The 2009 Mr. Olympia was billed as the greatest Olympia contest in history. Bodybuilding fans and contest promoters alike were excited at the prospect of the two most recent Mr. Olympia champions and the last three Arnold Classic champions facing off in Las Vegas!

Phil Heath and Kai Greene were the favorites to dethrone the reigning Mr. Olympia, Dexter Jackson. Victor Martinez and Dennis Wolf were also thought to be potential contenders for the Sandow.

Former two-time Mr. Olympia Jay Cutler was often mentioned but only out of respect for what the many accomplishments he had accomplished over the years as a top professional bodybuilder. Only die-hard Cutler fans gave him a serious chance of recapturing the crown after having lost the title to a competitor. That had never happened before.

And Branch Warren? Well, perhaps he would place in the top ten.

But how did the story actually turn out?

1. Jay Cutler

{joomplu:45389} {joomplu:45441}

Jay Cutler immediately knew he was “on” at prejudging on Friday night. His confidence and stage presence sent a clear message to all the other competitors. His competitors received the message loud and clear as they followed Cutler around the stage during posedown opportunities.

The audience clearly wanted Jay to win. Cutler has a lot of fans in his hometown of Las Vegas; but he seemed to convert the entire theatre to his corner by the end of the show. They wanted

him to win and came to see him win.

Cutler's condition surpassed his condition in 2001. His abdominals have unmatched deep and thick cuts when he is in this type of condition. He was extremely dry around the mid-sections. This made his waist look smaller. When Cutler's stomach is tight, it seems to control and dictate the condition for his entire physique.

We did not expect Cutler to approach this type of condition again in his mature career. By doing this, Jay rewrote the history books by becoming the first Olympia champion to lose then regain the title in a subsequent year.

Jay Cutler's physique was a complete and total surprise. But not the biggest surprise of the contest!

2. Branch Warren

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The biggest and most shocking surprise of the Olympia weekend was the second place given to Branch Warren. Branch looked dramatically better than he ever has in his career. He nailed his condition and surprised everyone. No one dreamed that Branch Warren would defeat Phil Heath or Kai Greene, much less Dexter Jackson.

Branch Warren totally deserved to be rewarded with a high placing for the best conditioning. But as good as he was with a dry, hard, and grainy muscular physique, the shape and symmetry is lacking. Warren comes up short in the guns department as well; his arms do not compare with other elite bodybuilders on stage.

Branch should have placed within the top six; we had him as high as fifth overall. But second place? The Mr. Olympia is about more than conditioning. There is a lot more to take into

account at a bodybuilding competition than conditioning to place second.

3. Dexter Jackson

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Dexter Jackson was shocked when he heard his name announced in third place – and rightly so. Dexter was in what appeared to be his best shape ever. He was better than last year when he won the Mr. Olympia. No one would have complained if he won again.

Few bodybuilders can compete with Dexter's shape and symmetry. The closest bodybuilder to him is Phil Heath.

This was undoubtedly a hard blow for Dexter. It seemed as if he wanted to say something to the judges from the stage before thinking better of it.

There was a lot of booing in the Orleans Arena.

Total disbelief.

4. Kai Greene

{joomplu:45421} {joomplu:45431}

Kai Greene was the most popular competitor after Cutler in the fan department. While Kai displayed some unique movements, such as his "sideways moonwalk", he missed his shining

moment on the Olympia stage. It was his golden opportunity to definitively show his ability as the best entertainer in history but he did not quite live up to expectations.

Kai Greene must be very careful. He is at serious risk of ruining his physique if he sacrifices conditioning and shape while going after size and mass at all costs. He would be wise to learn from the mistakes of Kevin Levrone and Flex Wheeler who compromised their physiques later in their careers by trying to play the “size game”.

5. Phil Heath

{joomplu:45416} {joomplu:45403}

Everyone talks about Phil Heath being a “future” Mr. Olympia. Even Phil Heath talks about Phil Heath being a multi-Olympia champion. Of course, he must capture that first title beforehand.

Phil Heath should have one last year at the 2008 Mr. Olympia. He could have won this year. He had the size, even more than before, but maybe he sacrificed a bit of conditioning to obtain it. Yet, he was still “spot on” and could have easily won the contest this year.

Phil sometimes appears to be barely human. Some shots were unbelievable. Heath has not only amazing size but muscle shape and bellies that are bestowed with a certain roundness and fullness. It is incomprehensible that Phil Heath could have placed fifth.

If Phil Heath’s physique at the 2009 Mr. Olympia doesn’t get any better than fifth place, fans must wonder if the contest is fixed.

Something is not right.

6. Victor Martinez

Victor Martinez was approximately 5-10% off his all-time best. He improved from prejudging to the finals on Saturday night.

His choice of posing music was curious. It seems possible that it was intended as a type of dedication to his late sister (although we can not be certain). His sister's tragic fate was alluded to at the press conferred. Victor was in a mellow mood all weekend. Her absence was surely felt.

The sudden and unexpected departure of Martinez's sister must have disrupted his training, dieting, and overall precontest mindset. If we are not mistaken, his sister was the one helped prepare his meals precontest. Victor lost not only a sister but a very close friend.

Nonetheless, Victor is a champion and showed up in great shape.

7. Ronny Rockel

Ronny Rockel finally showed up a contest in totally dry condition. It was his best shape so far as a professional bodybuilder. Like Cutler, Rockel was a surprise when he showed up in the best condition in several years.

We have never seen Rockel with that type of condition in back poses. His back had previously unseen details and his glutes were tight with striations.

Ronny seemed to know he was in his all-time best condition because his confidence was apparent on stage. However, Ronny still lacks the charisma on stage that gives a bodybuilder the extra points and solicits the support of the audience. This could have pushed him as high as fifth or sixth place.

Ronny Rockel impressed us.

8. Toney Freeman

Toney Freeman appeared bigger than last year but sacrificed condition as well. Toney's 2008 Mr. Olympia physique was the best package ever.

Freeman was still disappointed by placing eighth. The contest was a very tough show to crack the top six. Yet eighth in the world of professional bodybuilding is not bad at all!

9. Hidetada Yamagishi

It was clear to us that Hidetada Yamagishi would be in the top ten from the prejudging. He showed up with great condition and a hard appearance to his muscles. His presentation of classical posing to classical music was perfect for his physique. Hide should be very proud to have placed in the top ten of such a competitive field.

10. Moe Elmoussawi

The most baffling surprise of the contest was the announcement of Moe Elmoussawi in the top ten! *Several* of the competitors that followed him were worthy of his spot including Silvio Samuel, Gustavo Badell and Troy Alves even select bodybuilders who placed outside the top 15.

The 2009 Mr. Olympia was clearly neither the greatest Olympia contest in history or even recent history. The 2009 event can be characterized by its numerous unexpected surprises. There were surprises from the competitors: Jay Cutler's re-emergence, Branch Warren's condition, Ronny Rockel's dryness and Dennis Wolf's lackluster physique. There were also surprises from the judges: Branch Warren's second place award, Moe Elmoussawi's inexplicable gift in the tenth spot and the determination that Phil Heath is no better than the fifth best bodybuilder on

that stage.

Anything can happen at the Mr. Olympia!

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