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**Morris hosts Minnesota's first intercollegiate Ground Quidditch tournament**

*Summary: The Prairie Cup will take place on April 16, 2011.*

(April 15, 2011)-Andy Showalter '13, Maple Grove, has wanted to start a Ground Quidditch team since elementary school. Last year, he and friend Samantha (Sam) Bruno '13, Foley, "half jokingly" decided that the time was right. Showalter began to research the idea in earnest, eventually building a goal hoop. Soon, 73 students joined in weekly practice and the UMM group became one of 70 active teams in the Midwest region. Showalter, a political science and history major, is the club's secretary and studio art and art history major Bruno serves as commissioner.

Ground Quidditch, or "Muggle Quidditch" is the human version of the game played in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels, differing in that the balls in play are the only things that fly through the air. But, like their fictional counterparts, chasers (offense) and beaters (defense) do ride broomsticks, trying to score goals and tag out other players in a sport that has been called a combination of rugby, basketball, soccer and dodgeball.

The game is over when a seeker catches the snitch. In Ground Quidditch, the Golden Snitch, the small, gold-colored winged sphere that flies around the Quidditch field at high speeds, sometimes pausing and hovering in place, is not only earth-bound but also much larger. A human snitch, dressed in yellow, suddenly enters the game and ups the stakes.

The organized sport is only five years old but is already an international movement open to college and high school teams. Beginning as an intramural league at Middlebury College in Vermont, the Intercollegiate Quidditch Association (IQA) was founded following the first intercollegiate match between Middlebury College and Vassar College in 2007. In 2010 the IQA transformed itself into the International Quidditch Association and became a registered nonprofit organization, run largely by college volunteers. It even created its own iPhone app.

Now in its second year at UMM, the game is so popular that this spring the University will host the Prairie Cup, the first intercollegiate Ground Quidditch tournament in Minnesota, on Saturday, April 16. Championship games will be played on the "lake" between Gay and Indy Halls on Saturday at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and noon.

Teams vying for the Cup, besides Morris, include St. Olaf College and the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. The St. Cloud team will be spectators this year, along with some high school teams. Organizers hope that families and friends attending the Undergraduate Research Symposium will stop to watch.

One or two of UMM's four teams will compete. Usually seven players comprise a team, with an upper limit of 18. Reflecting its intentional promotion of gender equality, IQA rules specify two female players on the field at any given time. In addition to the championship game in Big Cat, exhibition games will be played on the mall or the skating lake. The winning team will receive a "huge" trophy. Showalter and Bruno are working with a firm in Alexandria on the design and execution.

A Harry Potter theme will rule the day, including the half-time show and closing ceremonies. Organizers have reached

out to campus theatre and music groups and ideas such as a duel or musical scenes are being considered. And watch out for the snitch, who might turn up anywhere on campus during the tournament. Teams also will be selling t-shirts and chocolate to raise funds.

For more information or to get involved, visit the [web page](#), [Facebook](#), or contact [Showalter](#) or [Bruno](#).

## Morris Quidditch players

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