

Dragon Changes 8: A Day at the Games

By

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Fancy rock and roll coupled with quick background orchestra music announced the start of the sports game broadcast. Then showed a three dimensional gold logo that was made up of two generic looking dragons facing off with a round disc between them. Next the program shifted to a huge open rolling Wyoming summer field near mid day. Based on a large shadow passing over the ground, the video was being shot from a gliding dragon encircling the field.

The aerial video showed a huge playing field that had been marked out in the middle of the wide open land. Unlike other sports fields, this one was rolling, uneven, and vast. Yet like many other sports fields, there were four huge poles delineating a enormous two mile long by mile wide playing area. At each end were five story tall posts that looked similar to the American football goal posts. Sitting lonely in the center of the field was a large brown plastic looking rounded disc.

What was even more amazing to the areal shot were the amount of dragons all splayed out around the playing field. Many of them had settled on the ground at a safe distance from the field. Each one, in all their different shapes, had their human torsos out and gossiping with each other. There were even a few dragons winging their way around outside the marked off field. Each lazily taking in the sights below them.

But just as interesting among the crowds of dragons were large amounts of humans. Some were gossiping with each other, while even more were leaning close to a dragon's human torso. Every human and dragon alike looked to be excited for the upcoming match.

"Hello and welcome to the first broadcast of Dragon Ball," greeted an older male voice over the broadcast. "I'm Jack Dempsey and my co-host here is Andrea Henderson." The man introduced himself and his co-host to the viewers. The broadcast shifted from the field to two people who looked like they were in what appeared like a makeshift broadcast tent off to the side of the field at a safe distance.

"Thanks Jack," greeted Andrea with a warm welcoming smile on her face. "The entire world has been abuzz with the news of the brand new sport created by the dragons. With some pull and help from various international sports leagues, we are happy to bring you the first ever official Dragon Ball league game broadcast from the rolling hills of Wyoming!"

"Now some of you may be asking what is this sport called Dragon Ball," Jack posed to the views. "Well the obvious answer

is that this is a game played by dragons right? Well there's a little more to it than just that. To put it simply, this is a game that has parts from soccer, touch football, and even Frisbee."

Andrea took over from Jack, "let's take a look at this animation to show you what we're talking about." The video shifted to one of a computer graphic representation of the field just beyond the broadcast booth. It showed an overhead view of the field with its four boundary marks, two goal posts, and a center line midway between both goal posts. Each of these objects had been highlighted in the animation.

Andrea resumed narrating, "now the game is made up of fourteen dragons divided into two teams of six and two referees. Each team is then broken down into three groups, three offensive players, two defensive, and a goalie."

"Yes Andrea, the goal of the game is to get the game disc across the opposing team's goal post. However as a twist, once a player possesses the disc, then they must stop moving. If they are in the air, they must hover, if they are on the ground, they cannot take off. Along with that, until the dragon player passes the disc, they are open for being tagged by the opposing team. If that happens the play is over and the opposing team takes over the disc at that spot," Jack easily described to the viewers. "Now they can either pass the disc or try throwing it between the opposing team's goal post. Plus the opposing team is allowed to intercept the disc. However they are not allowed to bat or otherwise block the disc. This last part was added for the safety of the spectators. The dragons did not want anyone being killed by a huge disc uncontrollably flying their way."

Andrea picked up the narration from there, "now unlike other games, there is no time limit or section breaks. Nor are there any substitutions. The dragons that started the game must finish the game. The only way to win Dragon Ball is by scoring five goals before your opponents."

Jack then turned to Andrea, "one question, how do they divide the teams? Do all the teams assign themselves the three, two, one format?"

Andrea shook her head, "no, some teams choose to use the three on three method. The only thing that is static is there must be some who are defensive and some who are offensive and are bound by the center line. Those that are set as defensive must stay behind that line throughout the entire game."

"What about different shaped dragons? Doesn't that also change how the game is played?" Jack knowingly posed so she could explain that facet to the viewers.

"Yes it does Jack. While most dragons who play Dragon Ball have hands or feet that they can use to catch and throw the disc, some just have heads and no hands. Because of that, some dragon bodies are more suited for defense, while others are more suited for offense. So teams usually form along those lines depending on the shape and abilities of that dragon. Also, they are allowed to use whatever grasping body part that have to catch and throw the disc."

Jack chose to shift the discussion from the rules to the teams, "one question our viewers have is how do we tell the difference between each team? With each dragon having different body colors, their bodies begin so huge, and wearing uniforms is out of the question because of their sizes, how can we tell them apart?"

"I'm glad you asked that Jack because the dragons have thought of that too. Their solution is rather simple. One team elects to smear their main bodies with mud while the other team does not."

"How do they decide which team uses the mud?"

"A coin toss."

