

An Interview with Local Ninja Luis Moço



by Matt
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“American Ninja Warrior” is an obstacle course competition based on “*Sasuke*”, the original Japanese version known as “Ninja Warrior” in the U.S. and other countries. For the past three years “American Ninja Warrior” has culminated with a mere ten Americans competing in Japan. This year a new format was introduced keeping the entire competition in the U.S. Six regional preliminary rounds were held with approximately 125 competitors in each region. Each region ran its own six obstacle preliminary course with the top thirty times advancing to a nine obstacle semi-final course, narrowing the field to fifteen finalists from each region. Ten “Wildcard” contestants were chosen at producer’s discretion to join the ninety regional finalists in Las Vegas, which consisted of a grueling, 4-stage final obstacle course.

The Prize for achieving “Total Victory”: \$500,000 and eternal bragging rights as the 1st American Ninja Warrior “Grand Champion.” American Ninja Warrior premieres the first of the six regional preliminary rounds on Sunday, May 20th at 9pm on the G4 channel. Regional semi-final rounds will air the following night at 9pm on NBC.



A triumphant Luis
Moco!

Athletes with diverse backgrounds as well as professionals from non-sport related careers have run the course. "American Ninja Warrior" requires speed, strength, agility, confidence, and the ability to think and react in the moment. Many Parkour athletes, or Free-Runners do very well on the course due to their training which normal consists of running, jumping, climbing, and general body awareness. Confidence is a key ingredient to success in any sport, and Parkour inherently teaches you to be confident in your own abilities at a moment's notice and strive to push your limitation to become a better athlete.

Luis Moço, a professional Stunt Performer from New Bedford, MA competed for the third time this year in the Northeast region's event. Episodes are tentatively scheduled to air June 3rd and 4th. I had a chance to sit down with our local Ninja and stuntman extraordinaire to discuss being on American Ninja Warrior and his experience working on movies and TV shows as a stunt performer.

1.) You went through the whole American Ninja Warrior process last year, why did you want to be part of American Ninja Warrior 2012?

It's just too much fun to stop! You meet other athletes and keep in touch when you're not competing. It's a great community to be a part of. We all want each other to succeed. It's less of a competition and more of a social gathering with and obstacle course to play on.

2.) Are you happy with your performance in this years American Ninja Warrior? How much training did you put into this years competition?

I'm very happy with how I did this year. I've been training specifically for ANW 2012 since January; building replica obstacles and working on my upper body strength. I was way more prepared this year than last.

3.) How did your background in stunt work help you with the competition?



For his day job Luis likes to play chicken with cars ... the cars usually win.

When I'm on set and the Director calls "ACTION", its go time. If something goes wrong I have to adapt and make it work, I can't just stop and ask to do it again. I have to suppress any doubt and be confident that my training will get me through the scene. ANW is very similar; you're waiting on the starting block, looking down the course, waiting for your chance to run and when it comes you have one shot. No second chances, no "take two", you either succeed or fail. You have to adapt in the moment and be confident.

4.) Speaking of your stunt work, favorite stunt you've ever done? favorite actor/actress you've worked with? and, favorite movie/tv show you've worked on? and why?

Favorite stunt would have to be my first car hit. It was the first stunt I did after moving to NY in 2010 on a show called "Blue Bloods." It went great, everyone was impressed and the stunt community heard about it quickly, which helped me get more work.

Favorite actor would be Robert De Niro. I did a small scene with him in a movie called "Being Flynn"; he comes to my door with a bat with nails sticking out of it and when I opened the door he swings it at my head. Real bat, real nails, and we

rehearsed this 15-second scene for 10 minutes just to make sure he didn't hit me, very professional.

Favorite film was a movie I worked on for a few months this past winter called RIPD. Shot completely in Boston, I learned so much from just being on set every day. Most of the time I work a day or two on a project and that's it. It was nice to know I had work the next day.

5.) If you could work on ANY upcoming film, what would it be? What role would you want to have in the film?

I would love to work on a superhero movie just to wear the costume. If I could double Batman or Captain America that would be a dream come true.



Luis playing a tough guy on TV.

6.) American Ninja Warrior is not for the faint of heart. Do you have any advice for any aspiring Ninja's out there?

If you've seen the show and think you've got what it takes, submit a video and try out. Find a gym with ANW specific obstacles in it and give it a try, especially the Quad Steps. For those of you who don't know, the Quad Steps are usually the very first obstacle you'll have to face, and I'd say 30-40% of people fail them. It's easy to underestimate an obstacle that looks simple on TV. I've done it and failed. Give every obstacle 100% of your attention, worry about the next one when you get to it.

7.) Speaking of Ninja's, pretty cool being a Ninja?

Ha, I wouldn't consider myself a "Ninja", but I am a competitor and an athlete. I do watch the show and when I see myself running the course I do think its pretty cool.

8.) You got injured training for this years American Ninja Warrior, how are you feeling? Will you do it again next year?

Unfortunately, I tore the ACL and Meniscus in my left knee training, it's a huge set back and I'm having surgery to repair it now that the competition is over. I'm pretty upset about it, but I know I'll be back in shape for next years competition.

9.) Final question, any projects on the horizon and where can people look for you on TV and in the movies (past or present)?

Everything is on hold for a few months now that I'm having surgery but I did work on Men in Black 3, which should hit theaters soon. I was recently featured on an episode of "Gossip Girl". I worked on a subway fight scene with Bradley Cooper in "Limitless" that you could find online. I had a small part in "Whaling City" which filmed here in New Bedford as well. I've worked on several TV shows that film in NY but most of the time you can't see my face so it's hard to tell where I am. I really don't care about seeing myself on screen anymore, but doing a great stunt is always exciting!

Check out G4's What it Takes to be An American Ninja Warrior video for more details!