
SPELLING SPORT STAGE by Mark Strivings

Here's the effect. The performer brings eight people up on stage and divides them into two teams of four each.

There can be all kinds of fun picking captains (read: CEO's, principals, teachers and such) who then choose their teams, depending on the situation. Each person is given a large card displaying a single letter and they stand in a row, each with their team. It is explained that the performer will give out a word and the members of each team must rearrange themselves, physically moving to the proper location, to spell the word correctly. The team that spells the word first wins that round. A total of five rounds will be played.

Believe me when I tell you that this gets very competitive very quickly and the chaos that ensues is invariably hysterical. I have the audience decide which team wins each round. A ninth volunteer is used to keep track of the score using a dry erase board.

There is a lovely kicker for the final round. The letters used are 'S', 'O', 'T' and 'P'. There are several different words that can be spelled with these letters, but the final word turns out to be "DOTS". There is usually an instant freeze of the action on stage while everyone tries to figure out how to spell the word. Eventually someone does, either in the audience (who yells out the solution) or the contestants themselves. Regardless, it makes for a fine finish to this part of the routine. (If you haven't as yet figured out this ending, I will give you one hint - all of the letters are lowercase. Think about it, you'll figure it out).

Once the calamity has died down it is announced what the final tally was. Let's say that Team 'A' won four times and Team 'B' won once. Both teams receive a huge round of applause. This entire time you have been standing there holding an envelope. It is opened and inside is a dry erase board with the exact tally of the wins and losses. You've cleanly predicted the outcome of total chaos! It's a killer!

The entire rig is eight letter cards (6" X 9"), two dry erase boards (6" X 9") and a heavy envelope. Supply your own dry erase marker. That's it! Talk about packing flat and playing big!

All of those bodies and movement seriously fills a stage in every way, and as

such is a boon for stage workers.

A few salient points to keep in mind:

There is no secret writing involved.

There are no formulas to remember.

The outcome is genuinely random and different every time.

There are no forces of any kind.

It's hard to imagine a prediction effect that is truly random that is so easy to do.

The 'secret' of this effect will make you laugh out loud. You've never seen anything like this before.

This is a worker in every sense of the word. It's a joy to perform, can be hysterically funny, is positively loaded with action and it has the gorgeous kicker of the performer having cleanly predicted everything in advance. It's beautiful.

'Spelling Sport', the stage version comes with eight 6" X 9" letter cards, two 6" X 9" dry-erase boards and one heavy envelope along with complete instructions and routine. (Also available in a close-up size, 'Spelling Sport Up Close'.)