"It's that simple?"

"Yep, they flip something ahead of time and then one team slathers their main bodies up with enough mud to be noticeable."

Jack paused for a second, "now before we go any farther, I think it only prudent to cover some dragon culture for our viewers."

"Sure jack."

"Now as everyone knows, the dragons come in all different shapes," he continued as the video shifted to the various dragon spectators and how their bodies differed. "As much as they look different, they do fit in categories or subspecies as they like to call their different bodies."

"Jack did they have any choice in what subspecies they turned into?"

"No Andrea, just like they had no choice in their transformation, they also had no idea what subspecies they were going to turn into until they finished their transformation."

"Some viewers may be asking what they are sticking out of their mouths, does each dragon have a person stuck in their mouths?"

Jack chuckled at the thought, "no, those things that look like humans are actually part of their bodies. They are shaped exactly like their pre-transformation human bodies except of instead of having legs, those torsos are connected to their bodies by fleshy connections in their mouths."

"Now how do those dragons speak with each other? I mean during many other sports, teams always communicate with each other?"

"Well Andrea, dragons can only speak with each other, or with us, through their human torsos. When those torsos are withdrawn inside their mouths, they can't speak."

Andrea whistled at the idea of being unable to say anything to teammates while playing, "so then how do they communicate to each other?"

"The teams mentioned that each has some sort of growling or other noises they use while playing."

"Another question some viewers may ask, is how do they referee the game?"

"Well two dragons are selected as referees. To help us delineate them from the players, they only dip their heads and tails into the mud, while leaving their main bodies free of mud," Jack explained.

Andrea chose to shift the topic of discussion, "let's talk about the two teams we'll be seeing today, the Flying Fireballs versus the Power Fliers."

Chuckling a bit, "yes Andrea today is shaping up to be a rather interesting game. These teams have been eager for a match against each other. Both teams comes into this game with a one and zero record. Because Dragon Ball has no ties, someone will coming out with a winning streak and other a one to one season."

"What makes this even more of an interesting game is that both teams are essentially evenly matched. All the dragons playing today have regular hands or feet. Because of that, neither team is worrying that the other team might make the disc slippery from an arm mouth gripping and slobbering on the disc. Plus, all the dragons have legs that they can use to land and take off with."

"That's true Andrea. While it is always fun to watch the snake dragons and those with heads for arms playing, they are at a bit of a disadvantage to those with legs and regular arms in this game. That the snake dragons have problems getting up off the ground as quickly as the other dragons. Plus catching the disk in a mouth is much more tricky then trying to do so with a hand or bird foot."

"Let's shift over to our roving reporter, Wendy Andretti who is standing by with a bunch of humans and dragons eager to watch the game," Andrea spoke as the broadcast shifted over to a short woman standing amid of a large group of people and dragon torsos. Though for decency's sake, all the dragon torsos in the shot were wearing t-shirts. Some had team names on them while others wore just simple shirts.

"Thank you both. I've been walking amid the crowds trying to gauge what they expect from the game today?" Wendy walked up to one young male dragon torso. He was grinning happily in anticipation of the upcoming match. "Sir what's your name?"

"Andrew?"

"And you were originally from?"

"South Carolina."

"And who do you think will win the game today?"

"I'm rooting for the Fireballs! Their offense will fly rings around the Power Fliers," Andrew enthusiastically replied pointing to his shirt with the team's name emblazed in big red letters across his white t-shirt. When he said that, the other dragons and humans surrounding him cheered loudly. Those with wings flared them a bit with excitement.

Wendy then moved on to interview a few other dragons and humans. Each briefly gave their view on the game and who might win. Yet, the consensus was that at the very least that this would be an exciting game.

"We sure have a huge crowd on hand for this game Andrea," Jack spoke up as the sound shifted away from Wendy back to the two announcers.

"We sure do, current count is over a thousand dragons and another two thousand humans all are eagerly waiting for the two teams to come out," Andrea replied pleasantly as the camera feed shifted to showing all the different beings eagerly waiting for the game to start. Most were already sitting or laying on the grass, while there were still even more filing in trying to find a good spot to watch the game.

As the broadcast continued, a loud cheer arose from the crowds near the field. The broadcast shifted over to show six dragons walking into the field from the right. The team was made up of three six legged dragons, two bird like dragons who lacked arm heads but instead had arms that were also their wings, and a three headed dragon. Every dragon in this team had their main bodies smeared with thick drying brown mud.

"And now, from the northern regions, it's the Power Fliers! Playing on the Power Fliers offense are, Jill Powers, Adam Wheeler, and Zackary Jenkins. The starting defense for the Power Fliers will be Karen Brothers and Michael Bilder. While their goalie is the powerful Susan Springer," Jack announced each player of the Power Fliers as they entered the field and assumed their positions. Each raising their heads in appreciation of the crowd's cheering.

