

Lazytown interview

Magnus Scheving plays 'Sportacus' in Lazytown.

You posted questions for Magnus on the CBeebies message board: here are the answers!

Bigkiddie: "I have noticed that the girl who plays Stephanie is growing up rather quickly and seems to be a tall girl now. Will you carry on using the current actress, or will there come a point in time when you need to get a replacement actress?"

Magnus: We were so lucky when we found Julianna Rose Mauriello. She brought so much to the show. Like everyone else, she gets older. With regards to replacing Julianna, we haven't really thought too much about that, I'm sure the time will come though. Since LazyTown started back in 1995 we've had three different 'Stephanies', even though only in Iceland.

Skyelark: "Is there any chance that there will be stage version of the show containing the three lead actors from the TV programme (even if it's a one-off)?"

Magnus: LazyTown is currently on stage in South America and the UK. In the next couple of years, many more countries will follow. Regarding the original actors getting together on stage - who knows! One of my dreams is to do a big one-off concert in the UK with the original cast, but nothing has been decided.

Skyelark: "How are the plans for the Lazy Town movie progressing? And will that be the last we'll see of Lazy Town?"

Magnus: The movie plans are progressing slowly but surely. I guarantee that a movie wouldn't be the last of LazyTown, only the next step for our brand.

Dylsmummy: " Will you marry me? No really, where did you get the inspiration for Lazytown and are all the characters your idea? Who is your favourite? Stingy is a big hit in our house. We love his song. Also, Dyl'sDaddy wants to know if you will teach him to do that spinny around push up that you do. Keep up the amazing work. See you in Liverpool next June.

Magnus: When I was travelling around the world, giving lectures and teaching fitness, parents came to me again and again with the same questions. They all had to do with how they could get their kids more active and to eat healthier. I realised that no matter where in the world, all parents want their kids to be healthy, kind and independent - that's where the idea of LazyTown comes from.

All the characters are my idea and therefore I cannot pick a favourite one. But I agree with you on Stingy - he always puts a smile on my face.

Great to hear that Dyl's daddy wants to do the spinning push-ups, and I have one very good trick for him. It is a secret trick that I use all the time. Would you like know what it is? Here it goes - practice, practice, practice!!

daddycus: " Why do the kids of LazyTown have no parents? Can you reassure me about the stage show - I've booked tickets but I'm concerned that my kids will be really disappointed that it's not the real Sportacus/Stephie /Robbie/etc. Do you have any plans for further LazyTown TV, movies, spinoffs? You and Stefan make a great double act on the show. Any plans for working together on other projects? Maybe even something aimed at grownups? What time does Sportacus get up in the morning? Why did Number 9 leave Lazy Town? How much would it cost me to book you for a personal appearance? (I'm serious!!!)

Magnus: The kids in LazyTown have parents. We just don't tell stories that involve them.

I can assure you that you're going to love the stage show. I've seen it many times and it was unbelievable to hear the kids and grown-ups yell and shout when the characters appeared. Even my own kids loved it and they're my special quality control.

We have big plans for more TV production, not mentioning movies and spinoffs.

Stefan and I have worked together many times before, and who knows - we might do it again in a different field sometime in the future.

Sportacus gets up when the cock crows.

There's a big story behind Sportacus 9, but at this point I can't go into details.

Thanks for asking me to do a personal appearance. Unfortunately I'm booked for the next 12 years (I'm serious ;-)

emsy,liasmummy: "Just want to say how amazing i think Lazytown is; my son adores it. He loves jumping around pretending to be Sportacus and has even named his guineapigs Sportacus and Ziggy! We would like to know do you have a favourite episode/story? And how long does it take to film one?"

Magnus: This is a difficult question. I like so many episodes for many different reasons. I liked "Hero for a day" because it had a great Ziggy story. "Rottenbeard" was a great adventure, "Ziggy's alien" was really exciting - I could go on forever.

It takes about one week to shoot one episode. Then we have to edit it, add in some visual effects, add in sound effects and underscore. Finally we go through colour correction and mastering. The whole process takes about one month.

emsy,liasmummy: "Wow! Didn't know there were plans for a movie! Will there be any new characters?"

