



Episode 413 – Gracie JiuJitsu | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello and welcome! This is [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) episode 413. Today, we're talking about Gracie JiuJitsu. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, your host on the show, the founder at whistlekick and I love martial arts, love it, love it, love it so much. I do the show twice a week, we bring you an interview on Mondays, we bring you a topic show like this one each Thursday and you can learn more about the show whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. You can subscribe through your podcast apps, you can check out what we do on YouTube, we've got a ton of stuff going on and of course you can find everything we've got going on @whistlekick.com. We've got some stuff over there you can buy and if you use the code PODCAST15, you're going to save 15% off every single thing that we do. You can use that code all you want. You can sign up for the newsletter and find out about the new things we've got going on. We've got some original content that comes out on those newsletters. We try to spread out, want you to check out all the things we've got going on so we try to incentivize you do that and if you're not on the newsletter list, you can sign up at any of our website and I hope you do because that's the best way to stay clued in to what we're doing.

If you want to learn about the world-renowned, the popular martial arts system that is generally referred to as Brazilian JiuJitsu, in one way or another you really should know about the family who developed it. In fact the Gracie family is so synonymous with Brazilian JiuJitsu that sometimes it's referred to is Gracie JiuJitsu because the Gracie family is the one who really promoted and developed JiuJitsu in Brazil. Even though there is another lineage that emerge through someone else, Luis Franca.



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Brazilian JiuJitsu or simply BJJ has become very prominent in the world in no small part due to the ultimate fighting championship the UFC since Royce Gracie used the art to win three championships in 93 and 94. The art has also become one of the primary elements that most people include in their mixed martial arts curriculum or system because of its effective ground techniques. So today we're going to talk about how the Gracie or the Brazilian JiuJitsu style came into existence, I'm sure many of you are curious about the history. Some of you may know some stuff about this but we did some research. So listen and let's talk more about it.

So first off when we say Gracie, who is Gracie? What is this family name? Well the Gracie family tree roots go back to George Gracie. George was born in Scotland and he migrated to Brazil. He had a son named Pedro who married Cesarina Pessoa Vasconcellos. I am fairly confident I'm not getting that name right but it's the best I'm going to be able to do because I don't speak Portuguese and this woman was a woman of high status. The couple had a son named Gastão who later became a businessman and partnered with the American circus in Belem which is a city in Brazil. Now in 1916, a Japanese judo cut and prizefighter Mitsuyo Maeda performed in the American circus stage by the Queirolo brothers made up for the demonstration once more in 1917 in De Paz in the theater where he was watched and observed by Carlos Gracie the eldest son of a Gastao Gracie. Carlos was impressed by Maeda his techniques to defeat a much bigger man and from that day forward Carlos decided he wanted to learn JiuJitsu. If you're unsure of the relationship between judo and JiuJitsu you might want to go back, we did an episode on judo we did a separate episode on the founder Jigoro Kano and you might find some value in those if you really are interested in this history. Maeda, who was nicknamed count combat or Condé Coma in Spain agreed to teach Carlos. However, about four years later Gastao and his family are forced to return to Rio de Janeiro due to his father's death and financial difficulty at the same time. Now this incident wasn't a hindrance for Carlos to continue learning jiuJitsu, the local coaches in Rio de Janeiro also learned from Maeda they taught Carlos and his brothers Oswaldo, Gastao Jr, George and Helio. From then on the Gracie brothers embrace the art of judo or JiuJitsu which was the term used by Maeda. Carlos wasn't quite content with what he learned from Maeda, so he decided he was going to devise a more effective version of JiuJitsu. According to reports he participated in open matches and use this experience to create and refine his own system, subsequently, as the eldest among his siblings Carlos taught his own style of JiuJitsu to his younger brothers.

Helio the youngest among the siblings grew up to be very athletic. His early sports were rowing and swimming and he just started to learn JiuJitsu at the age of 16. However, during his training he found it difficult to execute the techniques even though he knew them theoretically because of his relatively smaller physique. He experimented on the techniques and adjusted them to suit his own body and eventually this experimentation led to the development of you may have guessed it, Gracie JiuJitsu. After Judo was introduced in Brazil, some the rules were changed to better suited as a spectator sport and to improve the sport safety. Some of these changes included lesser range of joint locks and a deemphasis of groundwork techniques. Now BJJ, Brazilian JiuJitsu on the other hand doesn't follow these changes and it makes it more of a grappling art which of course it. While BJJ looks similar to judo,



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especially to people who haven't trained in either the contribution of the Gracie's make it a more distinct art style by giving greater emphasis on Full Contact fighting. The main difference between BJJ and judo is that the former focuses on bringing the fight to the ground, if you've watched Brazilian JiuJitsu practitioners in full contact fight, you see that this is quite often their strategy. Therefore, it employs many takedown techniques such as pulling guard, thigs that are prohibited in judo and even in most wrestling systems. The main objective is to gain the dominant position on the ground until a submission technique can be applied. Also as a fight is mainly on the ground, striking techniques are not emphasized in BJJ. Have you ever rolled with someone and tried to punch them? It's kinda hard.

The graces in general use the term Gracie JiuJitsu to identify their own variation of JiuJitsu especially when they brought it to the United States. However the first cousins Carley and Rorian had a legal dispute over Gracie JiuJitsu. In December 94 Carley filed a legal complaint again Rorian because the latter claim to have obtained a federal registration for Gracie JiuJitsu service mark, a trademark because of this service Mark, no other races could use this name unless he approved. Now on November 1997 a jury actually said that Rorian didn't have a valid federal service mark for Gracie JiuJitsu and it voided the mark that he had obtained.

