MANNHEIM UNDER A FULL XMAS MOON – It’s another almost perfectly choreographed fight night for K2 Promotions as consensus top heavyweight Wladimir Klitschko thumped Hasim Rahman for a seventh round TKO.

Rahman arrived in this cold German winter wonderland looking jet lagged and sleepy but determined to make the most of his late replacement opportunity. Klitschko didn't make his trip any smoother.

The title of the latest installment of the Klitschko brothers slugging saga was "Des Nachste Bitte" which translates out to "The next one, please."

Immediately following the one-sided contest, Rahman was no more than an afterthought as the main topic of the postfight press conference was whether it would be Wladimir of Vitali who fought David Haye in England next year.

Maybe it was a case of the less said about Rahman's weak performance the better. Klitschko pitched a somewhat subdued shutout until :44 of the final frame in a bout where his jab was just about the whole story.

"I feel like I did what I wanted," said Klitschko. "He was a strong opponent so I think this was a good showing. As my brother said, the important thing was that the crowd was happy and I kept my titles."

I'm told the SAP Arena, which sits like a spotlighted flying saucer in the countryside outside the city, seats around 15,000. It didn't look as crowded to me as the equally modern O2 in Berlin, where Vitali fought Samuel Peter, but both houses were full of well heeled blue and gold Ukranian flag waving fanatics.

The ratio of dolled-up women in the crowd surpassed even the De La Hoya glory days in Vegas. Tonight featured the most over the top introduction I've seen. One again, there was a big video lead in, this one interspersed by renowned German actor Michael Mende doing a poetic performance art monologue in a strangely illuminated ring, followed by Il Divo singing operatic overtures above most of the masses.

At first the fight looked like a replica of Vitali-Peter, but Rahman tried to be more active, and by the third round Kltschko's lips looked as red as his bright trunks.

Still, Klitschko was basically unmarked and looked very strong and flexible inside. He consistently backed Rahman up behind thudding rights in what amounted to Klitschko's best showing in quite a while.

Big lefts sat Rahman down in the sixth, where it looked like he might stay. But to his credit,

Rahman finished the frame and came out for more in the seventh. Referee Tony Weeks told Rahman he'd have to fight back more but Rahman could barely stand up in a display that went from helpess to hapless.

A few more glancing, one-two whomps and Weeks justifiably waved it over.

"I knew he was taking way too many jabs to do anything against me," said Klitschko. "It didn't matter if I knocked him out or if he quit. The important thing is to fight well, and I think I did."

"I'm very satisfied," said trainer Emanuel Steward. "Rahman couldn't get inside so he went to the ropes hoping Wladimir would get tired, but Wladimir fought a very disciplined fight."

Rahman didn't show for the press conference but Haye did, sporting a brown cowboy hat in young gun mode, which got the media buzzing.
Haye stood quietly at first and listened to translations politely, but he grew agitated.

Klitschko manager Bernard Bonte indicated the most likely scenarios involved Wladimir meeting Chris Arreola in the US next while Vitali met Haye in London, but keeping all options open was the main theme.

"With Povetkin and Haye making a name for themselves, 2009 will be a very good year for me," mused Klitschko. "I still want to get the belt of Valuev or Chagaev, but I can't figure out who's supposed to have that title."

The conversation was more lively when Haye spoke up.

"Wladimir won tonight so congratulations to him, but I wasn't impressed at all," jabbed Haye. "Vitali spoke to me and said we'd fight. I'd prefer to fight him because he comes to fight. I don't like guys who fight like bitches, it should be a fight, not a jabbing contest. I can see in Vitali's face he wants to shut me up, but Wladimir doesn't."

"Haye came to me with a picture of my brother's head cut off," fumed Vitali. "In today's world that's a horrible thing to do. He's going to pay for that."

"You going to cut my head off?" mocked Wladimir. "This is not good. You must be punished."

"Do something about it," challenged Haye. "You need your big brother to fight for you."

"Cowboy, take care of yourself," said Wladimir like he was ready to sign the contract. "You won't like getting what you ask for."

Boxing fans have been waiting to long for some real action from the big boys. If things keep going like they have been among the heavyweights recently, the sport may finally see those overdue fireworks.