Some people send emails here, irked that we cover MMA, mad that we compare and contrast the sweet science with mixed martial arts.

All people should understand that those comparisons actually serve to better boxing, and helped to propel the power brokers in boxing to lift their game this past year.

On Nov. 20, I posted a story (http://www.thesweetscience.com/boxing-article/5511/arum-king-goldie-watch-learn-from-ufc/) that stemmed from watching the UFC's PPV show in Newark, NJ on Nov. 17. I wrote that I was impressed with the presentation at the MMA show: the music, the video clips in between bouts that built up the forthcoming scraps, it was all top level.

Soon after that piece ran on TSS, I got an email from Top Rank executive Todd Deboeuf, who told me that he had been trying to elevate the presentation at Top Rank events.

Here's an excerpt of duBoef's email:

Recently, I attended the NBA All Star weekend in Las Vegas and had an eye opening experience. As you know, Top Rank does approximately 45 events a year. The music was pumping the energy was high and the announcers audio for in arena interviews were played in the facility.

I loved it... My six-year-old son loved it.... Why can't I replicate this for our events?

As I started to implement some changes into our format I was hit with the same issue. The TV network will not allow. So, I slowly integrated subtle changes into our format. The archaic TV world was so fixed on how it looked to the television audience that they abandoned the live site fans. This is as a result of the promoters ceding their power to the networks. All of us allowed the one entity that paid for the TV rights to dominate the environments where the events took place. What a mistake.

By the time we time we were doing Cotto vs. Judah in June 2007, I had it pegged and convinced HBO to give me the power to run the events. I added lights and brought in the live DJ from Tryst in Las Vegas. The place was electric and for those who were there it was one of the most memorable nights in boxing and at MSG. The whole time the producers from HBO in the truck were screaming that the music was to loud and it interfered with Lampley and Merchant but they still opened up the mics for post fight interviews.

Everyone reported on this special night and specifically the atmosphere. The fans raved and even MSG execs told me they hadn't experienced anything like this.

I have been to many UFC events. The owners of UFC are childhood friends of mine and they have done a great job with their product.

Obviously, this takes a supplemental budget and the profit margins for boxing promoters are much smaller than MMA since boxers purses are significantly larger than MMA fighters; therefore, marketing, advertising and extra production is the first to go when cutting expenses.

On Nov. 10, at Cotto vs. Mosley, I was set up for the same June experience but to my surprise the HBO truck shut my guys down. I was livid and caught by surprise. I trusted the TV network was aligned with me once again but it didn't happen and they pulled the plug on the DJ. It will never happen again.

The lesson for all promoters is to control your content and take responsibility to develop fans on TV and in the arenas.

I appreciated Todd taking the time to share his take. Sensing an opportunity to actually make some headway in this department, with an eye on aiding in providing a better atmosphere and experience for the consumer, I reached out to HBO, to get their side of the story.

HBO sports' executive producer Rick Bernstein listened to duBoef's account, and shared his perspective on the matter.

"I have a very good relationship with Todd and Top Rank," he told TSS, "and in no way is this confrontational. I'm all in favor of doing what we can do to improve the sport for the live audience and the audience on TV. When we did the Cotto/Judah show, we went in with the understanding that the music would be played in between the undercard fights, not during the main event. I agree, the building was rocking, but I'm not sure it was just because of the music and lighting. You had a fighter from Brooklyn, Judah, at Madison Square Garden, too. I'm looking for a compromise with Todd and other promoters to improve the viewers' experience. During Cotto/Mosley, there was music in between rounds during the undercard fights. Would I prefer there be music? No. Our obligation is to the paying audience at home.

"We asked that the music be slightly, I emphasize slightly, lowered, but it got louder, and louder, and louder. Our cameramen couldn't hear the director, the announcers couldn't hear each other. My understanding is that the Garden went to the DJ and asked him to cut it down."

UFC, Bernstein says, has been tweaking their format for a few years now, and has figured out how to juggle the music, and videos and such, so that the announcers can still do their job, and the support personnel can hear the producers. "I can't tell you how their announcers can handle it, we all use the same technology," he said. "They've done like 70 or 80 shows, they've worked out the kinks. We've never had a run through, with the DJ, the cameramen, and the announcers, to see what's working, what's not working. We're very willing to work with whoever."

I believe fight fans attending shows in 2008 will be seeing a better all around show, now that decision makers are more aware of the holes they need to plug, and that they need to get up to

date with their product.

The UFC's ascendence is actually a blessing to fight fans, because it forces boxing higher ups to offer more compelling product to compete and stave off a siphoning of viewers, and so we will continue to contrast the two fight sports moving forward.

SPEEDBAG While I had Bernstein on the line, I took the opportunity to ask a question that has been nagging me for years. When I see old fights, from the 40s, 50s and 60s, you often see the house lights in the arena are dimmed, and the action in the ring is spotlit. So as I'm watching on TV, I'm not distracted by Robert Goulet, or Jack Nicholson, or Chuck Zito sitting in the front row. Is there a reason the houselights at shows stay on during fights, I asked Bernstein?

"That's a valid question," he said. No one had ever brought that up, he said, in his almost three decades in the arena.

"There's a certain energy level you get seeing the crowd jumping up and down."

Would he consider dimming the lights, and simply lighting the two combatants?

"It's something I would discuss with my staff," he said. "But I think it would feel like a step backwards. I can't see us trying something like that. Back then, it was that age of production, they didn't think about anything other than lighting the field of play. And we use gel lighting, and that brings color to the shot, too."

I floated the theory that the current MO may have something to do with the society's collective case of ADD, and our withering attention spans. We need multiple sectors of stimulation in our entertainment, now. More is almost always better, in most minds. Bernstein didn't bite. But I know I tend to get distracted during fights at times, and I can drift off.

Hey, that hottie sitting next to that old guy in row three. I wonder if she's a paid escort, or just a gold-digger?

Why is that exec sitting in row six, and this one in row two?

I'd like to see the focus purely on the two athletes, for a spell, and see how that works.

Sometimes, I think, the innovations aren't necessarily better.