

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 4, 2020



PANCRASE 316, July 24, 2020 – Studio Coast, Tokyo  
Bout Hype

After a five-month hiatus, the legendary promotion Pancrase sets off the summer fireworks with a stellar mixed martial card. Studio Coast plays host to 8 main card bouts, 3 preliminary match ups, and 12 bouts in the continuation of the 2020 Neo Blood Tournament heats on July 24<sup>th</sup> in the first event since February.

Reigning Featherweight King of Pancrase Champion, Isao Kobayashi headlines the main event in a non-title bout against Akira Okada who drops down from Featherweight to meet him. The Never Quit gym ace and Bellator veteran, Kobayashi is a former Pancrase Lightweight Champion. The ripped and powerful Okada has a tough welcome to the Featherweight division, but possesses notoriously frightening physical power.

“Isao” the reigning Featherweight King of Pancrase Champion, has been unstoppable in nearly three years. He claimed the interim title by way of disqualification due to a grounded knee at Pancrase 295, and following orbital surgery and recovery, he went on to capture the undisputed King of Pancrase belt from Nazareno Malagarie at Pancrase 305 in May 2019.

Known to fans simply as “Akira”, he is widely feared as one of the hardest hitting Pancrase Lightweights, and steps away from his 5<sup>th</sup> ranked spot in the bracket to face Kobayashi. The 33-year-old has faced some of the best from around the world, and will thrive under the pressure of this bout. A change in weight class could be the test he needs right now.

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The co-main event sees Emiko Raika collide with Takayo Hashi in what promises to be a test of skills and experience, mixed with sheer will-to-win guts and determination. Pancrase is proud to host this bout between the top two ranked Flyweights hunting for Queen of Pancrase career gold.

Raika made her professional boxing debut in 2000 and switched to MMA right in the heart of the “joshi-kaku” explosion. At 45 and still strong, she is cut from a rare stone, never backs off and never shows weakness.

Hashi hails from the Wajutsu Keishu Kai network, renowned for producing world-class fighters for over 20 years. A Strikeforce veteran, the 42-year-old has faced Sarah Kaufman, Cat Zingano, and holds a win over current top UFC Flyweight, Roxanne Modafferi.

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6. Yuta Nakamura and Masayuki Kikuri go head to head in a classic grappler versus striker battle. Add to that the 50-bout experience of 38-year-old Nakamura versus the hungry young gun KO artist Kikuri, still 25, and there’s a recipe for FOTN.

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BJJ blackbelt, Nakamura, hasn't been stopped in over 3 years since he met the now reigning Welterweight King of Pancrase, Hiroyuki Tetsuka. With 5-straight wins and a showing in QUINTET Fight Night 2, the number 6 ranked Nakamura stays active and brings a 17-year-long career to the table.

Tall welterweight, Kikuri, uses his reach expertly. Only one of his wins went to the scorecards, and that's the way he likes it. Coming in following a cancelled bout due to injury last year, he has revamped himself and is ready to make bigger waves.

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5. Kohei Sugiyama and Naoki Arikawa are two Flyweights riding winning streaks battling to break into the top 10 rankings. This bout promises a big turning point in the Pancrase matchmaking for the victor.

Sugiyama at 24 has already faced the toughest competition in Japan. He possesses dangerous ground and pound balanced with quick submission skills and is as hungry as they come.

Stylistically, Arikawa matches up very well in this with fast hands on the feet and submission hunting on the mat. He is undefeated under the Pancrase banner.

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4. Bantamweights Masahide Hiraoka and Yuki Kosaka face off to determine who gets to step up in the ferociously tough Bantamweight division. Product of the legendary gym Krazy Bee, Hiraoka took gold in the 2019 Neo Blood Tournament. Kosaka, 8 years Hiraoka's senior with more than double the fight experience, took some time out from the Pancrase cage and is looking to make a strong comeback.

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3. Jun Doi versus Sho Sekihara promises fireworks. Doi holds a wealth of experience having faced the likes Bantamweight King of Pancrase challenger, Masakatsu Ueda, and RIZIN standout, Yuto "Kintaro" Hokamura. Sekihara makes only his 4<sup>th</sup> appearance, but is undefeated and comes off a powerful round 1 KO victory at Pancrase 311 in December last year. This has all the hallmarks of a blink-and-you-missed-it bout.

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2. Featherweights Mayo Komori and Tokitaka Nakanishi clash to make their names on the unforgiving Pancrase Featherweight roster. Komori is 2-1 in Pancrase and is out for redemption following a grueling battle in December last year at Pancrase 311. Nakanishi is Shooto's newest rookie tournament winner and makes his Pancrase debut with two strong wins back-to-back.

1. Kicking off the Pancrase 316 main card is Lightweights Shinichi Taira and Kazuki Kasai. Taira made his name in ZST with a slew of knockout wins and is looking to tip the balance of his new 1-1 Pancrase record in his favour. Kasai struck it lucky getting a Pancrase main card spot, and the Mach Dojo newcomer promises to rise to the occasion.