Magnus: We are working on the script and unfortunately I'm not allowed to give out any details. But I can promise you a few surprises!

soniac1: "My 2 daughters, 6 and 2, love the show as do myself and my husband and they love to try and copy the moves, especially Sportacus'. Magnus should get together with Jamie Oliver and get the young kids at schools interested in healthy eating with the help of the Lazy Town characters. It is a brilliant show and idea and long may it continue.

Magnus: Thank you so much for the kind words. You will never believe how much it means to me to hear from parents and children and see that LazyTown is actually working - all over the world.

I like Jamie Oliver and thought his efforts to get school kids to eat healthier was great. Hopefully we can work together in the future.

emsy,liasmummy: "Does Sportacus need a girlfriend? Im very willing!!! Ha Ha! Magnus, just want to say you're all fantastic on Lazytown, I think I love the show as much as my son!! The songs are so catchy and I'm not ashamed to say I get up singing and dancing with my little boy! I have even taken the CD into my work!! I work at a special needs school and the students, and staff love it! How often do you train? And what's your diet? Do you have a favourite sport? Are you into football? Do you have a favourite team? I think the character Robbie Rotten is hilarious! He actually reminds me of Jim Carrey the actor?! Where did the idea of Lazytown come from? What did you do before? Do you have children yourself? If so what do they think of you being 'Sportacus'? Do you have a favourite character from Lazytown? Did you ever imagine that Lazytown would be so popular?"

Magnus: It's great to hear that you're dancing and singing with your son! One of the goals of LazyTown is to get parents to spend time with their kids and have fun.

It may sound strange, but I don't train in a regular sense. I may drop in the Gym from time to time - but I like to use the whole day to work out. Run up the stairs at work - do lift-ups in the chair at meetings - play with my children when I get home etc. The day is full of opportunities to get the heartbeat up just a little bit.

When it comes to diet, I try to keep it balanced. We all know it's no fun to eat greens all day and count each calorie. So balance is the key.

I still haven't found a sport I didn't like. I'm always looking for some time to practise my golf-swing a little more and I can't stand still if I see a tennis court nearby. Football is a great sport. My favourite team is of course "Grotta" - my son's junior league soccer team.

The idea of LazyTown came from travelling around the world and hearing parents coming up with the same questions again and again. I created a story and characters that tried to answer all those questions. It started out as a book back in 1994 called "Go LazyTown" and took off from there.

When I was young, I decided to be an architect. But I realised that if you want to know how to design houses - you have to know what it takes to build them. So I started out working as a carpenter. I was also active in the fitness business at that time and slowly I found my passion in that field.

I have three kids. They are so used to seeing me as Sportacus that they think nothing of it.

It's difficult to pick a favourite character - it's like trying to pick your favourite child. The thing with the characters of LazyTown is that you can find a little bit of yourself in every one of them. Sometimes you're like Sportacus and are ready for anything. Sometimes you are a little Ziggy and decide to have just one more cookie and sometimes you just want to kick back in the sofa and do nothing - Robbie Rotten style. So if you mix all the LazyTown characters together into one, I would say you have a really balanced person.

To tell you the truth, and not wanting to sound arrogant, I knew that LazyTown was going to be popular. I had seen it work here in Iceland again and again. There's something about those characters that kids love and get's

them up on their feet.

aginggracefully: "Hi Magnus, I'm not one for repeating what's already been said but you are in fact fantastic! The concept of the show is brilliant and the songs truly make each episode memorable. What I'd like to know is... Firstly, do you really do all your own stunts, flips and splits or do you 'sometimes' need a stand in (you can't possibly be that jumpy all the time can you)? Secondly, what's the most embarrassing thing that has happened whilst filming an episode of Lazydown (now don't be shy, us loyal viewers want to hear about your shame) Long Live Lazytown!

