



that I can get a point any time I want a point. It sounds maybe a little ridiculous and I'll bet that there aren't five fighters in the country who think like that, but I believe I can. I just tell myself to make it close, and get the winning point before the end. This is for the good fighters. The rest of them, I'll just go ahead and run the score up on them. When I'm fighting the good fighters, like Harris, for instance, I just tell myself, "Keith, move, circle, side kick. When you see an opening just go ahead in there and get it." Any time somebody scored on me, they told me afterwards that they could just sense that I wanted that point back real quick. Joe Corley has told me, "Keith, I've seen you fight all around the country now. When you really want a point you just go in there and get it. Now why don't you do that all the time? I just told him, "It just feels good to be in there, moving around and not doing anything, I guess." I hope all this doesn't make me seem like a big ego or something.

#### Are you worried about that?

Well, a couple of years ago when I won the Mid-America Diamond Nationals—I had just beaten Longstreet, Carini and Tucker, and then I fought and beat this guy Mac Jagger. We fought two three-minute rounds or two two-minute rounds, and I felt like I could hit him any time I wanted to. But I said to myself, "Keith, if you hit him, you're just going to make that big heavyweight so mad that he's not going to care if he wins or loses and you'll just be fighting for your life." I believed that, so at the end of the first round it was 0 to 0. The second round I just blew him away, hitting him with a backfist, reverse punch, side kicking him, and stuff like that. I just didn't want to get him frustrated until it was almost over. So anyway, Ben Kalb, the former editor of your magazine came up and asked me how I felt. I said that I felt happy to have won and I felt so good that I thought I could have beaten any

heavyweight that they had put against me. Kalb misquoted me and printed that I had said that I could beat any heavyweight any time. So, for about a year after that, people kept coming up to me and saying, "Hey, I'm a heavyweight and I'm after you." It was kind of funny in a way, but what I had said was that I had felt that I could have beaten anybody that particular night. But he misquoted me and I had a kind of rough time for a while.

#### What about differences in rules from place to place?

I'm real happy with the techniques I've got. I've got strong side kicks, strong kicks. And I can move with the best of them. But it's nothing to do with bragging. I'll fight by any rules, provided they're legitimate rules, and as long as the other person fights by those rules. When I went down to Texas for Kurban's tournament (Ft. Worth Nationals), I hit the guy 15 times, and he hit me back 15 times, and the score was 1 to 0, his favor. He beat me. I just bowed out and told him it was a good fight, because that's the way I thought it should have been done. I didn't gripe about who beat who, or whatever. The rules there are backfists don't count and you've got to hit hard. So that was fine. I knew that before I went in.

But at the PKAs in California, when I was fighting McCallum, well, the rules called for control. It's not Texas. Now, McCallum is not the type of fighter who can adjust from region to region, but I can. I can fight no contact. I can fight contact. I can fight full contact. Anyway, I hit McCallum with about eight backfists, and that just killed him. He couldn't believe that little, cheap backfist could beat him. In that kind of a situation I'll hit him every time he moves with that backfist. And he's going to find that out. I've got his timing down pat. I know what he's doing. But if the rules call for no backfists, well, then, you're just not going to see the Vitali backfist.

#### How do you think you'd fare without the backfist?