Manhoef and Saki are monsters in the ring. They both bring a unique brand of intensity to their contests and whoever thought of matching these two against each other was responsible for an act of minor genius. Who *wouldn't* want to see two knockout artists, both capable of powerful, flowing, knockout combinations, go to work on each other?

At the time, Manhoef was a slightly more established name than Saki, though the latter's name was on the rise. Manhoef was known in kickboxing circles for his trilogy with Remy Bonjasky, and was also responsible for one of the most violent knockouts in K-1 history in his 2007 match with Ruslan Karaev. Rather frighteningly, *every one of his kickboxing victories is a knockout or stoppage of some sort.* His record speaks to spotty defense, however, and most of his losses have also come by stoppages, making a Manhoef match an unpredictable affair.

Gokhan Saki's first win over a major name in K-1 was against Alexei Ignashov in 2006. Since then, he's really come into his own as a smaller fighter in the super heavyweight division. He's beaten Paul Slowinski, Ruslan Karaev, Ray Sefo, and Tyrone Spong since then. 2010 saw him put on his best performances yet, with a swift destruction of Freddy Kemayo and a four round war against Daniel Ghita.

Were the two to rematch now, Saki would be a heavy favorite, but at the time of this match, it was a much closer contest, especially since they were fully capable of KOing each other. Saki wears the blue gloves in the bout, Manhoef the red. Note that, even though Saki is already small for a K-1 super heavy, he still carries about 20 lb over Manhoef and stands 3 inches taller.

Thanks to yaserakin1978 for uploading this bomb, high quality version of the fight with English commentary.

Both fighters come out cagey and tense, Manhoef more so. Saki easily takes the first round, controlling the pace throughout while Manhoef is content to block, coming in twice with long flurries. Saki's first left high kick, thrown in the opening round, strikes me as being unusually damaging for a blocked kick, and definitely foreshadows the opening Saki would exploit in round two, though he doesn't press the advantage after the first kick.

What's the motivation behind the somewhat risky left high kick? Two considerations catch my eye. In this bout, Manhoef carries his left hand higher than his right, leaving his right side slightly more exposed, and he drops both hands after exchanging. Saki's first down early in the second came as he tried to catch Manhoef on the way out. The strange part is that it looks like Manhoef's right glove was well up to protect his face. Manhoef nevertheless got a count and, even worse for him, seemed to have trouble resetting.

The MMA world was shown Manhoef's susceptibility to being KOed in his Strikeforce bout against Robbie Lawler. Manhoef's brawling style likely led to his taking lots of punishment, and the technical adjustments we see him making here, with a tight guard, may have come a little too late like, say, the changes Chuck Liddell made before his fight with Rich Franklin. However, Manhoef's exciting style, reminiscent of Bovy Sor Udomson's and Wanderlei Silva's, earns him a devoted fan base whose size belies his record.