

# Dream Jobs: Puppy Bowl referee

By Charles Curtis, USA Today, adapted by Newsela staff on 02.07.18

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Image 1. Dan Schachner is the referee for the cutest game in sports, the Puppy Bowl. Photo by Paul Zimmerman/WireImage.

There is no doubt about it: The greatest job of all time belongs to Dan Schachner.

He's the referee for the Puppy Bowl, which celebrated its 14th year on Animal Planet this Super Bowl Sunday, and while wrangling a room full of young dogs has its challenges, he confirmed it's the best.

"It combines my three loves," he told For The Win during the taping in October, "because I've always been in TV, I've always loved sports, I had dogs growing up and I foster dogs now. So, yes, it is the best of all three worlds."

Here's what else we learned from "The Ref" in our condensed and edited Q&A.



## How do you describe your job to people who don't know much about the Puppy Bowl?

I don't think you can describe the job. I sometimes get someone who says, "What's the Puppy Bowl?" They often confuse it with the Bud Bowl. We have to clarify that.

The puppies are not really playing football but they kind of are. We're doing a modified version of the game. It's incredibly entertaining, it's for every member of the family. It's entertaining because you see dogs, cats, barnyard animals and this year, a sloth (he was my assistant). I'm the one human trying to wrangle it all together. The other aspect of it is every single dog is up for adoption. They're from shelters across the country, between three and six months of age, and every single one needs a forever home. We're putting their names out there and driving people to shelter websites.



## So it's for a good cause in addition to the cuteness factor.

It's like watching a Disney movie and, like, "Call this number and then you can bring this character home!" You get to track these dogs along, you get some of their backstories and at the end of the show, you see some of them adopted and walked off stage.

## What's your strategy on the field?

There are many aspects to this rough (or ruff) job: It's part spokesperson, it's part promotions, sometimes part researcher. I'm also producing a segment this year. On set, you're the gatekeeper. You're maintaining order among the chaos. There are 12 dogs around you. You're trying to find out if they're being safe and you're the first line of defense. Then it's about getting them inspired to run a ball into the end zone. They can run or kick a toy into any end zone — the rules are pretty loose.

## So it actually sounds like the hardest job ever?

It seems like the hardest, except they're adorable.



## **Do you have a favorite Puppy Bowl moment?**

Last year was really cool. The dogs are divided into two teams: Team Ruff and Team Fluff. Team Fluff kept getting their butts handed to them. For whatever reason, the pretty boys dominated in 2017, 93-38, so it was nice to see the "underdogs" come through and win one for their side.

Quiz

- 1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-4]. Select the paragraph below from the article that suggests the Puppy Bowl does not air on NBC like the Super Bowl does.
- (A) There is no doubt about it: The greatest job of all time belongs to Dan Schachner.
  - (B) He's the referee for the Puppy Bowl, which celebrated its 14th year on Animal Planet this Super Bowl Sunday, and while wrangling a room full of young dogs has its challenges, he confirmed it's the best.
  - (C) "It combines my three loves," he told For The Win during the taping in October, "because I've always been in TV, I've always loved sports, I had dogs growing up and I foster dogs now. So, yes, it is the best of all three worlds."
  - (D) Here's what else we learned from "The Ref" in our condensed and edited Q&A.
- 2 Which sentence from the section "How do you describe your job to people who don't know much about the Puppy Bowl?" supports the conclusion that the dogs appearing in the Puppy Bowl need to be adopted?
- (A) I sometimes get someone who says, "What's the Puppy Bowl?"
  - (B) They often confuse it with the Bud Bowl.
  - (C) It's entertaining because you see dogs, cats, barnyard animals and this year, a sloth (he was my assistant).
  - (D) They're from shelters across the country, between three and six months of age, and every single one needs a forever home.
- 3 Read the section "What's your strategy on the field?"
- What does this section explain that other sections do not?
- (A) some of the rules in the Puppy Bowl
  - (B) how to adopt puppies from the Puppy Bowl
  - (C) who won last year's Puppy Bowl
  - (D) who the coordinator of the Puppy Bowl is

- 4 Read the section "How do you describe your job to people who don't know much about the Puppy Bowl?"

How does this section contribute to the article's MAIN idea?

- (A) It talks about the differences between the Puppy Bowl and the Bud Bowl this year.
- (B) It describes how the dogs, cats and barnyard animals all interact with each other while playing football.
- (C) It gives more details about the purpose of the Puppy Bowl and how the dogs get adopted.
- (D) It gives more information about the kinds of animals that are usually best at football.