"One my sources says that with her three heads, Susan is one of the hardest goalies to get past," Andrea chimed in with that tidbit of information.

"We will have to see," Jack replied as another loud cheer erupted from the crowd as the Flying Fireballs entered the field from the other side. The team was made up of four six legged dragons and two three headed dragons. "And now from the southern regions around Nevada comes the Flying Fireballs! Starting on the Fireball offense is, Erica Baggins, Kyle Seaside, and Anita Pisano. On defense is Marilyn Katz and Kate Andrews. While tending goal for the Fireballs is Dennis Cook," Jack intoned to the viewers as the Flying Fireballs assumed their position on the opposite of the Power Fliers. A large group of the crowd began to chant "Fireballs" over and over again.

"While the Fireball's goalie doesn't have as much experience as the Power Flier's goalie, he does share the same attributes she does with his three heads," Andrea commented as two referee dragons walked into the middle of the field between the two dragons.

"It has been an interesting combination to have multiple points of view when protecting your team's goal. Many of the other teams have tried to match the Power Fliers with their team design. We will have to see if the Fireballs are able to do it."

"Makes sense, when you see one team have success with something, why not try it out for yourself," Andrea commented as one of the referees walked up to the disc sitting in the middle of the field. To the dragons, the disc was not that large, but to an average human, the disc was the same size as a midsize car. The referee dragon reached down and grabbed the disc in one of its arm mouths.

"All the players are getting ready for the beginning of the game. Both offensive lines are crowding around the referee while the defensive lines seem to be spreading out and readying themselves for whichever way the disc goes," Jack interjected.

The other referee who did not have the disc looked to the crowd and held up their dragon hand, splaying out all five taloned fingers. "Now comes the traditional start of the game," Andrea commented to the viewers.

Upon seeing the referee's five fingers, the crowd yelled five, four, three, then two. Then on one, the other referee holding the disc threw it high up into the air. Every dragon on the field roared up into the air and began to pump their wings madly trying to be the first to grab the disc.

A dragon from the Fireball team was the first to snag the disc. Flapping her wings hard to stay still in the air, Erica quickly searched for a teammate not being blocked by a Power Flier. It seemed as if the Power Fliers were trying to crowd her in, each hoping to tag her before she threw the disc. Power

Fliers', Adam and Zackary quickly flew at her from two different directions. In seconds she soon spotted Anita repositioning herself within the Power Fliers side of the field and let out an announcing roar to her teammate.

Whipping the disc, Erica was able to get rid of it just before Adam's hand touched the tip of her tail. Realizing the disc was coming to her, Anita began to fly higher until she was able to snag the disc. Quickly the other Fireball offensive players began to race through the air to position themselves inside the Power Fliers territory.

Both Power Fliers defensive players swiftly began speeding towards Anita. While the other Power offensive teammates tried to block the other two open Fireball offensive players. Each Power Fliers player were using short barks to communicate with each other.

Feeling pressure, Anita quickly whipped the disc downwards where she thought Kyle was flying towards. However a Power Flyer defender, Karen, was able to intercept the disc. Rapidly Karen whipped the disc away from Power Flier territory.

Every dragon, except for the Power Flier defensive line and goalie, began to fly as fast as they could towards the disc. It seemed that every dragon speeding towards the Fireball territory was communicating with barks, howls, and roars to each other.

Seeing the disc heading their way, both Fireball defenders swooped towards the disc in the hopes of intercepting it. However an offensive Power Flier player, Adam, was a bit faster and was able to grasp the disc before it impacted on the ground.

Rapidly Adam spotted his teammate Jill high above him as she tried to position herself closer to the goal. He whipped the disc to her just in time to be kept from being tagged by a Fireball defensive player. He then flapped away from the spot towards the Fireball goal. The Fireball goalie noted this with one of his heads while watching the disc with his other heads.

Jill quickly whipped the disc to Power Flier player Zackary who immediately threw it back to Adam. Meanwhile Dennis, the Fireball goalie, turned to block a possible shot from Adam. However, Adam anticipated this by throwing the disc back to Jill who was just below the goalie. She then whipped the disc threw the opening in the Fireball Goal.

All the Power Fliers fans erupted in cheers at seeing their team get the first point!

Both teams then relined up on their respective sides and waited for the referee to toss the disc up in the air. The Fireballs again were able to win the disc. This time though, they were quick to get the disc downfield towards the goal. For a short bit, they tossed the disc back and forth between the three Fireball offensive players. Right away they were able to

squeeze the disc just past the Power Flier goalie. It had been a really close shot with Susan, the goalie, who missed the disk by mere inches.

