

# UFC PERFORMANCE INSTITUTE

Orchestrating an Interdisciplinary Approach to Performance Optimization

FUSIONSPORT.COM / SMARTABASE

## ABOUT THE UFC PERFORMANCE INSTITUTE

The **UFC Performance Institute (UFCPI)** represents a truly unique business model in the sports industry, providing unmatched resources and support to approximately 600 active fighters around the world. Located in Las Vegas and Shanghai, the institute is a “global destination in high performance for MMA,” offering a range of interdisciplinary services, education, and access to the latest sport science and technology to fighters and their coaches.

Every fighter under the UFC umbrella can visit the UFC Performance Institute whenever they need – to make weight for an upcoming fight, recover from injury, or simply take advantage of their world-class facilities and services while in Las Vegas or Shanghai. The moment a fighter walks through the door of the UFCPI, they’re treated to a high-end experience with access to the latest tech and some of the most respected performance practitioners in the industry.

## OVERVIEW: UFCPI AND SMARTABASE PARTNERSHIP

### Opportunity

To help orchestrate an interdisciplinary approach to human performance optimization, UFCPI leadership wanted to better understand how fighters were utilizing their facility and services. With the right data and systems, they believed they could make better decisions about how to evolve the UFCPI and demonstrate the value of training at the Institute to stakeholders and UFC fighters.

### Challenge

The UFC Performance Institute operated in a dynamic environment providing personalized care to approximately 600 active fighters around the world at any given time. Flexibility and scalability were a must. To achieve their vision, the UFCPI had to find the right human performance platform and collaborative partner.

### Solution

Smartabase was the chosen solution to serve as the UFCPI’s integrated AMS & EMR. Flexible and mobile forms and custom workflows helped streamline their unique processes and standardize data capture to enable effective analysis. Role-based and visual dashboards presented real-time data to staff and leadership while fighters and coaches can access their data from anywhere with the app.

### Impact

UFCPI leadership is empowered to make data-informed budgetary decisions and justify continued investment in its facility and services. Performance staff now has a 360° multidisciplinary view of fighters. With centralized and usable historical data, they can ask and answer new questions that help them improve treatment and better understand typical MMA fighter injuries and recovery times.

# THE OPPORTUNITY



It's about the process of integrated problem solving – building a system that brings people together in an interdisciplinary fashion so everyone on the team understands how we're going to solve the problem. It's one of the most challenging things to do on a performance team, it's hugely impactful.

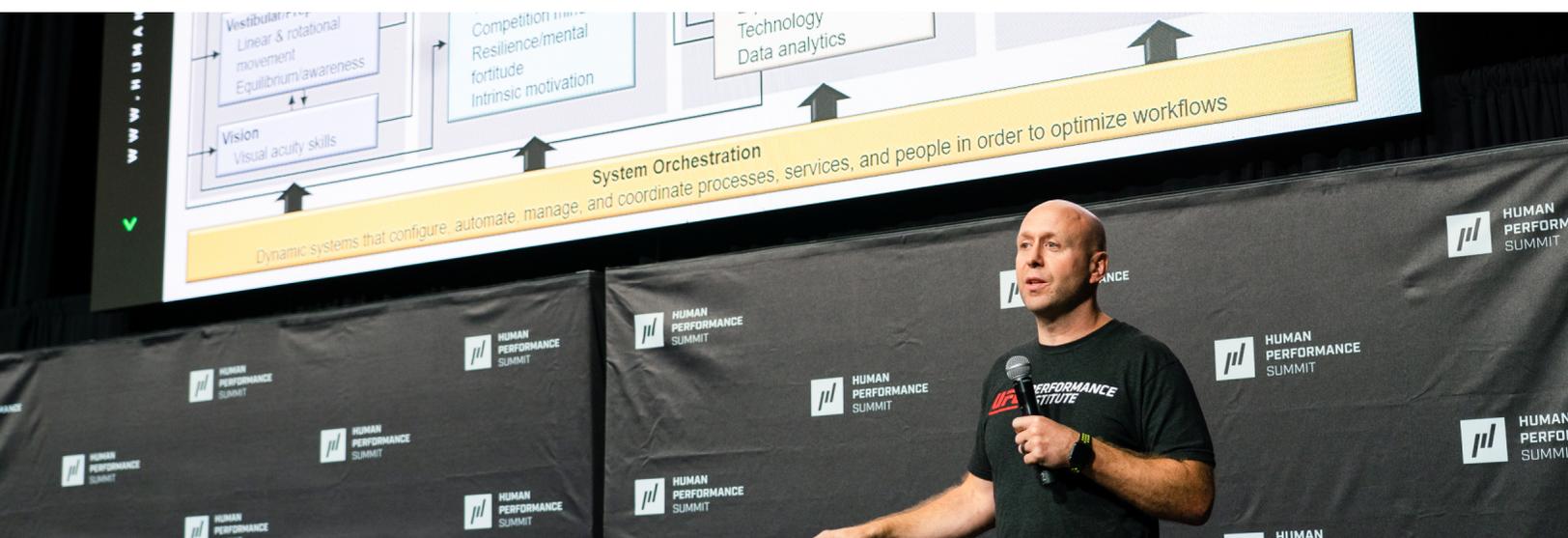
**-Duncan French, VP of Performance, UFC Performance Institute**

