

Review of ESPN's Around the Horn

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People watch game shows for entertainment. Watching ESPN's Around the Horn fits into this category, although the only entertainment you will get is from laughing at how ridiculous it is, or from taking a shot every time the show makes an annoying dinging sound.

The show is hosted by sports personality Tony Reali, the person whose opinion viewers are supposed to value most. He runs the show like a king, awarding points to four sports writers based on their arguments on a sports-related topic. If he doesn't like what they say, he takes away points or mutes them. If they have the least points at the end of the round, he eliminates them. Sounds like fierce competition.

If you're looking for some good nostalgia, it will certainly take you back to your favorite childhood games with the bright red, blue, yellow, and green colors, cheesy sound effects, and fights almost as dumb as the ones you witnessed your parents have.

In a recent episode, we learned the exciting news that Ramona Shelburne was screaming at her TV when the USA women won gold vs. Canada in hockey this year. After that, we got to listen to Tim Cowlshaw, Clinton Yates, and Woody Paige get validation points for basically saying that women's sports are important. We even got to hear Yates shout that he wanted to see more of LeBron James, because nobody knows who that is. Sports commentary at its finest.

Reali asks a question such as "Are you okay with the gold medal being determined by a shootout?" and then proceeds to award points to whoever says what he seems to think about it. The panelists are awarded points within seconds of saying something, before they give any argument to back it up- even though the points are supposed to be based on their arguments. Usually winning a game is determined by luck or skill, not by how well you say what someone else wants to hear.

You may not ever know what a panelist actually thinks, because Reali is not hesitant to blast a loud horn to get them to shut up. Seems like something you would do when someone is saying something you personally don't like. He also mutes the panelists if he feels they are going down the wrong track, so then we don't hear their opinions at all, which is supposed to be the point of the show.

The panelists essentially appear as actors. They are trying to win a game, so can they really be expected to be 100% honest with their opinions, even if they know they are unpopular? What is the point of watching people give their opinions on sports, while knowing they are trying to please someone with them? The panelists seem scrambled at times for what they should say next, especially if they start losing points.

If you're looking for real knowledge of sports and actual analysis, this may not be the show for you. The writers prove almost no knowledge on the technicality of sports, fighting over irrelevant things like if it's okay for a Canadian to take a silver medal off their neck right after receiving it at the Olympics. It seems like the only thing these panelists like to talk about when it comes to athletes and sports is drama- maybe because it gives them a better story to write.

Sure, the show can give you a laugh, but it's more of a 'I'm cringing so hard' laugh than a 'This is really good comedy' laugh. Embrace your inner Tony Reali and just mute it.