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Greg Savage

SAN JOSE, Calif., Dec. 8 — Before an official crowd of 8,701, Strikeforce's fourth effort had a little something for everyone. There were titles on the line, a women's fight and some drama in the form of [Frank Shamrock \(Pictures\)](#) announcing that his long-awaited showdown with [Phil Baroni \(Pictures\)](#) has been inked.

The 13-fight slate was headlined by hometown favorite [Cung Le \(Pictures\)](#), who was taking on *The Ultimate Fighter* veteran [Jason Von Flue \(Pictures\)](#).

It was to be the biggest test to date for the San Shou legend-turned mixed martial artist, as Le faced a serious ground threat for the first time in his short MMA career against the man known as "Live Wire."

The possible ground battle never materialized. Le ripped open a cut above Von Flue's left eye with a kick just seconds into the fight. The UFC veteran, who moved up in weight from 170 to 182-pounds to fight Le, immediately clinched and pulled guard.

Yet as soon as Le freed himself from Von Flue's clutches, backed out of his guard up to his feet, referee [Herb Dean \(Pictures\)](#) recognized the cut and called for the ringside physician. She did not hesitate to wave off the bout, giving [Cung Le \(Pictures\)](#) the TKO victory at only 43 seconds of the first period.

[Josh Thomson \(Pictures\)](#) had his hands full with a tenacious [Nam Phan \(Pictures\)](#) during their three-round scrap for the Strikeforce U.S. lightweight title. After an opening frame that saw Thomson muscle Phan around, "The Punk" started to show signs of fatigue, something he attributed to his newer training regimen, which focuses more on lifting weights than cardio.

Phan was unable to capitalize on Thomson's lack of stamina, though he did have some moments of his own during the bout. The second round also saw Phan walk into a straight right from Thomson that sent him to the mat. The scrappy Phan refused to give in and eventually found himself trying to take Thomson's back as the period ended.

Down two rounds to none, Phan pulled out all the stops in the third, pushing forward and forcing the tired Thomson to trade with him in the center of the cage.

It was a noble strategy but one that would allow "The Punk" to utilize his edge in power while he launched a salvo of knees that sent Phan backwards towards the cage.

Phan caught one of the knees but soon found himself defending a guillotine choke. From there Thomson moved to mount and finished the last 30 seconds of the fight throwing wild haymakers downward at a beleaguered Phan.

The judges unanimously scored the bout for Thomson (30-27, 30-27 and 30-27) giving him the win. Thomson was noncommittal when asked if he was looking forward to a fight with Strikeforce world lightweight champion [Gilbert Melendez \(Pictures\)](#) when he talked with Sherdog.com after the fight. Thomson emphasized the fact that he and Melendez frequently train together, and that he doesn't see why they would fight right now.

Las Vegas native [Gina Carano \(Pictures\)](#) brought the crowd to its feet with her Houdini-like escape from an [Elaina Maxwell \(Pictures\)](#) triangle choke midway through the final period. Maxwell, possibly in need of a finish to win, almost pulled off the comeback. But it just wasn't to be as Carano slipped out the back door and swiftly mounted Maxwell.

The last minute of the round saw Carano dropping punches from the top, cementing her unanimous decision win (29-28, 29-28 and 29-28) and keeping her record unblemished.

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