Once while officiating a tournament at the start of the championship finals I was struck with an idea for adding more excitement to the mat sport. Before I share my thoughts with you, I need to emphasize some very significant points regarding our sport. To begin with, wrestling is one of the oldest and purist athletic events man has ever developed. It is also a competition which pits the power and strength of one individual against the other. And during these physical struggles, there are subtle actions occurring that the unknowing eye cannot perceive. Thus, many observers view wrestling as being a less exciting sport to watch. Some comtemporary referees have tried to speed up wrestling matches by calling "stalling" faster. This officiating approach has not been very successful. As a matter of fact, the strategy has often taken such matches away from the wrestlers and placed it in the hands of the referee. That's not suppose to be the job of wrestling officials.

So how can we make the activity more interesting? What about MUSIC! Yes, that is what I said — music, the universal language of mankind. Now before a few of you consider committing me, allow yours truly the opportunity to explain. Let's return to the tournament. I was assigned to officiate the first match of the championship finals. When the bout was about to start, the announcer introduced the wrestlers to the beat of exhilarating rock music. I began the match as the fast-paced rhythms were still playing in the background. When this musical entertainment was cut short, I actually heard sighs of disappointment from those watching the contest. Moreover, the music did not bother the matmen who were in the midst of wrestling. As a matter of fact, they, too, actually seemed to enjoy it.

This is when I was intrigued with the idea of allowing such energetic background music during dual meets and final matches in tournaments. I, myself, think it would definitely add to the excitement of a wrestling competition. We might even witness more aggressive wrestling.

Stay with me because I can back my thoughts with facts. First of all, music stimulates the psyche of all peoples. It can make them cry, laugh, healthy, reflect, work harder, etc. Now consider this. How many times have you watched runners or individuals working out, listening to music? Why—because it motivates them to run faster and train longer. And what about movies? No doubt they would be much less enjoyable and exciting without music.

As I said before, wrestling, by its own nature, can lack the overt activeness found in other sports at times. This is why I strongly believe that a rousing background music would be motivating to both the fans and the performers. And note, there is no regulation in the National Federation Wrestling Rulebook that prohibits music during high school and junior high school competitions. Ultimately, it will take the initiative of creative wrestling coaches with the willingness and courage to try out this innovative approach.

Personally, I believe they will be quite pleased with the results. In my opinion, dramatic, upbeat background music will promote fan attendance and enthusiasm, as well as wrestler-productivity, during dual meets and the championship finals of tournaments. And boy, I would love to be on hand as the official of such an electrifying event. So what do you think? Am I crazy or not?