

# BRAVE CF 51 reveals stacked fight card for Belarus debut

Marcel Grabinski vs Lucas "Mineiro" Martins to headline the event



## ● Denis Maher to face Fernando Gonzalez in the co-main event

TDI | Manama

**B**RAVE Combat Federation, the truly global MMA promotion, is ready to add yet another new country to its hosting nations list, as the fastest-growing organization in the

world prepares to land in Minsk, Belarus in less than a month. With the anticipation building up for the 51st edition, BRAVE CF has revealed the full fight card for the June 4th event.

BRAVE CF 51: The Future Is Here will be headlined by a pivotal Lightweight clash between Brazilian veteran and former BRAVE CF world champion Lucas "Mineiro" Martins and German superstar Marcel Grabinski.

Another crucial match for the

BRAVE CF 51 Fight Card	
Lightweight:	Lucas Martins vs Marcel Grabinski
Super Welterweight:	Denis Maher vs Fernando Gonzalez
Lightweight:	Ylies Djiroun vs Sam Patterson
Super Welterweight:	Vadim Kutsyi vs TBA
Featherweight:	Roman Bogatov vs Abdulmutalip Gairbekov
Bantamweight:	Vladislav Novitskiy vs Yanis Ghemmouri
Flyweight:	Badmatsyren Dorzhiev vs Almanbet Abdyvasy Uulu
Bantamweight:	Aydemir Kazbekov vs Abdul Karim Badakhshi
Strawweight:	Anastasia Feofanova vs Sevde Turk
Light Heavyweight:	Vadim Rolich vs Abylkasim Yakubov
Catchweight: 64.3kg:	Murat Azerbiev vs Evgeniy Sleptsov

future of the BRAVE CF Lightweight division is also set to take place at BRAVE CF 51, as Sam Patterson takes on Ylies Djiroun. The British standout has left the nickname "The Future" behind, and became more and more "the present" of the division, and Djiroun lived up to the hype on his BRAVE CF debut with a submission win over Abdul-Rakhman Makhazhiev.

Russian star Roman Bogatov is also set to make his second BRAVE CF appearance, after dominating Nurzhan Akishev back in January. Bogatov will square off against Abdulmutalip Gairbekov, one of the most feared names of the new generation of Dagestan, and riding a 13-fight undefeated streak.

The night wouldn't be complete without the presence of local stars and Belarus will be

very well represented inside the BRAVE CF Arena in the co-main event of the evening, with undefeated star Denis Maher facing Sweden's Fernando Gonzalez.

Four other local stars will be featured in the card, with Vladislav Novitskiy facing France's Yanis Ghemmouri, Vadim Rolich fighting Kyrgyzstan's Abylkasim Yakubov, and Murat Azerbiev vs Evgeniy Sleptsov opening the night in a Belarus vs Belarus clash.

BRAVE CF 51: The Future is Here takes place on June 4th, at the Falcon Club, in Minsk, Belarus, and will be promoted in association with Rukh Sport Management. The event will count with athletes representing 10 different nations, once again reinforcing the global-orientation of BRAVE Combat Federation.

## Mahrez fires Man City into first Champions League final



Riyad Mahrez scores Manchester City's second goal  
AFP | London

**P**ep Guardiola said Manchester City's first ever Champions League final had been five years in the making after Riyad Mahrez's double saw off Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 on Tuesday to seal a 4-1 semi-final aggregate win.

City will look to set the seal on a third Premier League title in the past four seasons in the coming days as they remain on course for a treble, having already lifted the League Cup.

But their previous four Champions League campaigns under Guardiola ended in anguish before the semi-final stage.

Guardiola has won the competition twice before as a coach during his time at Barcelona.

However, the Catalan has also endured a decade of disappointment in Europe's premier club competition since.

"It is for all of us and the club. I'm incredibly proud," said Guardiola. "Getting to the final now makes sense of what we have done in the past four or five years. Every day these guys have been consistent and



**Manchester City's previous four Champions League campaigns under Guardiola ended in anguish before the semi-final stage**

this is remarkable."

Mahrez's goal also decided the first leg and the Algerian, who grew up in the Parisian suburbs, haunted his home town team again with two clinical finishes early in each half.

The final in Istanbul on May 29 against Real Madrid or Chelsea is the culmination of City's rise since an Abu Dhabi takeover in 2008 transformed the club's fortunes.

Meanwhile, four years on from making Neymar and Kylian Mbappe the world's two most expensive players, PSG's wait for a first Champions League title goes on.

## Philippines hires foreign coach for volleyball team

TDI | Manila

**T**he Philippines has acquired the services of a foreign mentor in Brazilian Jorge Edson Souza de Brito to join the national women's volleyball coaching staff.

This was confirmed by the Philippine National Volleyball Federation (PNVF).

The 54-year-old veteran tactician will be joining the coaching staff currently led by head coach Odjie Mamon.

