

THE FUTURE OF SPORTS

A SCENARIO BY JOSH KREHBIEL

It is the future. Sports have evolved. No longer do our greatest athletes need to prove their might on the field with a full retinue of elite comrades. Now games can be decided from the comfort of our athlete's homes, available for everyone to see.

Number of players: Games can be played with a minimum of three players, two players representing the opposing teams, and one player acting as the referee, enforcing the specific rules of the game, whatever they have been determined to be. Additional players can participate in the roles of coaches, commentators, or just audience members. While there is no real upper limit, having more than ten players will have some players having very little to contribute to play.

Mode of Play: All players should join in a single room in an Internet video conferencing platform of their choice. Both of the athlete players need to be visible via webcam, although all other players can participate with only audio if they like.

Materials: A couple of games are written with the assumption that the players have a swivel chair. Other games requires a pencil, some disposable paper, or up to five handheld objects. For one game, the referee need a small recognizable object and an interesting room with lots of stuff in it. However, no game requires any additional materials at all if planned appropriately.

How to play

If it has not been decided beforehand, all players should determine what role they will play. Once decided, play should proceed in the following fashion:

Rules of Engagement – The athletes, referee, and coaches collectively should determine the specific contests they will use. Most games are played over three periods, with each period containing one contest, but for exhibition games different rules may be used if everyone agrees. The rules of play should be decided unanimously. A list of common contests are below.

Introductions – For posterity, the referee shall state the exact name of the game that is being play, and then give each player (or coach if preferred) an opportunity to introduce what region and team they are representing. Commentators are encouraged to provide additional details about the teams for context.

Preparation – Coaches may take a moment or two before the match to provide advice to their athletes, being respectful of time.

Play – On the referee's call, each athlete will begin play per the rules of engagement. The referee will keep time and score and enforce the rules, calling penalties when they observe violations. The athletes should concentrate on their feats, keeping unsportsmanlike trash talking to a

minimum. Coaches are allowed to provide generic encouragement. Commentators can provide color as they see fit. Audiences members may cheer.

Break – After each period, if there are still additional periods to play, athletes should take a short break. Coaches can provide advice, praise or admonishment at this time. Commentators can provide game updates and interesting statistics. Audience members may take a bathroom break or get some snacks. After everyone is rested and ready (no more than three or four minutes), continue the next period.

End of Game – After the final period, the referee shall review the final score and declare a winner. The athletes shall exchange a moment of sportsmanship. The winner may celebrate, the loser can also celebrate if they want. The coaches can provide feedback to their athletes about their performance. The commentators may interview anyone they like, keeping their questions short and succinct. Everyone may feel a sense of camaraderie.

Common Contests:

Strength: Each player shall take five sheets of papers stacked together and rip them in half. The player may not fold or otherwise manipulate the paper before attempting. They will then stack the halves together and rip that pile in half. Continue until each player can no longer cleanly rip a given pile in half. Whoever creates the smallest, most even pile of paper is the winner, based on the referee's judgment.

Hand-eye Coordination: In turn, each player shall close their eyes and spin their chair around twice. The players who hits an

obstruction shall start over. Then players shall attempt to place their index finger on their webcam. If both players cannot, the referee shall use their judgment to determine who was closest. If both players performed the task perfectly, repeat the task but the players must start with their back to the screen. The winner is the one who was able to do so or whoever was closest.

Discipline: In turn, each player will close their eyes on the referee's mark. Then each player will open their eyes after they believe twenty seconds has passed. They may not verbally or physically use any counting method to assist with this, only mental counting is allowed. The winner is the player who was closest to exactly 20 seconds. In case of a tie, repeat the task with opening your eyes after forty seconds has passed.

Deception: Each player shall in secret place one to five small objects in their hand and hide it. One player will say (truthfully or otherwise) how many objects are in their hand. The other player will then say (truth or not) how many objects they have in their hand then states if they believe the total number of objects in both hands is even or odd in number. The first player will say if they agree or not. Then in unison, both players state their vote if the total number of objects is odd or even, and both players reveal the objects, which are counted. Each player who got the answer correct will gain a point. Repeat at least twice more until one player has more points than the other. That player is the winner.

Elegance: In turn, each player shall perform an elaborate dance routine lasting no more than one minute using only their

arms. The rest of their body must remain still or they will be disqualified. They should take into consideration the viewing area of their webcam. The referee will decide via a point system of their choice which routine was the most elegant and graceful, taking difficulty into consideration, and decide the winner based on this scale.

Balance: In turn, each player must balance a pen or pencil on a single finger, then move that finger the width of their screen. The winner will be decided by who takes the least amount of time completing the task. Players who swivel their chair to give the appearance of movement should be disqualified.

Perception: The referee will present an object to the players, and then turn off their camera and place this object somewhere in the background of their camera, making an effort to make it difficult to find. Then the referee shall turn their camera back on and signal the players should attempt to find the object. For fairness, the player must state an identifying object near the target object. This task may be played best out of three attempts if all parties prefer.

Memory: The referee will make a series of five predetermined distinct non-moving hand signals. Each player should attempt to memorize each signal, as well as their order. Then the referee and players will hold a sportsmanlike conversation for three minutes. At the end of the three

minutes, each player must attempt to recreate the hand signals. The referee will decide the victory based on the number of correct hand signals, the order, and the time spent recreating each hand signal if needed.

Speed: The player shall compete against each other in a race to swivel in their chair five times. The player who does so the fastest will be declared the winner. Players should perform this action safely, if a player collides with anything or exits their chair, their time is disqualified.

Luck: The referee shall flip a coin three times per player, each time asking a player which side it will land on. The winner is the one who correctly guessed the most flips. Repeat an additional flip per player in case of tie until there is a winner.

Adjustments: A contest can be adjusted or completely substituted, as long the resulting contest has the following tenets -

1. The task of the contest can be performed by exactly two players in competition, both seated in front of a computer.
2. The task takes no more than five minutes in total to complete.
3. The task can be determined to have a victor by an objective metric, or at least decided by a neutral party.
4. The task adequately tests an attribute considered exemplary in the arena of sport.