UFC Fight Night DraftKings Breakdown

Featherweight Yair Rodríguez vs. Jeremy Stephens

This fight comes down to ranges for me. In kicking range, Rodríguez should excel as he is the more varied and better overall fighter at range. In strictly boxing range, Stephens should have the advantage as he has superior punching power and Rodríguez does not have good head movement (does not keep his hands up a lot either). I slightly favor Rodríguez as I believe he should have the better cardio (fought in a 5 round main event at high elevation vs. Chan Sung Jung on short notice) and be more active, but I expect this fight to be competitive with the chance that it could go to a decision.

**For DK: I recommend targeting both sides of this fight. The winner is a very likely candidate to be on the optimal/tournament-winning lineup due to their prices ($8,200 and $8,000), 5-round scoring potential, several significant strikes to be accumulated, and finishing potential.**

Women's Strawweight Carla Esparza vs. Alexa Grasso

A wrestler and a striker are featured in this bout. Esparza (the wrestler) looked very good with her timing, technique, and explosiveness when attempting takedowns in her most recent bout versus Jandiroba. I believe Esparza can land take downs and control Grasso for stretches of this fight due to her being the superior wrestler and grappler here. Also, Grasso was taken down, controlled, had her guard passed by Randa Markos when they fought the last time the UFC came to Mexico City (a little over two years ago). Grasso has the clear striking advantage, but I do not expect Esparza to engage with Grasso’s striking unless she is closing distance to attempt a takedown or clinch with Grasso. I believe the matchup favors Esparza, but I could see Grasso making it competitive enough to get the nod in Mexico City.

**For DK: I prefer to play Esparza or pass on this fight. Grasso put up a lot of significant strikes in her last bout versus Kowalkiewicz, but that fight was all stand up and Kowalkiewicz was fighting at a range where Grasso had the opportunity to consistently land on her. I expect Esparza to be standing far away from Grasso, clinching, and attempting (being successful) takedowns. I do not see how Grasso lands a ton of significant strikes in this stylistic matchup. Esparza can land several takedowns and pass Grasso’s guard (like Markos did) to get a win. At $7,800, Esparza has a reasonable DK price and I do not expect her to be popular in tournaments.**

Flyweight Brandon Moreno vs. Askar Askarov

It’s nice to see Moreno back in the UFC. It was Moreno and Sergio Pettis that headlined the card the last time UFC visited Mexico City (UFC Fight Night 114 on August 5th, 2017). Moreno has no easy welcome back to the UFC fight when as he takes on Askar Askarov. Askarov is very solid wrestler and grappler. Askarov’s striking is fine. He does not move his head much and relies on movement for defensive striking and he is not aggressive. Moreno I expect to have the striking advantage by being more aggressive and being the more threatening striker of the two. Askarov’s path to winning is landing takedowns and controlling Moreno. Moreno can be taken down, but he is skilled on the ground and is good at getting up once taken down (i.e. vs. Dustin Ortiz). I slightly lean with Moreno, but I expect it to be competitive.

**For DK: I like both sides of this fight. Askarov can land several takedowns with some potential grappling advances which will mean a good score for his price ($8,800) even in a decision victory. Also, Moreno ($7,400) is a live underdog which makes him in play. I do not expect Moreno to land takedowns here, but he is skilled on the ground and if he gets in an advantageous position he can excel. Also, I favor Moreno striking, but his striking defense can be much improved, so I do not expect him to dominate in the stand up (i.e. vs. Pantoja and Pettis was getting tagged repeatedly).**

Women's Bantamweight Irene Aldana vs. Vanessa Melo

Melo likes to strike, but Aldana is the superior striker by a wide margin. Melo can attempt takedowns, but I do not expect her to take Aldana down. Aldana should win this fight comfortably via decision.

