

# Ridiculous Number of Middleweight Contenders at IBJJF 2018 No-Gi Worlds

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Dec 12, 2018 Michael Sears

36 athletes have signed up in the black belt adult middleweight division. It is by far the largest black belt bracket at this year's No-Gi worlds and contains a ridiculous amount of elite athletes who will contend for the IBJJF World No-Gi title.

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*Left to right: Isaque Bahiense (Pic: Maggie Left), Dante Leon (Pic: Dan Rod), Vitor Oliveira and Mike Perez (Pic: Dan Rod)*

**Isaque Bahiense** (Alliance) had a fantastic sophomore year in the gi in 2018, winning Worlds, Europeans and the Abu Dhabi World Pro, as well as pro invitational like the Marianas Open

and the ACB Grand Prix. Bahiense has an incredible 37-2 record in 2018, with twelve submissions and his only losses coming by referee decision. Now Isaque will ride that momentum into No-Gi Worlds, an event he won at brown and purple belt.

“I’m feeling really good for No-Gi Worlds. I’ve had a very productive camp, evolved a lot, and now it’s the final stretch,” he says. “I’m going in search of my third world championship this year. IBJJF Worlds, the World Pro, and now IBJJF No-Gi Worlds. Let’s end the year in a good way!”

***UPDATE Dec 12, 8.00 PM CST: It looks like Isaque Bahiense is OUT of the World No-Gi. More details we get them.***

GF Team is sending three of their killers to Anaheim in **Jaime Canuto, Vitor Oliveira** and **Dante Leon**. Canuto has finished third in the World two years in a row, Oliveira also finished third this year after taking out JT Torres in the quarterfinal. Leon has won No-Gi Pans in his first two years at black belt, and finished third at No-Gi Worlds last year after losing a close match to champ Josh Hinger in the semi. Oliveira is a No-Gi Pans champion and has been on the podium at No-Gi Worlds three times.

Atos is sending a pair of their best young athletes in **Michael Liera Jr** and **Michael Perez**. Liera finished in third place at the 2017 No-Gi Worlds, and took double gold at the 2018 No-Gi Europeans after closing out the open with teammate Lucas Barbosa. Perez is a no-gi specialist who recently finished third at No-Gi Pans and is a veteran of ADCC and Kasai Pro 2, where he took second place. Perez won No-Gi World titles as both a brown and purple belt.

Unity Jiu-Jitsu is also sending a strong pair of middleweights to No-Gi Worlds with **Manuel Ribamar** and **Felipe Cesar**. Ribamar has been on a tear lately, winning his last 17 matches in his weight class and gold at the Los Angeles Grand Slam and World Series of Grappling 2. After a win over Rudson Mateus in the Grand Slam final, Ribamar would go on to defeat

Gabriel Arges, Jaime Canuto, Victor Silverio and Leo Lara at WSOG. Felipe took second in this division at the 2017 No-Gi Worlds, losing by an advantage to Josh Hinger in the final.

**Hugo Marques** (Soul Fighters) won middleweight and the open class at the 2018 Brasileiro No-Gi and should contend for the World title in Anaheim.

Other athletes to keep an eye on include **Victor Silverio** (Gracie Barra), **Lucas Rocha** (ZR Team), **Enrico Cocco** (Fight Sports), **Darragh O'Conaill** (ECJJA), **Lachlan Giles** (Absolute MMA) and **Michael Trasso** (Gracie Humaita).

### **IBJJF World No-Gi Championship**