

The GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

By Rob Frankel

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*DEDICATED TO
Aunt Nan and Uncle Jess, my "other parents"*

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PRODUCTION NOTES

This play is a compilation of scenes which may be performed in any order. Individual scenes may also be eliminated if the director wishes. In addition, this play was written to allow for traveling so that the "scenery" consisting of four large wooden blocks and some odds and ends is very simple. The result of all of these features is that the show is very versatile and very portable. After most scenes, a trio of cheerleaders perform an "interlude scene." These interludes bridge scenes and provide you brief time for some set changes. The dialogue for the trio is written as a rap - the trio is not meant to be your typical set of "straight cheerleaders"! Any movements, from dance to finger-snapping to rap sound effects, will make these interludes more fun and entertaining.

Flexible Casting

In most of the scenes male or female actors can be used interchangeably. With the exception of a few scenes whose theme clearly includes the interplay of the sexes (e.g. "*Making the Team*"), you may swap roles liberally. Where a clearly all-female or all-male team exists, the coach can be of the opposite sex giving you flexibility in casting. In addition, you can double up roles or not as you desire, leaving you the flexibility of a minimal cast of 5 females and 5 males, or up to 20 of each.

Costumes

Simple costumes work best for this production. T-shirts and jerseys, or accessories such as bats, helmets, or glasses can be used to suggest each of the characters. Because each actor will play several parts and because you never know what your offstage area will look like if you are taking this on tour, keeping the costume changes simple will prevent any gray hair the director might be prone to.

Set/Props

For the same reasons expressed under "Costumes," the setting and props should be kept as simple as possible. Four large wooden blocks can serve as tables, benches, podiums, etc. While there is certainly room for lots of sports equipment, there is nothing wrong with miming much of it. This is particularly helpful with less sports-skilled actors. For a complete list of props, see back of playbook.

Sound Effects

Drum major's whistle, marching band drum beat, buzzer, earthquake, telephone ring, laughter, applause.

Performance time

Approximately 90 minutes including a ten-minute intermission.

SCENE 1
THE PRE-GAME WARM-UP

PLAYER #1, a sports rapper
PLAYER #2, same
PLAYER #3, same
PLAYER #4, same
PLAYER #5, same
PLAYER #6, same
CHEERLEADER #1, one of trio of rappers
CHEERLEADER #2, same
CHEERLEADER #3, same

(SETTING: The stage is empty.)

(AT RISE: There is a loud, long, marching band style whistle and a steady beat of a drum offstage - nothing fancy required. The TRIO of RAPPERS march in. THEY wear matching t-shirts and shorts or pants, as well as flip-up, sports-style sunglasses. THEY stop CS while the drum beat continues. THEY take up the beat with snaps of their fingers. Their recitations are rap songs. THEY stand snapping as 6 SPORTS PLAYERS enter the stage behind THEM, EACH carrying the ball or stick of a different sport. THEY form a "V-shape" with the apex US and behind the TRIO, and begin doing simple, rhythmic warm-ups appropriate to the sports prop THEY are carrying.)

CL #1: EVERYONE PLAYS A GAME OR TWO, THEY MAY SAY THEY DON'T, BUT THEY REALLY DO.

CL #2: SOME USE A STICK
PLAYER #1: HOCKEY, TENNIS, GOLF, AND BASEBALL,

CL #3: SOME USE A KICK
PLAYER #2: SOCCER, SWIMMING, KARATE, FOOTBALL.

CL #2: SOME USE THEIR HANDS
PLAYER #3: VOLLEYBALL AND BASKETBALL,
CL #1: SOME USE THEIR HEADS
PLAYER #4: SOCCER (*Rubbing head in pain.*) AHH!

CL #3: SOME USE THEIR BRAINS
PLAYER #5: CHECKERS, BRIDGE, AND CHESS,

CL #1: SOME USE A BET -
PLAYER #6: POKER - HAA!

CL #2: IT'S ALL A PART OF THE...

The Games People Play

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EVERYONE: ...GAMES THAT PEOPLE PLAY!
CL #1: THEY GOT YOU THINKIN' YOU'RE SO BAD. THEY'RE THE...
EVERYONE: ...GAMES THAT PEOPLE PLAY!

CL #3: AND THEY'LL MAKE YOU GLAD, SAD, OR OH SO MAD!

PLAYER #3: YO, WANNA SHOOT SOME HOOPS?
PLAYER #5: HOW 'BOUT A COOL DIP?
PLAYER #1: PING-PONG, BABY?
PLAYER #6: I'M A HOPSCOTCH 'N SKIP!
PLAYER #2: TOSS THE OL' PIGSKIN?
PLAYER #4: GONNA BANG ME SOME STRIKES!
PLAYER #6: POK-ER, SUCK-ERS?
PLAYER #2: GONNA GET ME SOME SPIKES!
PLAYER #1: SOFTBALL,
PLAYER #3: WRESTLING,
PLAYER #5: CHECKERS AND CHESS,
EVERYONE: TENNIS, SOCCER, TRY TO BE THE BEST!

CL #2: IT'S ALL A PART OF THE...
EVERYONE: ...GAMES...THAT PEOPLE PLAY!
CL #1: THEY GOT YOU THINKIN' YOU'RE SO BAD. THEY'RE THE...
EVERYONE: GAMES...THAT PEOPLE PLAY!
CL #3: AND THEY'LL MAKE YOU GLAD, SAD, OR OH SO MAD!

(As THEY EXIT.)

CL #1: I'M A-TALKIN' 'BOUT...
EVERYONE: GAMES THAT PEOPLE PLAY!
CL #2 I'M A-TALKIN' 'BOUT...
EVERYONE: GAMES THAT PEOPLE PLAY!
CL #3: I'M A-TALKIN' 'BOUT . . .
EVERYONE: GAMES THAT PEOPLE PLAY!

