





# INTERVIEW WITH MMA STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH **JONATHAN CHAIMBERG**

An Inside Look At The Famed Adrenaline Performance Center In Montreal  
And Some Of Its Marquee Fighters With Canada's Top MMA Trainer

**TEXT AND PHOTOS BY TERRY FREND**

**I**n addition to being one of our Inside Expert columnists, Jonathan Chaimberg is also Canada's leading authority on strength and conditioning training for the wildly popular sport of Mixed Martial Arts. Jonathon runs his Adrenaline Performance Center in Montreal, Quebec where on any given day you can find him there training some of the biggest names in the sport, including current UFC® welterweight champ Georges St-Pierre. With a resume that includes being a former National wrestler and the distinction of being the trainer for many of our country's National athletes, Chaimberg has carved out quite a niche for himself, training both high performance athletes and the general public for more than 10 years now to much success and acclaim.

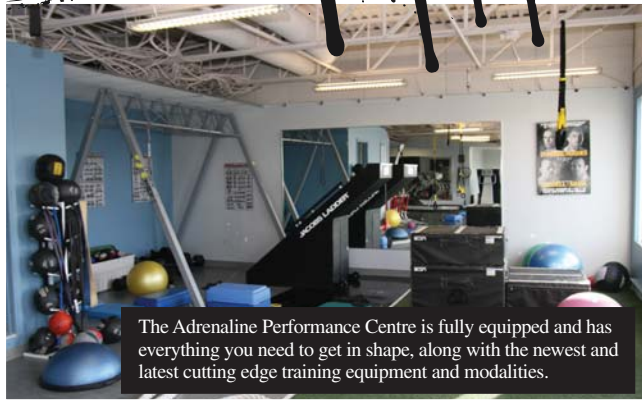
**IFM: Jonathan, we're proud to have you as**

**part of the Inside Fitness team as a regular contributor, and owe you a big thanks for sitting down with us for this special MMA conditioning feature. Let's start with a bit of background information. Where did you grow up and did you have a physically active childhood? Did you play sports in high school and if so, what sports did you participate in?**

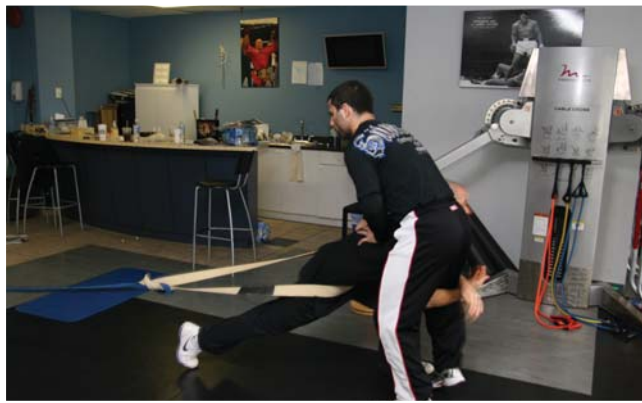
**JC:** I grew up in Montreal and yes, I had a very active childhood. My father was a pro hockey player, and my idol, so I tried to compete in every sport possible. Also, being an only child I would create games my own games to stay active.

**IFM: Did you pursue any formal post-secondary education in the field of the exercise sciences?**

**JC:** After university, I spent a great deal of



The Adrenaline Performance Centre is fully equipped and has everything you need to get in shape, along with the newest and latest cutting edge training equipment and modalities.



time just bettering myself, both as a trainer and as a coach through seminars, books, mentorships, etc. I learned as much as I could, and tried to create my own principals and modalities of training.

**IFM: When did you make the decision that you wanted to train people for a living, and what influenced that decision?**

**JC:** I had a series of major concussions during my amateur wrestling career. At one point, I had to take a year off from my own training, and it was during that year that I realized training other people was my true calling.

**IFM: How did you first get into MMA and what drew you to the sport originally?**

**JC:** I got into MMA through freestyle wrestling. I always enjoyed watching UFC®, but only after I began training these mixed martial artists did I really gain a newfound respect for the sport.

**IFM: How did you first get involved in training MMA fighters specifically?**

**JC:** I met Georges St-Pierre and some other MMA fighters at the National wrestling club a few years back, as at that time, I still trained recreationally. I often urged Georges to train with me, and only after his loss to Matt Serra in April of 2007 did he take me up on it.

**IFM: Let's talk a little about your Adrenaline Performance Center in Montreal. When did you start the Center?**



GSP towing the line as part of his MMA strength and conditioning program, conducted under the watchful eye of Jonathan Chaimberg.



Jonathan definitely practices what he preaches. Here he does chin-ups with a 120-lb dumbbell!

