McComber starts strong but taps out in second

ZACHARY KAMEL
THE EASTERN DOOR

For close to five hours on Saturday night, spectators were treated to 12 Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) bouts at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Featuring five title matches, Fightquest 33 was billed as the "Night of Champions."

While the hall did not reach capacity, Stephane Vigneault, a trainer at MMA Fightshop Training Center and a co-organizer of Fightquest, was satisfied with the attendance.

"In the summer it's hard to find a lot of people who want to come to see a fight, but we were very happy and we have a great crowd."

Kahnawa'kehró:non Marshall McComber (2-2-0) was on the bill for the night and was excited about fighting in Kahnawake. "It's awesome to fight at home, it's always nice to fight here with a crowd behind me," said McComber.

McComber stepped into the cage to fight Justin Gimblett (1-1-0) and dominated the first round. At two times during that round he suffered two low kicks to the groin, the second of which took the wind out of him.

Gimblett came back with a fury in round two and McComber ultimately tapped out just under two minutes into round three. McComber noted that the low blows may have affected his performance and said "with the adrenaline going you don't really want to take a minute to rest. I felt like I



Two low kicks may have been critical for Marshall McComber, who looked dominant to start the bout.

was losing momentum. In hind-sight, maybe I could have taken more time, but that's past now."

While he will be taking a brief hiatus from fighting in order to deal with some health issues and focus on his music career with Avery's Descent, McComber has every intention to continue training and win his next fight.

"I love to train and it has become a huge part of who I am," said McComber. "I don't know if I have the 'killer instinct' like some fighters have, but I do love the competition and feeling of accomplishment that comes with a win or a loss. We train hard, we do the best we can, and we move forward."

For the main event, Guillaume Gagnon-Arsenault (7-0-0) put his middleweight championship on the line. He remains undefeated after going the distance with Julius Trimmeliti, winning by unanimous decision after five rounds.

As Arsenault entered the cage, many in the crowd chanted

"Guill-aume" in unison. After one round, Trimmeliti was bleeding from his left eye. While Trimelliti was a worthy challenger, putting a strong chokehold on Guillame in the second round, by round five it was clear who came out victorious.

When asked about his match, Guillame said that "it feels good," and that "hard work pays off."

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Vigneault doesn't think

Arsenault will stay in the amateur ranks for much longer.

"I think he's got one, maybe two more fights at this level before he goes pro. Being undefeated means he has nothing left to do in amateur fighting."

And that's the whole point of Fightquest, said Vigneault - a breeding ground for professional fighters.

The co-main event pitted Vince "The Buck" Morin against Etienne Gagnon for the vacant featherweight title. By the end of round four, Morin's face was covered in blood from multiple hits by Gagnon.

Seeing red, Morin's energy surged and he dominated the rest of the bout. Morin's fans showed up in droves to the event, many of whom dressed in "Vince the Buck Morin" t-shirts and never ceased to show their support throughout all five rounds.

Morin came out on top by unanimous decision.

The night also featured the inaugural women's featherweight championship, pitting Rebecca "Duck Hunt" Contrino (1-1-0) against Patricia Waloch (1-2-0). Waloch started round one in control, but by round two Contrino had a strong takedown and landed countless punches to Waloch's head.

They went the distance, and Contrino came out on top by unanimous decision after five rounds.

Fightquest 34 will return to Kahnawake at the end of November and, according to Vigneault, will feature several Kahnawa'kehró:non.

Iroquois Nationals

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that was 17-0 in international competition heading into the box.

Hiana Thompson scored a minute into the game, and the Iroquois kept the pressure on, riding an emotional crowd heavily favouring the underdogs.

After one it was 5-2, and at half the Iroquois led 6-4.

Much like in hockey though,

Team Canada is chock-full of allstar pros and it started to show in the second half, particularly on the defensive end.

Goalie Aaron Bold (formerly of the Kahnawake Sr. B Mohawks) showed why he got the starting spot over perennial number one Matt Vinc in the second half.

The Mann Cup and NLL championship-winning goalie kept the deadly Iroquois shooters at bay, and, aided by his formidable defence, held the Iroquois to three goals in the half.

Angus Goodleaf for his part stood strong in the Iroquois net, making a number of impressive stops. Canada eventually tied the game with under 10 minutes left, but the Iroquois kept pushing. Shattler scored with 8:49 remaining, but the goal was called back for a too-many-men penalty that proved correct.

Dan Dawson and Jordan MacIntosh then scored for Canada, and the game ended 11-9 Canada.

The Iroquois walked out of the box knowing the team is able to run with a Canadian team made entirely of NLL players.

"I feel confident," said Goodleaf. "We just played a freaking all-star team over there and we hung with them. We could have had them at the end there, but they just scored a couple of late goals. We're confident in the next time we meet them."

It's the first time for Goodleaf getting the call as the number one Iroquois goalie after taking the reigns from legendary Iroquois goalie Mike Thompson.

The general consensus after the first two games was positive for Goodleaf, who knows which shooters he will need to get the best of if the Iroquois are to win on home turf.

"There's a lot of pressure on us to win the gold, I guess, but we

know that's a good Canada team over there," said Goodleaf. "We know they're the top team here, and we got to get through them to get the gold. We're confident. We'll be right there."

Canada followed up Sunday's win by thumping the Czech Republic 19-2, and beating the US 18-7.

The Nationals play the winner of USA v. Czechs tonight in their semi-final game at 7:30 p.m. at the Onondaga Arena. Canada plays at 4:30 p.m. Medal games are Sunday at the Carrier Dome.

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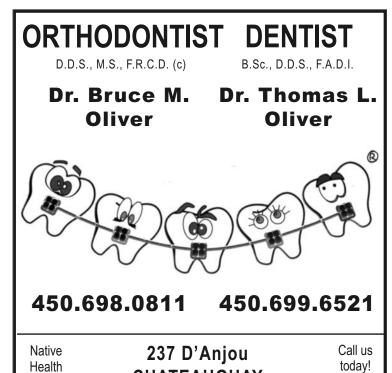
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