

Silva Delivers Front Kick From Hell, KOs Belfort At UFC 126

Written by Michael Woods

Sunday, 06 February 2011 00:28

Too many MMA fans had paid too much money to see too little action from Anderson Silva in the past. So they were ready to get their boo on after two boring minutes in the main event of UFC 126 at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas on Saturday night. Then Silva launched thunder from his hind leg, in the form of a front kick, which landed on Vitor Belfort's chin, and dropped the former Phenom to the floor. Two punches later, ref Mario Yamasaki interceded and halted the bout to save Belfort further punishment.

Looking for his eighth title defense, middleweight titlist Silva (27-4 entering; age 35; from Brazil; winner of 12 straight entering) weighed 185 pounds on Friday, while Belfort (19-8 entering; age 33; from Brazil; ex light heavy champ) was also 185.

In the first, the two lefties sized each other up. The crowd leaned Belfort, chanting "Vitor, Vitor" to start the round. A minute in, they booed at the lack of exchanges. Two minutes passed with little to no action. A left hand from Belfort scored and the crowd loved it. A front kick from Silva dropped Belfort, a nasty left leg delivered in the blink of an eye to the chin. Silva threw two blows and the ref hopped in to halt the scrap. The time of the KO was 3:29.

Silva drew scattered cheers when he asked afterwords for all to respect Belfort, who he said he always looked up to. He also thanked a coach for showing him that front kick, which Belfort expected to land in his midsection. Belfort afterwards admitted he just got caught. "I will be back," he told Joe Rogan. "That's what UFC's about, we're here to fight."

Ultragraybeard Rich Franklin (age 36; ex middleweight champ) faced off with graybeard Forrest Griffin in a light heavyweight matchup. In the first round, Forrest worked some ground and pound. Franklin breathed deep and fended him off. He did well to escape the round without a cut, after Franklin was on top of him for a few minutes. Griffin looked more spent after the round than did Franklin. In round two, Griffin was light on his feet. His kicks, especially his inside leg kicks to the lefty's right leg, were bothersome. He tagged Franklin with a left hook with 1:30 to go in an all-Forrest round. For being away from the cage for 14 months, Griffin looked sharp as a Joan Rivers quip. In the third, Franklin didn't look fresh. That said, he was still looking to land a homer. Griffin impressed the judges with his takedowns, and there was no drama as we awaited the cards. Well, judges being what they are, there was the tiniest bit of drama...But all three saw it 29-28, for Griffin. After, the victor told Joe Rogan he felt rusty, and his camp wasn't stellar but overall he was happy with the outcome. Franklin never got untracked.

Ryan Bader scrapped with phenom Jon Jones in a light heavyweight tangle. Jones had a north-south choke on tight, but Bader weathered it two minutes in. Jones is such a smoothie; Bader shot and Jones stuffed him like it was his three year old niece trying to take out his legs.

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Jones showed a surprising strength edge, considering Bader is one of those guys that looks like he threw hundreds of hay bales in an afternoon on the farm without breaking a sweat. In round two, Jones choked out Bader, making him tap via guillotine. The time of the finish was 4:20. After, Jones talked to Rogan. He said he got a new religious tat which gave him strength. Then Rogan asked him if he wanted a shot at light heavy champ Shogun Rua, because Rashad Evans withdrew from their title clash because of an injured knee. "Hats off to Endicott, NY, and I'm goin' for a world title, baby," he said, before dropping to his news, awash in emotion. Rua strolled into the Octagon, and said he respected Jones, but doesn't have a problem facing anyone.

Jake Ellenberger met Carlos Rocha in a welterweight bout. Rocha had side control in the first, and his transitions as he looked for the sweet spot to submit Jake were seamless. Jake weathered that span, but was again in trouble when Rocha had a kimura in his sights. Jake's standup was better than Rocha's, but he loaded up with the right too much. Rocha disrupted Jake's rhythm with head and leg kicks, and after three, we went to the cards. One judge saw it all Rocha, but was out-voted by two who gave it to Jake, 29-28.

Ex WEC bantam champ Miguel Torres, formerly a top tier pound for pounder, fought in the PPV curtain jerker. He won a UD, 30-27 across the board, from Antonio Banuelos in his UFC debut. His jab told the story. It was hard, and quick and kept the loser from attacking. It wasn't a scintillating scrap, and Torres could've showed more passion and urgency.

Follow Woods on Twitter @Woodsy1069.

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MisterLee says:

It was a good fight. I thought Franklin, besides receiving 2-3 hard shots, dominated the stand up, but Griffin had the floor. I would have given Franklin at least one round, with the 3rd being a throw'em up. I think Griffin won on getting points on takedowns and switching ground positions, but I think neither did anything devastating, and the decision could have gone either way. With that, I'm still a fan of "Ace", and realize Griffin's attitude more so than his skills make him an elite fighter. Holler!

FighterforJC says:

Jon Jones is what it's all about. The guy is an entertainer and a finisher.

ultimoshogun says:

He's cleaned out the division and everyone seems to be pushing for a superfight with GSP...I like the idea, but I don't think GSP will be much trouble for Silva the way a lotta people believe...To be honest, I wouldn't be surprised if Silva dominates GSP. If the superfight ever

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happens and should Silva win I'd like to see him get a straight shot at the LHW title before he retires.