

▼ KICKBOXING

Ladue's Thomasson to learn Muay Thai

By DAVID KVIDAHL
STAFF WRITER

By all accounts, Allan Thomasson is a smart young man with a bright future ahead of him. The recent Ladue graduate will attend Rhodes College in the fall and start to make his mark in this big, wide world of ours.

Knowing that, what do Thomasson and a pistachio have in common?

They're both nuts.

Before Thomasson reaches Memphis to begin his studies, he'll study somewhere else for three weeks this summer.

He's going to Thailand to learn how to kickbox.

More accurately, he'll travel to the Far East to learn the martial art of Muay Thai, arguably the most brutal form of kickboxing in the world.

Thomasson's never tasted Thai food nor does he understand the language. He's never traveled so far away from home and, in all honesty, doesn't know exactly what lies ahead for him.

What he does know is it's going to be toughest three weeks of his life and he's greeting it with open arms.

"I told my dad, if I didn't do it, it's something I'd regret for the rest of my life," Thomasson said.

The 6-foot-2, 205-pound Thomasson was looking for something to pursue, athletically, after high school. He realized his size wasn't conducive to college football even though he spent his entire prep career on the gridiron for Ladue.

He'd long been intrigued by Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). Finally, once football was over, he decided to pursue MMA as a hobby and, if his dreams turn



RICK GRAEFE PHOTO

Allan Thomasson of Ladue works out on a Power Plate doing a single leg squat under the supervision of trainer Brian Fitzmaurice of Fitzmaurice Performance in Ellisville.

into reality, a career.

MMA's popularity grows by the day. The sport has taken the place of boxing as America's top mano-e-mano showcase. It pits two fighters in the same weight class in a ring (known in some circles as the octagon). The fighters have at their disposal any number of fighting techniques and martial arts.

To win the fight, you have to adhere to a strict guideline of rules (no biting, head butting, kidney punching, striking the trachea or the back of the neck). Victories are declared in the case of a knockout, submission and technical knockout (TKO). A TKO can happen when the referee rules a fighter can't defend himself or the ring doctor declares a fighter is incapable of continuing due to injury.

The three main veins of fighting are ground attacks, clinch attacks and standing attacks.

Ground attacks are performed on the floor of the ring, using a variety of moves that are supposed to make your opponent submit. It's like wrestling, but without the need of a pin to win.

Clinch attacks are similar to judo, where the objective is to grapple and take down your opponent.

The popular standing attacks are boxing, kickboxing, karate and Muay Thai. Fighters use these techniques to strike their opponent with a variety of punches and kicks, depending on the chosen discipline.

Muay Thai is different from standard kickboxing, as it's more physical. Muay Thai uses knees and elbows as striking elements as opposed to just hands and feet.

"Elbows and knees are the most dangerous weapons in Muay Thai," Thomasson said. "They can open up cuts easier (than

punches and kicks)."

To get himself into fighting shape, Thomasson trains four times a week at Fitzmaurice Performance in Ellisville. There, under the watchful eye of Brian Fitzmaurice, he goes through rigorous workouts designed to increase his stamina, strength and overall condition.

"He's physically prepared for anything," Fitzmaurice said. "In mixed martial arts, they're going to test his physical abilities. He has to be able to do anything at anytime."

In the past, Fitzmaurice worked with the International Fight League's Tucson Scorpion, which are owned and operated by Don Frye, known as "The Predator" in MMA. His training regime for Thomasson is one that focuses on preparing his body for the brutal battles ahead.

"It's a full strength and conditioning program," Fitzmaurice said. "We do everything here but the skill."

Thomasson goes through a routine of circuit training, power plate training (which is an advanced form of physical training) and he even lugs around 150-pound sandbags.

The workouts are brutal, especially when Thomasson is pumping up his cardiovascular abilities on a hill in Ellisville.

"During the workout, I don't like it," he said. "But, afterwards, I feel like I accomplished something."

Thomasson will spend the last two weeks of June and the first week of July in Thailand. He'll fly from St. Louis to Chicago to Los Angeles and then on to Singapore before landing in Bangkok.

"The program is going to be what I make it," he said. "It's going to be fun."