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Muay Thai - An Introduction to This Amazing Form of Martial Arts

Muay Thai is a form of kickboxing martial arts that has developed in Thailand over the centuries. It started as a style of hand to hand combat in warfare and has developed into the exciting sport that attracts thousands of fans around the world.

The Thai people are gentle, kind and fun loving, quite small in stature, but when it came to defending their homeland against invaders, they were fierce combatants. Muay Thai was designed to enable the Thais to fight in the hilly terrain that is their homeland, putting their enemies at a distinct disadvantage. The techniques involve survival skills and fierce attacking moves using feet, elbow and knees.

Thai tradition, heritage and national pride are all embodied in the art of Muay Thai. It is expected that most young Thai men will train diligently in the art as a rite of passage into manhood. During both training and fighting, arm and headbands are worn that have been specially blessed by the monks to bring the fighter courage and success. The young men take great pride in their training, draw inspiration and motivation from the monk's blessing and consider it an honor to wear such symbols of faith and national pride.

Training and fighting is demanding both physically and mentally; there is much to learn about the history and techniques of the sport, themselves and their spirituality. Training is as much a spiritual journey as one of physical development. The spiritual overtones of Muay Thai carries over into the actual fight; before the fight begins the boxers warm up with a particular form of dance that is symbolic and meaningful to the Thai nation.

All martial arts derived from the need to defend what belonged to the people, and Muay Thai is no exception. It was a dangerous business with no safety or protective gear worn to protect the fighters. All they had, originally, were lengths of cord which they used to protect their hands by winding the cord around their fists. As the need for defending their country diminished and Muay Thai became more of a sport, rules were established for the protection of the fighters.

Muay Thai has become internationally recognized as a popular contact sport. It is taught and competed in many countries and televised into even more. It has become a very popular spectator sport, with the thousands of fans who attend bouts cheering loudly for their favorites. A bout consists of three minute rounds with two minutes between the five rounds that make up a match.

Muay Thai is a hard and dangerous sport but that does not diminish its growing popularity. New students are attracted to the philosophy and art of the sport all the time with many going on to compete in competitions worldwide.

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