



Muay Thai Clinch meets MMA Takedowns

HOW TO SET UP WRESTLING'S DOUBLE LEG FROM THE CLASSIC THAI CLINCH

By John B Will

No one can dispute the effectiveness of Muay Thai as a martial art. It has enjoyed a long and illustrious history and has emerged as one of the premier combative art forms of the modern world. Undeniably, one of the principle aspects that sets Muay Thai apart from most other traditional forms of martial art is its incorporation and development of fighting from the standing clinch; in particular, the use it makes of neck and head control. Only those living under a rock somewhere, can still deny the effectiveness of wrestling takedowns, particularly in the arena of modern day MMA. Again, this art form has been around, literally, for thousands of years. The grappling arts have always been with us, the fact is that they were seemingly put to one side for thirty years or so, when the modern martial arts boom hit the western world. But the idea of taking the opponent to the ground has always been there as a mainstream combative art form. What I would like to do in this article is to marry these two powerful ideas up; and get people thinking and training in new and interesting ways.



The two world's of Muay Thai and Wrestling Takedowns are not as far removed as you may think. here's a look at how fans of the Thai Clinch can use their skills to set up the highest percentage wrestling takedown - the Double Leg.

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The Basic Ingredients

The Thai Clinch

There are a number of variations on the Thai method of controlling the head. These methods have largely evolved as a means of securing the opponent in a way that allows us to deliver knee and elbow strikes as opportunities permit. Although the basic Thai clinch can be used to effect some types of takedowns, it has simply not evolved for that purpose and many a Thai would find themselves getting an upside-down view of the world if they tried to apply it to a good wrestler. The most basic problem of the Thai clinch is that it is performed in a very upright and 'hip to hip' fashion, so as to limit the opponent's ability to use his own knee arsenal. Okay for the knee-fight, but not a great way to prevent a wrestlers body-lock and subsequent lift or suplex.

That being said though, there is little doubt that the Thai clinch can be used to move an opponent around, not only to set up knee and elbow strikes (as it is designed to do) but to set up some good basic wrestling shots.

Illustrated here are just two of the most common clinches the Thai fighter finds him or herself in. These are both common situations that arise in traditional Muay Thai training environments.

The Takedowns

There are a vast number of wrestling takedowns, set-ups and combinations. As a combative art form it has been evolving for several millennia; it has stood the test of time and is continually evolving. In this article we will look at just one of those takedowns, the High Double Leg. But we will look at two entries to the High Double; the Classic entry and the High Crotch entry.

To read my SECRETS TO SHOOTING THE DOUBLE - Click Here.

- The Basic entry: This is fairly standard stuff. When the opportunity presents we change levels, step in with our lead leg deeply between the op-



The Basic Neck tie: The first is the basic neck tie where we are the ones who have control of our opponents neck and are basically dominating the fight.



The head & bicep tie: The other is similar to the basic wrestling tie, whereby our opponent has our neck controlled and we have automatically responded by controlling one of his arms and one side of his neck.

ponents legs, our head is on the outside and we secure a grip on the back of each of the opponent's knees. This is known as the penetration step phase of the Double leg. We finish by stepping to the outside with our trailing leg and driving strongly into our opponent whilst cutting downward with our far hand to prevent him from hopping away. There is not as much lifting as you might think.



- The High Crotch entry: This is a little more advanced than the basic entry but very useful. The simplest idea here is that we are changing levels but this time we step to the outside of the opponents leg and we take the shot at his leg with our opposite hand; almost as if we are attempting a single leg (with our head on the outside – usually a no-no in submission grappling). We are though, only in this position for a split-second before we lean into our opponent, regain our feet and switch our far hand across to the outside of his far leg, once again giving us the chance to finish with the double leg. Simply put, we use this in a situation where we initially at least, the opponent only presents one leg and we only have our opposite hand free t=and ready to attack it; during the course of the technique though, we changeup to our good-old Double.



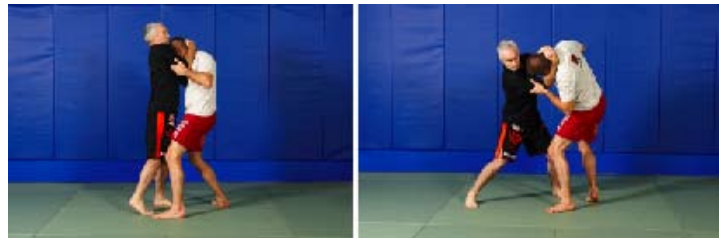
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Some Combo's to get us going

Thai Clinch to Double:

We begin by establishing the Basic Thai neck control on our opponent. Add knees into this equation if the opportunity arises; but realise that this greatly increases the chances of being taken down ourselves.

In traditional Thai fashion, we begin by swinging the opponent around in the direction of our rear leg; the effect of this can be enhanced by first tilting his head slightly in the direction we want to swing him. Keeping our feet planted, the idea here is to swing him so that he basically lands with his feet one either side of what was previously our rear leg but at the completion of our rotation has now become our lead leg. This puts the opponent in the perfect position for a double leg. In effect, we have reconstructed the penetration-step phase of the takedown. All that remains to be done is a level-change and finish. This is a great way to familiarize ourselves with the way that Thai neck control and knees (optional) can be woven in with the Double leg shot.



Head & Bicep Clinch to Double:

Our opponent has beaten us to the basic Thai neck control position; and we have instinctively countered with a basic wrestling style clinch. Our right hand controls his neck and our left hand controls his biceps.

Although there are things we can do from here, if his clinch is tight and well-established, it is best to try to unbalance him before we take our shot. One method to loosen his control is what I like to call the Steering Wheel method. We effect this by releasing our hold on his biceps and reaching underneath his arm and between our bodies to get a grip on the outside of his far elbow. Now we pull his head down and to the right whilst pulling his elbow across and up, just like we are turning a Steering

Wheel to the right. This will have the effect of unbalancing him and opening up a gap between his elbows so we can change levels.

As soon as his grip is loosened, we take our hand off his neck and use it to yank his elbow upward as we change levels, stepping across and to the outside of his leg (our trailing knee drops to the floor) and shooting our left hand in between his legs to grab his right calf. We immediately cover that hand with our other hand, to prevent him from pulling it back; leaning into him, we regain our feet, and whilst doing so, we switch our left hand across to his far leg to secure our double.

This sounds a little complicated at first but it certainly greatly increases the opportunities to effectively finish with the double leg. Once we get fifty or sixty reps under our belt, it becomes surprisingly smooth and easy to do. The key is to think of bouncing off the floor; we do not want to spend more than a fraction of a second with our knee on the ground; we are only dropping it down to help our level-change. This is a very explosive move; and one that is considered a high-percentage move in wrestling (freestyle).



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