

# The Paducah Sun

## UFC champ brings passion for teaching to Paducah

BY CORIANNE EGAN

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Three-time UFC Champion Royce Gracie travels around the world throughout the year. His family redefined Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. His talent is legendary and has landed him a spot in the Ultimate Fighting Championship Hall of Fame.

So, it's no surprise that more than 50 children and parents attended a Jiu-Jitsu session with Gracie at Three Rivers Martial Arts Academy in Paducah on Saturday.

"I love teaching, and I love traveling," Gracie said. "In my family, you learn to fight when you learn to walk. It's never too early or too late to teach people."

Gracie took part in the seminar for both adults and children that lasted through most of the day. He spent most of his time going over basic moves and techniques, as well as giving pointers and advice during sparring sessions. Children participated in the early session, while adult novices and experts got a chance to train with Gracie through the afternoon.

Please see **GRACIE** | 3A



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**Royce Gracie**, three-time UFC champion, talks to Matthew Browning, 6, of Vienna, Ill., as he attempts a mount a maneuver on Kali Browning, 6, also of Vienna, at Three Rivers Martial Arts Academy in Paducah on Saturday. Gracie offered Jiu-Jitsu tips to both adult novices and experts as well as children during the day-long seminar.



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**Chase Shelton**, 5, of Paducah gets his arms around martial arts star Royce Gracie during a Jiu-Jitsu clinic at Three Rivers Martial Arts Academy in Paducah on Saturday.

**GRACIE:** 'It's about leverage and technique,' UFC champion says

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"Learning Jiu-Jitsu is great for kids," said Brian Minor, whose 8-year-old son Brendan practices martial arts. "It teaches them sportsmanship and how to be humble. It is a huge deal when people like Gracie come to work with the kids."

Gracie was in the area primarily for his other passion — teaching Jiu-Jitsu and other techniques to members of the Nashville (Tenn.) Police Department. Jiu-Jitsu is used by many police officers to subdue suspects, allowing an officer to gain control with minimal harm to their opponents.

"The fact is a lot of cops are beaten by their own weapons," Gracie said. "What I teach them is a way to protect themselves humanely, to subdue a suspect without having to beat them up."

No matter where he is teaching, Gracie stresses the same message: Learn the technique, train hard and no matter who you are, you can be a champion.

"People have this misconception that you have to be big and strong," Gracie explained. "But it's not true. Anyone can do Jiu-Jitsu, from young kids to 75-year-olds."

At 44, Gracie is proving that statement. In December, at a UFC news conference announcing an event in his native Brazil, Gracie acknowledged that he was still had the urge to fight. Two weeks ago, his name was added back to the official roster of fighters. Although Gracie has remained quiet about his potential return, he maintains that the sport has nothing to do with age.

"This isn't about strength and speed," Gracie said. "It's about leverage and technique. Once you have that down, you can be successful."

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