

BY TODD HESTER | PHOTOS BY RICK FARMER

Anthony Argyros

NAGA GRAPPLER OF THE DECADE

Over the years Kipp Kollar's North American Grappling Association (NAGA) has seen a parade of top stars and competitors battle it out on their mats. Many have become household names and have gone on to international mixed martial arts stardom. But yet when it came time to name one man as the NAGA Grappler of the Decade and for Gladiator Magazine to honor him with the 2010 Golden Gladiator award and a gold timepiece from principle award sponsor Sonbol Watches, there was one obvious choice: Anthony Argyros.

A Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt under Carlos

Catania/Sergio Penha, Argyros has exemplified the NAGA spirit of participation and competition over the past ten years. In his NAGA career he has won a nearly unbelievable 89 tournament championships and 11 Grand Prix RANKED titles. He has taken first place in at least two NAGA tournaments per year since 2000, has NAGA wins by leg-lock submission every year since 2000, has competed and placed in every NAGA Battle at the Beach since 2000, is the only grappler in the world to have competed in every NAGA North American Grappling Championships (NAGC) since 1999, and the only grappler to

compete in every NAGA Battle at the Beach since 2000.

Although starting his grappling quest relatively late in life at age 31, Argyros has more than made up for lost time. Perhaps his proudest accomplishment, however, is that he is the first black belt under instructor Carlos Catania and has received every belt from him during that process. He is also a huge fan of NAGA and of Kipp Kollar. One thing is for sure, NAGA could not have a better representative or example of the positive effects of submission grappling than Anthony Argyros.





Anthony Argyros
Major Championships

- 2010 NAGA Worlds:** Directors Expert No-Gi and Gi
- 2009 NAGA NAGC:** Masters Expert No-Gi Super Heavyweight
- 2008 NAGA RIC:** Adult Advanced No-Gi Heavyweight
- 2007 NAGA NAGC:** Adult Expert No-Gi Cruiserweight
- 2006 NAGA NAGC:** Masters No-Gi Expert Absolute
- 2005 NAGA Cape Cod:** Blue Belt Heavyweight
- 2004 NAGA Battle at Beach:** Masters Expert No-Gi Super Heavyweight
- 2003 NAGA U.S. Nationals:** Masters No-Gi Cruiserweight
- 2002 NAGA NEGC:** Adult Advanced No-Gi Super Heavyweight
- 2001 NAGA NAGC:** Masters Advanced No-Gi Cruiserweight
- 2000 NAGA Worlds:** Adult Advanced No-Gi Super Heavyweight

Q: How did you get interested in submission grappling?

A: I watched early the UFC shows and was mesmerized by Royce Gracie and Ken Shamrock. Ken is still my idol. I always wanted to be a combination of the two. I wanted to know shootfighting and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. I also wanted to have a physique like Ken but that didn't happen, unfortunately!

Q: Who did you train with?

A: I began my training with Phil Dunlap and in my friend's garage, then early in 2001 I began my longtime study with Carlos Catania. He took me all the way from white belt to black belt in BJJ. Ninety-nine percent of my knowledge came from Carlos Catania. He's the best teacher I could have ever asked for. I think Carlos is the best teacher in the world. I am very proud to be able to say that I am Carlos' first BJJ black belt.

Q: What has driven you to keep competing?

A: The "streak" and the "drive." I am "driving" towards 100 championships in tournament competition and I currently have 89 tournament titles and 11 Grand Prix RANKED championships. The "streak" involves taking first in NAGA events every year since 2000 and winning NAGA matches by leg-lock every year since 2000. I am the only fighter in the world to have competed in every Battle at the Beach and NAGA North American Grappling Championship in the 21st century.

Q: What values have you gotten from martial arts?

A: There are so many: respect, honor, valor, courage, resilience, patience, and integrity just to name a few. Martial arts have given me a cloth to live by. I am a martial artist first and a champion grappler second.

Q: Do your kids train and compete?

A: My kids train but do not compete. If they want to compete sometime in the future that will be their decision not mine. They have a

tremendous children's instructor in Jerry Jones.

Q: Why do you like NAGA so much?

A: I love NAGA so much because it has changed my life and given over 100,000 people a chance to go for something, whether it be a gold medal or just to face down their fears and have a sense of belonging and achievement. I hope NAGA gets so big that it becomes nationally televised. I truly hope Kipp Kollar becomes like Don King or Pete Rozelle and is know around the world. No one will deserve it more. Kipp is the best at what he does and he truly cares about the sport and the competitors. I also like that NAGA is a family-run organization.

