ALTONA, HAMBURG -In Germany Shannon Briggs hospitalization subsequent to absorbing 36 minutes, or quite possibly a lifetimes worth of heavy leather was a major headline of the weekend.

The bout received plenty of prefight sports related coverage but Briggs dramatic futile stand and sensationalized medical treatment propelled the story into Deutschlands public consciousness, even as Briggs was reportedly losing his after the fight.

I am nointellectual experton thegeneral German psyche, but I have observed a unique, uniform pridein the ability to swallow bitter things with stoic resolve, be they (by USA standards) rigid social contracts or bizzaro traffic etiquette. The audience of around 14,500 at O2 Arena deeply appreciated the resolve Briggs showed as Klitschko basically dropped the building on him but couldnt drop Briggs.

Broadcasting RTL network reported 15 million viewers, with a market share of 66.9%.

He was very brave and never gave up, understated Klitschko.

Briggs gained the crowds respect eating right hands.His postfightaddress made him a beloved part of theadopted national family.

I fought George Foreman, I fought Lennox Lewis. Vitali is the best Ive fought. Ive been hit by Foreman, and Vitali hits harder, said Briggs with a face that swelled as he spoke. I just want to say to all the people of Hamburg that although I was fighting their champion, everybody treated me with respect. All the people in the city were great, all the people at K2, even the chef. I love Germany and I hope I get to come backhere some day.

Briggs may get the key to the city before somebodydemonstrates the key to giving Klitschko a real fight.

By the time news dispatches fromsponsoringRTL had spread internationally, data on Briggss injuries got blurred in mis-translation. The security guard who escorted Briggs from the ring said the fighter was disoriented and stumbling, and Briggs reportedly collapsed while waiting for a urine test. Other unverified scuttlebutt said Briggs tried to refuse medical treatment but was forced by his promoter Greg Cohen to hit the hospital. Good, if obvious call.

There was quickly growing outrage over Briggss widely perceived lack of proper protection. Somewhere, his last second highlight reel stoppage of Sergei Liakovich probablygot playeda bit too much.

This fight should never have gone even ten rounds, said commentator and semi-active heavyweight Luan Krasniq.

Ringside doctor Stephan Bock told RTL that he would have recommended the fight be stopped, but nobody ever asked him. After the fight Briggss pupil reflexes were fine, but he was drowsy, indicated Bock.

Klitschkos trainer Fritz Sdunek said the words everybody feared, Briggs will never be the same after this.

Perhaps, in light of various personalities and subjective issues, boxing should take away the human factorin what decides a technical stoppage and switch to a numeric or statistic basedmodel.

Instead of leaving itup to hopefully well informed and intended but often inconsistent players like referees, doctors and corner men, let the numbers make the call. Similar to a 10 run baseball rule or11-zip racquetballshutout,fights could have a designated boxers dozen, in which an 8 count is delivered if one guy gets hit flush more than 10 times in a row withoutlanding anything back at all.

Or, in a case like Briggss totally awesome, totally unnecessary display of durability against Klitschko, something along the lines ofa if a guys head gets spun 160 degrees while his face looks like putty and his counterpunches miss by more than a foot, and this occurs ten consecutive times a round in round after round, then forHeavens sake pullthe plug kind of rule.

Johannes Brahms is one of this citys most famous sons, and the musical theme for tonights easily translatable Das Deull der Knockouterwas who could really deliver the lullaby. Klitschko landed thuds that looked and sounded gigantic, but Briggss heart for the task was equally bigand somehow kept him upright, though often dazed and wobbly, for the 12 roundduration.

There will doubtlessly be many a wise guy who says Klitschkos monotonous whomping of Briggs put them to sleep, and US viewers may never wake up to Klitschkos style.

Not so the O2 Arena, where the placekept rocking with cheers, chants andcollective gasps at Briggs endurance thatgained affection from a satisfied audience who watched him pay the price for plentyofprefight howling hype. Itwasnt a good boxing match, butit was riveting theatre until around the middle frames when it the outcome becameobvious.

Klitschko probed with straight lefts andscored with the first big right he threw. Briggs smiled, but soon his left eye blinked with the look of a guy who knew it would be a long evening. Briggs huffed and puffed and briefly got on his toes, but Klitschko kept a disciplined drumbeat of short rights into Briggss tenderized countenance.

