

UFC78 'Validation' November 17, 2007 – Fight Card Review

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Michael Bisping (England 205lbs) vs Rashad Evans (USA 206lbs):

Bisping is now the first Brit to headline a UFC card & this was the first card to feature The Ultimate Fighter winner vs winner. These guys really gave it their all this fight and like Evans' last bout, it could well have ended in a draw. To give Evans the nod due to takedowns really showcases how much today's judges are hung up on takedowns, as did the Parisyran/Chonan fight.



In my opinion, Bisping's knees should have levied more clout with the judges as they were far more damaging & his takedown defense was excellent. When Rashad did get him down, he was unable to deal any significant punishment & he was unable even to keep him down. Plus Bisping got a good takedown himself, right at the end of round 2. I would have judged this match a draw.



Bisping should really spend some time at Chute Boxe in Brazil because had he followed their philosophy, instead of landing one good knee & breaking, he would have clung on like a tumor & fired knee after knee until the opponent crumpled. There is nothing in the striking repertoire of mankind more devastating than knee strikes in the Thai clinch! All told, Bisping's standup game is quite good but nowhere near top-shelf levels yet.

Rashad on the other hand, typical of every fighter with a wrestling background, really needs to work on his standup skills. Sure, he knocked out Sean Salmon with a beautiful roundkick to the head but I wouldn't give him 2 minutes in a K1 match....

In any case, both of these dynamic fighters are still in their 20's, are exciting to watch & have great futures ahead of them.

Winner: Rashad Evans by split decision

Houston Alexander (USA 203lbs) vs Thiago Silva (Brazil 204lbs):

It took Alexander less than a minute to knock out Keith Jardine at UFC71, and that's impressive, because Jardine has victories over Forrest Griffin & Chuck Liddell. Lethal, physically imposing & meteoric, Alexander is a likeable fighter. His pre-fight interview says it all "I am here to give the fans their hard-earned money's worth".

Alexander's opponent here is 10-years-younger, undefeated Chute Boxe fighter Thiago Silva, BJJ blackbelt & Muay Thai fighter. I think Chute Boxe is the best fight camp on earth so when someone like Thiago skyrockets out into the mainstream fight circuits, destroying all comers, mostly by knockout, you have to take notice. This guy looks to be another Wanderlei or Shogun or Anderson Silva in the making!

Alexander's background in comparison is in hip-hop! I think that pretty much says it all. Thiago had Houston fully mounted by 2 minutes into the fight & unconscious 90 seconds after that.

Winner: Thiago Silva by first round knockout



Karo Parisyan (Armenia 170lbs) vs Ryo Chonan (Japan 170.5lbs):

I recall telling Johnny Powers my sentiments before this fight: 'I think Karo Parisyan is going to win but I hope Ryo Chonan kicks his ass'. All those years of judoka discipline yet Parisyan hasn't learned one iota of humility; he is a complete testosterone head! In his defense, he's young, but after his belligerent, unprovoked mauling of Nate Diaz on the Ultimate Fighter reality show, and his nauseating "I can hurt these guys in so many ways" defense afterwards, I have a hard time respecting this guy. And let's be honest; he doesn't have nearly the standup skills to justify walking out to 'Bad to the Bone'; most of his wins have been by decision & he's never had a knockout.

Ryo Chonan, is best known for his remarkable heel-hook victory over Anderson Silva in 2004 & for somehow surviving a fully extended armbar by Carlos Newton. While a versed, tough fighter, his career is otherwise decidedly unremarkable, as was this fight. Much of it was spent stagnating against the fence or on the ground with the judges eventually giving the nod for the takedowns.

Winner: Karo Parisyan by unanimous decision



Ed Herman (USA 186lbs) vs Joe Doerksen (Canada 185.5lbs):

OK let's just get this one out and over with: Doerksen should have won the fight. In what can only be described as 'the mother of all saves by the bell', Doerksen had Herman finished at the end of round two via triangle choke. Not just in trouble, but finished!



Let's remember that he has beaten Herman before via triangle choke and history would have definitely repeated itself had he snapped that hold on five seconds earlier.



Going into round 3 Herman still looked a little dazed and tired but Doerksen was obviously totally exhausted. 'Gym rat' or not, let's bear in mind that he took the fight on 2 weeks notice as opposed to Herman who is on a dedicated fight-training schedule. As a result, instead of owning Herman a second time, Doerksen gave him his first knockout victory.

Winner: Ed Herman by third round knockout.



Spencer Fisher (USA 154.5lbs) vs Frankie Edgar (USA 154lbs):

I picked Edgar to win this bout because he is really on a roll: since entering the MMA circuit 2 short years ago he's already won 8 out of 8 fights including a victory over Tyson Griffin. This is quite a feat because Griffin, it should be recalled, is the only man to hold a win over Urijah Faber and is undefeated outside of his loss to Edgar.



In a style reminiscent of Tito Ortiz, Edgar took Fisher to the ground & kept him there throughout the entire fight, imposing his will in ground-and-pound fashion. Fisher just didn't have an answer for Edgar's takedowns & wrestling prowess which is unfortunate because he is the far superior striker. Fisher really needs to work on his takedown defense and hey, if you're going to be taken down anyway, why not throw a knockout strike each time he closes with you? He gave Edgar nothing to answer for yet he has great knee strikes which he has used in the past against takedowns.



Spencer, you were the better MMA fighter in this match but you were bested by a superior wrestler and it certainly doesn't have to be that way...

Winner: Frankie Edgar by unanimous decision.



Joe Lauzon (USA 155lbs) vs Jason Reinhardt (USA 155lbs):

I don't always review the end-card match but this one was really good. I like Joe Lauzon, he's only 23 & he has a 16-3 record! He never brings anything but his A-game & his combat spirit is right up there with the champions. Next to Nate Diaz I believe he was the best fighter on their season of The Ultimate Fighter & I foresee a great future for him in the 155lb weight class, especially now that he's finally given up his day job!



Jason Reinhardt makes his UFC debut here with an 18-0 record, with only two fights going past the first round. Certainly he's an experienced competitor but there's something to be said about stepping into the Octagon for the first time, not to mention his opponent is 15 years younger!

As it turned out, Lauzon really summed it up best when he said of his opponent "This is the big leagues... he hasn't fought the same level of competition that's known in the UFC".

Lauzon blew past Reinhardt's guard & took the match in only 1:14, with the submission of the night.

Winner: Joe Lauzon by first round RNC (rear naked choke) submission