

The "Doogie Howser, MD" Drinking Game

by Joe Mulder

Thanks to hulu.com, people the world over now have a better way to solve arguments, mediate disputes and find common ground. What is that better way, you ask? It's the "Doogie Howser, MD" drinking game, of course!

[although it's not technically a "drinking game," or in fact not at all a drinking game, it's still fun to refer to it as such, so that's what I'll be doing]

Now, let's say you've got some disagreement that needs settling. Who should do the dishes? Who should be the designated driver? Who should have to get up with the baby tomorrow morning? Who should get to watch their show first (I say that instead of "whose show should we watch," because really, in this day and age, any home that doesn't have a system in place allowing for two shows to be recorded at the same time doesn't deserve the privilege of having access to television programming in the first place)?

In days gone by, the only way to settle this was with either rock-paper-scissors (which gets old fast) or with complex, agonizing and prohibitively expensive litigation. But no more, thanks to the "Doogie Howser, MD" drinking game!

How does it work? First, go to <http://www.hulu.com>. At the top, click "TV." Then click "Alphabetical." Then, scroll your way down to the Ds and click on "Doogie Howser, MD." There, you'll find every episode of the late-80s/early-90s show that made Neil Patrick Harris a star and, thanks to Doogie's best friend Vinny Del Pino (Max Casella), made young men everywhere feel like you could act like a complete perv and people would find you delightful.

The game can be played two ways: either you watch the entire episode (good for if you've got 24 minutes to spare), or you skip right to the end (good for if you don't). Either way, what you do is this: when Doogie starts making his cryptic, quasi-Zen diary entry (which he does at the end of every episode), as Neil Patrick Harris (or, probably, some production assistant) types, as soon as you possibly can, you and whoever it is you're competing against start shouting out the rest of his diary entry, attempting to finish it before he does by predicting what he will write. The first person to shout out the entirety of the rest of the diary entry, verbatim, is the winner. There are no penalties for incorrect guesses, so shout all you want.

Confused? Don't worry. Some practical examples (although it is recommended that, in the spirit of honor and fair play, those who read this do not use these episodes in competition, as they will have an obvious and unfair advantage):

In Season 3, Episode 24, "Club Medicine," originally aired May 13, 1992, Doogie (now 18 and officially an adult) and his dad (now 56 and officially a senior citizen, at least

according to that killjoy at the movie theater box office who offered to sell him a ticket at the discounted rate!) use their annual father-son vacation to go down to Honduras and join a group of American doctors donating their time and services to a small village with little access to any modern health care.

Doogie, idealistic and excited to help, is initially disgusted at the lightheartedness and joking around with which the doctors ply their trade. Doogie's dad, learning to appreciate that with age comes wisdom, tells Doogie that such behavior can help alleviate the tremendous stress the doctors are under, and that Doogie's an adult now, which sometimes means giving yourself permission to act in a childlike manner. So Doogie goes back to the makeshift clinic and puts an inflated rubber glove on his head, which apparently smoothes everything over.

When he sits down to write his diary entry, he types:

"May 18, 1992... Honduras - This year's father-son vacation was almost more than I could handle. [Then comes the requisite "pause and look thoughtfully off into space" moment; one could feel free to start screaming out guesses before the "pause and look thoughtfully off into space" moment, although all it would probably serve to do would be to distract one while one's opponent paid closer attention to the coming sentences] Good thing my father was here to ["SHOW ME THE WAY!"] show me that sometimes ["LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE!"] the heaviest moments ["BRING THE BIGGEST LAUGHS!"] require [and a person should have it at this point, so really shout it out, don't hold anything back] the lightest touch."

For a bigger challenge, or due to time constraints, one could play without watching the episode (although Hulu.com will provide you with a quick synopsis). In Season 3, Episode 11, "Truth or Consequences," originally aired December 11, 1991, according to the blurb, "Doogie has his eyes on Cecilia, the hospital librarian, but is put off by the size of her nose."

Simply go to the end of the show (you'll have to watch a short commercial first, but you'll live), and you're ready to play, but with little idea as to what exactly happened in the episode:

"December 10, 1991... Bert [see? Who's Bert? Isn't this already more of a challenge?] showed me the beauty of telling the truth. [thoughtful pause] But I learned the truth about beauty ["IS ONLY SKIN DEEP!"] from a woman ["WHO WAS BEAUTIFUL ON THE INSIDE!"] who taught me to see... not ["WHAT'S OUTSIDE BUT WHAT'S INSIDE!"] with my ["EYES, BUT WITH MY HEART!"] eyes, but with my heart."

POOP READING

This can be played with an unlimited number of people, with the winner of each round winning the right to sit out the subsequent rounds until only one loser remains; but keep in mind there are a finite number of episodes (11 of which, according to IMDb.com, don't actually feature Neil Patrick Harris; I'm not sure how that works, nor am I particularly interested in finding out), so the "Doogie Howser, MD" drinking game should really not be played with more than 20 or 30 people, unless you want to exhaust its usefulness as a problem-solving tool sooner rather than later.

If a dispute arises as to who shouted out the correct, verbatim diary entry first, I offer two solutions: either a) record the competition on audio or videotape, so the results can be reviewed in the event of any controversy, or b) simply play another round of the "Doogie Howser, MD" drinking game to settle the outcome of the first.

The "Doogie Howser, MD" drinking game. Please enjoy responsibly.