The third time, the Power Fliers won the disc and tried to move it downfield towards the Fireball goal. Yet, one of the Fireball defenders was able to intercept the disc and toss it back to another Fireball player.

The Flying Fireballs were able to quickly get the disc downfield with a long toss. Then they played a game of toss between each other trying to confuse the Power Fliers. Yet a Power Flier dragon was able to intercept the disc after one toss and get it out of their territory. After that, one of the Power players was able to fire a shot at the Fireball goal.

Yet, the goalie was able to catch the disc and return it to one of his players. The Fireballs were then able to come back at the Power Fliers goalie in force this time. With a quick switch they again squeaked the disc pass the goalie.

By this point, the game score was two to one. Yet in the next round, the Power fliers were able to tie the score back up to two to two. The game went from point to point until the score was tied at four to four.

Whoever scored the next point would win the game!

The referee again launched the disc up into the air. Fireball offensive player, Erica, was the first to snag the disc out of the air. She tossed it to Kyle who then tossed it to Anita who had been standing on the ground. This downward direction of the disc caused the rest of the Power Fliers to fly towards the ground.

Abruptly Anita shot the disc back up into the air towards Kyle who had shifted positions. The sudden change in disc direction briefly threw the Power Fliers in disarray. Rapidly they tried to change directions mid flight.

This afforded Fireball offensive player, Kyle, an opening to toss the disc to Erica.

All the Fireball offense flew as hard as they could to get in position. Anita was the first to get open and Erica chucked the disc to her. Quickly she thought she saw an opening in the Power Flier goal and whipped the disc at the goal only to have it be blocked by Susan.

Susan threw it to a defender who then flung it to the Power Flier offensive, Adam. Adam then tossed it to Jill. Jill then long passed the disc across field towards Zackary who was trying to position himself off to the side of the Fireball goal.

Zackary tried to slip the disc past Dennis, the Fireball goalie. However he was able to block it and quickly threw the disc to a defensive player. They then tossed the disc to Erica who shot the disc downward to Kyle who was near the ground.

Quickly the three Fireball offensive players had the disc back into Power Flier territory. They made rapid tosses keeping all the Power Flier players from trying to tag a Fireball offensive players. The three players had positioned themselves on either side of the goal with the third just under. Passing from one to the next, they were able to trick Susan to block one way while opening up the goal in the other direction.

Rapidly the Flying Fireballs were just able to squeak the disc past the goalie who had just realized too late what the Fireballs were trying to do. With the fifth point scored, the Flying Fireballs won the game!

While the fireball fans were cheering at their team's win, the Power Flier fans dejectedly got up to leave. All the players landed on the ground and lined up. Then each pushed out their human torsos and shook hands. They thanked each other for a great game.

"So there you have it, the Flying Fireballs beat the Power Fliers in a five to four game!" Jack announced happily to both Andrea and the viewers. "Have you ever seen such a game before!"

"No Jack, I haven't. I've done soccer games, football games, and even a few baseball games. Yet, I've got to say this might become my favorite one of all."

"I agree, the three dimensional nature of it, coupled with large colorful dragons, makes this a rather exciting sport," Jack replied almost breathlessly.

"What do you think the future of this sport will be?"

"Well I know that there are teams over in Europe who want their games televised and there is talk of organizing some kind of official Dragon Ball league. While this had been mainly an exhibition game, I assume after this, there will be far more Dragon Ball games shown in the future. I suspect by this time next year we will be broadcasting league games across the world."

"I hope so. Wendy is now standing with the winning team," Andrea spoke as the broadcast shifted to six dragon torsos crowding around a smiling Wendy. Someone had thought to hand the dragons Flying Fireball shirts to cover their human torsos up for television.

"Thank you Jack and Andrea. I am here standing with the winning team," Wendy said addressing the camera. Then turning to the six dragons, "how does it feel to have beaten the Power Fliers?"

"Great," yelled Erica enthusiastically.

"They were a great team," chimed in Dennis eagerly.

"Knowing you couldn't speak to each other, how did you guys come up with such coordinated maneuvers," Wendy asked the team at large.

Kyle was the first to speak up, "practice, lots of practice. Plus, having our great captain here," he said while hugging Marilyn's shoulders with joy, "she really helped!"

Marilyn blushed a bit from the praise, "it's all about building a cohesive team that respect and trusts each other."

"I bet, when is your next game and who is it against," Wendy asked Marilyn.

"We've got two weeks until our next game against the Avalanches. But you can be assured we won't be relaxing right guys," Marilyn called out to her team.

"Heck no," they all called out in unison.

"There you have it straight from the winners," Wendy spoke as video shifted back to Jack and Andrea.

"From everyone here, we would like to congratulate the Flying Fireballs. We hope everyone had a good time and we will see you at the next televised Dragon Ball game," Jack bid the audience as the broadcast ended.