

Tatsuya Kawajiri Prepares for Strikeforce with Yuya Yamamoto

Written by Dave Walsh

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In April, Strikeforce Lightweight Champion Gilbert Melendez squares off with Japanese powerhouse Tatsuya Kawajiri. This is a big fight for Kawajiri and for fans of Japanese MMA, as Gilbert Melendez absolutely crushed Shinya Aoki last year in Strikeforce, sending every website's Lightweight Rankings into disarray.

For Kawajiri, it is a big fight as he will get introduced to a wider American audience, and is coming off of a big win over former Strikeforce Lightweight Champion Josh Thomson. Kawajiri brings an entirely different skillset to the table than Aoki, including a very strong wrestling and judo game with good takedowns and the ability to hold down and pound out opponents. On top of that, he also possesses formidable stand up skills. While Shinya Aoki was taken down at will and kept at bay by Melendez's hands, with Kawajiri it will be a whole different ballgame.

It turns out that Crusher isn't just doing his normal training for this fight, he is training with K-1

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MAX and KRUSH competitor, Yuya Yamamoto. Yamamoto is best known to recent fans as the guy that Petrosyan absolutely annihilated in 2009. Outside of that, Yamamoto is a strong fighter and does have some good ability on top of heavy hands. [[source](#)]