**For DK: I prefer to pass on this fight in tournaments. Melo ($6,800) is an underdog that does not have a reasonable chance to win. Aldana ($9,400) is too expensive for her upside. She is a striker and I do not believe she wins this fight inside the distance. With cheaper options than Aldana (i.e. Eubanks, Puelles, Askarov, etc.) with higher upside on paper, I prefer to fade Aldana on DK.**

Featherweight Martin Bravo vs. Steven Peterson

This is a FOTN candidate. Both fighters like to march forward, do not mind absorbing strikes, and are both tough. All else equal, I believe Peterson is the superior submission grappler which is way I am favoring him to win this fight, but if this fight goes to a decision, I see it as being competitive. I still favor Peterson in a decision scenario despite being in his opponent’s home country.

**For DK: This is one of the sneakiest fights to target. I believe the winner will score well even in a decision victory. My preference is Peterson ($8,100) due to his submission grappling advantage, more experience, and better camp, but I will play both sides.**

Bantamweight José Alberto Quiñónez vs. Carlos Huachin

Despite losing, I thought Carlos Huachin looked good in his UFC debut. His striking looked crisp and technical and he has some power in his hands. His opponent this Saturday, Quiñónez likely will not bring the style of fight where Huachin can excel tremendously. Quiñónez likes to stand at distance where he utilizes kicks and other distance strikes. Quiñónez also wrestles but does not come from a high-level wrestling background. Also, Huachin’s takedown defense looks solid, so I do not believe Quiñónez can take down Huachin excessively (maybe once or twice at most). I could still see Quiñónez winning a striking battle due to having more activity and better cardio than Huachin. I slightly lean towards Quiñónez, but I believe this fight can be competitive and I consider Huachin a live underdog due to his striking advantage.

**For DK: I prefer to target Huachin ($7,500) or pass on this fight completely. I do believe Huachin is KO/TKO or bust in terms of putting up a big score on DraftKings. Quiñónez ($8,700) is a wrestler, but I do not believe he will have a lot of success DK scoring wise. He also has not scored well in favorable matchups on paper neither (i.e. Rivas and Ishihara).**

Featherweight Polo Reyes vs. Kyle Nelson

This will be a fun fight. Both fighters throw with power and like to strike. Nelson is the fighter who is more defensively sound and more durable, so that combined with the fact that Nelson can have success wrestling and grappling is enough for me to favor him. I do believe Polo Reyes can make this a firefight where he has a reasonable chance due to his power and aggressiveness. Also, Polo Reyes most recent KO/TKO loss was toward the end of June this year, so I am not sure to what extent he has recovered after losing to Dober.

**For DK: I like both sides of this with a higher lean towards Nelson. I like the leverage here as I believe Polo Reyes will be more popular, but I believe the matchup on paper favors Nelson, so based off that, I will have more Nelson. Polo Reyes has odds value and will score well in a win which is the reason I will have a small amount of DK exposure to him.**

Women's Strawweight Ariane Carnelossi vs. Angela Hill

This fight should be another exciting one on this card. In the striking department, both women bring it. Hill is more technical, light on her feet, and more experienced, but Carnelossi is physically strong, aggressive, and powerful. I see this fight as competitive that likely hits the scorecards. I favor Hill due to her experience and technical advantages, but both women throw excessive volume which makes this fight competitive with takedowns unlikely in this scenario.

**For DK: I prefer to pass on this fight, but I prefer to play Carnelossi ($7,700) if I am playing this fight as she is a live underdog that has some advantages over Hill.**

Flyweight Sergio Pettis vs. Tyson Nam

Pettis should be favored here as he is much more UFC experienced (it’s Nam’s UFC debut) and has fought the better competition. Nam is also taking this fight on short notice, so that is enough for me to favor Pettis. It’s hard to invest in Pettis as a high favorite because he is not a threatening striker, does not wrestler often, nor land in excessive volume. I could see this fight being competitive because I do not think Pettis is THAT much better than Nam on the feet, but I am favoring Pettis overall.

