

Martial artist from Art of 8 Martial Arts Academy wins Canadian National Title

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

Local Muay Thai fighter and Kru at the Art of 8 Martial Arts Academy in Orangeville, Martello Jones, recently claimed the Canadian Title in Muay Thai fighting.

Competing in the cruiserweight division, he took the title after a bout on Nov. 23, sanctioned by the World Boxing Council.

The fight took place in Belleville and was a part of a full card for the night.

Scheduled for five, three-minute rounds, Jones dispatched his opponent in just under 40 seconds into the first round, winning the fight with a knockout to claim the title.

Jones faced his opponent earlier in the year at the world championships, however, he entered the fight with an existing injury to his ribs and decided not to continue after one round because of the risk of having a punctured lung.

Muay Thai is similar to kickboxing but also allows the use of other moves.

‘To the uninformed, they would reference kickboxing as the closest sport to Muay Thai,’ Jones explained. ‘Unlike kickboxing, Muay Thai uses knees, elbows, and the clinch. At the amateur level, it’s very safe. We wear head gear, shin guards, and elbow guards so the chance of getting a cut or anything like that, is very small. At the professional level there are no safety pads worn.’

The title ‘Kru’ is a Thai word meaning coach, teacher, or trainer.

Unlike other martial arts where someone is a ‘sensei,’ the title of Kru is given by students and others, to someone who has achieved a level of recognition and is given the title out of respect.

‘It all depends on how much time and dedication you put into the sport,’ Jones explained. ‘Becoming a Kru really means becoming an instructor with a commitment. Kru that I trained under, officially recognized me as a Kru after 12 years. I was teaching before that, but I never referred to myself or allowed anyone to refer to me as Kru, until my Kru confirmed that title upon me.’

Jones has been involved in the sport for 14 years.

‘It is a martial art that was born on a battlefield and the villages of Thailand,’ Jones explained.

In a country that has had more than its share of invaders, Muay Thai was developed as a way to fight them off.

‘Now people train for fitness, the culture, and developing good solid defence skills,’ Jones explained. ‘Around one per cent will move on to compete. It is there that people try to win provincial or national championships and for North America and world titles. You compete based on weight class and experience.’

The championship title fight was over mere seconds into the first round.

‘The fight was amazing, the fight ended in 38 or 40 seconds,’ Jones said. ‘He was a dominant kicker ? he kicked and I countered ? he was knocked out cold.’

Now that Jones is a champion, he admits he has a target on his back as other up-and-comers will be looking to take his title.

Jones owns and operates the Art of 8 Martial Arts Academy in Orangeville.

It is a 5,000-square-foot training facility located at the Orangeville Mall (150 First St., Unit G8A).