

St-Pierre Wipes Out Serra With Ease At UFC 83

Written by Michael Woods

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It's time to start the debate. After Georges St-Pierre dominated welterweight titlist Matt Serra, and made the talky New Yorker eat his words with a decisive TKO demolition at the Bell Center in Montreal at UFC 83, he made a strong case for himself as the top MMAer, pound for pound, in the world.

Anderson Silva fans will not hear of it, and will lobby for their man to be anointed as the sports' best. But the athleticism of GSP (16-2) is so apparent as soon as he enters the Octagon, and one has to think long and hard of who could give GSP a good go of it, as it appears he has put together his mental and physical components to devastating effect for opponents. He whopped Serra on the mat, Serra's favored territory, and there wasn't a second where the Canadian wasn't in the drivers seat on Saturday evening.

Serra had won the welter strap from the 11-to-1 favorite GSP at UFC 69. GSP had won the title from Matt Hughes at UFC 65, after Hughes had beaten GSP at UFC 50, with the vacant welterweight belt up for grabs.

Serra was supposed to engage in a grudge match with Matt Hughes at UFC 79 after the two men clashed philosophically and culturally on the Ultimate Fighter show, season six, but he hurt his back. So GSP stepped in for him, and wiped the floor with Hughes. Serra didn't like that GSP diminished his win by talking about family woes and distractions that had him at less than 100% mentally when Serra upset him, and Serra announced his disgust several times in interviews, pre-fight.

Serra came in holding the UFC's welterweight strap and the crowd in Montreal greeted him with copious boos as Bruce Buffer announced his stats.

In the first, GSP took Serra down immediately, a ballsy call against a BJJ expert. GSP looked to pass the New Yorker's guard, and tried a little ground and pound as Serra calmly assessed his status. GSP seemed to have the strength edge, but Serra closed his guard, and didn't allow the Canadian to do much. At the 1:35 mark, GSP passed guard, and the crowd perked up. Serra fended his foe off, and eventually reached his feet. GSP landed a sweeping left hook and then took the champ to the floor. The first round was all GSP and Serra went to his corner pondering a switch in strategy to combat the improved GSP who has grown markedly since the two tangled before. Cornerman Ray Longo advised Serra to stay on his feet and look to land a strike rather than working off his back.

In the second round, GSP took Serra to the floor. But the undersized fighter showed some life yet, as he struggled to his feet, and then fended off a single leg takedown attempt. He launched a high head kick, but then ate a few GSP jabs. He had to be thinking, Is there any skill GSP doesn't have? Serra again found himself on his back, with GSP looming over him, trying to drop sharp elbows on his mug. GSP cracked Serra's side with knees, part of his methodical assault. He achieved side control with 50 seconds to go. With Serra on his knees, covering his face,

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GSP caved in his side with knees, one after another. He landed four, and Serra was not protecting his side at all.

The ref perhaps heard the splintering of ribs, or perhaps didn't want to hear that sound, and he halted the bout at 4:25 of the second. The classy Serra (9-5) lifted up GSP, and walked him around the cage as the crowd roared. True pros, both of whom talked trash before, but hugged it out afterwards.

GSP told the crowd not to give Serra crap after, saying they both talked smack to hype the fight. He said he'd fight Serra in NYC, on his home turf, as he's a man of his word. The right side of Serra's face looked pretty ugly and he called GSP the best in the world. Is he right, Silva fans?