**For DK: I prefer to pass on this fight completely in tournaments. I like Nam ($6,900) for cash games because I believe this fight can go three rounds with Pettis ($9,300) unlikely to finish (+605 ITD on 5 dimes at 6:01pm CST) and with a chance for this fight to be competitive.**

Light Heavyweight Vinicius Moreira vs. Paul Craig

Two submission grapplers are featured in this bout. This is Moreira’s best matchup yet in the UFC. In his first two UFC appearances, he was matched up with Alonzo Meinfield and Eryk Anders. Both men are superior athletes, superior wrestlers, and had power in their hands to earn them KO victories in their respective bouts with Moreira. Moreira will likely try to attempt takedowns here against Craig where he can have success. Once on the mat, I favor Moreira as I believe he is the superior submission grappler. Craig is also a good submission grappler, but in top position, I see Moreira being able to advance position to attempt submissions or ground and pound. I could see this fight finishing on the ground but striking-wise I do not see a TKO/KO finish despite the durability concerns for both fighters due to neither of them showcasing power in their hands nor adequate striking technique. I favor Moreira here due to him having the submission grappling advantage.

**For DK: I believe Moreira is sneaky due to his fight logs showing very little points. This fight is much more winnable for Moreira than against Meinifield and Anders, so I will have a decent amount of him at his reasonable price ($8,300). I prefer not to play Craig ($7,900) as I do not see him having success grappling in this bout. Craig was able to be competitive and win other bouts in the UFC due to his submission grappling, but I do not see that as the case here.**

Women's Bantamweight Sijara Eubanks vs. Bethe Correia

I like Sijara in this bout. She can win this fight via standing and/or on the ground. She is the superior submission grappler. Also, I believe this is her best matchup for her to excel in the UFC thus far. I believe Sijara comfortably wins this fight via finish. Correia’s durability and inferior grappling make it hard for her to win this matchup.

**For DK: I like Sijara ($9,100) not only for cash games, but GPPs (tournaments) too. She can have a lot of success landing takedowns, grappling, and striking. Also, I believe she makes for a decent pivot off Puelles who I expect to be popular. In a winning scenario for Correia, I believe will score only 50-60 points in a split decision. I am not interested in playing Correia on DK.**

Lightweight Claudio Puelles vs. Marcos Rosa Mariano

This is a high variance fight. Mariano is the superior striker as he is more varied, technical, and more threatening of a striker than Puelles. Puelles has also shown he is not defensively sound nor comfortable taking damage. (i.e. versus Bravo and Silva was hurt several times). Where Puelles can test Mariano is in submission grappling. Puelles is the superior submission grappler by a wide margin against Mariano. Mariano can be taken down easily and have his guard passed repeatedly. However, I am just not sure Puelles will have success wrestling soon enough prior to taken excessive damage from Mariano. Puelles is not an adequate offensive wrestler and Mariano is BIG for this weight class. This is a very tough fight to call despite the wide odds. I am going to lean with Puelles, but nothing would surprise me here.

**For DK: This is a good fight to target both sides. I think Mariano is very sneaky ($7,200) with a good chance to finish if he wins. If Mariano does not beat Puelles, I believe Puelles will win via dominant grappling eventually earning a submission victory. I will have both fighters in my lineups (I am making 10-15), but I will have more Eubanks ($9,100) than Puelles ($9,000).**

AJ’s Flash Knockdown Picks:

**Lock her in (cash games):**

* Sijara Eubanks $9,100

**High priced fades:**

* ~~Irene Aldana $9,500~~
* ~~Sergio Pettis $9,400~~

**Low-owned live underdogs:**

* Marcos Mariano $7,200
* Carla Esparza $7,800

**Underdogs (relative to DK pricing 🡪 below $8,100) to consider in cash games:**

* Tyson Nam $6,900
* Jeremy Stephens $8,000

**Low-owned tournament plays:**

* Kyle Nelson $8,600
* Vinicius Moreira $8,300