By Daniel Galvan

When Thiago Santos and Eric Prindle are in a cage at the same time there is one thing that is for certain. Someone's testicles will be damaged. In what was an unbelievable case of déjà vu, the main event of Bellator 75 between Eric Prindle (7-3, 1 NC) and Thiago Santos (11-1, 1 NC) - a bout that was made due to their previous encounter that saw Santos hit Prindle with a fight-ending groin strike- ended with Thiago Santos screaming in pain lying on his stomach after being hit in the groin. Prior to the untimely ending, Santos had controlled the fight on the ground with several submission attempts after securing a single-leg takedown on Prindle. With a little less than a minute left in the fight, Prindle got back on the feet while Santos stayed on the ground. Referee Gary Copeland foreshadowed the ending of the fight as when Prindle was standing over Santos, Copeland told both fighters, "no groin shots". Prindle ignored Copeland's instruction like a spoiled teenager, and he landed a 260 plus pound fueled axe kick straight into the baseballs of the Brazilian.

Contrasting with their previous bout that was ruled a no contest, Thiago Santos was declared the victor via disqualification. The anticlimactic win advanced Santos into the semifinals of Bellator's heavyweight tournament.

Also in season seven's heavyweight bracket, Brett Rogers (12-5, 1 NC) looked more like a punching bag than an MMA fighter in his fight against the lanky training partner of Fedor Emelianenko, Alexander Volkov (17-3).

For three straight rounds Volkov absolutely dominated Rogers with his stand-up. Volkov, standing 6 foot 7 inches, implored his reach advantage and kept Rogers at bay with several combinations. Rogers was really hesitant in the feet. This was supposed to be the next chapter in Brett Rogers' MMA career, but it ended up being the coming out party for the Russian prospect.

Despite being short in length, the other two heavyweight opening round match-ups were quite memorable.

Richard Hale (20-4-1), the runner up Bellator's Season Four Light Heavyweight Tournament, utilized his hand speed and surprising power en route to a TKO victory over TUF alumn Mike Wessel (12-5). Hale got the back of Wessel early after a half-hearted takedown attempt, and he was able to flatten Wessel out and finish him with ground and pound at 1:19 in the first round.

Returning to the sport of MMA after nearly a two year lay-off due to a suspension and a knee surgery, Vinicius Queiroz (6-2) elicited a tap from Mark Holata (12-4) at 3:26 in the first round with an arm-bar. Things were looking bad for Queiroz early as he was knocked down with a

heavy left hand from Holata, but he was able to recover and eventually lock on the fight-ending submission.

Out of the four semifinalists, the fighter that looked the most impressive tonight was Richard Hale. He has a serious speed advantage over the field, and he is also a talented grappler.

A preliminary bout between Joe Williams (7-1) and Rod Montaya (15-15) was also shown on the MTV 2 broadcast of Bellator 75. Once-beaten Joe Williams looked impressive by submitting Montaya with a rear-naked choke in the first round. Williams got the fight to the ground with a powerful double-leg slam, and eventually got the choke after transitioning to mount.

If you take out the disappointing Rogers/Volkov fight, it was a relatively fun night of fights. Call me strange, but I thought the groin shot finish to the Prindle/Santos fight was both comical and a bit entertaining. The early finishes from Queiroz and Hale really made the show enjoyable, and I think this heavyweight tournament will surpass expectations.

Quick Results

HW QF Bout – Thiago Santos def. Eric Prindle via DQ (Groin Strike) in the 1st Round (4:54)

HW QF Bout – Alexander Volkov def. Brett Rogers via UD (30-27, 30-27, and 30-27)

HW QF Bout – Richard Hale def. Mike Wessel via 1st TKO (1:19)

HW QF Bout – Vinicius Queiroz def. Mark Holata via 1st Sub (3:26)

WW Bout – Joe Williams def. Rod Montaya via 1st Sub (3:27)

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