Tomorrow night marks the kickoff of one of the biggest tournaments in MMA history. That sounds like grandstanding, doesn't it? It sounds over-the-top and like a simple tournament is being made to sound bigger than it actually is. The only problem with that logic is that the **Strike force Heavyweight GP** is one of the biggest tournaments to happen on American soil in MMA, and is the biggest tournament to happen since PRIDE ran its last Grand Prix. Stay with me, because I've received a few complaints from **LiverKick.com** 's faithful readers in regards to the Strikeforce coverage. No, Strikeforce is indeed not kickboxing or muay thai, but it is being covered for a very distinct reason; we care about the global fight scene, a lot.

Zuffa did something incredible when they took over the **UFC** and helped to rehabilitate the image of **Mixed Martial Arts** and worked to bring it into prominence in the United States. Along the way, something happened, though. UFC was expanding and growing, but it had nothing to do with Mixed Martial Arts and everything to do with UFC. UFC grew, the sport of Mixed Martial Arts became the afterthought. Every promotion that has popped up since the UFC's initial boom has been left in the dust, purchased by Zuffa or driven out of business. UFC grew, MMA died on the vine. The only promoter who was able to make a real impact and not drive his company into the dirt was **Scott Coker** with Stikeforce. Strikeforce began as a kickboxing promotion, with Scott serving as the head of K-1 USA beforehand. Scott knew what he was doing with kickboxing and still has strong ties to the industry.

Do you see where I'm headed yet? The global fight industry is what it is, we are seeing a once super power in Japan begin to wither and die, which no one really wants to see happen, outside of the UFC. The UFC is looking to take over the world, and picking over the scraps of the Japanese fight scene makes life a lot easier. The fight scene in the United States is sparse at best, boxing is holding strong for the big names, but for the smaller names the market is showing some serious cracks. **Kickboxing** and **Muay Thai** have some strong markets, but they are very much local and can't really compete on the global level.

The Strikeforce Heavyweight GP that begins this weekend has a big fight feel to it, something that even huge UFC events haven't had that past few years. UFC has put on big events, but not since **UFC 100** have I personally felt the sort of buzz surrounding a show like this. A non-UFC show getting this kind of attention, praise ad hype is rare and quite honestly, it is up to Strikeforce to take advantage of this and the not only deliver but follow up on this initial show with more strong shows.

Strikeforce's success helps the global fight industry more than most people can imagine, how? UFC is in the business of promoting UFC, the brand. The fighters are almost inconsequential. UFC 100 was not a huge deal for the fighters, sure, **Brock Lesnar** was on the card and that helped immensely, but it was the allure of UFC's 100th numbered event. Strikeforce is selling shows around the fighters and the fights, which helps raise awareness of the sport itself, not just the promotion.

The over-arching point of this is that someone needs to break UFC's stranglehold on the market, it wasn't **EliteXC, K-1** crashed and burned, so for right now the hope is that Strikeforce can at least try. For sports like kickboxing and muay thai to be taken more seriously, it also helps to have **Sergei Kharitonov** and **Alistair Overeem** involved in this tournament, with talk of their K-1 participation. Promotions like Strikeforce make viewers more aware of the fight world at large, as they do not have a self-contained empire to protect. Strikeforce will talk about UFC, PRIDE, K-1, It's Showtime, wherever their fighters came from and had success. The Strikeforce Heavyweight GP feels like a global affair. UFC events feature fighters from all over the world, but all of the action is contained within the UFC's own branded world that they built.

So tune in tomorrow night to watch **Fedor Emelianenko** square off with **Antonio Silva, Andrei Arlovski** go to war with **Sergei Kharitonov.**
On top of that, there are three reserve bouts for the tournament, including

Valentijn Overeem
, Alistair's big brother, squaring off with K-1 legend
Ray Sefo
while prospects
Shane Del Rosari
o and
Lavar Johnson
compete to see who is a reserve fighter.