

Fight night promises to be exciting

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from the corner, 'knock him out, knock him out!'"

Tipping did exactly that, finishing his opponent with a knockout punch.

Harrison, who applies the same teachings he learned from Pinsinchai when the two met in Bangkok three years ago, hosted his friend during a recent visit to Stratford.

"He's a superstar in Thailand, an absolute legend," said Harrison. "We were incredibly fortunate to have him spend time with us. He spoke highly of our gym and believes our athletes have great potential."

They've lived up to that potential, going 16-3 in June in building momentum towards Evolution II.

Barnier, Kastner, Tipping, Chad Hunt, Chris Rebelo, Bobbi Whitaker, Kru Chris Kew, Josh Ludwig, Dave Cable, Matty Jacomen and Jesse McDougall are among those who have made contributions to 519's cause.

"Our athletes are quickly gaining the respect they deserve," said Harrison. "We train harder than anyone else and it shows. We're really looking forward to performing in front of our fans."

Tickets for the August 5 card are \$20 in advance and are available by calling (519) 703-0538. That's also the number to call for anyone interested in joining the Fight Factory.

"All are welcome," said Harrison, "provided they're willing to train hard."



Stratford's 519 Fight Factory was well represented at Thunder Alley during Toronto Grand Prix festivities on the Lakeshore this past weekend. Front row, from left, Adam Kastner, Jesse McDougall, Chris Rebelo; back row, from left, Kru Chris Kew, Kru Jeff Harrison, Syd Barnier, Joe Tipping. Contributed photo

Title shot for Barnier at Muay Thai Evolution II

By Mike Savage
staff sportswriter

The 519 Fight Factory is filled with bad intentions. And that's good news for local fans.

The Rotary Arena will once again be the site when Stratford's top pugilists take to the squared circle in Muay Thai Evolution II: Bad Intentions, on Saturday, Aug. 5.

The event is a follow-up to the hugely popular Muay Thai Evolution: Last Man Standing, which was held this past April.

"Everyone should circle August 5 on their calendars; it's going to be an exciting night," Kru Jeff Harrison said Tuesday, during a training session at the Fight Factory's new headquarters on Erie Street.

"I hope everyone who was there to see our first show comes out again. And to anyone who may have missed it, I can assure you, you'll want to be there for this one."

Headlining the event is 519's Syd Barnier, who electrified the home faithful with a knockout victory at Last Man Standing. This time, Barnier goes after the lightweight belt against Toronto's Muhammad Awad, who won the title here in April.

"It's always great fighting in front of the home fans," said Barnier, 24. "I know Muhammad will be training extremely hard for this one, but I'll be training even harder."

The two met this past weekend in a non-title bout at Thunder Alley during Toronto Grand Prix festivities on the Lakeshore, with Barnier scoring a convincing win by unanimous decision.

"Syd dominated but was under orders not to knock him out," said Harrison. "Otherwise, Muhammad would have been medically ineligible to fight in Stratford. We want our fans to see Syd win the belt at home."

The Fight Factory's Adam Kastner also fought at

Thunder Alley, outlasting his opponent in a fight which Harrison said was 'not pretty'.

"Adam got busted up in the first round but he gutted it out and showed a lot of heart," he said. "He came back to win a unanimous decision."

Kastner's nose was broken in the first minute of the bout and the other corner argued the fight should have been stopped for blood.

But Kastner, 17, recovered and was awarded the decision, due in large part to a major knockdown in the second round.

Harrison, 25, who recently became a fully certified coach through the Canadian Amateur Muay Thai Association of Ontario, credits CAMTAO for making events like this possible.

"I can't give them enough credit for the work they do," he said. "Ontario is the only province which recognizes Muay Thai as a sport and personally, I'm extremely grateful."

"We're trying to promote Muay Thai in Stratford for a variety of reasons, primarily to offer an outlet to our city's youth. A lot of opportunities have been created because of the sport."

That includes an opportunity to see the world, as Barnier and Joe Tipping discovered. The pair went to Thailand in June to train with Berklerk Pinsinchai, one of the greatest athletes Muay Thai has ever known.

"It was an amazing experience, we were treated just like family," said Tipping, 16. "I got in really good shape, and I learned how to use my techniques better, how to use them in difficult situations."

Tipping put the knowledge to good use when he scored a second-round knockout in a fight last month.

"I had just been head-butted and was cut above the eye," he said. "The doctor was coming in to stop the fight but just before he got there I heard Syd yell See Fight, page 15