark on them!



Beauties and the Beasts!

In front of 100s of people on Friday night I "officially retired"

However, the day after every Ironman race Ann has heard me say the same words so often yet come Monday with a good night's sleep and meal inside of me I would start to plan what I needed to do better or differently to improve in my next race!

So come Monday morning I sent Mick a text asking

"Serious question Coach.

Before I make a fool of myself and do something really stupid

IF a place comes available for next weekend's fights, could I consider putting my hand up and going again?

Or should I just bank this marvellous experience and walk off into the sunset?"

Mick's reply made my decision really easy

"From a technical standpoint absolutely.

From a sanctioning standpoint no.

*There's a minimum time between fights that CSA impose.
From memory I think it's 30 days as standard. That can be reduced, but in order to do so
you'd need to be reviewed by a doctor and they'd review your fight footage.
If you had a clean submission win with no head shots taken MAYBE they'd clear you.
But you guys belted each other so they wouldn't allow you to fight in 7 days.
But if you really want to go again let's see what we can do once you're healed."*

Part of me said that was a smart outcome. However, if I am really honest I was actually a little bit disappointed to not be able to fight again the week after.

Now It's YOUR Turn

While I gave it my all in every day of training and every minute of the fight, on December 6th I didn't win my fight but truly that doesn't matter one iota as the whole experience was unforgettable.

In my Ironman Triathlon days I would often hear the comment "If it was easy everyone would do it".

And while some might say that about Wimp2Warrior, the truth is I am a 61-year-old Grandfather, and if I can do it literally anyone can.

So,

If you are fat or unhealthy, sign up for Wimp2Warrior.

If you are unhappy or insecure, sign up for Wimp2Warrior.

If you are bored or need a challenge, sign up for Wimp2Warrior.

If your life is out of control, or not going where you want it to, sign up for Wimp2Warrior. Ultimately if you want to improve your life in any way, sign up for Wimp2Warrior.

Still not sure? Ask fellow Warrior Michelle Boundy about the impact on her life.

At 168 cms and 56 kgs (5 foot 6 inches and 123 pounds) one of the smallest Fighters in our Squad, but also one of the toughest:

It's been 11 weeks since I stepped into the cage and had the most amazing 11 minutes of my life.

They weren't amazing because of what I was doing, but because of what they symbolised.

They showed me that I'm stronger than I know, that I can do anything I set my mind to and that when life shits on you there's only one thing to do – grab it by the balls and show it who's boss.

The 20 weeks I spent training with W2W was about so much more than learning MMA or even the fight itself.

For me it was a much needed lifestyle change.

Instead of drinking every night as a way to cope with what was happening in my life, I started to nourish my body.

I stopped drinking, I started eating, I went to bed early and got up at 4am and was on those mats at 5am ready to take on anything they threw at me, day in, day out for 20 weeks.

I could literally feel myself becoming stronger both physically and mentally.

I overcame so much during those 20 weeks – a stint in hospital, being struck down with vertigo – that when the time came to step in that cage I was just so grateful to be able to finish what I started that I embraced every single second of those 11 minutes.

I fought a woman 15 years my junior and it was an epic battle to the very end.

It went to a 3rd round and ended in a split decision with the win ultimately going to her but honestly I felt like a winner in that moment and still do.

I did something that scared the shit out of me, something that challenged me mentally and physically and, most importantly, something that showed me how strong I am.

If I can survive the last year and a half and come out a better version of myself then I can handle anything life throws at me.

To life I say – Bring it, because I AM A WARRIOR!



<https://wimp2warrior.com/>

Final Thought:

A friend videoed my fight from an iPhone and Allan thoroughly deserved the win.

However, I have watched it over a dozen times, every time thinking what could I have done better and differently.

I have a voice whispering at the back of my mind, quietly saying "what do you think about getting back in 'the arena'" but at nearly 62 my old body is not fully recovered yet.

During the tougher mornings, I just couldn't wait to get through the training so that I could eat when I wanted, have a drink in the evening, and more importantly, stay in bed for an extra couple of hours.

Now though, 3 months after Fight Night if I wake up at 6am, I instantly feel guilty, as if the day has already started without me.

In addition, I miss my team mates and our coaches, the camaraderie, the mutual respect, the training, the honesty and the challenge.

Ann and I are planning to go to South America for High Altitude Mountain Climbing in a couple of months.

Yet after we all trained so hard, for so long, maybe, possibly, potentially, could I or would I go again if an opportunity became available.....???

THANK YOU

To Mick McSevney, Scotty Moran, Thiago Brago and Andrew 'Bez' Berridge

The impact you 4 have had on my family will forever leave me in your debt, as a father and as a competitor.

To all of my fellow W2W Competitors, I don't have the words to describe how much I respect each and every one of you and thank you for allowing me to share this adventure with you

James Andrews, Lyntin Atkin, Adam Beale, Billy Bellew, Michelle Boundy, Michael Bregenhøj, Michael Burgio, Scott Butcher, Jono Coffey, Jordan Coleman, Vince Costa, Gill Cox, Josh Cusworth, Karen Deane, Matt Duffy, Paul Duroux, Remi Chalon, Felipe Guariglia, Sonny Ghedia, Ben Gilroy, Jasper Heering, Sally Heys, Danie Hudson, Michael Lansdown, Tina Lucey, Allan Luks, Maria Nenarokova, Danika De Palo, Sam Pemberton, Anthony Romeo, Beverley Schultz, Laura (Moir) Sully, Steve Tompkins, Sophie Watkins, Sophie Lee-Williams, Georgie Furze, Daniel Kelly, Jayden Malala, Matt Poulier, Corey Strozer.

To Skyline Productions for their incredible Training Photos and Fight Video. Check out www.skyline-productions.net and also [instagram.com/skylineproductionsau](https://www.instagram.com/skylineproductionsau)

To Richie Cranny, Tanya and Nick Langton and all of the W2W team for developing the most incredible program, not just for me but for all Past, Current and Future Warriors.

Check out <https://wimp2warrior.com/>

Finally,

To my two beautiful daughters Kate and Beverley, I am so proud of you both and look forward to our future adventures together.

To the love of my life Ann, thank you for always being there to pick up my pieces and put me back together again

"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night!"



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