

COMEDYSPORTZ DFW

REFFING LIKE A BOSS

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“The referee is the **most** important and **least** important person in a ComedySportz match.”

A CSZ REF SHOULD BE...

- ▶ Confident
- ▶ Concise
- ▶ Energetic
- ▶ Enthusiastic & Positive
- ▶ Decisive



CONFIDENT

The ref must always **appear** to know exactly what happens next and exactly what he or she is saying. Game explanations and the ref spiel should be **smooth and practiced** without sounding like is being phoned in.



CONCISE

The **fewer words** a ref can use, the better. Cut out the rehearsed bits and unnecessary chatter. Memorize short game explanations. Keep the show hurtling forward.



ENERGETIC

The ref sets the expectation for the audience. A ref who seems tired, bored or mechanical brings the audience down.

... way down.



ENTHUSIASTIC AND POSITIVE

The ref should make calls fast and with confidence. It's better to be wrong than to be indecisive. It's more important to keep the show moving than to waffle on decision-making. If the fans boo your decision, it means they are involved in the show..



DECISIVE

The ref should always **appear** to be having a great time and should make the audience feel **welcome and excited** to be there. The ref is a **cheerleader** for the show.



Always do what's
best for the show!

ComedySportz is, not a "real" sporting event – make decisions in every moment that are the **best** decisions **for the show** and the **audience**. Ask yourself what the show needs right now.

Keep the show moving...

You are responsible for the show's momentum.

You'll get more from the audience and the players by keeping the **show rolling**.

Be Funny **in** the Moment...

Not by using canned material.

A ref should be entertaining through improv, **not** through old, rehearsed bits.

CONFIDENCE CONFIDENCE

Improv is a high-wire act. Your confidence gives the audience confidence that they're in good hands. If you know what you're doing, you make any bumps in the improv road feel a lot smoother.

Work on your Ref skills outside of shows/wshop

There are game explanations to memorize,
transitions to practice, announcements to learn.
Be prepared. Do the work off the field first.

10 WAYS TO REF LIKE A BOSS

1. Memorize short game explanations outside of workshop and shows

This is like learning lines for a play. Don't try to wing it in shows – you'll just end up rambling or doing the long explanations you've heard before.

Beastie Rap: This is a rhyming game. The team that makes the most rhymes wins.

Da Doo Run Run — Do Rap: This is a rhyming game. I'll eliminate players who fail to rhyme, repeat or fall off the rhythm.

DVD: I control this scene with my DVD remote.

Forward Reverse: I can make the scene go forward or in reverse.

Freeze Tag: We're going to see a series of short scenes separated by freezes.

2. Cut out the canned bits

You know what they are – you hear them in every show.

When you cut these out the show moves so much faster and you're responding to what the show needs.

3. Find the humor in the moment

Being a concise ref does not mean you can't be funny – it means you get to improvise your funny. Be funny by responding to the audience and the players and the sound person in new and fresh ways.

4. Don't rely on the stopwatch

A game is over when it's over, whether that's two minutes or six minutes. Be completely immersed in watching the game and call it when it's over. It's ok to fake it on "timed" games like 4 Things and Count down [aka Half Life].

5. Give the audience what they want

Stretch the time in 4 Things. Ignore a borderline elimination. Get that funny suggestion into the show. We are here to serve the audience and the show. Of all the “rules” of the games, this is the most important rule.

6. Move around the room

It's very easy to ignore the back half of the room. The Comedy Arena is a space easy to get to the back. Try to get back there often, and whenever possible anticipate your next suggestion so you're already back there.

7. Trim down & pump up your ref spiel

Cut out anything that isn't working. How can you best pump up the crowd in the least amount of time? Your ref spiel is teambuilding with the audience, not lecturing at them.

The 3 Things need for the Ref spiel

In this order

- ▶ 1. Tell them what they are about to see,
Competitive Improv with 2 teams
- ▶ 2. The Rules, Groaner, Potty Mouth, Have Fun
- ▶ 3. Giving/Getting Suggestions

8. Trim down & pump up your ref spiel

Before the show and at halftime, do what you need to do to mentally prepare for your game explanations, announcements and set-up on any games. Talk to captains about how the games will go if there's any question. Get on the same page about announcements with the sound person. Sound check your microphone.

9. Make your job easier

If you have experienced captains in your match let them get their own suggestions and don't invent categories for every ask-for. Let the audience do the heavy lifting. Do less. Say less. Give yourself less to do so you can play more.

10. Have fun and be playful!

If you are having fun the audience will sense your funness.
If you are well prepared you will have more fun because you don't have to think about what to say or do and can just react.

KEY NOTES

- ▶ Practice using your whistle
- ▶ Move with Purpose on the field
- ▶ Be the voice of the audience
- ▶ You are playing a role in a show
- ▶ Practice different ways to get suggestions
- ▶ Create new coin toss

NOW GO REF...

LIKE A BOSS