

Cage Fighter

By Rachel Weaver

From T-Town to TV.

Gerald Harris wants you to know something right away. He's not just a mixed martial arts fighter on Spike TV's *The Ultimate Fighter*. He's actually a man of many talents, which includes sports and acting. But his passion is stand-up comedy for which he discovered his flair for after attending an amateur night at a comedy club.

Born and raised in Tulsa, Harris describes growing up in the city as "crazy." Gang violence and rough neighborhoods were something he faced on a daily basis, but Harris credits wrestling with keeping him out of trouble. After graduating from East Central High School, he attended Cleveland State University in Ohio on a wrestling scholarship and later graduated with a bachelor's degree in history.

He returned to Tulsa after two years of teaching at a Florida high school. He taught at East Central for a year before his mixed martial arts career began to take off.

Harris always worked out to stay in shape, and he was at the gym running and lifting weights when a friend asked him if he needed money. He says he responded, "Hell yeah!" His friend suggested fighting, which Harris was wary of at first. But after his friend offered him \$800, he was in.

"I [said] if I get knocked out, I'm not fighting ever again," Harris says. "I ended up knocking the guy out and ever since then, I've been training. After that one-year of teaching at East Central, I went full time."

He moved to Portland, Ore., where he trains at Team Quest Training Center, and his next step was submitting a video for *The Ultimate Fighter*. He says he did well in the interviews because they were looking for not only fighting skills, but individuals they could market, too.

"They had me doing stand-up in the interviews, so they loved that," he remembers.

The Ultimate Fighter began airing in April and will conclude June 21, with the live finale when all 16 contestants, unless injured, will fight. The championship match between the two finalists will be determined a few days beforehand. The finale will decide who of the contestants will fight in the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

"The Hurricane," Harris' fighter name was based off his own father's name, a former boxer himself. Harris has two children, who are 8 and 2. Although he doesn't like his boys to watch him fight, his youngest gets excited when he sees his dad on television.

"He starts swinging at the TV and stuff," he says. "He starts throwing punches like crazy. I'm like 'Dang boy, you throw hands better than me.'"

For more on *The Ultimate Fighter*, visit www.spike.com.