When the UFC Performance Institute first opened its doors in 2017, professional Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) was still very young in terms of data analytics and insights. Using what they had, and based on their significant collective experience, the UFCPI team dove into figuring out what determinants influenced the outcome of a fight.

“There are so many variables in MMA – you can't reliably say what it takes to win. Which is why we've moved to a model of systematic inquiry,” notes Duncan French, VP of Performance at the UFCPI. “By assessing and mitigating the risk factors associated with underperformance throughout the fight cycle – nutrition, hydration, weight decent, and recovery, just to name a few – we believe we can increase the probability of a fighter reaching optimal performance during competition.”

To succeed, French's approach to optimizing a fighter's performance required what he calls a “system of orchestration.” From its people, processes, facility, equipment, technology, and data – French was on a mission to build an interdisciplinary, fighter-centric program that aligned all stakeholders.

One of the first objectives was to implement a data and analytics system that would help them develop a better understanding of how fighters were using the UFCPI facility and services. They believed with accurate and timely data, they could make better decisions about how to evolve the program and demonstrate the value of training at the Institute.



# THE CHALLENGE



We wanted to work with ambitious people willing to break out of the typical pro sports model, quickly experiment and adapt, and build something unlike anything else in the industry.



Unlike most other sports, there is no season for MMA. Fights happen throughout the year with each fighter operating on their own fight cycle leading up to or recovering from a competition.

“The world of MMA is a chaotic, dynamic, non-linear environment,” says French. “Our business model adds to the complexity, as we service over 600 fighters from 47 countries around the world all coming and going from the Institute at different times.”

To realize the vision for the UFCPI, accurate and actionable data was critical. Unfortunately, their existing system became a limiting factor instead of an enabling one. There was a need to quickly adapt to their unique and constantly evolving workflows.

For example, if a fighter was receiving physical therapy and they complained of right shoulder pain, the practitioner would capture this data in an open-ended notes field as “RT SHLDR”. Whereas another PT might capture this as “right shoulder pain”. While this data may provide legal cover, it was useless for analyzing fighter injury data.