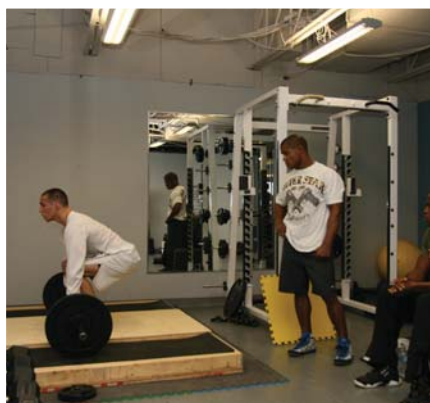
**JC:** I started the Adrenaline Performance Centre (APC) five years ago. Prior to that, it was known as JSport.

**IFM:** Can you tell us a little more about Adrenaline; where it's located, the size of it, the equipment, the facilities, what sorts of people train there, etc.?

**JC:** It's located in the heart of Montreal. It's fully equipped and has everything you need to get in shape, along with the newest and latest cutting edge training equipment and modalities. I train everyone from weekend warriors to world champions!

**IFM:** What percentage of your clients are high performance athletes, as compared to mainstream everyday people?

**JC:** I would say the split is about 40% high performance athletes and 60% regular mainstream people.

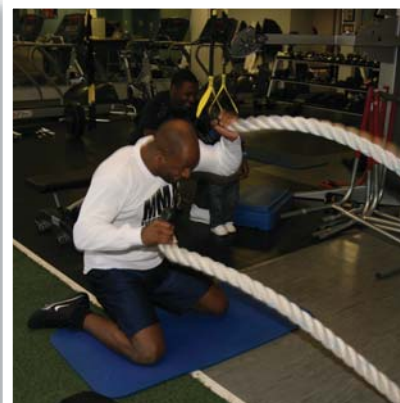


**IFM:** You're known for working with some of the biggest names in MMA, guys like UFC® welterweight champ Georges St-Pierre, former light heavyweight champ Rashad Evans, Keith Jardine and heavyweight king-pin Shane Carwin, to name a few. Given his Canadian pedigree, let's focus on Georges first. Georges has commented that his strength, power and speed have all gone through the roof while training with you. What sorts of exercises and training strategies do you employ with GSP to make an already world class fighter that much better?

**JC:** Georges is a special athlete; the kind of athlete that comes around once in a lifetime. I train him differently than most of the other fighters I work with. I make sure we work a lot of power, strength and explosiveness. There is only one GSP!



Jonathan Chaimberg with his girlfriend Karine Simard and his favourite fitness magazine.



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Anabolic  
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Pictured left to right; Mike Ricci, Karine Simard, Makdessi, Jonathan Chaimberg, Alex Garcia and Tom "Kong" Watson.

me that he was going to be the head coach for one of the sides. He then asked me if I wanted to be the strength and conditioning coach on team Rashad. I said 'sure' and it proved to be a great experience.

**IFM:** You also work with Keith Jardine, one of the more popular UFC® fighters. Jardine has indicated that your training protocols keep his body guessing, which provides him with optimal results. Are you a big advocate for constant turn-over and change for all your fighters? What about for your main stream clients?

**JC:** With Keith specifi-



**IFM:** If you had to pick one single attribute that Georges possesses that separates him from the pack, what would you say that is?

**JC:** His dedication and work ethic; he never misses a day of training.

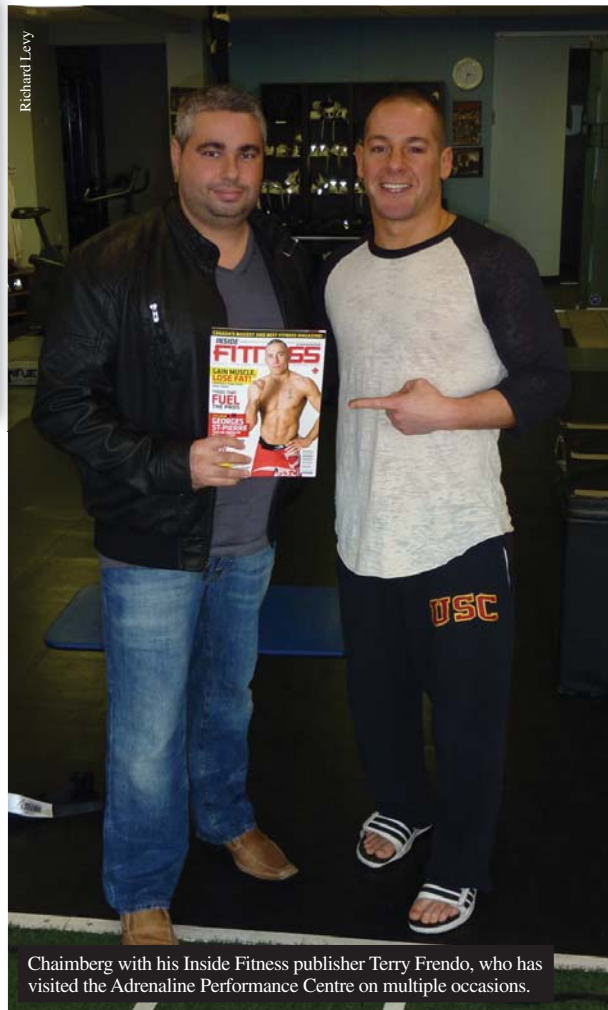
**IFM:** Switching gears a little bit, let's talk about Rashad Evans, another of the marquee fighters that you have under your wing. Rashad feels that training with you has dramatically improved his endurance to the point where he feels stronger in the later rounds of his fights. What sort of training regimen

