The last K-1 fight on the list, and we may have saved the best for last...

Peter Aerts v. Semmy Schilt ***(K-1 World Grand Prix Finals, December 11)***

There's been a lot of ink spent on this fight already, but it's the kind of fight that deserves all that attention and more. This was, in my opinion, the single greatest combat sports story of 2010, and the kind of story that makes you a sports fan. On one side - the 40 year old Peter Aerts. Aerts is the most beloved veteran of the sport, but after an unprecedented 17 year run at the top, he finally faltered last year, missing his first ever Grand Prix. Earlier in 2010, Aerts had talked about the end coming soon, and after his KO loss to Kyotaro, it felt like the writing was on the wall - this could be the end of the road for the great one. On the other side - the near 7 foot tall Semmy Schilt, the defending and 4 time K-1 Grand Prix champion. Schilt is as dominant a fighter as K-1 has ever seen, never once being knocked out of the Grand Prix, or any other tournament for that matter. All signs pointed to Schilt taking down the aged Aerts.

Now that is a moment.

Before moving on, let's take a look at exactly how Aerts pulled this off. So many men had failed to take Schilt down - how did Aerts succeed? One key to his victory is Aerts's ability to mix up his attack and constantly keep Schilt guessing. He knows when to wade in with punches, when to lock Schilt up because he is too far inside, and when to retreat from the big man's strikes. He reads Schilt masterfully, allowing him to always keep the pressure up and never let Schilt find his own rhythm. And with that pressure he is able to connect punch after punch accurately on Schilt's chin. They're not powerful KO shots, but they keep stunning Schilt. Most importantly, they prevent Schilt from establishing the methodical rhythm he has used to defeat so many opponents. It's a masterful plan, but one that takes intense concentration, confidence, and stamina to execute. And that's where Aerts seals the deal - he never lets up, ultimately winning the fight in the final minutes. When Schilt finally wilts under the Aerts attack, the 40 year old is still there to put the pressure on, claiming his victory with a definitive closing to the fight. Beautiful, beautiful work that, when combined with the story going in, makes for a truly exceptional fight.

Previously featured:

Tyrone Spong v. Jerome Le Banner

Bovy Sor. Udomson v. Takaaki Umeno

Yuya Yamamoto v. Scott Shaffer

Tetsuya Yamato v. Yuta Kubo

Peter Aerts v. Ewerton Teixeira

Mike Zambidis v. Chahid Oulad El Hadj

Gokhan Saki v. Daniel Ghita

There will be 10 fights total posted, with the final two posted on Wednesday. Fights are featured in chronological order moving through the year. Voting will be open Thursday to determine the winner.