Usually by this time in the year, we'd have a **K-1** show to kick off the Heavyweight season, or at least be preparing for one. This year is different, as instead
It's Showtime
stepped up to the plate and has taken that top position by promoting a big card over the weekend that proved to be the first big kickboxing card of the year on an international level, and it was great. The show's headliner was two young European heavyweights squaring off against each other.

The fight wasn't about titles or a tournament, instead it was two young heavyweights jocking for position and showing the world what they are capable of. Neither men have the hype behind them that a fighter like **Badr Hari** does, nor did they have the opportunities that he was given. They had to fight for their positions.

Daniel Ghita is the elder of the two, clocking in at 29. Ghita meddled in his home of Romania for a full ten years, until 2009 when It's Showtime gave him a shot on their biggest show of the year, the Amsterdam ArenA show against the Czech Republic's Thomas Hron. Ghita came in with a fire lit from under him and stopped the fight in the second round with his deadly leg kicks that he is known for. Then in August he entered K-1's Final Qualifying tournament in Tokyo and blew through it with all first round knockouts.

Hesdy Gerges (pronounced 'Hell-heth' if you didn't know, how bad ass is that?) is 27 and

worked his way up the ultra-competitive circuit in Amsterdam, as well as through personal issues. Thom Harinck has discussed Gerges troubled past and how if people thought Badr Hari was a bad boy, if they knew about Gerges it would blow them away. Gerges was invited to K-1 in 2009 to take on the giant, Semmy Schilt in what should have been a feature bout for Schilt in the March opening of the K-1 season show. Gerges fought hard and was able to hold on for all three rounds before the bout was decided for Schilt. Gerges fought his way back up and caught the eye of It's Showtime, who the next year felt like they had gold putting him up against Badr Hari. It has all been upward from there, as he proved just how tough he is and made an impact on K-1 as well in 2010.

Neither man had an easy path to this weekend's show. Gerges was given **Semmy Schilt** again in the Final 16 last year, knocking him out of contention, while Ghita was able to make the Final 8 before falling to
Gokhan Saki
. I feel like there has been a swell of support for Ghita over the last year, and rightfully so. Ghita's powerful kicks and hard head can take him far, he has shown a weakness with his hands but is clearly working on improving them. Gerges is a fighter that I feel a lot of people underrate. While Badr Hari was beating him last year, the heart and toughness he had shown, as well as the clean shots he was landing amid Badr's angry flurries were impressive. For a while now I've felt that Gerges has some serious potential and a strong future as a Heavyweight. His kicks are not as crushing as Ghita's, but his hands are much, much better at this point. So going into this fight, it was clear that both men are a big deal.

Over the past few years that has been a rather obnoxious talking point on the internet that Heavyweight kickboxing is "dead" and there is no new talent. That dominance of Peter Aerts and Semmy Schilt is "clear" proof of this, somehow. It isn't that they are just *that good*, but their age should somehow bring down the rest of the field. The rise of
Badr Hari, Ruslan Karaev, Gokhan Saki, Tyrone Spong, Kyotaro
and now Ghita and Gerges tells an entirely different story. It shows an upcoming changing of the guard, a new generation coming from a few transition years in the mid-00's. A fight between Hesdy Gerges and Daniel Ghita was more than a Heavyweight clash, it was a clash between two of the fighters that we've felt will carry on the elite Heavyweight tradition in the coming years and be part of a new golden age. The fact that the fight we saw was such an even, exciting fight is simply proof of all of these things, that regardless of who walked away the victor, both these men are going to make the next ten years or so extremely exciting to watch unfold.