Middleweight

1. Giorgio Petrosyan
2. Buakaw Por. Pramuk
3. Yoshihiro Sato
4. Andy Souwer
5. Albert Kraus
6. Nieky Holzken
7. Artur Kyshenko
8. Murat Dirkeci
9. Gago Drago
10. Pajonsuk
11. Mike Zambidis
12. Hinata
13. Saiyok Pumpanmuang
14. Sudsakorn Sor Klinmee
15. Yuichiro Nagashima
16. Chris Ngimbi
17. Mohamed Khamal
18. Yuya Yamamoto
19. Khem Sitsongpeenong
20. Hiroki Nakajima
21. John Wayne Parr
22. Chahid Oulad El Hadj
23. Leroy Kaestner
24. Marcus Oberg
25. Armen Petrosyan

*Welcome back to the **LiverKick.com** rankings. These rankings are an attempt to break down the top 25 fighters in two different weight classes - Heavyweight, for fighters above the 77kg*

limit, and Middleweight, for fighters at the 70-72.5kg limit. Our rankings are based on in-ring accomplishments and recent wins and loses. We hope they reflect where these fighters currently stand, although we recognize that all rankings are inherently subjective.

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The Middleweight rankings are, in a word, a mess.

The one thing we know for certain is #1. **Giorgio Petrosyan** is starting his 2nd year ruling over the division with an iron fist. He's clearly the #1 Middleweight, the #1 pound for pound kickboxer out there, and is entering that territory of best fighter period. The trouble is, when a division has such a dominant #1, it often means the rest of the rankings begin to falter a bit. And that's what we're seeing now.

The race for #2 is a tough one between a lot of fighters who have real reasons *not* to be considered #2. By virtue of his legendary career, S-Cup win, and six fight win streak, **Buakaw Por. Pramuk** retains the #2 spot, but it gets harder to keep him there. He started showing signs of slipping back in 2008, and hasn't defeated a ranked opponent in over a year and a half.

Meanwhile, **Andy Souwer**, a constant factor at the very top of the ranks, just recorded his 2nd loss to an unranked opponent in the past few months, losing a decision to Abraham Roqueni. He drops to #4, while **Yoshihiro Sato** moves up to #3 - more by virtue of Souwer's loss then his own victories, although he has put together a good string of wins since his very rough late 2008-early 2009 run.

Overall, the MW ranks seem to be waiting for some of their newer fighters to really stake their claim at the top. And there are definitely some good names out there ready to move up: **#10 Pajonsuk, #12 Hinata, #14 Sudsakorn, #15 Yuichiro Nagashima, #16 Chris Ngimbi,** and **#17 Mohamed Khamal** have all made big moves lately and are poised to move even higher. Of those names, the two that had particularly noteworthy months are Sudsakorn and Nagashima. Sudsakorn's win over now

#19 Khem Sitsongpeenong
in Thailand was the biggest fight yet this year from a rankings standpoint, while Nagashima defended K-1's honor with his stunning New Year's Eve knockout of Dream champion Shinya Aoki.

As we saw in the Heavyweight division, this next month will remain somewhat of a holding pattern for the Middleweights, with nothing big scheduled in February. But that changes in March with a host of major fights.

First up, the March 6 It's Showtime show, which features **#4 Andy Souwer** trying to get back in the win column against L'houcine Ouzgni; a great fight between
#7 Artur Kyshenko
and
#9 Gago Drago; #22 Chahid Oulad El Hadj
vs. Robin van Roosmalen; and
#23 Leroy Kaestner vs. Ramzi Tamaditi.

March 12 is the Oktagon show from Italy with **#1 Giorgio Petrosyan** defending his status against the excellent Cosmo Alexandre, plus
#3 Yoshihiro Sato
vs.
#25 Armen Petrosyan
. If Giorgio loses there I don't know what will become of the top 25.

But the big action to watch for is the July 3 It's Showtime show in Russia with **#7 Artur Kyshenko** vs. L'houcine Ouzgni, plus an 8 man tournament that could be the premiere Middleweight tournament of the year including
#1 Giorgio Petrosyan, #4 Andy Souwer, #3 Yoshihiro Sato, #8 Murat Direkci, #9 Gago Drago,
and
#16 Chris Ngimbi.