

# The Invitational Week 84: We Got Game

Tell us some funny ways to 'improve' a sport. Plus winning rhymes for Taylor Swift lines.

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The pole that didn't quite vault.

**Hello. Are you tired of sports, yet?** Neither are we. How *can* we be, when right in the middle of a tight pennant race in baseball, and on the cusp of the start of football season ... a major Olympics event was won by a penis? No, Frenchman Anthony Ammirati didn't win the gold in the pole vault — he missed it by roughly, uh, seven inches. But he won The Olympics' Biggest Moment, which in this quadrennial mega-spectacle is everything. *Feats, Don't Phallus Now!* What a great day for The Invitational.

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For Invitational Week 84, we ask you to humorously “improve” any sport to make it faster, more exciting, or simply somehow ... better. As in:

**Baseball: Require that batters’ crotches be pre-scratched before they reach the plate.** (*Ralph Nitkin*)

**Luge: Lugers slide down the track on their backs as usual, but headfirst, guided only by three rear-mounted dental mirrors.** (*Stephen Dudzik*)

**Soccer: Keep adding balls until someone finally scores a goal.** (*Anne Clark*)

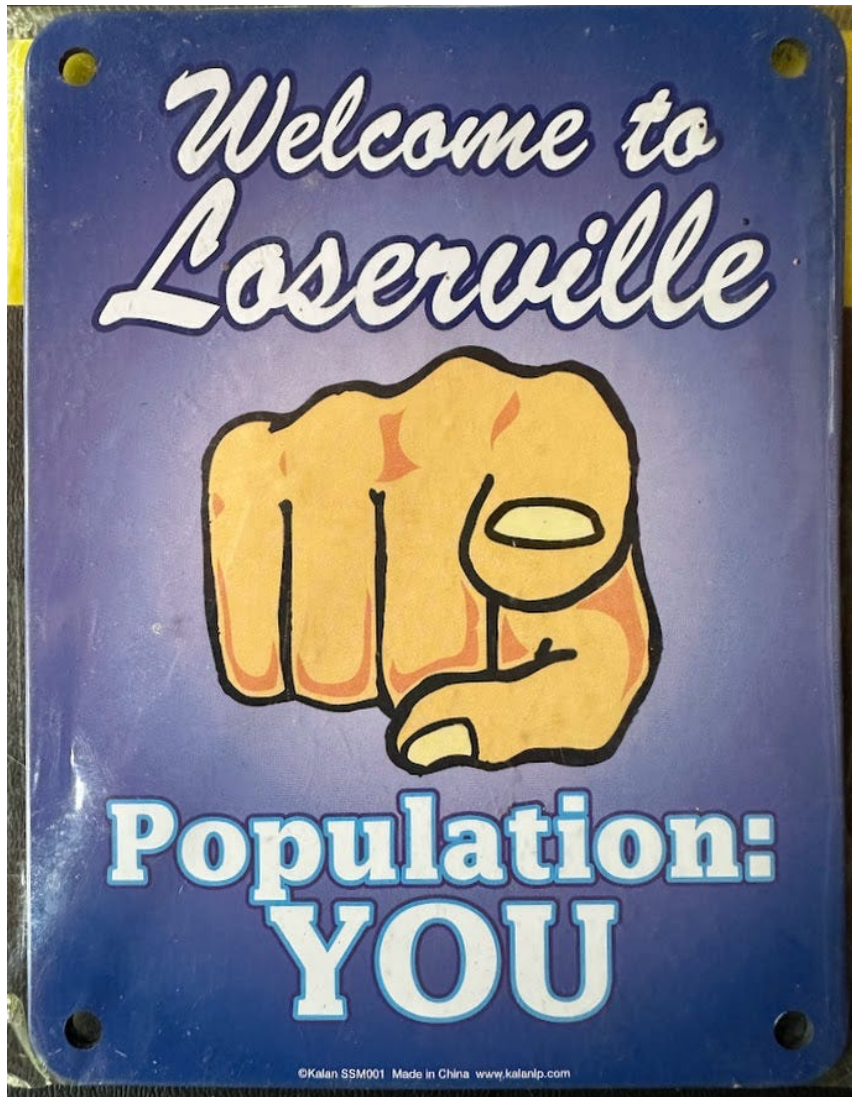
The examples above are from a similar Invitational contest 12 years ago ([full results here](#)), the last time we tried a contest of this type. **So what counts as a “sport?”** We’re going to be expansive about this, within reason: Most anything that is a contest involving some physical action. Rock, Paper, Scissors, sure. Tug of War, fine. Chess . . . fine! (the IOC has actually recognized it as a sport). Monopoly — no; no board games. The presidential election, no. The Invitational, no.

**Formatting this week:** Just our standard entreaty to **make each individual entry one single line** (e.g., don’t push Enter in the middle of the entry). *Almost* all of you have been getting this right!

**Deadline is Saturday, Aug. 17, at 9 p.m. ET.** Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Aug. 22. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week’s contest, preferably all on the same form.

**[Click here for this week’s entry form](#)**, or go to **[tinyURL.com/inv-form-84](http://tinyURL.com/inv-form-84)**.

**This week’s winner** gets this fine little metal magnetic sign, about the size of a switch plate, that would be especially appropriate if you had us over for brunch, just saying. Donated eons ago by 441-time Loser Nan Reiner.



Runners-up get autographed fake money featuring the Czar or Empress, in one of **eight nifty designs**. Honorable mentions get bupkis, except for a personal email from the E, plus the **Fir Stink for First Ink** for First Offenders.

