

Yuki vs Lee 2, Morii vs Pornsaneh Headline RISE/M-1 ~Infinity.II~

Written by Sam Sattler

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After a successful first event, RISE and M-1 Muay Thai Challenge announced that they would be repeating their efforts from earlier this month and bringing us RISE/M-1MC ~Infinity.II~ on January 6th. The event already has some great fights announced and is sure to start the year off with a bang.

In a bout that will likely headline the event, RISE 63kg champion Yuki puts his title on the line in a rematch against South Korean standout Sun Hyun Lee. The two first fought at RISE 88 with Lee taking a majority decision, though the fight could have easily been scored more one-sidedly in favor of Lee. Since, Yuki has fought just once, but scored the biggest win of his career in doing so, stopping former It's Showtime champion Javier Hernandez via low kicks. Lee is 3-0 with wins over top RISE contenders Yuto Watanabe and Shohei Asahara and most recently obliterating Buakaw WSR at the first Infinity event. The two bring similar strengths, as both excel with low kicks and have pretty good boxing, but the biggest difference between the two is speed and power. Lee brings a speedy, high volume attack while Yuki is known for his power, both in his hands and his signature low kicks. Lee will likely have the edge in conditioning, favoring him in this 5 round fight, but Yuki has the power to slow him down and even end the fight at any time. That said, I favor Lee by a wide margin here and see him taking a decision and the RISE title.

In the second biggest announcement, former Lumpinee Stadium champion Pornsaneh Sitmonchai takes on top ranked Featherweight Yosuke Morii at 59kg. Pornsaneh was originally slated for the first Infinity event, but was unable to compete due to the Lumpinee birthday show, but there's no reason for him not to compete here other than injury. Morii has been at the top of the Japanese Featherweight division for the past 2 years, losing only to Genji Umeno and Hiroki Akimoto in that time. Morii did take a fight in Thailand earlier this year with unfavorable results, but a win over Pornsaneh would be huge for him and could even spark a run at a Stadium title.

Speaking of Genji Umeno, he will also fight at this event against another Korean, Seung Ryul Kim, at 60kg. After dominating the Japanese scene, Umeno looked poised to possibly become the first Japanese champion of Lumpinee Stadium, but an offer to fight in K-1 put that quest on the backburner. Umeno faced Chang Hyun Lee, a fighter who fans knew little about other than that he was a teammate of Sun Hyun Lee. That changed after the two put on one of the best fights of 2012, a 3 round battle that saw Chang Hyun come out on top. Umeno seeks revenge against a Korean opponent and a win here could set up an anticipated rematch between Umeno

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and Lee. Standing in his way is Kim who, like Lee, there is little information about other than that he fights out of Team Bin, the home of K-1 veteran Chi Bin Lim. A win here gives Kim a name and gives us another Korean fighter to look out for.

The card also boasts three more Japan vs Thailand matchups with Arashi Fujiwara vs Pepunoy Parisha at 53kg, Sota Ichinohe vs Lucktawarun Esugym at 57.5kg and Chemical Shunta vs Kongnapa WSR at 59.5kg. I believe Kongnapa WSR is Kongnapa Sirimongkol who fought Genji Umeno twice, going 1-1.

Still slated to compete at the event but without opponents are Yuto Watanabe, Seiya Rokukawa and Hiroki Maeda, among others.