Magnus: I am proud to admit that sometimes we used stunt-doubles. I think the reason I'm so proud is that most of the time we didn't. I love to jump and flip and take on a challenge. During our last day of shooting in Season 1, I had to do over 3,000 jumps! My legs still hurt.

One of the most embarrassing moments happened while filming in Season 1. Sportacus was supposed to run up a wall. I took off and jumped with my right leg first but it went straight through the wall. I had to hang there, upside down, for up to 15 minutes while the crew was trying to get me free without ruining the Sportacus costume. Looking back at it now it's of course more funny than embarrassing but I wasn't laughing at the time, believe me.

AlanWJD: " Hi there, Ok got loads but can't remember them!!! Alright: Is Robbie Rotten Sportacus #9?

How many series are you planning?

Is there any possibility of expanding the cast a little (parents?)?

Magnus: Without giving away too much of the pre story of LazyTown, I can assure you that Robbie was not Sportacus #9.

We are constantly planning for more production, although it might not be in the same format as last two series.

Regarding new characters, we have been throwing some ideas back and forth. The original Icelandic LazyTown actually included more inhabitants. Even a talking rooster!

FinlaysDad: "It's not a question, but my 3 year old loves to pretend to be Sportacus (something I would certainly not discourage - a good role model). When he says "I'm Sportacus" I reply "No, I'm Sportacus". My 2 year old chips in with "No, I'm Sportacus". Very funny and totally lost on the kids!

Magnus: Great! Maybe it comes from the "Sportafake" episode when Robbie disguised as Sportacus. There are some lines from that episode that go like that.

HollyAmyJ: "We're looking forward to seeing the Lazytown Live Show in Grimsby next summer... is there any news yet on who will be the all new UK cast yet... I keep checking out the Lazytown Live website but there's no news yet?

Magnus: I'm really pleased with the cast from the UK live show. I think their performance is spot on!

twinsmummy99: " Hi ya just want to say thank u so much for bringing Lazytown in to our lives. The CD is always on. And my little girl took it to her dance school and even the teenagers went home to look up the moves so now we have Lazytown in our dance class to ha ha.

Do u have any plans to work with Jamie Oliver about getting our kids to eat heathy???

Please keep making lazytown All the best xxxxxxxxxxxx

Magnus: It's so great to hear that the whole family is getting involved! I think Jamie Oliver has done a terrific job and hopefully we can work together sometime.

RubyTuesday66: "My 4 year old daughter wants to know why Sportacus sleeps in his clothes and not in pyjamas? Thank you

Magnus: Sportacus has to be ready all the time to save someone in trouble.

Merlotmummy: "I'd like to know if there has been any evidence to demonstrate that Lazytown has had a positive effect on the habits of young children that watch it.

My 3 year old is obsessed by exercising, doing star jumps etc and loves eating 'sportscandy' all the time - 'because it's good for my body! it gives me energy!'

I appreciate any evidence can probably only be anecdotal, but has Magnus noticed his show has had a clear, positive effect on kids??

Magnus: The biggest evidence we've seen on that LazyTown works is that the obesity curve here in Iceland finally stopped going upwards for the first time in many years. When the Icelandic health minister was asked why that was, he immediately mentioned LazyTown.

We all know that we learn the most when we are having fun. It is very important for young kids to get familiar with fruits and vegetables and associate them with being active and having fun.

DaveEmmasDaddy: "As a parent, and a fan of Lazytown along with my 3 1/2 yr old daughter Emma, I'm interested in 'behind the scene' programmes and how shows are made, so is there any possibility of a 'making of Lazytown' program in the near future? Also, are there any plans to marry off Milford Meanswell and Miss Busybody? Keep up the good work Magnus.

Magnus: "We have hours and hours of "behind-the-scenes" material, dating back to 1995 when we started. We will definitely make a documentary out of it one day, hopefully sooner than later. We've just been so busy with production that this has always ended up at the bottom of the pile.

Joshymummy: "Would just like to ask him what country is he from? Is he in any other programmes and is he married...well the last question was worth a try!!!!

Magnus: I am Icelandic. I am not doing any other programmes at the moment. LazyTown is a 24/7 job.