General Position in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu by Paul Halme

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Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is a ground fighting martial art that emphasizes the use of diverse submissions, sweeps, attacks and defenses from definite positions. The positions discussed in this article are exceptionally accepted in the BJJ and MMA worlds and should be focused on by all practitioners. It is very essential to be relaxed both on top, and on the bottom of all of these positions and have a few techniques that can be applied to either hit your challenger with a choke or submission, or switch your place to a good turn for yourself. Either way, these positions are basic in BJJ and should become very familiar when you do advancement through your BJJ training.

Side Control/Cross-body

Once the top play effectively passes the security of his/her opponent and the player on the bottom has no control of the top player's body they are in side control. Side control is one the top player is controlling the upper body of his/her challenger and their bodies are perpendicular to each other. This is a dominant position for the top player and can work for several submissions and chokes such as a kimura, arm bar, and head arm choke. Additionally, the top player can advance their position by moving into the mount.

Mount

One of the most dominant positions in BJJ is when the top player achieves the mount position. This position is when the top player is sitting on the bottom player's mid section. This position allows the top player to work freely towards many arm locks, shoulder locks, and chokes. The player on the bottom is simply trying to avoid being submitted and is looking to move to a less dominant position by either escaping the situation as a whole, or by trying to slip his/her leg in to move into a half guard position.

Open Guard

The open guard position is a minor distinction of the closed guard where the difference is the player on the bottom does not have the capability to lock his/her legs around the back of their opponent. If you are on the bottom in the open guard position, you can work to move ahead your position by controlling the position of your opponent and permit yourself to lock your legs into a closed guard position. Another opportunity for the player on his/her back would be to try and break out from the control of the player on top by slipping his hips out and away from one's opponent.

Closed Guard

This spot is when the player on the bottom is lying on his/her back and has the capacity to wrap his/her legs around the back of their opponent. Being able to wrap your legs around the back of your opponent allows you to have power over your opponent's actions and allow you to attack with several sweeps and submissions. Some popular submissions from the closed guard position are the triangle choke, and arm bar. If you find yourself on top in this position, it is very difficult to submit your opponent, though it is possible. However, you should focus on move ahead on your position by passing your opponents guard and moving to side control, or mount.

Half Guard

Half guard is parallel to the closed guard position but the distinction is the player on the bottom only

has the skill to enclose their legs around one of their opponent's legs (opposed to around the back which would be closed guard). This is a popular position and can be used effectively by both the top player by passing the guard entirely, and the bottom player can use this position to sweep their opponent and repeal the position. Submissions are tricky from both the top and bottom in this position because it is hard to control your opponent with only one leg.

There are many more variations to these positions, but these are some of the most common and fundamental positions in BJJ and mixed martial arts. Other positions that exist include butterfly guard, spider guard, back mount, north-south, and many others.

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