



MUAYTHAI WORLD SERIES CHANG CUP

Lorne Castle reports for MAI from the recent **MuayThai World Series** event at the Bournemouth O2.

Another sell-out crowd were entertained beyond expectations in what has been described as the most action packed event so far. With twenty-one matches on the card, it was a smooth operation with fights running well after each other and a full TV rig filming for **Sky Active Channel** showing that MuayThai and martial combat is growing in popularity.

In the opening few matches the crowd saw some of the next generation on talent with four junior matches - the most exciting of all saw *Champions World Gym* girl, **Keira Bradley**, take on multiple Junior British Champion, **Danielle Butler**, with Butler gaining the points victory with slightly cleaner strikes and better ring craft gained from more ring experience.

The Adult matches cracked off with a better of a match, with **Leon Elphik** (*Gosport Muaythai*) taking on **Rob Tee** (*MAUK Dorchester*) - with Rob having a clear height advantage which he

used with long punches and kicks to gain victory. This was followed by the evening's first adult female match with **Eve Penderis** (*Champions World Gym*) facing fellow bodybuilder, **Hannah Tran**, from Salisbury. Both girls showed a conditioned frame and Hannah came out of the blocks firing sharp and clean combinations, literally as clean as a pad drill. Eve took her time and landed less, but far more damaging shots, with her right hook knocking Hannah across the ring. This seemed to take the confidence out of Hannah who was less inclined to engage and let Eve increase her dominance over the last two rounds with her right hook remaining very dangerous, knocking Hannah down. A win by points went to Eve Penderis.

Newcomer, **John Martin** (*Champions World Gym*), then entered the ring looking somewhat lost... He faced **Nick Lough Scott** (*Mike Bennett, Cheltenham*) who had a good height and experience advantage. John, having only ever trained in Boxing, stood in at late notice due to an illness and started with some crisp hand

RYAN'S CORNER OBVIOUSLY GAVE HIM GOOD ADVICE AS HE CAME OUT MUCH MORE CONFIDENTLY...



combinations. Nick threw back a couple of hard, high kicks which gave John the incentive to try his first kick which managed to take Nick off his feet, but he unfortunately landed awkwardly on his knee causing the match to be ended.

Champions World Gym fighter, **Rob Watson** stepped up next against **Ryan Cough** (*MAUK Dorchester*), with Rob having a strong first round with Boxing and kick combinations. He controlled the ring well, with Ryan not having much land in this round. Ryan's corner obviously gave him good advice as he came out much more confidently and looked at landing a right roundhouse kick. He



DENISE SHOWED CRISP, ACCURATE HAND COMBINATIONS AND SLICK MOVEMENT...

managed to push Rob back over the remaining rounds and Rob also slowed his pace during the same rounds, which gave Ryan a points victory.

The crowd were treated to a world class Boxing demo next between WBC Muaythai World Champion **Denise Castle** 46kg (*Champions World Gym*) and World Kickboxing Champion **Andree Warbrick** 53kg (*Mike Bennett, Cheltenham*). With a sizeable weight difference, this gave both girls the chance to gain valuable experience before they both face real opposition in the July **World Series**. Denise showed crisp, accurate hand combinations and slick movement, with Warbrick

looking to counter when the action came in close.

Sam 'Praying Mantis' Egan (*Planet Combat*) then faced off with **James Courtney** (*U2 Gym*), with the Mantis having a clear height advantage which he used to fire off some sharp knees to keep Courtney at distance. Courtney weathered the storm though and threw three and four Boxing combinations, but they lacked the effect that the tall Mantis had with his knees. A win via points went to Sam Egan.

The next female match saw virtually mirror images of each other - **Lisa Marlin** (*Champions World*

Gym) faced **Charlotte Kirwin** (*Thaiworks*). Matched at lower 50kg, not only were they similar in height, but style as well. With all three rounds very even, the girls both threw some good combinations, with Lisa Boxing and low kicking well and Charlotte Boxing and bodykicking well. Neither girl managed to have a dominant effect with anything they threw, leaving the judges to award the win to Kirwin via split decision.

The next match started well, with *Planet Combat's* **Sean Vale** facing *Gosport's* **Paul Long**. Complete clash of styles with Vale attacking at a furious pace with body punches and Long looking to land



that telling shot via low kick. Due to a nasty shin clash and cuts on both fighters this match had to end a no contest.

Pete Thomas (*Al's Gym*) shared the ring with **Tommy Barlow** from *Thaiworks* next. Tommy is known for being a slick and stylish striker and this performance was no different with him out-striking Pete at will. However, the strikes didn't carry enough effect to keep Pete at distance and he realised his chance to win was to force the clinch, in which he had great effect. After a very close match, Thomas was awarded the fight win due to his greater effect of what was thrown - a rematch is surely called for here.