There was a reality check type moment in the fourth frame during a lull in crowd noise. The fighters landed resounding, simultaneous shots that clearly illustrated the kind of painful popspresented inside the strands. Nobody looked anxious to trade places with either principal. Briggs managed to put some welts on Klitschkos torso with surprisingly fast body shots, but for the most part it was all Klitschko from the sixth frame on. By then, Briggs had earned his paycheckwhile Klitschko had already landed enough right hand mallets to flattenmany

contenders.

Klitschko threw very few body shots, buthe didnt need to. Kill the head and the body will die. Unless its Shannon Briggs.

By the seventh it wasnt really a fight any more. Klitschko landed multiple, variedcombinations as Briggsfelt furyfrom all angles. The crowd stomped their feet and chantedin anticipation of a knockout that never came.

It was surprising thatBriggs lasted through the eighth andshocking that he lasted through every round after that, but you could see in Briggss puffy eyes that he was willing himself to continue. Now the real drama began. Everybody in the place except maybe Briggs knewwho would win the bout, but nobody could tell whether hed actually go the distance, which still seemed almost impossibleas Klitschko blasted him senseless in the tenth and it became a slaughter. Howard Cosell spun in his grave.

Briggs reeled and rocked, thentrudgedback for more even though he could barely face his foe. Klitschko walloped him around the ring but couldnever back him into the ropes, let alone put him down.

When the bell rang ending round eleven, Briggs, who dragged badly for much of the recent evening, got a bright, wide-eyed look as if to say,Hey, I made it.

Not quite yet. Briggs still had to weather even more serious trouble in the12th, but somehow he took blast after blast without dropping. I dont know if it was a moral victory or not, but it sure was amazing to see.

Klitschko raised his arms and shruggedin acknowledging his frustration at failing to stop Briggs. Many fans cheered not theobvious shutout, but Briggss gutsy survival.

Otherperformers who logged Hamburg incubation time are The Beatles.Insertsong titles likeA Hard Days Nightfor your personal gag about Klitschkos widespread victory. What it really came down to was Help.

Guido Caravalleri and Victor Cervantesscored the bout120-107, with Anek Hongtongkam logging 120-105. Thats quite a few 10-8tabs without a knockdown, and quite justifiable.They might as wellhave scored the final sessions 10-0.

Whats not so justifiable, hindsight or not, is why Briggs didnt either go for broke or call it a dutiful day much earlier, torn biceps none withstanding.In Vegas you might think of high stakesover/under betting considerations, but that doesnt seem to be a factor here.

I wanted to knock him out and Im disappointed I did not, but he deserves a lot of respect, mused Klitschko. I couldnt believe he was still standing after some of the punches. I almost got discouraged.

Charlemagnes forcesestablished Hamburg around the year 800 AD. What is probably Germanys most diverse, funky metropolis has since seen eras ofsacking, plagues, and catastrophic blazes. It has also risen and remained one of Europes both most well to do and grittydomains.Hamburg is said to have by the countrys highest per-capitapopulation of millionaires by far, and it looked to me like home for most of the lands freaks and street people.K2 events feature elaborate video introductions and tonight Klitschkos highlighted his family life and training around various city landmarks.

The crowd ate it up so much he should probably try arun for office here instead ofthe Ukraine.

Klitschko had his pro debut in Hamburg, andkeeps a residence here.Hes endured some setback injuries, defeats, and a still present public skepticism in some quarters including the dominantUS market.That never stoppedKlitschko from widespread personal achievements and still growing acclaim and fortune.

Haters complain that since the K bros have cleaned out the division and wont fight each other, theres almost no point to many of the fights.You could say that about much of tonights affair, butby the conclusion there was a twisted beauty to Briggs refusal to fold.

Anybody can be a hero when its easy. Trash proclaims itself legendaryafter minor endeavors all the time.

It is immeasurably harder and usually more costly, in abstract nobility, to achieve heroism with the short end of the whipping stick.

There are many legitimate, contradictingperceptionsabout the Klitschko - Briggs battle but a couple thingswere undisputable. One is Klitschko looked formidible andcreamedBriggs so badly that stopping the fight should have beena much more pending optionin terms of future health.

Another is how Briggs overwhelmingly earned the esteem of the highly partisanswarm. He had played the formidible foil in grand stylethroughout the promotionand by the time his gigantic, dramatically enhancedimage blared across a darkened arena during his introductionBriggs wasa perfect dragon forKlitschko to slay.At the end of the contest, he hadearned thecrowds uniformly heartfelt admiration. You could almost say he stole the show.

By the end of the night Briggs was theguy Germanytalked about, with good wishes in their hearts.