DUSSELDORF - Rack up a big one, giant size, for youth over experience.

The 26 year-old Alexander Dimitrenko put himself in the thick of the heavyweight hunt, and quite justifiably the top ten, with a perfect left uppercut under the rib cage that sunk Luan Krasniqi in the third round of their highly energized encounter on Saturday.

Krasniqi had some productive moments prior to that point, but Dimitrenko's spearing gutshot made the early scoring academic.

"I expected more from him," said Dimitrenko. "I was surprised by what happened. At first there was nothing, then a delayed reaction and it was over. But that's boxing."

"I wanted to get up but it wasn't possible," said a dejected Krasniqi. "That's the heaviest punch I've ever taken. I never felt pain like that."

The well publicized battle garnished considerable high profile attention here and an enthusiastic, sold out swarm of 4,500 showed up at Burg-Wacher Castello for an excellent Universum Promotions card. Most in attendance were loudly for Krasniqi at the first bell, but to the victor went the spoils and Kasniqi was booed after the climax.

Both men were said to have earned around a million dollar purse for the contest that was broadcast live by the 2DF network.

Muzzled guard dogs near the entrances set a no-nonsense tone for the night, but there was still a party atmosphere throughout the arena, which featured the area's typically large contingent of well heeled VIPs, muscular fanatics and local models. Claudia Schiffer was discovered here, and the standard remains upheld.

There was an unusual frenzy as the fighters came down their own special, orange strobe-lighted runway to blaring tunes. The fighters lived up to the prelude and threw huge punches immediately.

It was an excellent, fast paced fight while it lasted.

The 6' 7" Dimitrenko, 256 3/4, scored with a train sized jab and looked like he dwarfed the 6' 3" 1/2 Krasniqi, 225 3/4, at first but Krasniqi got inside with good looping lefts and had the capacity crowd roaring with every punch he threw.

It looked like both men showed up in top shape. Neither was breathing hard after a furious first frame.

They traded jarring jabs and Krasniqi seemed to be getting the better of many exchanges. He

bulled Dimitrenko to the ropes and made the younger man hold on a few times to keep from getting pounded from all angles inside.

Krasniqi managed to back Dimitrenko up, but his right eye looked tender from Dimitrenko's jab. Dimitrenko started whipping in long uppercuts in the second, but Krasniqi stayed inside many of them and continued to score from both sides, coming over the top with rights. After the second session, Dimitrenko blinked in his corner as if he might be having trouble adjusting to the range and the pace.

Dimmitrenko tried to adjust his right hand timing as Krasniqi kept serious, successful pressure on.

Then the dam broke for the local hero.

Krasniqi landed a jab, then started to duck away as Dimitrenko thumped him atop the head in response. Dimitrenko followed up with a short, half hooking left that landed at a forty five degree angle underneath Krasniqi's ribs.

Krasniqi froze for a moment and you could see the impact shudder up his torso. He stepped back without air, tried to will himself to keep standing, but crumpled to his knees in pain on the center of the canvas.

That was that, as his tortured eyes testified, and referee Manuel Palomo seemed to count in freeze-frame motion as the crowd began to jeer. The official time was 2:54.

Krasniqi was blameless but disgraced. It looked like the punch sank in wrist deep. This is a tough game indeed.

"I'm sorry my fans were disappointed but there was nothing I could do," said Krasniqi. "I did my best. I thought I was in control."

The crowd had favored Krasniqi primarily because he embraced relocating to Germany from Kosovo, while Dimitrenko still touts his Ukranian roots.

"I understand that the fans were not behind me," said Dimitrenko. "But I think I convinced them. I caught him with a very good punch that landed harder than I thought. I am ready to fight at a championship level now. I've trained with Wladimir Klitschko and I know what it takes."

"Sasha" Dimitrenko, now 29-0 (19), rises to the top while Krasniqi, 30-4-1 (14), may have seen the last of the really big time.

Dimitrenko's well rounded assault may have also propelled trainer Fritz Sdunek, who also handled Vitali Klitschko and Felix Sturm in dominant performances recently, to the front of the line for Trainer of the Year.

Dimitrenko is due to face a more internationally renowned slugging star now, and judging from

Saturday's performance he's prepared for the task.

It's hard to go unnoticed for long when you're as large as Dimitrenko. It's looks like it's just about his time to be a center of attention in the suddenly more interesting heavyweight division.