

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

Sokoudjou's Inside Trip

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A fighter out of Dan Henderson's Team Quest camp, Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou was the undoubted underdog going into his February 2007 Pride fight against Antonio Rogerio Nogueira, little brother of the famed heavyweight Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira. Sokoudjou was unknown to most of the MMA world and had a 2-1 record in small shows. Not only did Sokoudjou surprise fans and critics everywhere by knocking Nogueira out, but he repeated the same feat two months later against the powerful Brazilian fighter, Ricardo Arona, cementing his place in the limelight of the MMA world.

Despite his two stunning knockout wins, Sokoudjou's background is in judo. Originally from Cameroon, Sokoudjou moved to the United States in 2001 at the age of seventeen, and proceeded to win the open-weight division of the US Open Judo Championships that same year. When visa problems prevented Sokoudjou from returning to Cameroon to compete in the 2004 Olympic Trials for his country, he instead chose to pursue mixed martial arts.

For this month's article, we go back to Sokoudjou's roots as he shows us an inside trip takedown, demonstrated on his training partner, Xande Ribeiro. In the photos, Sokoudjou is the one in blue, with the longer hair.

This particular takedown is a move Sokoudjou executes when his opponent winds up pushed against the fence (or ropes). In this scenario, Sokoudjou and Xande are locked together with their upper bodies, in the "over under" position. Sokoudjou's left arm is over Xande's right, pinning it down, and his right arm is going underneath Xande's left armpit. His hands join behind Xande's back in a tight grip. Sokoudjou's head is tight against Xande's right shoulder.

If Sokoudjou pulls on Xande's body, Xande will resist by leaning back against the fence and lowering his base. By "base," we are referring to a fighter's center of bodyweight and in essence, his balance. It is evident in the first photo that Xande has pushed his butt back and down against the wall to counter Sokoudjou's attempts to move him (photo 1).



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Sokoudjou's Inside Trip (continued...)



In this scenario, Sokoudjou chooses to keep his opponent against the fence and go for an inside trip. First Sokoudjou is going to take his right leg and hook it inside Xande's left (photo 2). As he does this, he will turn his body and hips out the opposite direction. This extends his reach with his right leg and also gives him a wider angle to turn back in towards Xande.

After he has hooked Xande's foot, Sokoudjou begins to turn back to the right. His body turns in a circular movement, his foot pulling Xande's leg away from the wall (cage), and his upper body pulling Xande's shoulders off the cage. Sokoudjou is pulling with his right foot against Xande's leg and pushing with his upper body against Xande's right shoulder (photo 3 & 4).

Once Sokoudjou successfully turns Xande away from the wall, Xande can no longer retain his balance because his weight is pushed back, but his feet are no longer underneath him and he does not have the cage as support (photo 5). Xande will fall to the ground and Sokoudjou will land in the dominant top position.



Sokoudjou's Inside Trip (continued...)



Against someone like Xande, who is an accomplished jiu-jitsu practitioner, this could be a dangerous position to be in. Sokoudjou has already taken precautions, however, and has his left knee up against Xande's inner right thigh, to prevent Xande from locking him in his guard. From here, Sokoudjou can begin executing his own ground and pound or submission strategy (photo 6 & 7).

While Sokoudjou is best known for his upset knockout victories over Nogueira and Arona, he is in fact a well-rounded fighter with world-class grappling skills and high-level competition experience. Sokoudjou is no longer fighting for the defunct Pride Fighting Championships organization and has been entertaining offers from a few different organizations in the United States.

In the meantime, to see Sokoudjou in MMA action, watch his Pride fights:

Pride 34 – Sokoudjou vs. Ricardo Arona

Pride 33 – Sokoudjou vs. Antonio Rogerio Nogueira



To see Sokoudjou's judo, check out [this match](#) between him and Karo Parisyan.



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