

one returning finalist was on the other side. A solution to these bracketing issues would be to separate returning state finalists so that way it would ensure the best matchups of the tournament are not taking place in the early rounds. If there were three it would be random which side resulted with two of the finalists on it and if there were four returning finalists there would be two on each side. In each of these scenarios the finalists would be separated and not meet up until at least the Semifinals. Using this process, returning state finalists would not have been forced to meet in the quarterfinals like they were in both AA and AAA this year. One more adjustment is that the finals should be wrestled separately on one mat, not simultaneously with the other medal matches. As an annual spectator at the state tournament over the last ten years, I have seen the change to this format away from what it used to be, and the excitement and suspense is just not the same as what it was. It is not fair to the athletes who advanced to the finals of the most prestigious high school tournament in the entire country to have to wrestle with only half of the arena watching them. This is what happens when three other matches go on simultaneously with the finals. There was no environment like a whole arena watching two kids do battle in the center of it with them being the sole focus of all attention. To improve the sport of wrestling in Pennsylvania, the PIAA should go back to this environment. I applaud the PIAA for attempting to improve the sport, but just as I would prefer a referee change a call that was clearly made in error so the integrity of the match is maintained, I would hope that the PIAA would do the same when they clearly have compromised the integrity of the state tournament with their pairing procedures and the decision to diminish the prestige of the finals matches.

The sport of wrestling is responsible for making many young men better people. This is why the sport is truly unique and there is no other sport like it. As a wrestler and someone who will love the sport for life, I would love for the people of the sport to make an effort to do what is necessary to improve the sport. In my opinion, this is changing the emphasis of youth wrestling, changing the out of bounds rules of high school wrestling, and more specifically making several adjustments to the Pennsylvania State tournament. I truly believe wrestling can change people's lives and I offer my suggestions to help make it the best sport it can be in hopes of it being able to reach as many people as possible.