Dynamite 2010 is fast-approaching, and while the entire card hasn't been finalized yet, for the most part, it has. It is safe to say that the card is epic, featuring 15 fights. This goes against FEG's wishes to tone down Dynamite!! this year into a 10-bout affair, but things did not work out that way. There were issues with TBS possibly not airing the card, financial woes and internal struggles at FEG. Since the PUJI deal finally came to fruition, Dynamite!! has once again become a mastodon of an event.

We are going to split our pre-show coverage up into two parts: this first part is what is of key interest to the Japanese crowds and *why* they are, the second is what is of key interest to Western audiences.

If you are Japanese, the highlights of the evening will most likely be some of the more odd fights. Katsuaki Furuki vs. Andy Ologun might sound like a terrible freakshow, and to a degree it is, but Ologun is a legitimate fighter. His MMA and K-1 record are not entirely impressive, but he is skilled enough to put a hurting on Furuki. Furuki was a popular baseball star, playing most of his career for the Yokohama Bay Stars. 2003 and 2006 saw him look extremely impressive, but from there he fell off a bit . He finished out his career with the Orix Buffaloes and retired after the 2009 season before taking up martial arts. He looked to make his debut at DEEP 50, but instead held off for Dynamite!!

The other freakshow for ratings is an "IGF" rules bout. IGF is Inoki Genome Federation --

professional wrestling -- and both men have a history of professional wrestling, with Sapp being a one-time New Japan Pro Wrestling competitor, holding the IWGP Heavyweight Championship, a belt originated by Inoki. His opponent is shamed sumo Wakakirin Shinichi. Wakakirin was kicked out of sumo for possession of marijuana, basically, which in Japan is very, very shameful (see: Kid Yamamoto). Wakakirin has wrestled for Inoki before and basically works as stiff (read: real) as possible. The IGF rules are essentially old Pancrase rules of no closed-fist strikes to the face, and as of right now it isn't clear how real or worked this will be. I don't think it matters, honestly, as it is a throwaway bout for Japanese audiences.

Minowaman will most likely take his place opening up the televised portion of the show like he is known to do, and do so in a bout against Judoka Hiroshi Izumi. Minowa was the *only* MMA fighter in Japan to make the Nikkan Sports list last year, with Masato at the top and assorted K-1 fighters and boxers rounding out the list. To say that Ikuhisa Minowa is a national treasure is maybe taking it a bit too far, but he is immensely popular. He will never be the favorite fighter in Japan, but he will always have a following and name for his accomplishments. He faces a tough challenge in Izumi. Izumi will at least not be dwarfing Minowa in weight.

Last but not least is Satoshi Ishii vs. Jerome Le Banner. JLB finds himself in the unenviable spot of facing Japan's only prospect to be a breakout star in a post-KID Yamamoto and post-Masato world. Jerome Le Banner of course has trouble defending against takedowns and throws, which are Ishii's specialty. Le Banner has what many will call a puncher's chance, but the truth is, Ishii has shown a tendency to "stand and bang" in his fights, which against JLB is a death warrant. In his last fight with Katsuyori Shibata, Ishii wisely took him down and submitted him, something he did not have luck against Ikuhisa Minowa with (although he did dominate Minowa). This is a big deal for Ishii, as he has gotten in some practice, he has tasted defeat, is he ready to carry Japan's fight scene on his shoulders, and is Japan ready to make him the next big star? Or is he just not enough of a pretty boy and not witty enough?