have you been putting Rashad through that has helped his endurance improve so dramatically?

**JC:** Rashad has all the tools; we just have to sharpen them. Introducing him to power endurance was key, as was the use of intervals in his training program.

**IFM:** Can you talk a little about your experience as one of the coaches for Team Rashad during the last season of The Ultimate Fighter™ reality show, and how that all came to be? What was your role?

**JC:** Rashad called me and told



Richard Levy

Chaimberg with his Inside Fitness publisher Terry Frendo, who has visited the Adrenaline Performance Centre on multiple occasions.



"All of our fighters are like family; they all love each other and we are all here to help each other."

cally, it was getting him to train smarter. Keith is the hardest worker on team Jackson, 'bar-none,' yet he doesn't train smart, as he tends to over-train. My goals are to get him to be more powerful, and to increase his agility. And yes, I always want the body adapting and progressing.

**IFM: Given the sheer number of fighters that you train at Adrenaline at any one given time, are there ever any issues with respect to ego amongst the fighters? Has sparring ever one too far?**

**JC:** All of our fighters are like family. We have our Patriarchs, those being Greg, Firas, Phil, John and myself, and then we have our children. They all love each other, but just like any family, we have small issues from time to time, but we are all here to help each other and to grow.

**IFM: Can you talk a little about the actual training camp setting, in terms how you would break down each of the different phases prior to a fight?**

**JC:** A true camp is really eight to ten weeks. Most of my guys

stay sharp year round, so the eight to ten weeks becomes more and more specific, as the weeks decrease en route to the fight. General prep is always first, but most of my guys can bypass that due to never taking off more than a week at a time throughout the course of the year. Then, depending on the athlete, we'll have specific concentrations; power, strength, power endurance, endurance, etc.

**IFM: What is your relationship with famed US-based MMA trainer Greg Jackson? Do you guys communicate often and if so, what sorts of things do you discuss?**

**JC:** Greg is one of my best friends. I can't think of one bad thing to say about him. He truly is a genius and a gem of a human being. We actually speak everyday. I'll give him his daily workout and we also discuss all of our guys.

**IFM: What makes the Adrenaline camp different from some of the other MMA camps like ATT, or Team Quest?**

**JC:** Again, I think what separates us is that we have leaders

who delegate jobs, and we don't overstep our boundaries. Greg is head coach and he has me train the guys. Phil Nurse handles the Muay Thai and the grappling. John Danehar is a genius, and then we have Firas Zahabi, who is one of the heads in Montreal as well.

**IFM: On the topic of up-and-comers, who do you have in your stable currently that you feel can make their mark on the sport of MMA in the coming months and years?**

**JC:** Mike Ricci is a stud. He's a very high level athlete who just signed with Belator; he's the future. Alex Garcia is a future

star also; he's in the gym more than anyone and physically, he's a monster! John 'The Bull' Makdessi is one of my hardest workers. He eats, drinks and breathes the sport of MMA. I expect huge things from him. He's like my son. Yves Jaboin is already in WEC; great talent. Nordine Taleb is very green, but has huge potential. Steve Boss seriously impressed the crap out of me at his last fight. He works so hard for me. Rory Mcdonald is another name to watch out for. He's the youngest athlete in the UFC®. He's only 20 and the sky is the limit with him! And finally, there's Aeimen Zahabi, who, if he chooses to fight and not coach, will be a champion. There are also a few amateurs that will be doing big things as well soon.

**IFM: We've covered a lot of ground here Jonathan and you've delivered with some great answers. Thanks Jonathon, we're truly lucky to have an expert of your caliber on our team.**

It's been my pleasure, anytime guys. Before I go, I would like to thank TRX and Headrush for helping out the gym, all our athletes and most of all, the coaches who help make the team what it is. **IFM**

