With 2011 quickly approaching, fight fans begin to look to the new year and anticipate the blockbuster matches that may come to fruition. MMA fans want Georges St. Pierre vs Anderson Silva. Boxing fans want Manny Pacquiao vs Floyd Mayweather. While those matches are well and good, none compares to a third meeting between K-1 World Grand Prix Champion Alistair 'The Reem' Overeem and Badr 'Golden Boy' Hari.

For the uninitiated, let's do a quick rundown of the history between these two iconic fighters.

Alistair and Badr first fought at Dynamite!! 2008. The match was made under the assumption that Alistair would first fight Badr in a K-1 match and then they would fight again under MMA rules. This gives each party involved a fight under the rules that they're most comfortable in. Alistair had fought in K-1 a handful of times before but he didn't have a lot of success and focused mainly on MMA. The terms were agreed upon and the fight went down on December 31st. Alistair shocked the world and defeated Badr with a left hook that KO'd the Moroccan. Following the KO, Badr Hari wouldn't agree to fight Alistair in an MMA fight. In a twist of fate, Overeem was elected by the fans to appear in the 2009 K-1 World Grand Prix Final 16. Alistair took full advantage of this opportunity and defeated kickboxing legend Peter Aerts to secure his spot in the Final 8. He would go on to meet Badr Hari in the semi-finals in what would be one of the most highly anticipated fights of all time. The energy inside the Saitama Super Arena was at a fever pitch for the rematch of these two giants of the sport. This fight would go differently, however, as Hari defeated Overeem with a high kick in the first round. Evening the score and giving Badr the vindication he so desperately wanted.

Fast forward a year and much has changed. Badr Hari has had multiple run-ins with the law while Alistair has methodically taken over the heavyweight landscape of both MMA and K-1. He has become a superstar in Japan and American audiences are starting to take notice of his skills with his first round dismantling of Brett Rogers in Strikeforce. Alistair currently holds the Strikeforce Heavyweight Championship as well as the K-1 World Grand Prix title. The first ever combat athlete to hold two titles in different fight sports simultaneously. Badr, on the other hand, was disqualified in his last fight for stomping Hesdy Gerges while he was down just like he did

to Remy Bonjasky in the 2008 K-1 WGP final. The contrast between these two fighters is apparent — one comes from relative obscurity to dominate while the other is experiencing a fall from grace. But I believe this can change.

If sports history has taught us anything it's that winning covers a multitude of sin. Ask Ray Lewis, Kobe Bryant, or Michael Vick. Sports fan love winners and while they may not absolve athletes of their off-the-field ills, they will forget them long enough to cheer heartily for the athletes they love. There's a separation of the athlete from the person that allows us to see them only as who they are when they're on the field or in the ring. Badr Hari can benefit from this same practice. Beat Alistair Overeem and suddenly fight fans the world over forget about how many bouncers you sent to the hospital.

His return is highly anticipated by kickboxing fans. Badr is one of the sports biggest figures and a return match against Alistair Overeem would send the sport of kickboxing into a frenzy. The publicity created by such an event is priceless for a promoter. The kind of buzz FEG, who is the parent company of K-1, could desperately use.

There has been much speculation as to the future of K-1, in the last year. As we saw with the demise of PRIDE Fighting Championships, when you lose the support of Tokyo Broadcasting System, your demise as a company is soon to follow. Money troubles, waning interest from viewers and the rumored loss of support from TBS had the K-1 world anxious and fearing the worst. The Ultimate Fighting Championship once found themselves in a similar situation before a fight between Stephan Bonnar and Forrest Griffin turned into a barn-burner and sent fan interest through the roof. Things only got better for the UFC after that fight and they're still enjoying the benefits. Luckily, it's being reported that the financial troubles K-1 experienced are now a thing of the past and the future is bright. Let's hope so.

Even with renewed financial backing, the need is still there for a blockbuster fight to get fans watching and talking and no fight is more anticipated than a grudge match. Two fighters that are fighting for more than a win or money. These are two fighters with a history and something to prove.

I can think of no fight that is more highly anticipated than a third match between Alistair Overeem and Badr Hari. It has every story line you could ask for and there's no question about it being an all out war. Just look at the last two fights for proof.