TEMECULA, CALIF-Super middleweight contender Andre Ward and heavyweight contender James “Lights Out” Toney both scored convincing knockouts to keep their place in line on Saturday and move the chains forward for Goossen-Tutor Promotions.

Toney and Ward were on target like a pair of laser-guided smart bombs.

It was Ward who entered the fight against Shelby Pudwill (22-4-1) knowing his next opponent would be Mikkel Kessler who won earlier in the day in his native Denmark. The Oakland fighter didn’t skip a beat in pounding out three rounds of snapping combinations that seemed to find every crease in Pudwill’s defense.

“It’s hard to knock out somebody who is fighting defensively,” said Ward, whose victory now nails down a showdown with Kessler. “I came in and did what I had to do.”

Though it was declared a tune up by most experts, even tune ups can result in disaster as another of Goossen-Tutor Promotion fighters Paul Williams discovered in the same arena a couple of years ago against Carlos Quintana.

“I hate tune ups,” said Dan Goossen, the president of Goossen-Tutor, adding that cuts and other injuries can fell a fight card as easily as a knockout. “I’m glad this is over.

It was in the third round when Pudwill decided to stand his ground and punch and it was also the third round that saw Ward find the mark with even more combinations than before. A left uppercut snapped Pudwill’s head back and dropped the North Dakota fighter for a knockdown.

“He doesn’t hit that hard but he cut my eye,” said Pudwill, who had been knocked out in one round by John Duddy in 2006.

“I don’t even know what I did. That’s when I’m at my best. One of those wild movements I just stepped to the side,” said Ward about the punch that floored Pudwill and led an eventual stoppage after some lobbying by the Oakland fighter who said that he was watching an old Muhammad Ali fight film and saw the legend pull that same tactic. “I’m a fighter, I know when a guy gets weak. It’s over with. The referee was watching very close. He stopped it when he was supposed to.”

Referee Pat Russell stopped the fight at 2:16 of the third round.

Toney

In the co-main event it was Toney looking like a pocket-sized destroyer as he shocked onlookers at the weigh-in a day earlier then at the fight weighing only 217 pounds.

Looking smaller but much more active and quicker, Toney paired up against Matt Greer who easily was six inches taller and almost 30 pounds heavier. But the more streamlined 217-pound Toney was like lightning in a bottle waiting to bust out.

The first round saw Toney punching at a much faster rate than seen since he fought Evander Holyfield in 2003, which ironically was the last time he weighed less than 220 pounds. Slicing left hooks to both sides of Greer's body it looked like a one-sided fight until Greer fired an overhand right that stunned the veteran. It also sparked Toney to boost his attack with even more body shots that had Greer looking in pain as he returned to the corner.

"I knew I hurt him with my right hand," said Greer (12-6, 11 KOs), adding that he was not surprised that Toney recovered.

Toney said it's all part of the fight game.

"He hit me with the punch, but I wasn't hurt," said Toney (72-6-3, 44 KOs) who has never been stopped in a fight. "I'm in the hurting game. It ain't nothing."

Greer sucked it up and came out of his corner looking to give one last good fling at knocking out Toney. But the veteran slipped and countered to the head and body so quickly that Greer had no options but to try and ride out the storm. Thunderous shots to the body had one of Greer's corner men on the top steps with a towel signaling referee Ray Corona at 2:33 of the second round.

"Everybody's been talking about my weight," said Toney. "There's nothing left to talk about."

For the past two months Toney had been working almost three times a day at his gym and

had looked better and better. By the weigh in there was no doubt he was looking to prove to the world that if it's weight that is making people doubt, then the weight was coming off.

"This is only the beginning," said Toney, who has his sights on a heavyweight tournament being discussed by the WBC. "Since I was a kid my favorite fighter was Salvador Sanchez with that green belt. Ever since then I've been chasing it. I want it."

Prelims

Francisco Santana (11-1, 5 KOs) won a close middleweight clash against Oakland's Tony Hirsch (9-3-1, 5 KOs) in a back and forth struggle. The judges scored it 60-54 for Hirsch and 58-56 twice for Santana who won by split-decision.

In a welterweight battle of undefeated fighters it was California's Mike Dallas Jr. (10-0-1) who was able to use his speedy attack style to outpoint New York's Vincent Arroyo (9-1, 6 KOs) in an eight round bout. After getting beat to the punch for the first seven rounds, Arroyo finally timed one of Dallas's charges with a perfect right cross that wobbled the Californian. The lanky fighter hung on until the final bell rung. One judge scored it 60-54 despite Arroyo's good last

round but the other two judges had it 59-55 all for Dallas.

“He caught me but it's part of the game. I out boxed him,” said Dallas.

Undefeated Rico Ramos (12-0, 8 KOs) dominated Mexico’s Victor Martinez (15-6, 11 KOs) in a featherweight fight and eventually stopped him in the third round with a barrage of punches. From the opening bell Ramos was the far superior fighter and had Martinez looking for a way out.

L.A. welterweight Terrell Williams (2-0) had too much of everything for Long Beach’s Joshua Zurfluh (1-7-1) who has a chin of stone but not enough offensive power. Referee Pat Russell stopped the fight at 1:55 of the second round though Zurfluh never was floored, he absorbed too many big blows.