Armed with vast experience as player and coach, Souza de Brito will help the Philippine women's team prepare for the upcoming Southeast Asian Games to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam from Nov. 21 to Dec. 2 this year.

He was a member of the 1992 Brazilian men's volleyball team that captured an Olympic gold.

Souza de Brito would become an Olympic champ again, this time as Brazil's women's volleyball coach in Beijing in 2008.

He was also a champion coach at the club level, winning titles in his home nation as well as in Turkey and Japan.

"With coach Jorge's vast experience as a coach and player, we are very sure that we will get the technology transfer we have aspired for," said Philippine National Volleyball Federation (PNVF) president Ramon "Tats" Suzara.

Souza de Brito is confident of bringing his winning pedigree to the Philippines

"I could be the fatherly-type,



Souza de Brito aims to bring his winning pedigree to the Philippines

**"I love volleyball and I love the passion Filipinos have for volleyball. They love the sport so much — and there are a lot of fans**

JORGE EDSON SOUZA DE BRITO

but I want to push myself and the team, work hard to achieve goals," said Souza de Brito, who was assigned by the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) to help work on the national women's team program.

"I'm very happy to have this chance to come to the Philippines, it's an honor. I love volleyball and I love the passion Filipinos have for volleyball. They love the sport so much—

and there are a lot of fans.

"It was amazing, I can feel my body shaking, it's a very special moment for all athletes. It was the best emotion in my life. I want to repeat that feeling again — in the Philippines, in the SEA Games."

The first day of Souza de Brito's his two-year contract will be on July 1.

"Coach Jorge has to have time to transition from his family and from his job as coach of Brazilian club Clube Duque de Caxias," Suzara said.

Souza de Brito will also work with assistant coaches Tai Budit and Grace Antigua.

"I will do my best to help Philippine volleyball and I expect to see good players getting involved in the project," he said. "We will try to get the best from what we can do and make a new page in history."

## Injury-free Fajardo ready to rumble in PBA

TDI | Manila

**S**ix-time Most Valuable Player (MVP) June Mar Fajardo is on the road to full recovery and ready to lead San Miguel Beer's campaign in the Philippine Basketball Association's 46th season next month.

The 6-foot-10 gentle giant is making great strides in his leg injury that sidelined him for more than a year.

Without Fajardo, the Beermen were eliminated in the quarterfinals despite holding a twice-to-beat advantage against Meralco.

But now Fajardo is expected to fully regain his strength this month.

So should the league open in June, the Cebuano franchise player would definitely be available to man the paint for the Beermen, who are looking to regain the Philippine Cup title.

San Miguel Beer head coach Leo Austria confirmed this positive development, saying: "Yes, he will definitely play this season. His expected timeline for playing was actually within May."

Ironically, the extended lockdown had worked to Fajardo's advantage since he was able to let his broken leg regain its strength.

"Even before the lockdown, he has been showing great improvement and has also been doing some workouts and court drills," Austria said.

The veteran bench taskmas-



Fajardo is back from a gruesome leg injury

ter said he could not wait to see his star player back on the hardwood.

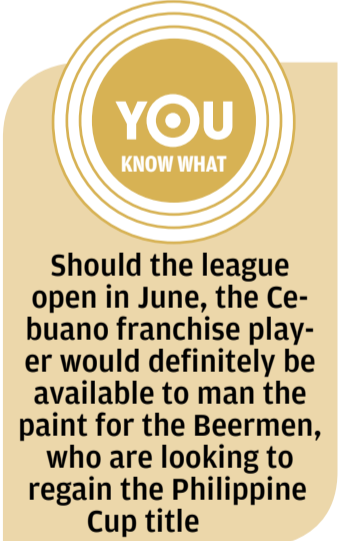
"Since there are no games yet, it looks like the delay gave him an advantage. He's really doing his best on his individual workouts now," Austria said.

"He is very eager to get back on the court. That's why he was a bit frustrated when the lockdown was implemented."

The road to recovery, however, was not easy.

After suffering a tibia fracture in practice in February last year, Fajardo sat out the entire 2020 season that was held under a bubble setup in Clark. He was also forced to undergo a couple of surgeries and rehabilitation programs while the National Capital Region was under enhanced community quarantine.

His recovery suffered a blow



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when doctors required him to undergo another surgical procedure to clean the infection in his tibia last December.

Still, Fajardo remained optimistic and used the delay in the PBA opening to rehabilitate and strengthen his leg for the tough grind ahead.

He will be joining a San Miguel team that made tremendous improvement in the off-season.

The frontcourt rotation that features Moala Tautaa and Arwind Santos remains intact as well as the backcourt core of Chris Ross, Marcio Lassiter, Alex Cabagnot and Terrence Romeo.

The addition of CJ Perez, however, turned the Beermen into a super team, putting the scoring cudgels off the shoulders of Fajardo.