MUAYTHAI

The final undercard match saw Salisbury instructor, **Ryan Lynch**, face Southampton fighter **Dan Potheary** at 69kg. Lynch, coming off the back of a two win streak, started confidently with good movement and striking, but little effect. Upon realising this, Potheary looked at landing shots that carried effect, which transferred into the win via points for him.

The main events were electric... A Chang South West Area Cup match between **Andy**

ing Bindon down for an eight count with a knee to the head. Toby made the count and was not stalled, coming straight back at Andy with clean, straight punches and a strong low kick. With two more rounds of pure action that were pretty even, it was the 8 count that split it and gave Turland the Chang Cup victory.

The first female Chang Cup of the night followed with *Thaiworks* **Sarah Blewden** facing *Hybrid Gyms* **Kristina Hopper**.

where he could not slip or evade and unleash dangerous combinations, but whatever James tried, Jake was able to slip out of the way and land shots from unpredictable angles with great force. With almost a *Matrix*-like body movement, Jake evaded nearly every shot thrown at him. Slick Boxing strikes came in from Jake far more often than James was able to force him to the ropes and, after five rounds of this it



Turland (*Champions World Gym*) and **Toby Bindon** (*Fightworx*) has been among the fights put forward as fight of the night. Local favourite Turland entered to a huge roar from his supporters, but Toby wasn't alone, having a large contingent travel from Torbay - the atmosphere in the O2 was on fire. Toby is known for his accurate spin kicks, coming from his San Shou background...in fact, he won his last world series match via spin kick KO. Turland, meanwhile, is renowned for being an awkward striker. Set at 63kg, these fighters went straight at full pace from round one, with Andy throwing wild Boxing combinations. Toby was composed and landed his trademark reverse hook kick, but Andy was ready with his guard glued high.

Round two saw Andy calm down a little and start to look for his hits - although the fight continued at a ferocious pace, it became clear that when the clinch came in to play, Andy was stronger - which he took advantage of in the following round, knock-

Hopper, the shorter of the two, is known as a hard hitter, with Sarah known for good movement and combinations. The fight started with Sarah striking well at range and avoiding being caught by Kristina. However, Kristina managed to move in well as the rounds went on and she landed strong and accurate shots to counter Sarah's strikes. The work rate of Blewden was too much though and, by the end, it was a clear victory to Sarah, but a great return to the ring from Kristina after a two year absence. We hope to see her again.

The second rival for fight of the night followed with a new style from **Jake Clarke** (*Gladiator Academy*) when he put his club's **Ghost** striking to the test against **James Freeguard** (*MAUK Dorchester*). With Jake entering to his fan's chants of "Ghost!" and James entering to the *Ghostbusters* song, it was clear that both fighters had done their homework on each others styles. James tried to force Jake to the ropes





LIAM POUNDED MARK'S THIGH CONTINUOUSLY WITH SHARP, LOW KICKS THAT PREVENTED HIM FROM MOVING IN



was a clear South West area Chang Cup win to Jake and his *Ghosting* method.

Charlie Guest of Salisbury stepped up in weight to face **Ross Smith** in the evenings final Chang area title match. Both known for being hard hitting and in the 76kg weight category this was a hard fight. Charlie had just returned from a month training in Thailand and his strong low kicks

showed this, along with his ability to control the pace of the fight. However, Ross matched him in every department, with some great counter techniques coming off Charlie's kicks and strong Boxing. This match was so close that it ended in the night's only draw, with the judges unable to split them.

The night's main event saw **Liam Barker** (*Champions World Gym*) face **Mark Little** (*Raptors*). Liam is known for being a sharp and slick striker who has KO power in his left hook while Mark is known as clinch and knee fighter. This fight was fought at traditional Thai pace with both fighters giving respect to each other by not rushing in, knowing that either one had the power to end it with one well-placed shot. Liam managed to find success with his right low kick that started to cause damage to Mark's thigh in only round one. When the fight entered the clinch, Liam actually managed to have great success with full on hopping side knees and turns timed to

perfection. Mark landed a couple of hard left hooks during the early rounds that warned Liam to keep his guard up and not to rush in. Liam then replied with some smooth high and body Boxing that ended with hard body hooks that Mark managed to take without showing effect. But, what did show effect was his leg - during the fight, Liam pounded Mark's thigh continuously with sharp, low kicks that prevented him from moving in - and the damage was visible. After a great hard hitting match, Liam Barker gained the Chang national cup win. ■

LORNE CASTLE

FURTHER INFORMATION: The next **MuayThai World Series** event is scheduled for June 22nd at the O2 Bournemouth. This last event will be available on DVD soon and be screened on **Sky Active Channel 281**. For information on entering, or for tickets please go through the contact page at www.muaythaiworldseries.com.