As the Road to Glory events have now begun in full swing we've been able to experience a sort of coming out party for kickboxing in the United States. With the first show of the series taking place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the second occuring yesterday in LA, we've been given a snapshot into how Glory plans to run the rest of the tournaments throughout the year.

We already know firsthand how well patriotism figures into ticket sales. Kevin Ross and the rest of the Can't Stop Crazy crew are pretty popular in California, while Randy Blake commands a sizable fan base in Oklahoma. In other countries, Mirko Cro Cop, Daniel Ghita, Badr Hari and Giorgio Petrosyan are all icons in their native lands. Plain and simple- a recognizable name and face, someone who speaks the language and represents it's people is what's going to draw fight fans into arenas and shell out money for pay per views. But while Glory's concept is solid, how well have they pulled it off?

Read more after the break

## The Good

1. Big Names: If fans don't care about the fighters, what's the point? Glory understands this and they have made sure to get at least one well known American on each card. In the 95 kg tournament that person was Randy Blake- the golden boy of Tulsa. Eddie Walker took this title in LA, famed for his picture perfect knockout of Joe Schilling late in 2012. For all intents and purposes these were *their* tournaments, as much as the K-1 MAX finals in Greece belonged to Mike Zambidis. You could say having a well known local fighter competing is win-win: If they take the whole thing then their stock only rises internationally, and if they lose then whoever beats them instantly becomes a household name among the devoted few.

2. Local Promotors: Some could argue this point as bad, but I prefer to look at local promotion as a positive step-up for American kickboxing as a whole. With the two tournaments thus far being put on by XFC and WCK respectively, it gives small time organizations a chance to "strut their stuff," present their best fighters, put on an exciting shows, draw in a larger crowd, and cooperate with a big time kickboxing organization. While the production quality is significantly lower than if Glory threw the event themselves, we're seeing the beginnings of possible partnerships with promoters that have existed under the radar for quite a while.

3. Knockouts: Who doesn't love em'? At the end of the day, despite everything else, the fans come to see two human beings punch and kick each other in the face. The Road to Glory shows have been delivering just that. In Tulsa, only one fight in the main tournament went to a decision, a feat which was duplicated in Los Angeles. The worst possible outcome for these events is that they be boring. A boring fight without the draw of a big name means...well, it means you've got nothing, really.

## The Bad

1. Who are these guys?: When trying to create a fan-base in a sport centered on individual athletes, you've got to make a case for why the common fan should care about who they're watching. Glory has done a particularly bad job at letting us know the credentials of the competitors in their tournaments. This is especially true when trying to build fighters into stars that Americans will fill stadiums for in the future. We don't need K-1 style video documentaries about their life, but a few words on twitter or facebook about their background, record,

ANYTHING prior to the event, would be helpful when trying to remember their face months down the road.

2. Mismatches: When the entire opening round of your tournament is described as a "freakshow" it might be time to take a step back and re-evaluate your roster. While the United States has a pretty low level of stand-up talent compared to places like the Netherlands, France, or Japan, that does not mean certain individuals are not leagues above the rest. The fact that one of the top ranked 85 kg fighters in the US, Eddie Walker, is in the same tournament as a guy making his professional debut with a losing amateur record is a little ridiculous. There is plenty of talent at any weight class that could easily be found by looking just a little harder.

3. No Stream, No Video: We've been hearing for a while that the R2G shows will be broadcasted on CBS Sports at a later date. While it wouldn't be unreasonable to file this as a good thing, the fact of the matter is that all the excitement for these events will be gone by the time the videos air. One of the pillars of journalism is "immediacy." The longer it takes for a story to break, the less relevant it becomes. This is just as true in combat sports as anything else.

**Overall**

Being the first kickboxing organization to make a solid push in the United States in years, Glory is not doing a bad job. Could it be better? Sure. But being two shows in is an optimal time to make changes. We all want kickboxing to suceed here in the states, and right now Glory is in the best position to make that happen. With 4 more R2G shows taking place in the US during 2013, it seems more and more of America's stars will find themselves under Glory contract. I'm looking forward to watching these shows at a later date on CBS sports, but as fight fans will tell you, nothing will ever compare to live action.