

UFC 73: Tito Ortiz Manages Just A Draw

Written by David A. Avila
Saturday, 07 July 2007 19:00

SACRAMENTO-Two Ultimate Fighting Champions defended their titles but the loudest roars were reserved for the match between former champion Tito "Huntington Beach Bad Boy" Ortiz who fought to a draw with Rashad Evans on Saturday.

It was the veteran Ortiz, 32, versus undefeated Evans, 32, in a non-title fight before more than 12,000 people that grabbed the most attention at Ultimate Fighting Championship 73 dubbed "Stacked" by the promoters.

But after three tense rounds that displayed both fighters' wrestling skills the fight was deemed a draw on all three judges cards 28-28 because of Ortiz's instincts to grab the fence illegally to keep his balance during a take down. Otherwise he would have won on the scorecards.

"I just grabbed," said Ortiz explaining his grabbing the fence of the octagon to maintain his balance.

Few people in the arena including most of the press were unaware of the point deduction by referee John McCarthy against Ortiz.

Ortiz seemed to have a better grasp on utilizing both boxing skills and wrestling technique to trouble Evans in the first two rounds, but it was soon apparent that he was learning quickly under pressure.

"I thought I was winning the fight," Evans (15-0-1) said. "I felt him break inside."

The three-round contest resulted in a cut under Ortiz's left eye and both of Evans eyes swollen from elbows and punches. Neither fighter could gain a definite advantage.

"Of course I thought I won," said Ortiz (16-5-1). "But he gave me a tough fight. He was undefeated."

Both fighters agreed that a rematch is necessary.

"Don't you want to see Ortiz-Evans two," Ortiz said.

In the other main event UFC middleweight champion Anderson "Spider" Silva out-maneuvered Nate "The Great" Marquardt (28-7-1), got on top of him, then fired numerous accurate blows on the ear. Referee John McCarthy looked at the listless Marquardt and stopped the fight at 4:50 of the first round for a technical knockout victory for the Brazilian Silva.

"I'm so happy," said Silva (19-4). "I want to thank all of my friends."

UFC lightweight champion Sean Sherk (36-2-1) used his strength and will power to keep

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Brazil's grappling expert Hermes Franca (19-6) on the run for all five rounds. Though the Brazilian had his moments, it was all Sherk in winning by unanimous decision 50-45 twice and 49-46 according to the judges.

In the first televised fight Brazil's Antonio Nogueira, a former Pride FC heavyweight champion, survived a nasty knockdown from a kick to the jaw from Texan Heath Herring (27-13, 1 no contest) in the first round. The next two rounds saw Nogueira show his superior ground skills to scratch out a three round decision 29-28 on all three cards.

"I never been hurt like that," said Nogueira (30-4-1) who has beaten Herring three times now. "But I showed my heart here in America."

Chicago's Stephen "the American Psycho" Bonnar (13-4) used his experience against top flight opponents to use a variety of holds to force Denver's Mike Nickels (5-2) to submit from a rear naked choke at 2:20 of the first round.

"He's flexible so I knew the first hold was not going to get that tap," said Bonnar. "So I got it (the choke) behind the head. Even though he tucked his chin I got it in there tight."

Lightweight Frank Edgar (6-0) of New Jersey maintained his spotless record and gave Canada's Mark Bocek (4-1) his first loss with constant pressure with his fists. Both fighters were dropped in a rousing first round but Medgar found more holes in Bocek and pummeled him on the ground. Referee Jon Schorle stopped the fight at 4:55 of the first round for a technical knockout.

Indiana's finest battled to a quick and abrupt ending in the first round of a welterweight contest when Chris Lytle (33-14-4) managed to wrangle a reverse triangle chokehold and an arm bar on Jason Gilliam (11-2) at 2:15 of the first round. Gilliam tapped out.

Two Brazilians settled a grudge match as Jorge Gurgel (14-2) was able to use his punching skills to win a three-round decision over Diego Saraiva (9-5-1) in a lightweight fight. Both fighters are from Fortaleza. The judges scored it 30-27 for Gurgel.