

SACRAMENTO COMEDY SPOT

Anti-Cooperation League ACL Overview

Updated July 30, 2022

History

Anti-Cooperation League was created by Brian Crall and first performed in Sacramento in 2007 at our first location at 1716 Broadway. Since then, many cast members have been part of ACL. Former sketch and improv performer Aaron Cheesman, coined the name Anti-Cooperation League. This name was chosen because ACL is meant to be high energy, fast-paced, with insane commitment to simple scenes the audience can relate to. This is not your artistic improv show.

Anti-Cooperation League Form

Each week, Anti-Cooperation League (ACL), interviews a special guest or the audience and uses the information gathered from the interview as inspiration for improvised comedy scenes.

The show essentially has three acts. The **first act** is an interview opening (15 minutes) where we interview a guest or the audience. When we are interviewing a guest, the host will talk to a couple of audience members before announcing the guest.

When the host is just interviewing the audience, cast members may also share their personal experiences inspired by the audience interview. This can be very loose and have more banter.

The Comedy Spot tech should play music as the guest enters the stage and during the transition between interview and improv scenes.

The opening is followed by the **second beat**, a montage of scenes inspired by the interview (40-45 Minutes). This part of the show is the wild west. Anything can happen- new scenes, group scenes, and callbacks in the later part of the second beat.

At 9:55PM the Comedy Spot Tech will turn on the comic light and leave it on until the end of the show. This the beginning of the **third act** of the show. This part of the show is full of callbacks at their most heightened state. You may also blend patterns in this beat. If you start a new scene make sure it has a simple pattern. This beat of the show if fast paced and relentless.

Any cast member can end the show by stepping forward, after a hit on the pattern, raising your hand, and in your loudest voice saying, "That's our show!" Then, the other cast members will step forward and clap and the Comedy Spot Tech will play music to signal the end of the show.

Hosting

Start the show by thanking the audience for being there and explaining the format of the show and making any announcements. Try not to let anything distract you until you've completed these first steps.

Example: "Welcome! Welcome! Welcome! How are you tonight?! Fantastic. Welcome to the show. This is Anti-Cooperation League, we get together every week and interview a special guest and then turn all that information into improv scenes. It's kind of like watching Saturday Night Live, but all of our sketches are created right off the top of our heads. We are also going to talk to a couple of you, and what you say might end up in the show tonight. Don't worry, we are not here to roast you. We are going to have a good time.

So we are going to talk to you and our guest for a while and then we are going to do scenes. Once we start scenes please do us a favor and don't talk in the audience. It's weird, because we can't see you and it takes us out of the show. Are we all okay with that? Okay let's get started."

The hosts ultimate focus, whether interviewing the audience or a guest, is to feed scene ideas to the rest of the cast. Look for the small unusual things the audience member or guests says and highlight them by restating the unusual as a pattern and even riffing on how the pattern could be played. Other cast members should join in this riffing so that they will remember the idea later on. It's important that we don't riff for too long, or we might exhaust all the hits on a pattern before we actually do the scene.

It is extremely important that the audience can hear the guest or the audience during the interview. Be sure to repeat what the audience members are saying so that the entire audience can hear. If a guest is really quiet you can also repeat what they are saying, or ask the Comedy Spot Tech to bring out a mic for the guest.

If you are interviewing the audience you should come ready with several different types of questions. Dating, jobs, high school, did something new, went on a trip, embarrassed by something. Also, once someone is talking to you, ask them about people around them. Asking about people around them might lead to ideas for patterns and characters.

Try not to go over the 15-20 minutes allowed for the opening of the show. Sometimes you can have too much information.

The host will never do the first scene of the show. They will take that time to transition from host to player and to remember ideas from the interview.

Tips and Guidelines

Here are some tips and guidelines that will help you be successful. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please reach out to Brian Crall: laugh@saccomedyspot.com | (916) 402-4757 Cell - Texting Preferred

- When the show is announced, take the stage with energy but don't overdo it. This is the first time the audience will see you on stage- you don't want to scare them.
- Stay engaged during the interview and try not to do anything on the backline that is distracting, especially during the opening announcements.

- Engage with the audience, guest, and host during the interview. Riff on scene ideas and call out the unusual so that you remember scene ideas during the show. Remember, don't riff on the pattern too much during the opening- save it for the show.
- If you have a question during the interview, step forward and be on the same plane as the host and guest and stay there until they have finished answering your questions. That way the host and guest aren't looking upstage and away from the audience. If you ask your question from the back wall then the guest and host will have to turn their head away from the audience to answer.
- Stay positive during the entire show, but especially when talking to the audience and the guest. The more comfortable they are, the more information they will give us. For more tips on improv intros and openings watch this video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJYVB7tiEK8>
- **The first scene of the show should have a very simple pattern and be pulled from something completely memorable from the interview.** This is the scene that demonstrates to the audience how the show works. If you can avoid it, don't bring chairs out for the first scene so that you can get straight to the scene. Clearly state your pattern- don't be coy.
- Initiate with clear patterns throughout the show. If we know what you would like to explore then we can support you.
- If you have a pattern for a scene, start sharing that early. Otherwise we are going to take it as an organic scene and start to find or discover the pattern with you.
- Don't waste potential patterns by using ideas from the opening as a throw away line in another scene. Don't connect or blend scenes until the third beat of the show.
- If you are the second person in a scene, be neutral and LISTEN to the initiation, agree, and build on their idea (Yes, Yes, Yes, and...). Pick a character that best supports your scene partner's pattern.
- Don't talk about it, do it.
- Play scenes away from the back wall.
- Use the entire space, the Comedy Spot is your playground.
- Be patient. If two players are playing a simple, recognizable pattern, successfully, we don't be overly eager to walk on to the scene. Give the scene space. Trust you team members.
- Remember, we walk on to clarify or hit the pattern. We would walk on early to clarify a pattern. If we want to walk on to hit the pattern we want the players in the scene to make at least 1-2 hits before we walk on. **Walk on, hit or clarify the pattern, and then leave.** Make sure we see how that hit affects the scene before anyone walks on again.
- Actively listen and be ready to support on the backline.
- Follow the ebb and flow of the show. If one scene is blue the next should be smart. If one scene is low energy the next should be high energy. If one scene is in a chair then the next scene should be active.
- One of the staples of Anti-Cooperation League is that historically, it has been a physical show. Don't be afraid to be physical (and safe.) Always **show** the pattern instead of talking about it.
- Support. Support. Support. Support each other.

- Relentlessly edit. We would rather edit early than late. We would rather edit a scene than let it go on too long. Nobody remembers a bad scene if we edit it and move on.
- Have fun. Slay dragons. Relax. Let 'er rip. Be great. You don't have to prove anything. You belong here. You were invited to play with this team because you are ready.
- Audiences like seeing cast members connecting to each other. If you are having a good time with the rest of the cast, half of your job is already done.

Logistics

- Call time for ACL is at 8:45PM each Saturday. If you want to get to the Comedy Spot early to catch up and riff, that is always a good thing.
- Leave your personal problems at the door.
- Be backstage and ready to warm-up and meet the guest at 8:55PM.
- Warmup. Please warmup. Warmup please.
- Please be available to take a picture immediately after the show.
- Cast members are allowed to have 1-2 guests per show. Please let the Box Office know that you will have a guest BEFORE the door opens for the show.