



Chronicles of playing against a friend who's better than you

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The only thing that's better than gaming alone is having friends. Even better than that is being able to game with said friends. Of course, when you frequently play against skilled opponents you start to show some less than pleasant traits. Below are some of the more embarrassing ones.

CHOOSING YOUR ARENA

When getting ready to battle, most people choose a game they're good at to improve their chances of success. You start to deviate from that game plan, however, once you know you're up against a better player. This provides an easy excuse for when you lose, because clearly you were out of your comfort zone. Don't overuse this tactic, though. Eventually people might start to notice the pattern, or you could end up saying something really embarrassing because you've gotten used to that one excuse.

"How'd you lose 28-2, dude?"

"Oh I don't play FPS games too often. They're not my strong suit."

"We're playing FIFA..."

MAKING YOUR OWN LUCK

This is something we've all done, and we don't feel even slightly guilty for doing so. Local multiplayer amplifies the stakes, and so it's only fair that you tweak the setting in your favour, if only a little bit. At first you start out small, like taking the seat with the armrests. If you're a bit more competitive, then you hand them the bad controller. The better the player, the worse the condition of the controller. At first they get the really old one with the flimsy keys, then the ones where random buttons are non-functional. I once tried to get away with giving a friend a controller

without a right stick, in an FPS deathmatch.

Yes, I'm a bad friend. No, I still didn't win.

LAUGHING ON THE OUTSIDE, CRYING ON THE INSIDE

When all of your petty tricks have failed, you must finally come to terms with reality. Your friend really is so much better than you, and this is on show in a variety of ways. If you're playing a fighting game, you will have to suffer through multiple flawless victories for your companion. No amount of button-mashing can prevent that, sadly. If it's a shooter, kill-cams will reveal some very classy 720 no-scopes while multiple flashbangs go off in the background. In sports games you'll get to experience all the celebrations a particular game has to offer. All of this will come at the expense of your self-esteem. The only thing you can do in these scenarios is to put on a brave face and weather the storm. It gets better, I promise.

IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT, FAKE IT

Despite being ridiculed in front of all of your friends, your ego still won't give up. Thus you go down the path of the sore loser, and begin to make even more excuses for the horrible performance you put up. Blame the game for glitching out, blame the lag. If someone points out that local multiplayer games don't have lag, tell them you meant input lag. Then, of course, you'll have no choice but to blame the controllers. Blame chains can get long and convoluted, so just make sure you don't accidentally shift the blame onto yourself.

Someday we'll become mature enough to accept that some people are just better at certain games. However, today is not that day.

Chronicles of playing against someone actually better than you

WASIQUE HASAN

Not to be confused with the other article bearing the same name, this one is for people who have lives and don't spend all day playing video games like losers. We know what it's like to be outmatched in activities that actually matter. The following are some of the things that go through our head when that happens.

DREAMING BIG

It's difficult for our ego to accept someone else's superiority. So much so that sometimes we prefer to be in denial over facing the truth. At least I assume that's what goes on in my head when it tries to tell me I can take on someone clearly much better than me.

Sometimes it occurs at the worst possible moment. If it's chess, I end up making overambitious moves hoping for a check. Reality hits me hard, however, with a mate in three moves.

Another sport where this may occur is football, if you're an outdoorsy kind of person. You and your ragtag bunch of unskilled amateurs might buy into "if you play with your heart, you can beat anyone". That's rarely how it works, however. Not saying anything but 7-1. Yeah.

NO SHOWBOATING, PLEASE

There are rare scenarios when you are fully aware of and willing to accept the other party's superiority. In these cases, you're happy to play second fiddle. Mainly because the opponent's showboating has shown you your rightful place in the corner. Oftentimes the showboating is unintentional. Whatever the intentions behind it, however, the gulf in skill levels still stings. You might be struggling to remember the order of

hands in poker. On the other side of the table, your competitors shuffle multiple decks of cards. Cards are flying from hand to hand in synchronised chaos, while they rap the fast verse from Rap God without missing a beat. In a game with as much bluffing as poker, that's sure to psych you out. Not to mention how skilled players in any sport have this certain swagger. You can pick it up from at least a mile away. It will blow you away, almost like the stench of day-old socks. I don't blame them. If I were remotely competent in any sport, I would do the same.

PITY PARTY

Once you've tried your hardest and still come up short, it will be evident for all to see. Sometimes even your opponents will start to feel bad about completely destroying you, and start to take pity on you. This hurts even more than the worst loss, because it is at this point everyone has lost all respect for you. Their main concern now is to bend over backwards to make life a little better for you, and every moment of it is an insult. This could manifest in a number of ways. Maybe they'll refuse to eat your piece in Ludu. Perhaps they take a card from the pile instead of hitting you with that Wild +4. Hell, maybe they just walk onto their own stumps in cricket, since you'll never be able to dismiss them.

As unpleasant as being outmatched is, you just have to suck it up and get through it. Who knows, if you stick with it long enough, maybe you'll see yourself on the other side of the skill tree someday. Till then, practice hard and suck it up.