The Gracie family believe that their martial arts style was superior over all others this prompted Carlos Gracie to issue the first Gracie challenge in the 1920s which was a Vale Tu Do or anything goes style match. The matches were usually set up between a smaller Gracie and a larger or stronger looking opponent. And due to the large percentage of wins from the Gracie family, the challenge became very popular. Some of the styles their opponents use included judo, karate, wrestling, and boxing. And the success of these challenges allow them to promote and further develop the martial art. One of the greatest adversaries the Gracies faced was Kazushi Sakuraba who was dubbed the Gracie Hunter and Sakuraba broke the Gracie's undefeated record in professional fighting by defeated Royler Gracie in pride 8. Sakuraba won by technical knockout TKO using the double top wrist lock. Decades ago a similar event happened but to Royler's father Helio prior to Sakuraba's win the last Japanese athlete to defeat a Gracie was Misushiko Kimura who is hailed as one of the greatest judoka of all time. Helio was defeated by the very same judo technique that defeated Royler it's like history repeating itself.

It's hard to talk about Gracie JiuJitsu the Gracie family and not talk about the UFC, the ultimate fighting championship because Rorian Gracie is one of the founders of the UFC. He teamed up with the entrepreneur Art Davey inspired by the success of the Gracie Challenge. Davey on the other hand was inspired by the Gracie's inaction video series produced by the Gracie family themselves where Gracie JiuJitsu students would be martial artists of other disciplines. Davey wanted to create a tournament like that to determine which martial arts discipline was best. If you remember the early days of the UFC, you probably remember the way these fights were promoted they were promoted as style versus style, not person versus person. Which was the better martial art we would find out in the octagon. Of course things have changed, but it's important understand the early days and why this was so important to the



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family. The first ever UFC tournament was held at McNichols Sports Arena in Denver, Colorado on November 12, 1993. It was an eight-man single elimination tournament participated in by kickboxer's Patrick Smith and Kim Rozier, Savant fighter Gerard Gordo, karate expert Zane Frazier, shoot fighter Ken Shamrock, sumo wrestler Taylor Tuli, Boxer Art Jimerson and the Gracie Families Very Own Royce Gracie a black belt in their system. Royce's participation was due to his older brother Rorian who handpicked him to represent the family. Rorian proved to be right in his decision as Royce emerged victorious in the very first UFC tournament as Champion. Not only that Royce also won the second and the fourth championships. At only 175 pounds always prove the effectiveness of Brazilian JiuJitsu over larger heavier and stronger opponents.

Fun fact a little bit off script for the moment one of the commentators at UFC one was friend of the show, personal friend, my kickboxing instructor, Bill Superfoot Wallace.

It was from this early success the Gracie's had in UFC one that they were able to leverage their notoriety, their fame in spreading their martial art. Royce's success turned into many Gracie JiuJitsu or Brazilian JiuJitsu martial arts schools throughout the United States. And while there is certainly variance from school to school, we can see these critical elements, this idea of bringing the fight to the ground in every version at least every version I've experienced. Even today when we consider the marketing of Brazilian JiuJitsu schools, most instructors try to claim some lineage to the Gracie family no matter who the name is and this is led to some problems but of course that's not uncommon when people claim lineage in the martial arts now is it. We talked about a few of the notable Gracie family members but here's more.

Roger or in Portuguese Heger, Gracie Gomez grandson of Carlos Gracie through Helio Gracie is a former one world cruiserweight now light heavyweight champion. He won 10 times the world JiuJitsu championship in various weight divisions from 2003 to 2010. He also won the ADCC South American championship in 04 and twice the ADCC world championship in 2005 for the absolute and the hundred kilo divisions. Kron Gracie grandson of Helio won the 2013 ADCC submission wrestling world championship held in Beijing. Clark Gracie grandson of Carlos won the 2013 Pan-American championship in the middleweight division and most famous of the female Gracie's, Kyra Gracie great-granddaughter of Carlos is one of only two Gracie women to achieve black belt in the system, she's also the first female Gracie to actively compete in the sport having won the 2005, 2007, and 2011 ADCC submission fighting world championships. She's also 4-time BJJ world champion by winning the 2006, 2008, and 2010 IBJJF world championships. Of course there's more that you can say. There are books, there are a ton of podcasts, in fact no other martial art has launched more commentary and content than Brazilian JiuJitsu or Gracie JiuJitsu depending on how you choose to look at it. And for that reason, we don't spend a lot of time talking about but yet it's influenced the martial arts community the world so much. It's brought people into training that otherwise wouldn't. It's brought money and fame to an entire family and people who follow that system and let's be honest the UFC may not have happened without the Gracie



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family. And while we don't talk a lot about MMA on the show, there are people who have started training in martial arts because of mixed martial arts and the UFC so personally I thank them for that.

If you head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com you can find a transcript, some links I mentioned the past episodes we've done on judo and Jigoro Kano, you can find those there as well and if you head to whistlekick.com you can use the code PODCAST15 to save 15% on everything that we sell from shirts and uniform, to protective equipment and a whole bunch more stuff. If you don't help us out would really appreciate that whether that be through making a purchase or you've got some free options. Leave us a review anywhere that you find podcast Apple podcast is the most important one for us but of course you can also leave us reviews on Google or on Facebook. You can share this episode or another episode with friends, how about the people in your school did they know about martial arts radio? Tell them. And you can follow us on social media we are at whistlekick on Facebook, twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. If you want to email me directly maybe want to leave a private comment, go ahead jeremy@whistlekick.com, I read all the emails and I respond to almost all of them. That's all I've got for you today, until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.