

The Games

The Games (NRK Super, Oslo, Norway) is a 7-minute weekly drama series for 7-to-11-year-olds about boy named Stian. His everyday life is accompanied by a funny commentary from two sports presenters. In this episode, “the fight for video night,” viewing preparations are underway in the basement of Stian’s home: snacks, remote control devices, and DVDs are set up in front of the screen and the couch. Meanwhile, the two presenters describe activity in the house (cf. illustration 1). Animated chalk drawings illustrate the game play to be achieved. According to the commentators, to win a victory Stian must succeed in putting his arm around Sara while they are seated on the couch together watching videos. As the game begins, Stian is at maximum distance from Sara (cf. illustration 2). By making a false cough, he moves closer. Then Stian tries a fake stretch and it appears that he could land the victory, but no! Stian has sweaty armpits. Does he have odor too? (cf. illustration 3) Stian excuses himself to use the restroom and the action breaks at half time. The commentators say it has been a short but intensive game so far. In the restroom, another correspondent relays the action to the presenters (cf. illustration 4). Excitement builds in the second half, with a close-up of Stian’s hands inching toward Sara (cf. illustration 5). He is interrupted as mother enters the room with some candy. “That’s a twist we didn’t need right now,” says one of the presenters (cf. illustration 6). Stian is forced to move to the bean bag when mother sits on the couch. Things are looking bleak and the game is going to be recorded as a loss. Thanks to Stian’s quick ingenuity, the game goes into overtime. Stian and Sara are back on couch together. It’s a victory! (cf. illustration 7) The program concludes with an instant replay of the winning move (cf. illustration 8).

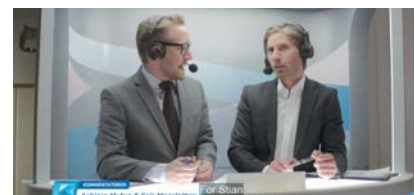
The Games won the top prize in the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014 in the 7-11 fiction category.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS’ OPINION

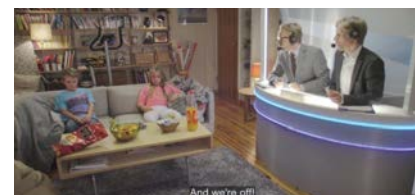
International experts shared their opinions about *The Games* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014. Experts loved the program. They thought the program is universal. They liked the idea, the tight scripting, the timing, the editing, the emotional intensity. Several experts mentioned that they would like to see this format with a girl protagonist, but they believe girls would be interested in this episode too, because they want to know what boys are thinking. Producers of the program noted that this was intended as a counter balance to a broadcast schedule with many programs for girls. There was general agreement that this program seems to be a fresh idea. There was debate about the depiction of the girl. Was she portrayed as passive or was this the picture in Stian’s head? Producers appreciate the attitude of acceptance of boys at this stage. The program works well for boys by not humiliating them, which is great for them.

“I was really laughing at the games today.” (female expert, Germany)

“I find the humor makes this easier for kids to watch with parents. It takes away the awkwardness of growing up.” (female expert, Canada)



III. 1: Two commentators give a play-by-play analysis of the action



III. 2: As this game begins, Stian and Sara watch videos on the couch



III. 3: Stian fakes a stretch to get his arm around Sara

Screenshots from *The Games* © NRK Super



III. 4: Stian's efforts to regain composure are relayed from the restroom



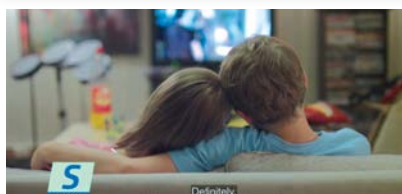
III. 5: A close-up of Stian's hand as it moves toward Sara



III. 6: Mom interrupts with candy and it appears the game will be a loss



III. 7: The commentators are overjoyed as Stian achieves a turnaround



III. 8: With his arm around Sara, Stian basks in his victory

Screenshots from *The Games* © NRK Super

“The idea and how you go through the emotions and analyze a situation within these two persons—not just boys and girls but many things—is interesting to me. (female expert, Iran)

“At this age, they live as if everything happens inside them....the news guys inside the house....I think it was brilliant.” (female expert, Turkey)

“It’s my favorite of this category because they take a typical situation for this target audience and explode it deeply in a dramatic way. It’s a very ordinary situation that they can transform in a very dramatic and intense performance. It is very well explored, dramatically speaking.” (female expert, Colombia)

“There are a lot of small fights and challenges in life when you think about it....Getting up in the morning is an episode. It’s quite funny because you take little stuff and you burst it up. That’s the whole idea.” (male expert, Norway)

“It’s very compact. It’s a very clever way of dealing with huge life issues.” (male expert, United Kingdom)

“Not a second goes to waste.” (male expert, Norway)

“The sound effects were real!” (female expert, Australia)

Elizabeth Spezia, PhD student, Southern Illinois University, USA

Target Audience 9.09

Idea 9.47

Script 9.21

Realization 9.13

Average Score per Category by experts' voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014