

Much has been written about the leagues curiosity about whether or not the majority of fans at an NBA game prefer music to be played while the ball is in play.

The NBA has from time to time mentioned that they would like to experiment with "silent nights" to find out for themselves. When this topic has come up, without any exceptions that I have seen, the media has fully endorsed the concept.

Rather than waiting for a proclamation from the NBA to experiment, I decided to try a "silent night" or two at Mavs home games. We tried playing no music , no only while the ball was in play, but also during stoppages. We did however play music during timeouts. The response was that there was a noticable decline in energy in the building and I got several emails asking what happened to the "show" at the games.

So i decided to try it again, because honestly, I hoped the concept would work. If the fans could lead the cheers and create the energy, my job got a lot easier. Our goal at any Mavs game is to make it an experience. We often liken it to a great wedding where everyone from Grandma and Grandpa to the 15 year old with blue hair and pierced everything all have a great time dancing, singing and interacting. Playing orchestrator as I often do at home games isnt always the easiest job.

So we added microphones to the floor so the entire arena could hear the sneakers squeaking on the court. We turned up the mics on the rim, so the arena could hear the grunts and guys talking on the defensive side. We brought in the Maniaacs to clap and cheer and encourage the fans to get involved. It didnt work. The energy wasnt there. We got far more complaints than compliments.

So we shelved the experiment. We went back to music, prompting and energy and the feedback improved considerably.

Which brings me back to the All Star game. I had a box along with my family, and friends. Some of whom were from Dallas, some who werent. Someone asked me why, with the exception of when the non basketball acts were on the court, or when they were throwing baby basketballs, there was no energy in the building. These were the best players in the universe. Where was the buzz.

It took me about 1 minute to realize what was going on . It was a "Silent Night" . No music while the game was in progress. Some organ prompts. Some limited music during breaks in play. No mics on the rims. No energy in the building until the final few minutes.

I applaud the NBA for taking the chance and seeing what happens. The All Star game is a great place to experiment. But thats not the point of this entry.

The point here is that NO ONE NOTICED.

The media response I got when we did our version was that it was noticably better to them. That they really enjoyed it. That it was the way "games were supposed to be" . Yet, at the game where there were more media members in attendance than any other game pre Finals..... not a word was spoken or written about the fact that it was a silent game.

I did hear commentary on the radio about the lack of energy in the building, but again, not a word about the lack of music , prompts, mics.

I guess we have our answer on "silent nights"