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Orono Wor Petchpun was already a world renowned Muay Thai fighter so when he announced plans to make his MMA debut in 2012 there was a lot of interest in the international media. The former WMC, WPMF, Lumpinee, Thailand and It's Showtime! champion is still hoping to make an appearance in the cage but says other priorities have taken precedence,

"Everything that I have I owe to Muay Thai and now a lot of students in Singapore want to learn with me and it is an honour for me to be able to teach them this sport, even if it means I am very busy. I have trained MMA and would like to fight for ONE FC but I am very busy with teaching my classes and giving private lessons, I do not want to let my students down or disappoint them and I have won many belts and titles in my career so now is the time for me to help others instead of looking for glory for myself," he said.

Were he to make his MMA debut Orono would probably be the most decorated Muay Thai fighter to ever take up the sport. He faced the best of the best during his career which began when he was a teenager,

"I did not start Muay Thai until very late, I was 15 when I had my first fight. The reason that I decided to become a fighter was that I wanted to make money for my family. The place I am from, Suphanburi, is not very famous for producing fighters but I was able to be successful and to earn a lot of money by fighting,"he said.

Orono would go up against the best fighters of the era and, more often than not, emerge victorious. During his prime he was thrown in against the best pound for pound fighters in Thailand almost every month but had no hesitation in naming his most fearsome opponent,

"It was Singdam Kiatmoo9. We fought nine times I think and every time it was a very hard fight, he had a very strong kick. I fought with many big names including Saenchai, Buakaw, Nong-O and Yodsaenklai who I knocked out two times."

Buakaw and Yodsaenklai would go on to win international recognition, the former with K-1 and the latter with an appearance on 'The Contender Asia' reality series. Towards the tail end of his career Orono was offered the opportunity to fight outside of Thailand and he says this remains one of his fondest memories,

"To win a title at Lumpinee Stadium is the most difficult thing to do in Muay Thai and winning the belt was a special moment in my career but I was fortunate to get to fight in some other countries, something which many very good Thai fighters never get to do. I fought in Holland, Japan, Italy and Sweden and got paid as much as $10,000 for a fight which is more than I could ever have earned fighting in Thailand," he said.

Orono is a key member of the team of world champion trainers at Evolve MMA which also includes Namsaknoi Yudthagarngamtorn, Lamnanmmoon Sor Sumalee and Yodsanan Sityodtong. As well as teaching Muay Thai he also works every day with the fight team and says being in such an exciting environment has given him a new lease of life,

"Before I came to Singapore I did not know about MMA and I did not know who Shinya Aoki was but now I have been to a lot of live events and I think I understand this sport. Evolve MMA has the best trainers in the world and it was an honour for me to be invited to work here and to

coach some very famous fighters, I have been training Muay Thai for 20 years now and I enjoy being able to teach the things that I have learned and to help fighters to win fights," he said.

Orono had a reputation as being an aggressive fighter and his style would be well suited to MMA. He has been studying the sport for several years now and finds helping young fighters to apply Muay Thai techniques inside the cage a very satisfying task,

"There are some differences, for instance you cannot use the clinch in the same way in an MMA fight as you can in a Muay Thai fight. When I teach an MMA fighter how to strike with their elbow or their knee and then they are able to use that to win a fight it gives me a very good feeling, I was lucky to have some good teachers during my career and I hope that I can help other fighters at Evolve MMA in the same way," he said.

Interview is courtesy of Evolve MMA .