2013 started strong in Japan with a pair of big Krush events, including the 67kg tournament, and the second installment of RISE/M-1MC Infinity. This post will recap all of the kickboxing/muay thai events that took place in Japan in January, no matter how big or small.

January 6th - RISE91/M-1MC ~Infinity.II~

The first event of the year in Japan saw RISE and M-1MC come together for a second time. The main event saw Sun Hyun Lee win the RISE 63kg title from Yuki. In other action, Yosuke Morii and Pornsaneh Sitmonchai fought to a draw, Genji Umeno picked up a win and Seiya Rokukawa won a 4-man 55kg tournament to fight for the vacant RISE 55kg title in March. Full write-up here .

January 13th - Shin Nihon Kick Association: Brave Hearts 21

This event featured a total of 4 Japan vs Thailand matchups, most notably the popular Hideki Soga vs Detphanom Chuwattana and Shiro vs Rajadamnern Stadium #2 Bantamweight Fonpaet Chuwattana. Soga knocked Detphanom down twice in previous rounds before getting a stoppage in the 4th round while Shiro and Fonpaet fought to a draw. Interesting to note that Shiro's best two outcomes have been draws, as he previously drew Rui Ebata. In a 73kg fight, Korean standout Woon-pyo Ha defeated SNKA Middleweight champ Makoto Kitamura. Ha fought, but lost to, RISE champion Takafumi Morita. He fights in the upcoming K-1 Asia MAX Tournament.

January 14th - Jawin Presents Krush Grand Prix 2013 ~67kg First Class Tournament~

The headliner here was Krush's inaugural 67kg tournament. Yuta Kubo and Abdallah Ezbiri rematched in the finals and Kubo won again, but not without some controversy. Yuji Nashiro lost in the quarterfinals to Ezbiri after missing weight and losing a point before the fight started and

Yuya Yamamoto made some waves, forcing Ezbiri to an extension round that ended in a split decision. In super fights, Mike Alamos upset Krush 55kg champion Shota Takiya plus Masaaki Noiri, Naoki Ishikawa, Hiroya and Hisaki Higashimoto picked up wins. Full write-up here .

J-Network: J-Kick 2013 ~Road to the King of J~ 1st

The main event saw former J-Network Super Lightweight champion Shunsuke Oishi defeat Kazunori "Popeye" Kagebi by 3rd round TKO due to a cut to win the Interim J-Network Super Lightweight title. This sets up a 3rd fight between Oishi and current champion Yusuke Sugawara. At Welterweight, WPMF Japan #6 ranked Welterweight picked up a big win over J-Network Super Welterweight champ Ichiyo Morimoto. In other action, NJKF #2 ranked Welterweight Tae-yon bounced back from his first pro loss with a knockout of Kousuman. Despite Kousuman being on a bit of a downslide, this is a big win for Tae-yeon and he will definitely be someone to keep an eye on. At 63kg, Shinji Suzuki and Naoki fought to a draw. After 3 solid wins over Hiroya, Marimo and Takayoshi Kitayama, Naoki has gone 0-2-1, unable to capitalize on the upset over Hiroya.

January 26th - Krush.26

After holding their 67kg tournament as a one-night event, Krush.26 kicked off the opening round of the 58kg tournament, which is set to be held across 3 events. Tournament favorites Nobuchika Terado and Takeru advanced with knockouts while Yuzo Suzuki avenged a loss against Tsuyoshi Nakajima with a knockout and Shota Kanbe decisioned Koji. The main event of the card saw 70kg champion Yasuhiro Kido defend his title with a 2nd round KO of Takuro Moriya, while Kenta likely earned a rubber match with Kido after upsetting Yoshihiro Sato. The opening leg of the 55kg WILDRUSH League saw Yuya Suzuki jump out to a quick lead with a knockout, earning him 3 points. However, tournament favorite Takumi took care of business and is right behind him with 2 points after a decision win. Full write-up here .

January 27th - MA Kick ~Break 33~

Despite being headlined by a heavyweight fight, this event saw top 5 fighters from the Flyweight, Bantamweight, Super Bantamweight and Super Featherweight divisions across 5 MA Kick title fights, 4 of which were rematches. #1 Bantamweight Takashi Ohno was the only one

to decisively retain his title and the only one fighter to pick up a 2nd win against the same opponent as he defeated #2 Takuma Ito. #1 Flyweight Ryuji Kato got revenge against #4 Yuji Uwasawa, winning the MA Kick title with a split decision win. #2 Super Bantamweight Keisuke Miyamoto retained his title, but not without a scare as Kunihiro fought him to a draw, even winning one of the cards. At Super Featherweight, champion Hikaru Machida suffered his second straight upset loss via cut TKO and Tadahiro Hashio earned the MA Kick Super Featherweight title. Finally, Hiroshi upset Kazuya Takeda to win his MA Kick Super Welterweight title. Full write-up here .

REBELS.14

This event saw the retirement of AJKF legend Hiromasa Masuda after a 15 year career. The main event saw WPMF Japan Welterweight champion T-98 and challenger Hideya Tanaka go back and forth, but in the end it was T-98 retaining his title via split decision. After the fight, he asked for a fight with Yuya Yamato which would be a great fight as the two are #2 and #3 in my Welterweight rankings. An interesting Flyweight bout took place as rising prospect Eisaki Ogasawara took a decisive win over WPMF Japan Super Flyweight champ Kiminori Matsuzaki. Ogasawara is just 17 years of age, while Matsuzaki is more than twice his age at 37. Ogasawara is undefeated as a pro and the win over Matsuzaki is huge. He is definitely someone to watch.

Kakumei Kick/MA Kick: Kakumei PURITY 4

In the main event, TARO upset #2 ranked MA Kick Bantamweight Noboru Yamamoto. At Flyweight, Puchi Dynamo dominated Atsushi Taira en route to a unanimous decision.