The New Alhambra, Russell Peltz's no-frills boxing venue, has little in common with the original Alhambra, a palatial and expansive Moorish fortress which sits atop a picturesque hill in Granada, Spain. South Philly's Alhambra is a fortress of a very different kind. Set in a district of warehouses, this boxing warehouse boasts a corrugated metal ceiling and cinderblock walls. Folding metal chairs, packed close to accommodate the capacity crowd, surround the ring. And $4 beers are all the luxury offered to patrons. But on a sweltering Wednesday night, with near 100-degree temperatures and the hot overhead lights that accompany ESPN burning up the room, water was the drink of choice for the sweating crowd. Perhaps it was a show of empathy for the sixteen fighters who came to do battle in this Philadelphia fortress.

In the main event, broadcast on ESPN2's Wednesday Night Fights, Rogers Mtagwa, 21-10-2 (16 KOs), defended his USBA featherweight belt against a game but overmatched Alvin Brown, 26-9 (12 KOs). Mtagwa emigrated from his native Tanzania in 2000, and seems to have found his true home in the City of Brotherly Love; his tough, aggressive style fits the mold of a Philadelphia fighter. Mtagwa came out strong, clearly not of the belief that Round 1 is for moving and feinting and gently feeling out an opponent. In Mtagwa's playbook, Round 1, like all the other rounds, is for punching. Mtagwa fired his shots with conviction, short, compact shots behind a tight guard. He played defense for a few moments in the middle of the round, making Brown miss with head movement as abbreviated as his punches. No wasted movement from Mtagwa, who finished the round punching.

In Round 2, Mtagwa started to unleash his signature punch, a short overhand right to the head. Amid a full arsenal of punches, this clubbing right first hurt Brown, then put him down. Brown, game throughout the fight, got off the canvass, only to be felled a second time by Mtagwa's right hand. When he got up this time, the timekeeper, known for precision but rarely for tenderness, nevertheless gave Brown comfort by sounding the 10-second warning. Brown survived, but, as Brown would later learn, survival is not a sure thing against the USBA champion, even with ten seconds left in a round.

Round 3 was not any easier for Brown, though he did stay on his feet. Mtagwa gave his 36-year-old opponent no rest, attacking him with a relentless array of short, crisp punches that continued to be punctuated by the clubbing right. The assault continued in Round 4, interrupted only briefly as Brown landed his own overhand rights. But Brown's turn at punching was short-lived. Mtagwa continued to hit and to hurt his doomed opponent, ending matters in dramatic fashion. With less than ten seconds left in the round, Mtagwa landed a big overhand right to the head that deposited Brown in his own corner. Referee Steve Smoger, a throwback who has not attached himself to the latest fad of stopping fights too early, counted ten over the fallen fighter. Official time: 3:06 of the fourth.

The co-feature pitted puncher against boxer in an eight-round junior middleweight bout. Jose Medina, 13-7 (10 KOs), who has "Macho" sewed into his trunks, fought macho as he took on Clarence Taylor, 11-9-2 (5 KOs). But macho, without anything to complement it, rarely works in

the sweet science. Medina stalked Taylor through the first round, looking to intimidate his taller, lankier opponent as he searched for an opening to land the big shot. He threw heavy punches, but he threw them rarely and he threw them too wide, setting a pattern for the seven rounds ahead. Taylor, tentative at first in the face of Medina's heavy hands, started to find his rhythm in the second round. He threw crisp, straight punches, too light to hurt Medina but accurate enough to score. Medina, meanwhile, continued to miss with wild swings. In Round 3, Medina's one-at-a-time swings were fittingly accompanied by exaggerated body movements as he dodged punches on defense, demonstrating in a new way his lack of a foundation in boxing fundamentals. Add to that his refusal to jab and his tendency to walk around the ring as if he were walking down the street, instead of maintaining his balance on feet spread apart at a proper distance, and you see the raw material on which Taylor, the boxer, was able to work.

Taylor, with only five knockouts in twenty-one fights coming into this bout, understood his strengths (and his weaknesses) and used them to good effect. Taylor threw straight punches and used movement and timing to do what a boxer should do, hit and not get hit in return. In Round 6, Medina, aware that the tide was against him, tried a new tactic, talking to his opponent (macho words, no doubt) to try to make Taylor fight. But Taylor prefers boxing to fighting, and he refused to be drawn in by Medina's taunts. Taylor continued to fight smart, beating Medina with straight punches and no words. Taylor, in full control as the fight moved forward, dominated the final two rounds. He hurt Medina in round 7 with a volley of clean blows that went unanswered, and in Round 8 a Taylor left precipitated Medina's fall to one knee. Taylor proved decisively that boxing is more than a contest of strength as he won a unanimous decision, 76-75, 79-71 and 78-72.

In the night's opening bout, Carlos Aballe, 5-2 (3 KOs), upset local favorite Orlando Lewis. Lewis came into this fight with a record of 4-0, all four victories coming by way of early knockout. He made the mistake of believing that his knockout punch would again secure him a win. But he did nothing to set up the knockout, nothing to create an opening where a knockout punch could land. While Lewis waited, Aballe worked, and handed Lewis his first loss by scores of 39-36, 38-37 and 39-35.

Lightweights Ryan Belasco, 2-0, and Bobby Campbell, 1-2, spent most of their four rounds together holding instead of punching. The more aggressive Belasco won by scores of 39-37 twice and 40-36.

Cruiserweights Glenn Turner, 8-3-3 (2 KOs), and DeAndre McCole, 4-15-3, engaged in a sloppy 6-round affair. McCole's cornermen demonstrated a healthy sense of irony by wearing shirts with "K.O. Security" inscribed across the back; their fighter has not scored a single knockout in his undistinguished 22-fight career. Turner, a Philadelphia native, had the crowd behind him, and scored the cleaner blows en route to a unanimous decision win, 58-56 on all scorecards.

Kaseem Wilson, 4-0-1 (2 KOs), and Wes Hobbs, now 4-1-1, junior middleweights, brought undefeated records and similar styles to their 4-round bout. These tall, quick southpaws spent most of the fight circling and jabbing at each other. Wilson showed slightly more power and aggression, earning a decision by scores of 40-36 twice and 39-37.

In a light heavyweight battle, Mike Eatmon, 9-6 (6 KOs), gave local favorite Chucky Cavallo, 10-0 (3 KOs), trouble in the first round, cutting Cavallo above the right eye. But Cavallo showed toughness in coming back to dominate the next five rounds, keeping Eatmon at a distance where the taller Cavallo could land straight right hands. All judges had Cavallo winning 59-54.

The final fight of the night was also the shortest. Welterweight Mike Jones of Philadelphia improved his record to 3-0 (3 KOs) with a first round knockout of Ron Glover, 1-2.

(Check out pics of Rogers Mtagwa vs. Alvin Brown in the TSS Photo Galleries)