

MMA: The Reckoning Ontario MMA Kicks Off With First Legal Show at Casino Rama, Orillia

Written by Brian J. D'Souza SPECIAL TO TSS
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Britto's ahead in this clinch but Young got the love from the judges in Ontario.

ORILLIA, ON – Saturday night at Casino Rama was a landmark event for about 5,000 in attendance at the first legal MMA card in the province of Ontario. While the first UFC is slated for April 30th, a promotion called Knockout Entertainment made it into the history books as the very first to run a card in Ontario.

The card featured such UFC veterans as Chris Horodecki and Josh Burkman, as well as local

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grappling specialists Misha Cirkunov and Jorge Britto.

Adrenaline MMA team member Chris Horodecki (17-3) wasted little time in taking David Castillo (9-3) to the ground in the opening seconds of their lightweight (155 lb) bout. Rather than use his dominant striking, Horodecki worked for a submission, eventually catching Castillo in a rear naked choke at 4:24 of the first round.

In a closely-contested welterweight (170 lb) bout, Canadian Jordan Mein moved to 15-5 with a decision win over Josh Burkman, whose record now sits at 21-9. Mein succeeded in keeping the fight standing; there were good exchanges, but the impatient crowd had difficulty all night dealing with any minor lulls in action.

Further down on the card, Xtreme Couture Toronto's Misha Curkunov moved to 4-1 against a game Ion Cherdivara. With just one pro fight and one win on his resume, inexperienced Cherdivara fought like he knew losing was guaranteed, and merely attempted to survive throughout the light-heavyweight (205 lb) bout. Ion was successful in forcing the fight to go the distance by staving off most of Curkunov's takedown attempts and remaining in a defensive shell during the stand-up exchanges.

Although Curkunov is an accomplished grappler—he was a Pan-American Games Gold Medalist (no-gi super heavyweight division) and North American ADCC Trials Champion—his inability to lock in a submission against a green opponent raises questions about how far he can go in MMA.

British fighter Jason Young (8-3) participated in one of the most riveting fights of the night against Toronto BJJ's Jorge Britto (12-7) at lightweight. The pair traded knockdowns in the first round, with BJJ black belt Britto scoring an impressive spinning backfirst. Britto kept trying throughout to pull out a submission throughout the fight, but Young deserves credit for defending well. The final round saw Young in total control on the feet—landing shots that had Britto hurt and backing up. Thanks to the damage done with his punches, Young took a decision on the judges' scorecards.

The well-organized show was free from any problems, and bodes well for the future of MMA in Ontario. Although the UFC sold over 55,000 tickets for a premium card at Toronto's Rogers Centre, it remains to be seen if there will be good business for smaller promotions across various cities in Ontario.

Knockout Entertainment announced that it would run a second show at Casino Rama on July 19th; no word about which fighters will be on the card yet.

Full results were as follows:

Joel Powell submits Brandt Dewsberry via Rear Naked Choke @ 4:54 of Rd2
Misha Cirkunov defeats Ion Cherdivara via Unanimous Decision (30-27, 30-27, 30-26)
Jason Saggo submits Taylor Solomon via Arm Bar @ 3:25 of Rd2
Matt MacGrath defeats Dean Amasinger via Unanimous Decision (30-27, 30-27, 30-27)

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Rob Hill submits Spencer Rohovie via Arm Triangle @ 1:42 of Rd2

Jason Young defeats Jorge Britto via Unanimous Decision (29-28, 29-28, 29-27)

Chris Horodecki submits David Castillo via Rear Naked Choke @ 4:24 Rd1

Jordan Mein defeats Josh Burkman via Unanimous Decision (29-28, 29-28, 30-27)

Brian J. D'Souza is a Canadian writer who has covered Mixed Martial Arts for ESPN.com, FoxSports.com and FIGHT! magazine.

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