DUSSELDORF - I'm not certain that undefeated, 20 year old flyweight Susi "Killer Queen" Kentikian is currently the best pound for pound female fighter on the planet, as a growing number of observers have claimed lately.

But, she certainly looked like the best boxer by far, male or female, on a high class card presented here by Universum Promotions at an immaculate venue called the Burg-Wacher Castello, home of the local pro basketball team and team handball (Olympics type).

Kentikian, 22-0, and holder of WIBF and WBA world titles was deservedly the star of the August 29th show, and she clearly outshined all the brawnier boys on a well run, nine bout lineup. That was basically due to the fact that her opponent, Hagar Shmoulefeld Finer, showed up to win the WBA female title contest and support her own argument as the best of the gloved up gal gang.

The main preliminary, which featured popular, heavily hyped WBO Intercontinental Champion Sebastian Zbik against John Carvalho, paled in comparison to the women's bout. On the plus side, the well conditioned Zbik, now 24-0 (9) and trained by Fritz Sdunek, pitched what could be described as a 12 round virtual shutout on the scorecards, but it was a bigger minus that the monotonous waltz was basically a no hitter in terms of stunning leather that landed.

The assembeled swarm of approximately 3,000 fashionable patrons applauded Zbik politely on occasion, carrying on in mellow mode as they had throughout the preliminaries.

When the headlining ladies made their entrances, the place finally started to rock.

After that Shmoulefeld Finer, 16-7-3-1NC (4), from Tel Aviv, Israel, made a heavy handed statement immediately, and during the opening rounds it looked like the hometown German fans were in for a major disappointment.

The women warmed up with slap like shots, but were soon throwing genuine punches.

Kentikian moved in while circling to the left with hopes of scoring big early, but Shmoulefeld Finer initially beat her to the punch. Despite enthusiastic chants of "Susi", the favorite had a bloody lip by the second session while Shmoulefeld Finer remained basically untagged.

Big trades ensued by the third frame. By then, the ten rounder was already the best fight of the night.

Shmoulefeld Finer threw like a maniac from all angles and kept her left in Kentikian's face. After each round she defiantly thrust her gloves into the air and kept the previously stoic audience howling.

Kentikian was not as flashy, but more consistent when it counted. By the fifth, she had closed the scoring gap, and landed thudding rights more and more. Kentikian continued to surge ahead, but it was never easy. She started getting through with some major blasts down the stretch, and for a few minutes it looked like her power might wear Shmoulefeld Finer down, but the challenger refused to be overwhelmed.

Official scoring: Pasquale Procopio 97-93, Jan Teleki 98-92, Roger Tilleman 99-91.

Procopio didn't seem that far off by my observation, since a couple rounds could have been decided by one or two shots during furious exchanges. Maybe the other judges got dazzled by the shiny streaks in Kentikian's braided hair.

Members of the European media I spoke with the next night at Valuev-Ruiz said that from the TV broadcast it looked like a hometown decision, or that Shmoulefeld Finer deserved at least a draw. The cab driver who had the fight on a six inch carscreen said the verdict was a robbery as he took me to the train station at about 180 kilometers per hour in his standard issue mini Mercedes taxi.

The only call that seemed indisputable was Kentikian's obvious star power.

"Of course I knew very well she was very tough," said Kentikian, "She boxed excellently against Regina Halmich, and also Alesia Graf and Julia Sahin (Kentikian stablemates) didn't have it easy with her. Hagar is very awkward, and she punches from everywhere. But I definitely know I deserved to win this fight."

Coming into the bout Shmoulefeld Finer's primary selling point was a similar strong showing in November 2007 against hugely popular Halmich. Finer dropped a majority decision in a contest billed as Halmich's retirement party. Added with the narrow defeat against Kentikian, Shmoulefeld Finer's resume indicates she is still a finer fighter than most, especially in the thin walloping waters of women's boxing talent pool.

From a promotional standpoint one would have to figure that Kentikian's performance against Shmoulefeld Finer would be debated in comparison to Halmich's, in ticket selling terms of whetting fans' appetites for a gala affair. German media ran with the idea during the buildup for Kentikian - Shmoulefeld Finer, with talk of a million euro (at approx 150 to the dollar) purse luring Halmich back into the ring.

Halmich sat ringside as a TV commentator, looking more like a retired model than a retired fighter. Considering the rare payday she'd be offered to tackle Susi, the bout would almost be a lock to occur under similar circumstances in the States. But I'm discovering that while certain things in the global fight game are exactly the same in Germany as what I'm used to across the US, there are also subtle differences.

When the women appeared together at a function to accept awards from the WBA they did not appear as future combatants, and Kentikian remained low key, with mixed messages about the probability.

"Halmich was very popular, but now I've got the belt and I'm the one representing Germany," said Kentikian. "Regina did a lot for the sport. She's my friend and I respect her a lot. She said stories about us fighting were only rumors, I believe her. I don't need to fight her, but if she wants to I'm ready any time."

If Kentikian and Halmich ever did fight, Shmoulefeld Finer deserves a crack at the victor.

If any of those pairings gets signed, the boys better tighten their rupture protectors and throw a lot more, or they'll probably be left behind again in terms of who fought the hardest and displayed the most juevos.