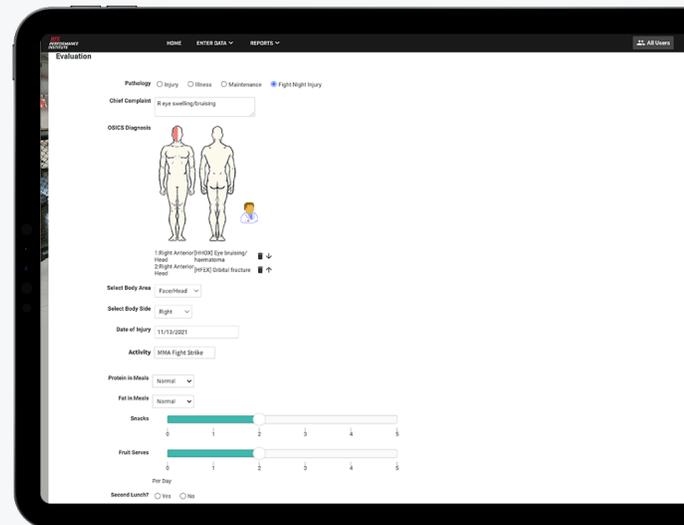
# THE SOLUTION



When we first met with the Fusion Sport team, I was impressed by how they asked great questions to make sure what they delivered worked for us. That collaborative relationship continues to this day as we evolve our program.

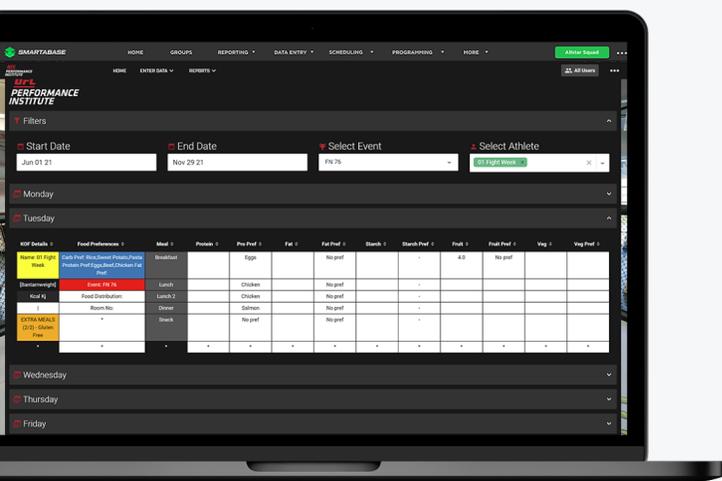
The UFCPI chose Smartabase to serve as their integrated AMS & EMR. The Smartabase Human Performance Consultants worked closely with French and his team to quickly stand-up a solution.

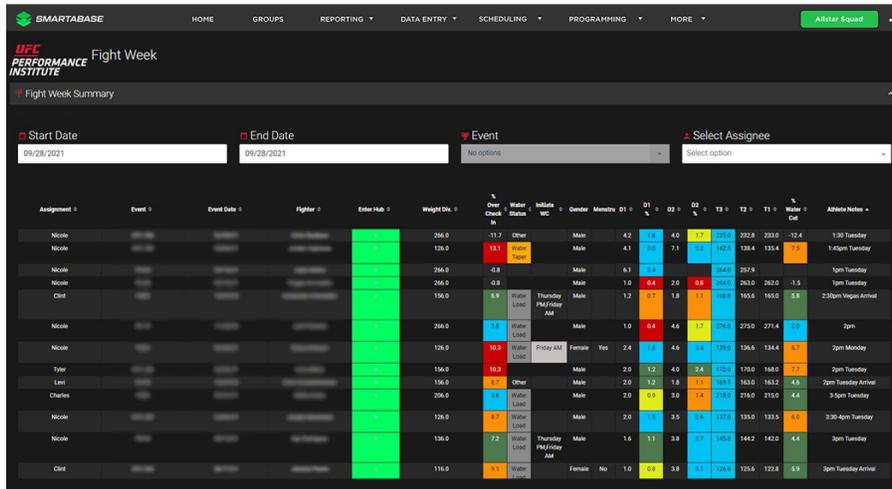
Mobile forms were quickly configured and deployed to begin capturing data. Two main points of entry – medical and Fight Week forms – branched off into custom flows depending on the treatment the fighter was to receive. Data capture was simplified and standardized with the use of OSIICS body diagrams, templates for different regions of the body, and drop-downs for fields such as limitations, restrictions, and modalities. The new forms significantly decreased the time practitioners spent entering data while increasing consistency, accuracy, and accountability.



