



MEAN MACHINE

Mixed martial arts fighter Ryan Ford tackles Ginch Gonch

by William Yeoman

"I'll knock out anyone who makes fun of me in my Ginch," warns Ryan "The Real

Deal" Ford. And he means it too. Standing 5 feet 11 inches and weighing 170 pounds, the mighty-muscled, multi-tattooed mixed martial arts welterweight fighter is the new celebrity face of underwear fave, Ginch Gonch. "Ginch Gonch reminds me to take at least two moments each day from my rigorous training and smile. After all, I'm living my childhood dream." "In it to win it" Ford aims to become champi-

most anticipated win was against Pete Spratt of the UFC via submission, where Ford first used the move he has become famous for, the Rear Naked Choke.

He is the son of retired boxer Allen Ford, once ranked third in the world and recently inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame. As the celebrity face of Ginch Gonch, the young Ford is making history of his own, becoming the first professional Martial Arts Fighter to win an endorsement contract with a leading underwear brand.

ranked third in the world and was inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame.

Did he inspire you to get into the ring?

I guess he did. I always wanted to be like Dad.

But you went a different route — the mixed martial arts ring. Why?

I started boxing, but it just wasn't hardcore enough for me. I wanted to go crazier in the ring and nothing is more intense than MMA fighting.

How do you explain the overwhelming popularity of the sport?

MMA fighting is raw and animalistic. It's not controlled. Anything can happen and that really appeals to a lot of people.

Is the sport aware of its huge gay following?

Gays are guys and every guy likes to see a good fight.

Yeah, but many gay men aren't watching for the fight. Many are watching because half-naked guys wrestling is, well, pretty hot... (Laughs) I don't know how to respond to that except to say that, yeah, I'd agree I'm pretty hot.

Is homophobia a problem in the league?

Not that I'm aware of.

Would an "out" fighter be accepted?

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Ryan Ford



on of the MFC (Maximum Fighting Championship) and the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship)

How did you become the new face of Ginch Gonch?

A lot of my buddies wear it and I reached out to the company for some digs. After chatting with them, badda boon badda bing, I was in the back of a dump truck doing my thing.

Did you have to fight former campaign model Benjamin Bradley for the job?

Who is Benjamin Bradley? He was one of the original Ginch Gonch boys.

Not familiar with him. So, to answer your question, I didn't fight him. I don't fight "boys" anyway.

Fighting is in your blood. Is it true your dad was a boxing champ?

Yes, he was. My dad, Allan Ford, was

leagues. With his record five wins and no losses, he's on his way. His most recent and

Deal" Ford. And he means it too. Standing 5 feet 11 inches and weighing 170 pounds,

Hoedown in the big town

Queen City Stomp gears up for annual event

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

Dust off that cowboy hat and boots, partner, and saddle up for this year's Queen City Stomp. Southern Country Charlotte is gearing up for its annual hoedown, hosted at The Charlotte Eagle. The weekend-long event takes place April 17-19, including silent auctions, dance workshops, dance exhibitions, cocktail and after-hours parties and a barbecue lunch.

Queen City Stomp has become one of several premier events in a growing list of gay and lesbian country western dance and rodeo activities. Growing every year, Stomp attracts people from all over the southeast and from as far away as Washington, D.C., Boston, Houston and San Francisco.

The Stomp kicks off Friday, April 17, 6 p.m., with a pre-party and welcome reception at Hartigan's Irish Pub in downtown's Third Ward, hosted by the Queen City Outlaws. Later that evening, the Charlotte Eagle hosts a welcome dance.

On Saturday, Queen City Stomp will present several dance workshops facilitated by instructors from Georgia, Texas and

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