

Girls Fight in Vegas

Virginia maybe for lovers, but it's also for fighters! MMA Institute showed up in force at Las Vegas Nevada to compete in an all girls Muay Thai competition called "TUFF GRLZ". The event was promoted by the world renowned Muay Thai master, Master Toddy who has produced 40 world champions in his illustrious career. The 22 bout fight card consisted of amateur female fighters from across the United States who had two, two minute rounds to make a statement of why they were there. From Virginia, a host of rising female fighters took to the ring and showed America what girls from this part of the country are made of and its everything but sugar and spice.

Angie Hines from MMA Institute - Charlottesville battled with one of the most feared competitors in the competition and went the distance, but had victory handed to her competitor by the judges. The fierce battle that took place had people standing the entire match and although Angie suffered a broken nose, she was back in the gym training the very next week. Angie lost a point early in the first round, which probably contributed to the decision, but with experience being the best teacher Angie's best days as a fighter are still ahead of her. This native West Virginian mountain girl has now got her first plane ride out of the way, saw the big city and is ready to get back in the ring. Joanna Catabui from MMA Institute - Richmond decided she didn't want the judges to decide her fate and took to her opponent with no remorse. A swift kick to the ribs landed her adversary on her back within the first 15 seconds of the first round. With one kick after another, "Jo" relentlessly attacked her opponent until she decided she wanted no more of the dish Joanna was serving and verbally surrendered to the referee giving Joanna her well deserved victory. At one time, Joanna was a director of children's programs in Catholic parishes, but now lives and breathes the world of mixed martial arts. Dating a professional fighter, working full time in a martial arts gym and increasingly finding her free time being spent with other fighter / students, I think we can all agree that after this night's performance she's found her call! Virginians along the coast didn't want us inlanders to have all the fun and three female fighters from Hampton Roads Hybrid Academy also made a showing at this event. Amie Morgan, Erin Fisk, and Paige Sweet performed spectacularly under frustrating circumstances as Amie's match was turned into a one round "exhibition", and two of their opponents came in grossly over-weight for their respective weight classes. Still, with all that stacked against them, in true form and character all three fighters performed magnificently turning the heads of those in the audience. There was officially no real "winner" in Amie's exhibition match, but clearly she won as she controlled every aspect of what happened in the ring. Erin lost by a controversial decision, but showcased her beautiful Muay Thai technique and skill. Paige, just training in Martial Arts for a little over a year, never let up on her opponent and won by unanimous decision. This show had a two fold purpose in that some of the fighters will get a spot on an upcoming reality show, TUFF GRLZ, formed around female Muay Thai fighters. Congratulations to all those who participated in this event!! It was very successful and highlighted the level of training and dedication Virginia has for the Martial Arts.