While many workflows and reports were created as part of the UFCPI's solution, some of the most significant include the Fight Week workflow and the Utilization dashboard.

The Fight Week workflow helps the interdisciplinary staff align around a fighter's Weight Decent Plan, with an emphasis on nutrition. The workflow begins as soon as a fighter checks-in at the start of Fight Week. The nutritionist develops a personalized daily meal plan that is sent to the kitchen where the chef creates meals that help the fighter make weight and stay nourished. Daily weigh-ins are monitored and reported on to flag to executives any fighter who is at risk of not making weight or whose health is at risk.





Fight Week Summary Dashboard

The Utilization Dashboard provides a view to UFCPI executives showing how the facilities and services are being used. They can see in real-time how many interactions each fighter has with different disciplines, what treatments they are receiving, and what equipment and areas of the facility they are using while at the Institute. This dashboard is reviewed monthly and during Fight Weeks when there is a surge of services.



Utilization Dashboard

Future evolution of UFCPI's Smartabase implementation includes the rollout of the Athlete App, allowing fighters and coaches to access their data anytime, anywhere, and the development of an exit survey to capture fighters' satisfaction with the facility and services.

# THE IMPACT



We had the resources and knowledge. Now we have a delivery and decision system to build a truly athlete-centered human performance program that can effectively optimize MMA fighter performance.

Smartabase helped the UFCPI achieve their initial goal – to develop a better understanding of how their Las Vegas and Shanghai facilities and services are being used.

With accurate and usable data, French can make more informed budgetary decisions about where to allocate their resources to have the greatest impact on fighter performance. For example, they can easily see how many times a fighter received Normatec compression therapy versus dry needling, assess outcomes, and compare costs.

Beyond budgetary decisions, French says “Smartabase provides us with the information and insights to justify the continued growth of the UFCPI.” Success breeds success – the more French can show fighters are using the institute, more fighters and investment dollars will flow into the program.

With access to a 360° view of fighters, the interdisciplinary staff is enabled to more effectively communicate and collaborate with one another to increase the probability of a fighter’s success. For instance, when a fighter comes to train at the Institute and is recovering from a rib injury, data can be pushed to the S&C coach advising no plyometric training, to the MMA coach suggesting no grappling, and to the Sport Scientist ordering a VO2 max test.

Going back to French’s approach to systematic inquiry and risk management, with consistent, accurate, and usable data on thousands of MMA fighters, the UFCPI staff can uncover insights to better manage the risks associated with underperformance. They can also begin asking new questions of their data such as: What are the most common injuries, the most effective treatments, and typical recovery times?

In most pro sports leagues, world-class performance teams and technology are only accessible to the superstar athletes, like Russel Wilson and LeBron James. While some, like the NFL and NBA, have tried to provide similar programs, no one has come close to what the UFC offers to all its fighters, regardless of status. With French’s visionary leadership, the UFCPI has quickly become a model for how a pro sports league can support its athletes. Smartabase is proud to partner with the UFCPI and continue to help them realize their vision.



## ***ABOUT FUSION SPORT***

Headquartered in Brisbane Australia, and with a US office in Colorado, Fusion Sport is a global leader in the human performance sector. Established in 2003 by co-founders Dr. Markus Deutsch and Dr. Douglas Moore, their human performance data and analytics platform, Smartabase, is trusted by national sporting federations, Olympic committees, many of the world's highest profile sporting teams, research and operational wings of military organizations and performing arts.

To discuss how we can help you realize the full potential of your data and improve athlete performance, health, and wellness, contact us.

 +1 720 360 0655

 [usasales@fusionsport.com](mailto:usasales@fusionsport.com)

 [fusionsport.com](https://www.fusionsport.com)