

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

Gi Guard Pass from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

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Last month's article covered the story of world-champion grappler Valerie Worthington. This month, Valerie demonstrates the first of three jiu-jitsu techniques we will be featuring. Valerie has trained extensively in both gi (wearing the traditional kimono) and nogi grappling techniques and has chosen a few of her favorites to share.

This month's move, the gi guard pass, begins with Valerie in Andy's guard (photos 1 and 2). Although to the layman it might appear that Andy is at a disadvantage, being on his back, he can actually mount numerous offensive movements from this position. By keeping his legs locked around Valerie, he can control her movements and keep her on the defensive. He also has the ability to set up chokes and arm locks.

Andy will keep the advantage as long as he can maintain his guard, meaning keeping his legs around Valerie. If she is able to pass his guard (escape from the leg wrap), then the tables will be turned and she will be able to achieve half-guard, side mount, or even a full mount. All of these are offensive positions.

Even though Valerie is at the disadvantage in Andy's guard, there are things she can do to maintain good form to assist her. She sits straight up, with good upright posture, and creates a balanced base with her hips and legs underneath her. To keep Andy's offense at bay, she is posting her hands into his solar plexus. With her left hand she grips the sleeve of his right arm, controlling his movement. In her right hand, she grips his gi collar and keeps her arm straight. As when holding weight overhead with an active shoulder and extended arm,



Photo 1



Photo 2

1 of 4

Gi Guard Pass from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (continued...)

she is using the structure of her arm, locking it straight, so that if he attempts to sit up, or to pull her down, she has a strong defense.

Valerie's objective is to pass Andy's guard and she begins the sequence of movements to achieve this by raising her left knee (photo 3). Raising her left leg first is important, because Valerie is controlling Andy's right arm, so he cannot reach for that leg. If she were to raise her right leg first, he would be able to reach it with his free arm and possibly sweep her.

Once Valerie has her left leg raised and her foot planted on the mat, she can then bring her right leg forward as well. While doing this she maintains her good base, or balance, with her weight and hip position and keeps her center of gravity low (photo 4).

From this position, Valerie stands straight up. Andy maintains a tight guard, so he is hanging heavily off Valerie, hoping she will tire before she can loosen his guard (photos 5 and 6).

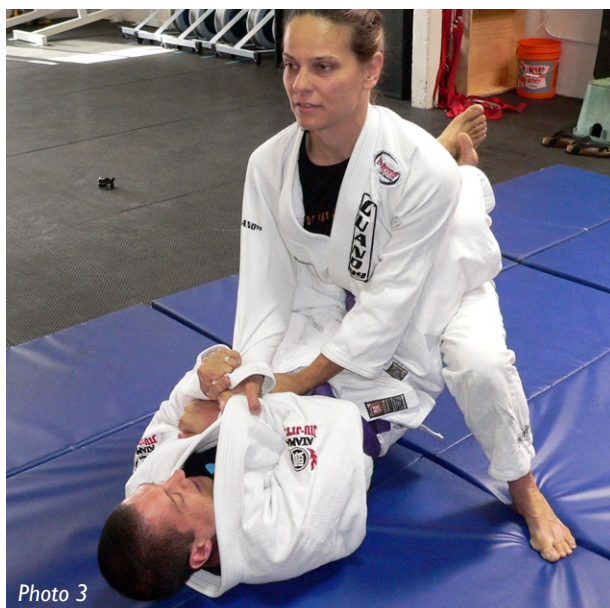


Photo 3



Photo 5

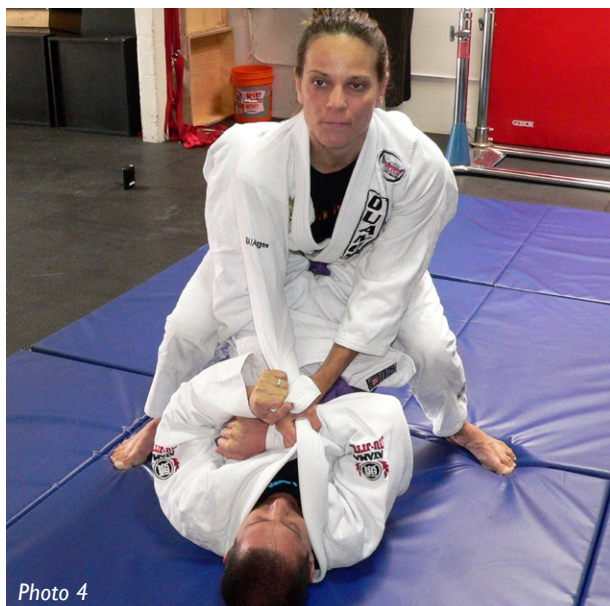


Photo 4



Photo 6

Gi Guard Pass from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (continued...)

To dislodge Andy's guard, Valerie first releases her grip of his gi with her left hand, and then reaches to her side and pushes down on Andy's right leg while attempting to shake him loose (photo 7).

Once Andy's guard loosens, Valerie will allow him to drop to the floor. She takes a lunge position with her left leg behind her and her right foot between Andy's legs. She maintains her grip on Andy's right sleeve (photo 8).

Once Andy is down, Valerie will release her grip with her right hand and slide her hand underneath Andy's left shoulder. She will use her right knee to slice across the inside of Andy's inner right thigh. Andy's thigh will be held down by her shin and she will bring her left leg across, so both her legs are now to Andy's side. Then, she will bring the rest of her right leg through and lower her hips. By bringing her hips down close to Andy's side and keeping her right arm under his left shoulder, Valerie has Andy's movement controlled. She is also



Photo 7



Photo 9



Photo 8



Photo 10

Gi Guard Pass from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (continued...)

controlling his right arm by holding it at the triceps and keeping it trapped by keeping her elbow close to her side. She is pressing her weight into Andy's torso. This position is sometimes referred to as "broken scarf hold" or "Judo side control" (photos 9, 10, and 11).

As the final step in this sequence, Valerie flips her hips over to assume regular side control (photo 12). Her hands remain in the same place, but she is now belly down to the mat. She is putting pressure on Andy with her chest and also keeping her knees close to his body to restrain his movement. Her right knee is close to his hip and her left knee is close to his ear. From this position, Valerie can begin mounting her own offensive strategy.



Photo 11



Photo 12

Valerie Worthington earned her Brazilian jiu-jitsu purple belt from Carlson Gracie and Carlson Gracie, Jr. She currently trains at the New Breed Academy in California. A dedicated member of Petranek Fitness/CrossFit Los Angeles, Valerie was a gold medalist at the 2007 World Grappling Championships in Turkey.

Becca Borawski, CSCS, teaches and trains at [Petranek Fitness/CrossFit Los Angeles](#) in Santa Monica. She has a master's degree in film from the University of Southern California and a background in martial arts training. She has blended these skills together to produce DVDs and build websites for professional fighters. Her main job is as the music editor on the TV show *Scrubs* and she currently trains jiu-jitsu under Eddie Bravo at 10th Planet Jiu-Jitsu in Hollywood.