

## UFC 76: Jardine Beats Iceman, Shogun Loses

Written by David A. Avila

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ANAHEIM, CALIF.-Two mixed martial arts super stars were bludgeoned by the upset bug as Keith "The Dean of Mean" Jardine beat Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell and Forrest Griffin choked out Mauricio "Shogun" Rua on Saturday.

Before more than 12,000 people at the Honda Center Jardine knocked down Liddell and used that momentum to win by split-decision over the former UFC light heavyweight champion in UFC 76.

The crowd was not pleased.

"There are so many guys at the top of the division," said UFC president Dana White regarding the two upsets.

Liddell (20-5) opened up the fight by landing left hooks that caused a large cherry-sized bump on Jardine and he also bloodied his forehead and nose. But the New Mexico fighter survived the San Luis Obispo fighter's attack.

"Man, he hit hard," said Jardine (13-4-1) of his opponent. "Even when I blocked the shots they hurt."

The two light heavyweights were both returning to the Octagon from knockout losses and fought with fists flying for all three rounds. A well-timed right hand counter by Jardine dropped Liddell in the second round but he jumped right back up to return fire.

"I started to see some openings," said Jardine.

Despite blood flowing from Jardine's ear, nose and forehead, and a bump alongside his right eye, Jardine continually landed right kicks and left hands on Liddell during the third round. It was a tactic the former champion could not remedy within three rounds.

"I couldn't get to him," said Liddell who now has lost two consecutive fights including the title fight to new champion Quinton "Rampage" Jackson by knockout. "I was a little frustrated."

Jardine (13-4-1) won by scores 29-28 twice while one judge scored it 29-28 for Liddell. The crowd of more than 12,000 people booed the decision but it was clearly Jardine's night.

The largest upset of the night belonged to Georgia's Forrest Griffin (15-4) who out-hustled Brazil's star fighter Mauricio "Shogun" Rua (16-3) over three rounds and ended the fight in dramatic fashion by a choke with 15 seconds left in the light heavyweight fight.

"It was nothing fancy, just a choke," said Griffin, who was the underdog against Brazil's Rua, a superstar in Japan's Pride Fighting Championship. "I'm sure that's not the way he wanted to

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start his UFC career.”

Jon Fitch of Indiana escaped two well-placed chokeholds and edged New Mexico’s Diego Sanchez (19-2) by split-decision in a three-round welterweight bout. The judges scored it 30-27, 29-28 for Fitch and 29-28 for Sanchez. Fitch’s record is now 20 wins two losses and one no contest.

“He beat me fair and square,” said Sanchez, who added that he may drop down in weight. “I was the smaller guy.”

Fitch said he was the clear winner.

“I felt I dominated,” Fitch said, adding that he helped prepare Josh Koscheck when he defeated Sanchez last winter.

Sanchez nearly had a choke out but Fitch escaped that hold and a triangle hold as well.

“I’m nearly impossible to choke out,” Fitch said.

Lyoto Machida of Brazil dominated Japan’s popular Kazuhiro Nakamura (11-7) in a three-round light heavyweight bout. Machida proved faster on the ground and with his punching and won by unanimous decision 30-27 on all three judges cards. Machida’s record is now 10 wins and no losses.

Nakamura arrived in the arena sporting a red and white umbrella. He pumped it in the air a few times to the delight of the crowd.

Tyson Griffin of Las Vegas out-scraped Brazil’s Thiago Tavares (16-1) in a three-round lightweight fight that ended in a unanimous decision for Griffin 29-28 twice and 30-27. Griffin’s record is now 10 wins and one loss.

### Prelims

Veteran Rich Clementi (36-12-1) out-maneuvered Anthony Johnson (4-1) of Los Angeles on the ground and used a rear naked chokehold to force a tap out at 3:05 of the second round of a fight held above the 170-pound welterweight limit. Johnson came in over weight but Clementi took the fight anyway.

Jeremy Stephens (14-2) of Iowa proved too strong for Brazil’s Diego Saraiva (9-6-1) in a lightweight bout that went the three-round distance. The new UFC fighter used his strength to offset Saraiva’s jujitsu holds and pounded his way to a 30-27 unanimous decision.

Christian Wellisch (9-2), fighting out of Sacramento, used a heel hook hold to force Scott Junk (6-2) of Hawaii to surrender at 3:19 of the first round of a heavyweight contest.

Matt Wiman (8-3) of Denver won by unanimous decision over Japan’s Michihiro Omigawa (4-5)

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in a punch out at the lightweight limit of 155 pounds. The judges scored it 30-27 and 29-28 twice for Wiman.