

Evans stuns Salmon on UFC's Fight Night

Written by Ralph Gonzalez
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HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (January 25, 2007)—A perfectly placed high-kick to the head of Sean Salmon ended his night and sent Rashad Evans' stock soaring on the main event of UFC's Fight Night which was televised nationally on Spike TV from Hollywood, Florida.

Evans, a winner of Spike TV's The Ultimate Fighter, sports a perfect 10 and 0 record and is a well decorated college wrestler hailing out of Michigan State. Salmon (9-2) is no pushover himself having found success wrestling for the Ohio State Buckeyes.

Both men traded shots in competitive fashion for most of the fight until Evans saw the opening and landed a high kick to the jaw that dropped Salmon unconscious in spectacular fashion. Salmon laid on the canvas for more than three minutes and was eventually taken to the hospital on a stretcher for further observation.

"We worked on that all during camp," Evans said after the fight. "I knew I'd catch him with it." The end came at 1:06 of the second round.

Salmon, 29, was more than game while it lasted but the patient Evans made use of his superior speed and newly acquired Muay Thai skills to eventually score a classic M.M.A. knockout.

O'Brien upsets Herring

Jake O'Brien scored a huge victory over the much heralded Heath Herring with a workmanlike unanimous decision win. O'Brien (10-0) has a lengthy resume as a collegiate wrestler and used all his skills to completely dominate his opponent on the ground.

Herring has mostly lost to elite M.M.A. fighters like Antonio Nogueira, Fedor Emelianenko and "Cro Cop" Filipovic and was expected to use O'Brien as a steppingstone in the UFC. Herring who competed as part of PRIDE FC and trained in Holland with the "Golden Glory" kickboxing squad never seemed to get anything going and couldn't defend against O'Brien's wrestling.

Herring threw out a lazy and ineffective jab when they fought on their feet but O'Brien was able to easily put Herring (26-12-0) on his back on numerous occasions.

O'Brien easily maneuvered around Herring and eventually had a half guard on his opponent.

The second round included more domination from O'Brien as he easily outwrestled and did what he wanted with "The Texas Crazy Horse." By the third, the 28-year-old Texan's luck wasn't going to change. It was more ground attacks that Herring didn't feel suited him well. "We spent too much time on the ground. I'm out here trying to give the fans what they want. Some standup. Some knockouts," said a dejected Herring afterwards.

Ultimately, O'Brien was easily able to smother Herring's striking abilities. An impressive win by O'Brien whose young career is likely to get a boost. The judges had the bout scored at 30-27

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(twice) and 29-28 for the winner.

Franca pulverizes Fisher

Hermes Franca (18-5) stopped Spencer "King" Fisher (19-3-0) and secured a lightweight title shot with a crowd-pleasing performance. Franca started off the fight throwing looping dangerous shots with fight ending intentions.

Fisher, 30, wrestled effectively and had his moments but eventually one of those looping right hands would be the beginning of the end.

There was some good wrestling by both men as they went to the canvas in the first round. Franca, 32, was able to land on Fisher from the top position before getting back to their feet.

In round two, Franca gained the top position on Fisher. He controlled by passing the guard and moving on to side control. After a lull in the action, referee Jorge Alonso stood the fighters.

Franca went for the kill as he threw his trademark looping punches. Fisher traded and landed some solid shots but a right hand from Franca landed and put Fisher on "Queer Street." The Brazilian pounced and landed a flurry of more than a dozen right hands and left hooks that prompted the referee to stop the carnage.

"I said I had to finish. I didn't know if he was faking or not," said Franca afterwards. Franca is now slated to face 155-pound champion Sean Sherk for the title. The end came at 3:30 of the second round.

Other results:

Ed Herman caught Chris Price with an arm bar at 2:58 of the first round. "Short Fuse," a charismatic The Ultimate Fighter alumni, had a solid outing after a disappointing loss to Jason McDonald in his last outing.

Josh Burkman outpointed Chad Reiner to win on each judge's card.

Din Thomas beat Clay Guida in lightweight action via a unanimous decision.

Nate Marquardt wins by unanimous decision over Dean Lister.

Rich Clementi defeated Ross Pointon using a rear-naked choke in the second round.