

TV Review: ‘The League’ on FX Has Potential to Be a Winner

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 29, 2009 - 12:01pm

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [FX](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia](#) [5]
- [Jon Lajoie](#) [6]
- [Katie Aselton](#) [7]
- [Mark Duplass](#) [8]
- [Nadine Velazquez](#) [9]
- [Nick Kroll](#) [10]
- [Paul Scheer](#) [11]
- [Stephen Rannazzisi](#) [12]
- [Television](#) [13]
- [The League](#) [14]

CHICAGO – FX may have finally found a partner for the great “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia,” in the just-as-raunchy “The League,” a show that’s basically about how guys like to give each other sh*t. On message boards, over a few drinks, at a family picnic - there are groups of guys everywhere who live to bust each other’s balls. If you can’t handle it, don’t suit up for “The League”.



The title of the sitcom is taken from a common obsession this time of year - fantasy football. A group of friends have an annual, highly competitive league that serves as the background for what is basically a relationship comedy between men and women. With raunchy humor that you’d expect to see on HBO or Showtime, “The League” sometimes feels like it’s trying too hard to be edgy, but by the end of the second episode, it has begun to show signs of developing a nice, funny rhythm every week that may not top it’s Thursday night schedule-mate but will make it a good one-two comedy punch.



Mark Duplass. THE LEAGUE premieres on FX.
Photo credit: F. Scott Schafer / FX

The ensemble of “The League” helps elevate some of the more mediocre writing with a very talented collection of recognizable faces.



Nick Kroll, Mark Duplass, Stephen Rannazzisi, Katie Aselton, Jon Lajoie
and Paul Scheer.
Photo credit: F. Scott Schafer/ FX.

Pete (Mark Duplass of "Humpday") consistently wins the fantasy league trophy and is absolutely unafraid to rub it in his friend's faces but his marriage is falling apart, threatening another run at the crown in the premiere episode.

Stephen Rannazzisi and Katie Aselton play Kevin and Jenny, the funniest couple on the show, as she pretty much runs his team from the sidelines and the fantasy dynamic seems to play into their marriage too. The second episode allows both Rannazzisi and Aselton to shine, indicating that this will be a true ensemble effort, as all great sitcoms are.

Ruxin (Nick Kroll) is the sexually frustrated husband to the very funny Nadine Velazquez ("My Name is Earl"), Andre (Paul Scheer) is the most-abused member of this Midwestern "Entourage," and Taco (Jon Lajoie) is the player of the group, a dim bulb who is handsome enough that his complete lack of social skills has done nothing to stop him from getting laid.

The theme of "The League" is simple. Men are more competitive with their friends than with anyone else. The writers cleverly work fantasy football into the fabric of the show with player trades actually being bartered for part of a criminal suspect's plea bargain in the first episode and to basically keep a marriage together in the second.

The first episode of "The League" is just okay. I thought to myself that it was good enough to give it another try but not great enough to be truly memorable. In a very, very good sign, the second episode is actually much funnier. A cast member has been cut and the gang seems more confident in their characters. A hysterical double date, "special sex," the concept of "Eskimo Brothers," and a song about "vaginal hubris" make the second ep of "The League" something that will likely get viewers very interested in a third.

Guys never really grow up. They just move from hitting each other with dodgeballs to razzing each other on fantasy football message boards. "The League" sometimes pushes the "need to shock" a bit too far but the cast has more than enough talent to keep viewers once that hook has brought them in. FX continues to impress.

'The League,' which airs on FX, premieres on October 29th, 2009 at 9:30PM CST. It stars Mark Duplass, Stephen Rannazzisi, Katie Aselton, Nadine Velazquez, Nick Kroll, Paul Scheer, and Jon Lajoie.



[15]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [16]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [15]

Source URL (retrieved on Mar 29 2024 - 3:33am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/9156/tv-review-the-league-has-potential-to-be-a-winner>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>

[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/fx>
[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/its-always-sunny-in-philadelphia>
[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jon-lajoie>
[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/katie-aselton>
[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mark-duplass>
[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/nadine-velazquez>
[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/nick-kroll>
[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/paul-scheer>
[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/stephen-rannazzisi>
[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
[14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-league>
[15] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
[16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>