Story by R. Choi

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On Thursday, September 13th, eight professional Muay Thai fighters gathered at the Renzo Gracie Academy in Brooklyn to fight in a one-night “Battle of the PRO’s” tournament. The event, which took place in the impressive new facility and was elegant enough to require a corporate casual dress code (sorry, no TapouT gear allowed) nevertheless delivered a great night of fights with plenty of action and several knockouts.

The first round of fights featured Rafael Machado of Gold Team (Newark, NJ) defeating Nate Chambers of Hyena Muay Thai (Las Vegas, NV) via unanimous decision, Villi Bello (Ardon’s Sweet Science, NY) advancing after the fight was ruled a no contest in the first round due to a questionable groin shot to Mervin Rodriguez (Pellegrino MMA, Belmar NJ), Troy Sheridan of Team Ultimate (Toronto, Canada) defeating the older and very experienced Peter Kaljevic by unanimous decision, and Deshawn Robinson (America’s Finest Kickboxing, NJ) overcoming a very aggressive Turan Hasanov (Fight Factory, NY) two minutes and 42 seconds into the

second round with a devastating knockout by knee that left him unable to continue.

An intermission and the only amateur bout of the night showed why clinch is essential in Muay Thai, as Jason Sheena (Workshop Muay Thai, NY) won a unanimous decision against Daniel Cronin (Renzo Gracie, NY). This also seemed to set the tone for the first fight in the semi-finals, which was also decided in the clinch with Villi Bello winning by TKO 1 minute and 25 seconds into the second round after landing several vicious knees on his opponent, Rafael Machado. Afterwards, Troy Sheridan and Deshawn Robinson faced off in a very exciting bout that had a flurry of back and forth exchanges in the first round. Troy looked rocked early but he still managed to send Deshawn crashing through the ropes onto the judge's table and was not only able to make a full recovery, but also scored an impressive KO at 2 minutes and 46 seconds with a right hook that sent Deshawn's mouthguard flying.

The final fight pitted Troy Sheridan against Villi Bello. Bello was very aggressive, but had problems with the longer reach of Sheridan. Bello tried changing levels and kept up an aggressive pace, but Sheridan ultimately controlled the distance and and kept Bello from getting close with a nasty jab and low kick combination that had served him well all night. In rounds two and three, Sheridan also added a high left kick to the mix and won the fight by unanimous decision, as well as the tournament.