

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
SPORTS

UFC 129 IN TORONTO

Pierson's first Ontario fight to draw 55,000

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Saturday night's event at the Rogers Centre will mark the long-awaited Ontario debut of the Ultimate Fighting Championship and will also mark the first time two York Region fighters will compete in their home province.

Vaughan's Mark Bocek and Stouffville's Sean Pierson are on the UFC 129 fight card and both will enter the octagon before 55,000 screaming fans, hoping to make this historic evening a winning one.

Bocek, 29, will take on former World Extreme Cagefighting champion Ben Henderson in a lightweight division bout. This match will kick-start the event's main card and if you are not attending the event in person, this match is only available through Pay-Per-View.

Bocek is coming off a dominating submission win in his last fight, while Saturday night will be the first fight for Henderson since losing his WEC title. Following that fight, the WEC merged

with the UFC.

Henderson, 27, is a taekwondo black belt, while Bocek holds a black belt in Brazilian-jiu-jitsu and kempo-karate. The fighter who emerges the winner is expected to climb into the lightweight division's top five fighters and could be in line for a title shot.

FREE ON SPIKE TV

"Ben is a decent striker, he has good cardio and he's a good wrestler, but I don't think he's ever faced anyone like me before," said Bocek in an interview. "I'm more polished than he is in each area of the game and I think that will play out," said Bocek.

"He is a big name in the division, so this is an opportunity I don't want to waste," he added.

You won't need Pay-Per-View to watch Pierson fight, as his welterweight match against Jake Ellenberger will be shown on Spike TV as part of a two-match preliminary teaser, prior to the event switching to Pay-Per-View at 9 p.m.

The Spike TV card starts at 8 p.m.

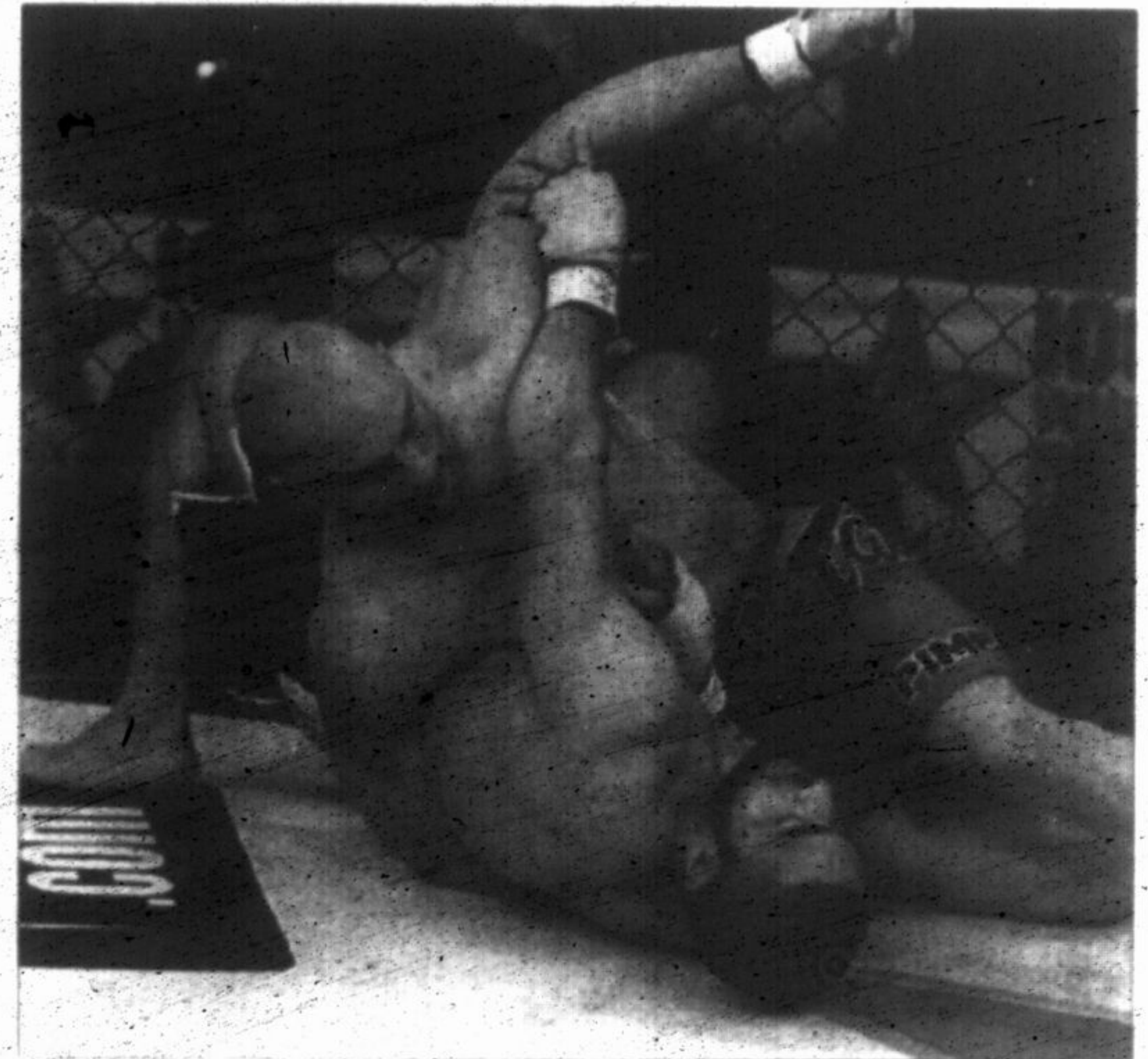
Pierson, 34, is coming off a unanimous decision victory in his December, UFC debut. A few days after that fight Pierson had a conditional offer of employment with the Toronto Police Service removed, due to concerns about his former nickname, "Pimp Daddy" and the persona he once carried as a fighter.

His opponent, Jake Ellenberger, 26, has won his last three UFC fights, two by knockout. Ellenberger will be fighting on short notice, after Pierson's original opponent Brian Foster was forced off the card once doctors discovered he had a brain hemorrhage.

"He's a good opponent and dangerous," Pierson said of Ellenberger. "He has far more experience than what Brian (Foster) had."

"Jake (Ellenberger) is a top-20 fighter in the world. To fight Jake is a huge step up for me. If I can win, it would vault me up in the rankings."

-with files from
 Michael Hayakawa



SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Stouffville's Sean Pierson (top) hopes to finish on top at UFC 129.

...continuing our efforts to fulfill shania's dream to find a cure for neuroblastoma...

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Shania's

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 2011 Canada Games

Shania was an 8 year old Markham girl who was diagnosed with Stage 4 Neuroblastoma in June 2006. Neuroblastoma is a cancer that begins in the embryonic cells which normally develop into parts of the nervous system. Shania started fundraising because she wanted to help children with Neuroblastoma. For more information visit www.shaniasunflower.ca