

= Office Olympics =

" Office Olympics " is the third episode of the second season of the television series The Office , and the show 's ninth episode overall . It was written by Michael Schur and directed by Paul Feig . It originally aired on October 5 , 2005 on NBC . The episode guest starred Nancy Walls , the real @-@ life wife of series star Steve Carell , as Carol Stills .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) and Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) leave the office to buy a condo . Meanwhile , Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) , along with Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) , organizes office games and gets his co @-@ workers to play them .

" Office Olympics " was inspired by The King of the Hill Office Olympics , which were created and ran by members of the television show King of the Hill . After the episode aired , other " Office Olympics " were organized in actual offices across the country . The episode marks the first appearance of Mose , Dwight 's Amish cousin , played by writer Mike Schur . Mose was based on an actual person , with the same name , on the UPN reality show Amish in the City . The episode contained several cultural references , with many alluding to the actual Olympic games . " Office Olympics " received largely positive reviews from critics . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 3 @.@ 9 in the 18 ? 49 demographic and was viewed by 8 @.@ 3 million viewers .

= = Plot = =

While Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) leaves with Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) to sign closing papers for his new condominium , the staff fills out their expense reports . Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) " dies " of boredom , and Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) revives him by calling him to the reception desk and throwing objects into Dwight 's coffee mug . Jim discovers that his co @-@ workers have their own office games , such as Toby 's " Dunderball " , and Kevin and Oscar 's " paper football flicking and hitting " game . Jim and Pam organize the Games of the First Dunder @-@ Mifflin Olympiad , competing for hand @-@ made medals constructed from yogurt lids and paper clips .

At the condominium signing , Michael discusses the deal with his realtor , Carol Stills ( Nancy Walls ) . Dwight finds a variety of things wrong with the condominium , and , at the very end of the deal , Michael gets cold feet but relents when he learns that backing out of the deal will cost him a substantial amount of money .

When Michael and Dwight return , the coffee cup race quickly dissolves , and the office returns to normal . Michael isolates himself in his office , still upset over the closure of his condo . When Ryan Howard ( B.J. Novak ) attempts to throw away his gold medal , Jim and Pam organize the " closing ceremonies " , believing them important to the office staff , and they award Michael the gold medal for closing on his condo . They also award Dwight the silver medal for unknown reasons . Michael feels touched by this and thanks everyone for the honor .

= = Production = =

" Office Olympics " was written by Michael Schur . This episode was the first episode of the series directed by Paul Feig . Producer Greg Daniels said the idea for the actual Office Olympics stemmed from The King of the Hill Office Olympics , which were created and ran by Daniel 's former assistant Tim Croston and the show 's two production assistants at the time : Tony Gennaro and Seranie Manoogian . The games were held in the King of the Hill offices , where Daniel served as executive producer . Daniels later elaborated on the types of games they played , stating " Like , who ? s going to get off the elevator first and races in chairs . The funny thing is then it became a TV episode and it has now gone full circle and I hear offices are doing it all over . " After the episode aired , other " Office Olympics " were organized in actual offices across the country . The Chicago Tribune organized an interview with a majority of The Office cast members who ? in character ? explained

the rules to the various games . The Yogurt Lid Medals reappear in the third season finale , " The Job " : Receiving the lid and a note from Pam is the catalyst for Jim 's decision between Pam and Karen .

This episode establishes the use of cold openings in The Office , a practice which continues for the rest of the series . The first shot of Steve Carell in the title sequence is also updated .

When choosing Michael 's car for the episode , producer Kent Zbornak brought in pictures of various cars and had the writers choose which one they thought Michael would most likely own . The writers ended up choosing a Chrysler Sebring convertible , because according to B. J. Novak " we figured it 's the showiest car that he could afford " . While shooting the scene in Michael 's car , cameraman Randall Einhorn accidentally broke the back window , which ended up costing \$ 859 to replace .

Writer Mike Schur made a cameo appearance in the episode , appearing in a photograph as Dwight 's Amish cousin Mose . The idea for Schur to be Dwight 's Amish cousin had been a joke among the writers since the first season . Mose was based on an actual participant , with the same name , on the UPN reality show Amish in the City .

= = Cultural references = =

After telling Ryan he can take his pants off and run around the office , Michael makes a direct reference to the 1983 teen comedy @-@ drama film Risky Business . Dwight compares his friendship to Michael , using the analogy that Michael is " like Mozart , and I 'm like ... Mozart 's friend . No . I 'm like Butch Cassidy and Michael is like ... Mozart . " When Michael asks Pam if she had his magazine subscriptions changed to his new address , he mentions Small Businessman , American Way , Maxim , Cracked , and the fictitious Fine Arts Aficionado Monthly . When touring his condo , Michael makes a Mr. Bill joke to the head of the condo association , whose name is Mr. Bill . The jokes are a reference to the clay figurine star of a parody of children 's shows that was part of Saturday Night Live .

Due to the nature of the episode , several explicit references are made to the Olympic Games . When Jim starts the Office Olympics by lighting the " Torch " , he hums " Olympic Fanfare and Theme " by John Williams , one of the themes for the actual Olympic games . When the games are finished , the employees play a recording of " The Star Spangled Banner " .

= = Reception = =

" Office Olympics " originally aired on NBC in the United States on October 4 , 2005 . The episode was viewed by 8 @. @ 3 million viewers and received a 3 @. @ 9 rating / 9 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 3 @. @ 9 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 9 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . An encore presentation of the episode , on April 25 , 2006 , received 1 @. @ 8 rating / 6 % share and was viewed by over 4 @. @ 3 million viewers .

" Office Olympics " received mostly positive reviews . Michael Sciannamea of TV Squad wrote that " The Office has turned the corner into separating itself from the British version . " Sciannamea went on to say that " although Michael still garners the most attention , the other characters are beginning to break out . " His only criticism of the episode was that " Dwight is too creepy " , Sciannamea suggested that the writers " tone down his insanity a bit " . " Miss Alli " of Television Without Pity graded the episode with a " A- " . Erik Adams of The A.V. Club awarded the episode an " A " and called it the show 's " first truly classic episode " , due to the added " verve " of both plots . Adams praised the way the main story and Jim and Pam 's stories were intercut with each other , so that both could play off of each other ; he wrote that " Michael Schur ? s a great writer , and Paul Feig knows how to let superb comedic performances flow from his actors , but the stitch @-@ up job here makes the two halves of the episodes complementary when they could ? ve rocketed in opposite directions and ripped ' Office Olympics ' apart . "

Entertainment Weekly named Dwight 's line comparing his relationship with Michael to Mozart and

Butch Cassidy as one of "TV's funniest lines" for the week ending October 10, 2005. When Pam tries to get Angela to play the games with her fellow employees, Angela cattily reveals that she plays a game called "Pam Pong", where she counts how many times Jim goes to talk to Pam at her reception desk. Pop punk band Sweet Diss and the Comebacks later named one of their songs "a [Pam] Beesly tribute" after the game.