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Combat Zone 31 — Amateur at The Rock
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SANTIAGO VICTORIOUS IN MMA MAIN EVENT TO REMAIN UNDEFEATED; STUART TAKES CO-FEATURE AT ROCKINGHAM PARK



by Lynn Snierston

SALEM, NH — Will “The Brown Bomber” Santiago displayed plenty of heart along with his talent to score a third round TKO in the thrilling main event of mixed martial arts action at Rockingham Park on Friday night as he remained undefeated.

Headlining the 12-fight card made up of all amateurs and presented by Combat Zone MMA, the Lawrence native battled Josh Morales of Derry, NH in front of the sold out Sports Club crowd that was on its feet and screaming from the first bell. Santiago, who trains with American Top Team, finally prevailed in 1:51 of the final round when he turned the match of 185-pounders his way.

“He’s a wrestler and I didn’t think he wanted to stand up,” said Santiago. “My wrestling training is pretty good too, and I’m the smaller guy so I knew I had to keep him standing up and then get him on his back. Once I did, I was able to hit him with strikes and rain down punches and that was the difference.

Santiago, making his second appearance in the cage, was also able to use his experience against Morales, who fights for the Militech Fighting System in New Hampshire but was stepping into the cage for the first time. Santiago improved to 2-0-0 while Morales is now 0-1-0.

In the co-main event, the crowd was also vocal in support of local favorite David “Hollywood” Stuart of Haverhill, Ma as he came out as the aggressor in the first round and inflicted some damage to Phil Parrish in an intense battle of the 180-pounders. With the crowd standing and chanting, “Hollywood, Hollywood” in round two, Stuart tried to submit Parrish with an arm bar but his opponent rolled out of it to end the round.

Parrish, of Cortland, NY, then came back with force in round three and scored points with his superior kick boxing skills but Stuart was declared the winner by split decision and improved to 2-1-0 while his opponent slipped to 1-3-0.

“It was my take-downs and getting control on my take downs that made the difference,” said Stuart, who also fights out of American Top Team. “He’s a real tough

guy and a real tough fighter and it was a good fight. He’s also a gentleman in a fighting man’s sport and a good guy. I definitely felt all of the support in the room and really appreciate it.”

Ben Martignetti (0-1-0) of Danvers, Ma and George Lynch (1-0-0) of Roslindale, Ma, both making their career debuts, started off the action on the under card in the 145-pound class and it took Lynch only until 2:15 of round two to submit his opponent with a rear naked choke hold.

Next up, RJ Letendre (1-0-0), a police officer in his hometown of Rollinsford, NH, and Sean Blaisdell (0-1-0) of Amesbury, Ma got the crowd fired up in the first round that saw the two first-timers in the 155-pound division trade punches and kicks and take each other to the ground. Letendre notched his first victory with a rear naked choke hold in 1:44 of the second round.

The heavyweights then battled in the third fight and Bob Burton (1-0-0) of Malden, Ma, one of four American Top Team representatives on the card, came on strong in the second round to submit Matt Thompson (0-1-0) of Syracuse, NY by rear naked choke hold in 1:02 of the second round.

In the next fight for 155-pounders, Sean Hamel (2-0-0) of Huntington, VT remained undefeated in his second cage fight and only took 2:40 of the first round to submit James Post (0-1-0) of Kingston, NH by a rear naked choke hold.

In the following two bouts, brothers Keith and Andrew Nelson of Team KAMMA saw action for the first time but both were dispatched by TKO in the dual 170-pound classes. Aaron Smith (1-0-0), fighting out of Seacoast MMA at 170pounds, needed only 1:33 of the first round to score his first win after he caught Nelson in an arm bar. Jay Bakanowski (1-0-0) then dominated Andrew before the referee stopped the fight in 2:20 of the first round.

When the action in the 185-pound class resumed after intermission, Lowell Zangri of Manchester, NH and Team Valor and Tim Miller (0-1-0) of Cortland, NY had the crowd rocking as they battled the distance before Zangri (2-0-0) was declared the winner by unanimous decision to remain undefeated.

Next up in a match between 145-pounders who both had experience, Taylor Trahan of Lisbon, NH won his second fight and second consecutive match by submission when Adam Toussaint of North Berwick, Me tapped out in 1:23 of the first round after Trahan got him into a rear naked choke hold. Trahan improved to 2-3-0 while his opponent dropped to 2-2-0.

Ali Corbett of Revere, Ma then took Logan Moore of Kingston, NH the full three rounds before being declared the winner by unanimous decision in the first fight for both and at 155 pounds. In an evenly matched battle between Devin Lenfest of Londonderry, NH and Corey Palmer of Derry, NH, two fighters seeing live action for the first time and who once trained together at Team Valor, Palmer kept the match off the mat and in a slug fest for the first two rounds. Lenfest took Palmer, now with Militech Fighting System, to the ground in the final round and with all three judges scoring the fight 27-28 but taking a two-point deduction, Lenfest was declared the winner.

The results of the Combat Zone 31 all- amateur card are as follows:

Will Santiago (2-0-0) of Lawrence, Ma. def. Josh Morales of Derry, NH by TKO 1:51 round 3.

David Stuart (2-1-0) of Haverhill, Ma. split decision over Phil Parrish (1-3-0) of Corning, NY.

Devin Lenfest (1-0-0) of Londonderry, NH def. Corey Palmer (0-1-0) of Derry, NH by unanimous decision.

Ali Corbett (1-0-0) of Revere, Ma def. Logan Moore (0-1-0) of Kingston, NH by unanimous decision.

Taylor Trahan (2-3-0) of Lisbon, NH def. Adam Toussaint of No. Berwick, Me (2-2-0) by TKO in 1:23 round 1.

Lowell Zangri (2-0-0) of Manchester, NH def. Tim Miller of Cortland, NY (1-0-0) by unanimous decision.

Jay Bakanowski (1-0-0) of Northborough, Ma def. Andrew Nelson (0-1-0) of Berwick, Me by TKO in 2:20 round 1.

Aaron Smith (1-0-0) of York, Me def. Keith Nelson (0-1-0) of Berwick, Me by TKO in 1:33 round 1.

Sean Hamel (2-0-0) of Huntington, Vt def. James Post of Kingston, NH (0-1-0) in 2:40 round 1 by rear naked choke hold.

Bob Burton (1-0-0) of Malden, Ma def. Matt Thompson (0-1-0) of Syracuse, NY in 1:02 round 2 by rear naked choke hold.

RJ Letendre (1-0-0) of Rollinsford, NH def. Sean Blaisdell (0-1-0) of Amesbury, Ma in 1:44 round 2 by rear naked choke hold.

George Lynch (1-0-0) of Roslindale, Ma, def. Ben Martignetti (0-1-0) of Danvers, Ma in 2:15 round 2 by rear naked choke hold.