(Stage is empty for a moment, then CHEERLEADERS stick THEIR heads back on and, with quiet enthusiasm, in rhythm, say, "Yeah!" BLACKOUT.)

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2
THE INTERVIEWS

GOLFER
VOLLEYBALL PLAYER
HOCKEY PLAYER
SOFTBALL PLAYER
REPORTER #1
REPORTER #2
REPORTER #3

(SETTING: Four blocks or chairs are set up. Two are spaced apart DC; two are angled USR and USL, respectively, of the DC chairs. The whole set up forms something of a wing pattern.)

(AT RISE: A PLAYER stands on each block. USR is the GOLFER; DR of CS - the VOLLEYBALL PLAYER; DL of CS - the HOCKEY PLAYER; and USL - the SOFTBALL PLAYER. EACH PLAYER holds either the "ball" or "bat" of his sport. EACH stands still for a moment, in broadly egotistical poses - each one unique. After a moment, the scene begins.)

VOLLEYBALL: *(With pride.)* Volleyball. Six players moving in harmonious unison to create impossible situations for the opponent and eventually win. Object: To score 15 points before they do. Me? *(Stops and looks mischievously, evilly at the audience.)* I'm...The Spi-ker!

SOFTBALL: *(With pride.)* Softball. Nine players hitting the daylights out of a 16-inch stuffed piece of canvas while trying to stay awake in right field on the rare occasion that someone might hit it there. Object: To score more runs than they do. Me? *(Flexing muscles.)* I bat Clean Up! *(Mimes hitting one out of the park.)*

HOCKEY: Hockey. Six players whacking a frozen rubber disk at 100 miles per hours. Object: To smack it so hard and so quick, it escapes the goalie and makes the net. Me? *(Arching eyebrows.)* I'm...The Goalie!

GOLFER: *(Tossing golf ball in hand.)* Golf. The refined art of searching 500 yards to find this... *(HE forms a small golf hole with HIS hands and fingers.)* ...with this. *(HE holds the ball up for all to see.)* Object: Don't take too many shots to find this.. *(Repeats previous hand gesture.)* ...with this. *(Repeats previous ball gesture.)* Me? I'm a 4-handicap!

(THREE REPORTERS, with pads and pencils, immediately ENTER in a hubbub of noise, and plant THEMSELVES DSR. Amidst the noise, REPORTER #1 breaks above the din.)

REPORTER #1: Question, question! What does it take to be the best?

(The answers throughout this section are given in rapid succession from the PLAYERS except for the last PLAYER to speak each quatrain.)

SOFTBALL: A gold glove and fast wrists.

HOCKEY: Lotsa hustle.

GOLF: A smooth stroke.

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VOLLEYBALL: (*Chewing gum murderously.*) You gotta be able to jam the ball while your eyes are staring into someone's armpit and your nose is catching the sweat from it.

(*REPORTER #1 writes this down.*)

REPORTER #2: Question, question! What's it like to be so popular with your peers?

HOCKEY: (*Staring at REPORTER #2 nastily.*) I reject the notion that I have any peers!

SOFTBALL: I perform for them; they buy me lunch, dinner, and lots of...(*Gropes for the right word.*) affection.

VOLLEYBALL: They don't mess with me, know what I mean? It's like, "What do you feed a three hundred-pound parakeet? Anything they want!" Know what I mean?

GOLF: (*Holding up ball.*) You ever try autographing a thousand of these little things? First it's fun. A mob of people wanting your autograph. Then your hand starts to get sweaty. Then your mind turns to mush. Then your pen runs out of ink. Then... (*Showing HIS hand all crumpled.*)...your hand starts to cramp from writing so small, and it hurts like heck and you wonder why you ever took up golf and got so good when you could be... (*Stops and looks out.*) What was the question again?

(*REPORTER #2 writes this down.*)

REPORTER #3: Question, question! What sport would you be in if you couldn't be in this one?

GOLF: (*Showing the size of an imaginary football with HIS hands.*) Football!

SOFTBALL: Is "acting in movies" a sport?

HOCKEY: (*Egotistically.*) King!

REPORTER #3: Excuse me. I said a sport.

HOCKEY: Okay. King - on a chessboard!

VOLLEYBALL: A boxer!

(*REPORTER #3 writes this down.*)

REPORTER #2: Question, question! What's the fondest memory you have?

VOLLEYBALL: (*Chuckles.*) I'm playing Lanesboro North, right? They got this kid Shirley, five foot three, right? (*Makes cocky facial expression and rolls eyes.*) It's all tied at 14 in the final game. They set it to Nancy, then to Sue, then to Shirley. She goes up. I go up. She whacks. I block. B-dd-aa-bing! She goes down on her back, the ball stuck to her braces! So help me, stuck to her braces! (*To HERSELF.*) I am sooo good!

SOFTBALL: Fondest memory? Okay, okay, got one. We're in the state finals. Championship game. They're beating us four to two, two outs, last of the ninth, runners on first and third, and yours truly up. First pitch, strike. Second pitch - STEEE-RIIKE! I put some pine tar on Maverick - Maverick, that's what I call my bat! - and dig in. Here comes the pitch... (*Makes sound of ball hitting the bat.*) ..That's way back, way back. It hits the center field scoreboard, goes right through it in fact, and all of the fireworks that are stored up there start going off. What a shot! We win the game!

REPORTER #2: Pardon me. Didn't I see that in a movie? "The Natural" with Robert Redford?

SOFTBALL: (*HE's been found out.*) Oh. Yeah, yeah. It was. (*Pause, continues undaunted.*) But that movie was based on my life!

End of Freeview

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