BERLIN/KLITSCHKOVILLE - The slugging scenario, so to speak, was written in giant glowing script that flashed in a neon scroll around O2 World Arena before,during, and after the Vitali Klitschko - Samuel Peter fight.

Der Champion ist Zuruck. Translated, it meant "The Champion is Back". It took about two minutes after the opening bell rang to become obviously prophetic.

There were no neutral corners Saturday night as a very strong looking Klitschko hammered out a monotonous, one sided stoppage after eight intense but unsuspenseful rounds.

By the time defending active WBC kingpin Peter and titleholder "emeritus" Klitschko actually clashed between the strands there was a considerable amount of positive speculation that the much maligned current heavyweight division was in for some genuine thumping thrills and smashing spills.

Not exactly. The anticipated fireworks never really happened.

The thumps all came from Klitschko, and his loyal legions got the only thrills.

Peter, who called it a day between frames, got the smashed part.

"Congratulations to Samuel Peter for being a strong champion," said an unmarked Klitschko afterward. "I was in top form. I was very surprised he retired when he did. I promised to stop him myself, that's probably why some people were unhappy with the ending."

"He proved he was ready," said Peter through manager Ivalyo Gotsev. "I have to see the film of what happened then I'll look at what I need to do. My corner stopped it, I never would have quit."

German TV footage indicated Peter shook his head and mumbled something like "No more, it's over" to inquiring cornerman Stacey McKinley.

While both contestants are generally good-natured professionals, the encounter was somewhat of a grudge match due to a controversial pre-fight buildup which realistically portrayed each man capable of delivering a wild knockout.

It turned out only Klitschko came into the ring possessing that power. Peter just showed an amazing ability to absorb huge thuds.

Peter, who trained in the reknown Black Forest region, was popular with the locals but Berlin held a homecoming atmosphere for Ukrainian Klitschko since he was born in Hamberg and most of his fights have been in Germany.

If there was any doubt about who's massive house it was after a big screen Klitschko tribute film just prior to the introductions, that was erased by taped "You can do it, Vitali" videos featuring Joe Frazier, Mike Tyson (who got the most cheers), Evander Holyfield, George Foreman and Lennox Lewis that rolled before the principals' entrances.

The roaring swarm of around 15,000 pilsner fueled pilgrims voiced their appreciation all night long.

The nearly four year layoff since Klitschko's last appearance was never a factor. He scored again and again with sharp lefts from the hip that kept Peter from working inside.

Klitschko made Peter stumble in the first round, landing punches at a rate of over twenty to one. The pattern was set immediately and didn't change. Peter looked as sturdy as a tank but it seemed like the only real danger for Klitschko was whether he'd run out of gas.

Peter threw straight to Klitschko's clavicle area, which reddened but didn't seem to hurt. Klitschko didn't throw to the body at all.

Klitschko looked bigger and bigger after every session. Peter's right eye got tenderized and he started looking like an early halloween pumpkin waiting to be carved. He probably should have gone for broke by the third round because by then just about all he could do was attempt counterpunch flurries that glanced off Klitschko's arm.

Klitschko made it look easy, and the accumulated damage to Peter was apparent by the midway point.

When the end was finally signalled, McKinley looked the most disappointed of Peter's team.

Afterward, Klitschko and younger brother Wladimir posed for thousands of fans who made their way to the floor.

Besides Klitschko's and Peter's distinct personalities, the stakes for each man hinged on opposite polarities. Peter pursued a revenge unification against consensus champion Wladimir, while Vitali, now 36-2 (35), sought to enter the record book with his brother as the only siblings to share concurrent title recogniton.

Now what once seemed an unlikely scenario was played out at the post fight press conference, which transpired more like a fan fest as the Klitschko brothers piled their belts between themselves on the podium, joking with the media and each other.

Absent Peter, 30-2 (23), was a fading afterthought to everyone in the place but Gotsev.

"I prepared different especially for this fight," said Klitschko. "He's a head shorter than me. Actually, my sparring was more taxing than the fight. I expected him to be more explosive than he was. I felt quite sure I'd drop him in another round or two."

"I showed I could do it," concluded Klitschko. "I have a lot of dreams about boxing. I feel I can do so much more. I'll talk to the people close to me and we'll see what comes next."

Saturday night, it was Klitschko's age over Peter's youth, inactivity and rest over recent solid work.

Questionable local cooking never figured in the result. Still, for Klitschko, a hometown advantage that came with a deep sea of smiling, supportive faces sure didn't hurt.