**Custom Tailoring: The Swift ‘tailgaters’ from Week 82**

We asked you to take any line from a Taylor Swift song from her latest album, “The Tortured Poets Department,” and add — before it or after it — a funny, rhyming line of your own.

The results were good. We must admit we found that Ms. Swift’s lyrics do not read like poetry. They did not read like the previous models for our tailgater contests: Dylan, the Beatles, and Shakespeare. Instead, they read like this: “As I said in my letters, now that I know better / I will never lose my baby again” and “Messy top-lip kiss, how I long for our trysts.” They are almost all about the soul-shattering anguish of relationships.

In judging this contest, the Czar and Empress had a ~~near fistfight~~ mutually respectful disagreement over one entry that rhymed “plague” with “leg.” She, a Philadelphia native, considered this a perfect rhyme; he, a New York City native, felt this was not a rhyme at all. Eventually, she ~~grudgingly caved~~ ~~in~~ graciously and amicably acquiesced, in the interests of collegiality. We did not use the entry. (Meanwhile, Swift herself rhymes “plague” with “every day.”)

The results: Taylor’s own lines are in orange; click on them to see the full lyrics they came from.

***Third runner-up:***

**I will never lose my baby again —**

My number’s on his head in Sharpie pen. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

***Second runner-up:***

**I can fix him, no really I can —**

No need to take Spot to the pricey vet-man. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

***First runner-up:***

**The jokes that he told across the bar were revolting and far too loud**

Like “Your Mama’s so uncultivated — but she keeps getting plowed.” (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

*And the winner of the toilet paper earrings:*

**Lights, camera, bitch, smile ...**

I haven't taken this cognition test in a while. (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

## **Swift Descent: Honorable mentions**

**And for a fortnight there, we were forever**

Trying to understand team handball, or épée, or some other wacky endeavor. (*Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.*)

**All the wine moms are still holding out**

But the single cat-ladies support me, no doubt! — K. Harris (*Mark Raffman*)

**And I could see it from a mile away**

But the Secret Service shrugged, "Looks okay." (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

**And you deserve prison, but you won't get time**

Aren't you lucky now that a president can't commit a crime? (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

**Beauty is a beast that roars**

See, I'm married to a guy who snores. (*Mark Asquino, Santa Fe, N.M.*)

**But I felt a hole like this**

Right after moving in for a kiss. — D.J.T., 2016 (*Mark Raffman*)

**But it's gonna be all right, I did my time,**

So straight into Trump's Cabinet I'll climb. — S. Bannon, P. Navarro, P. Manafort (*Duncan Stevens*)

Dear aliens who abducted me to examine my poo,

**They'll say I'm nuts if I talk about the existence of you.** (*Jesse Frankovich*)

**And no, you can't come to the wedding**

Since my bridegroom you've been bedding. (*Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.*)



### **Another fortnight lost in America**

Scrolling through TikTok's esoterica. (*Marni Penning Coleman, Falls Church, Va.*)

### **I'm havin' his baby**

Unless Kamala wins and appoints some new Supreme Court Justices, maybe. (*Roy Ashley*)

### **Them's the breaks, they don't come gently**

When you wreck your daddy's Bentley. (*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.*)

You could fix (with some new zippers or other closures)

**All your indecent exposures.** (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

### **I can take the upper hand and touch your body**

'Cause when you're a star, they let you be naughty. (*Michael Stein, Arlington, Va.*)

### **But you awaken with dread, pounding nails in your head.**

I kept telling you, "Fred! Try some plywood instead!" (*Duncan Stevens*)

### **If you want to tear my world apart, just say you've always wondered:**

When God created **Chinese crested**s, could it be He blundered? (*Pam Shermeyer*)

### **I know he's crazy but he's the one I want**

I don't care that he thinks he's a buttered croissant. (*Frank Osen*)

### **Just say, "I loved you the way that you were";**

There's really no need to disinter... (*Beverley Sharp*)

### **Messy top lip kiss, how I long for our trysts —**

I miss how your spit trickled down to my wrists. (*Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.*)

**My husband is cheating, I wanna kill him —**

Or maybe just hire a lawyer and bill him. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.; Jesse Frankovich*)

**My husband is cheating, I wanna kill him —**

I'll just ask my lover where to landfill him. (*Pam Shermeyer*)

**My spine split from carrying us up the hill.**

Next time, go fetch your own water, Jill! (*Jonathan Jensen*)

**You crashed my party and your rental car**

And I hope that it Hertz you wherever you are. (*Mark Raffman*)

**You said some things that I can't unabsorb**

That were **cheugy**, **delulu**, and totes unadorb. (*Frank Osen*)

**"There's a lot of people in town that I bestow upon my fakest smiles"**

Is a grammatical construction that would give teachers piles (*Frank Osen*)

**Listen to one more second of all this bitching and moaning —**

Taylor may be gorgeous, but her lyrics have me groaning. (*Rob Cohen*)

**You're no Dylan Thomas. I'm no Patti Smith.**

Does AI write my poetry? I'll have to take the Fifth. (*Marshall Begel, Madison, Wis.*)

**The scandal was contained, the bullet had just grazed.**

If someone doesn't use this lyric line, I'll be amazed. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

*[Indeed, we got several couplets that included this line; they were less than sympathetic to the grazee.]*

**And Last: "Out, out, out, out, out, out!"**

"What rot!" the Czar and Empress shout. (*Jesse Frankovich*)

*The headline "Custom Tailoring" is by Chris Doyle; Dave Prevar wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.*



**Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, Aug. 10:** our Week 83 contest to explain what various sound-phrases mean, including “Tock-tick, Tock-tick” and “Fee-fi-fo-fump.” Click on the link below.