I was debating discussing this story at all. I mean, yes it does involve K-1 Grand Prix champion **Alistair Overeem**, but there are so many places where the **Strikeforce Heavyweight Tournament** is getting coverage that it seemed maybe unnecessary.
Then this morning, Strikeforce added an extra fight to the tournament that really piqued my interest.

In an upcoming fight, **Valentijn Overeem** will face one of K-1's favorite sons, **Sugar Ray Sefo**. The fight is not 100% confirmed yet, and it is unclear if it will be on the Feb. 12 card or a future date, or a prelim or main card fight.

Now, here's the interesting thing from our end about this tournament. You have 8 names in the main draw, plus 4 more Heavyweights currently set to compete in fights on these shows.
Of those 12, 3 are current, active K-1 fighters (Overeem, Sefo, **Sergei Kharitonov**) and one more (**Andrei Arlovski**) was very nearly in the 2010 Grand Prix.
This tournament is a major event – the most prominent US tournament in MMA since Don Frye won the UFC Ultimate Ultimate way back in 1996.
For the tournament to feature a significant K-1 presence is definitely a point worth discussing.

Much has been made of the Strikeforce/Dream partnership that has resulted in fights like Shinya Aoki v. Gilbert Melendez and Tatsuya Kawajiri v. Josh Thomson. But one aspect that has been largely overlooked previously is that Dream and K-1 are both part of FEG, so as Strikeforce works with Dream, they open the door to working with K-1.
We are seeing that door crack open here in the tournament.
Now, obviously the fighters we are seeing her are not K-1 exclusive fighters, and all have experience in MMA; most fans still view Overeem and Kharitonov as primarily MMA fighters

trying their hand at K-1, while Sefo has been working on his fledgling MMA career for the past 2 years.
But they are all fighters whose recent careers have been more marked by K-1 action than MMA, and who hold interest for K-1 fans.

Last year, there were vague rumblings of Strikeforce considering running some kickboxing fights in the US – remember that Strikeforce started in the kickboxing heavy California scene – but these plans never came to fruition. Since then, we have heard rumors of It's Showtime making their US debut in 2011, though again, nothing is confirmed.
With this tournament including some big players in the kickboxing scene (and right now, no one is bigger than Alistair Overeem), there definitely is potential to generate some stateside interest in kickboxing.

Will this tournament lead to Overeem v. Badr Hari here in America? No, but depending on how they promote Overeem, Kharitonov, and Sefo, it could lead to a significant number of MMA fans hearing an awful lot about K-1 and kickboxing throughout the course of the tournament.
Much will be told by how the videos and commentary position these three fighters.
If they focus on MMA, there will be little benefit for kickboxing.
But if they talk up Overeem as the GP champ, Sefo as a K-1 legend, and Kharitonov as pursuing a kickboxing career, it will give kickboxing valuable exposure to the large US MMA audience.
And as K-1 struggles at home, increased international exposure can only be a good thing.

Alistair Overeem *faces* ***Fabricio Werdum*** *in the quarter-final round at a date yet to be determined. The winner moves on to the semi-finals to face either* ***Fedor Emelianenko*** *or* ***Antonio Silva*** *, who meet on February 12.*

Sergei Kharitonov v. Andrei Arlovski *is also set for February 12 with the winner meeting* ***Jos h Barnett*** *or* ***Brett Rogers*** *in the other semi-final.*

Ray Sefo v. Valentijn Overeem *may be on Feb. 12, or may be at a later date. The other*

announced fight is a reserve fight on the Feb. 12 card between
Shane Del Roasrio
and
Lavar Johnson.

No dates are yet set for the 2nd half of the quarter-finals, semi-finals, or finals.