

# Quidditch Tournament turns magical game into serious sport

By JAMIE HALE  
The Oregonian



Jamie Hale/The Oregonian

The Portland Augureys play the Western Washington Wyverns at the first Portland Quidditch Tournament at the 53rd Avenue Community Park in Hillsboro, on Dec. 5.

PORTLAND — “The first thing people usually ask is about the flying,” Benji B’Shalom, captain of the Portland Augureys, explained. As in, do the broomsticks stuck between every athlete’s legs really fly? Is there really magic involved?

His answer? No, sadly, there is no flying, no magic, no Harry Potter in real-life quidditch.

“People come out the first time and usually they’re looking for that novelty,” he said. Once the novelty wears off they start to really play the game - that’s when the real magic happens.

The Portland Augureys and five other teams competed - “broomsticks” and all - at the Portland Quidditch Tournament in Hillsboro, the area’s first officially recognized quidditch competition.

If you’re not familiar with J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter” series, you might not know much about quidditch, a magical sport played by the witches and wizards who inhabit the author’s universe. Ever since the books became popular, fans have tried to make quidditch a reality, evolving it from college campus novelty to serious sport over the last 10 years.

Students at Middlebury College in Vermont first brought the game to life in 2005. By 2010, U.S. Quidditch became a formal organization, today standardizing rules for the nearly 200 recognized teams nationwide.

The teams are made up of players young and old, fans of the series and folks who simply enjoy playing the game.

“Part of the point of having quidditch in the first place was capturing the magic,” B’Shalom said. “You’re

always thinking in the back of your mind, ‘I’m playing quidditch, this is so cool.’”

Still, there’s a smidgen of disappointment knowing this isn’t authentic quidditch - that the players aren’t actually magical beings flying through the air on enchanted brooms. But once you pull your head out of the “Harry Potter” universe, this Muggle version of the sport becomes a real treat.

The game deviates a bit from the way witches and wizards play it in “Harry Pot-

ter,” but it runs by the same basic rules.

Players known as chasers score points by tossing the primary game ball, the quaffle, through one of three hoops on the opponent’s end of the field. Defenders, called beaters, can stop their progress by nailing them with one of two red rubber balls, called bludgers. Each goal gets you 10 points, but the real points come with catching the golden snitch.

“The sporting aspect (of quidditch) can’t be understated

ed one bit,” B’Shalom said.

In the books the snitch is a little golden ball charmed to speed around the playing area until one of the teams’ seekers manages to catch it. In real-life quidditch, the snitch - worth 30 points - is a ball stuffed into a sock stuck to the back of a neutral player’s shorts. The person playing the snitch comes onto the pitch 18 minutes into the game, running from and grappling with the seekers.

Once the snitch is caught, the game is over. The team with the most points wins.

Nothing about quidditch is particularly whimsical. There are no wands, no cloaks, no Patronus spells cast on the pitch. This is a rough-and-tumble sport, one that mandates use of mouth guards and banned wooden broomsticks after they began to shatter in play. People walk away bloodied, bludgeoned and itching for more.

The uninitiated have a tendency to smirk, Augurey player Jeff Chatteron said, asking if quidditch is something like Harry Potter cosplay.

“We’re like, ‘no, no, think rugby,’” he said. “Think rugby but cooler.”

Ruggers might take offense, but the man has a point. Put quidditch on the ground, and it really does

resemble rugby, with players running with and passing off the quaffle before getting slammed by either a bludger or an opponent flying through the air.

At the Portland tournament two Augurey players received yellow cards for physical play, including one for a rough tackle that left an opposing Western Washington Wyvern absolutely floored. In truth, that brutality is paying proper homage to Rowling’s creation - remember that game of quidditch in “The Chamber of Secrets” when Harry broke his arm, then lost all his bones?

Novelty sports don’t tend to live long, but quidditch might be serious enough to last longer than most. The Portland Augureys have practiced twice a week for the last two years. They travel to northern Washington, Idaho and California to compete. They had to pay big money to Hillsboro Parks and Recreation to keep the lights on over the field at the Portland tournament.

They take it seriously, and plan on playing as long as there’s interest in the team. Recruitment has been up and down, but the Augureys benefit from the true magic of real-life quidditch, B’Shalom said: “It turns nerds into athletes and athletes into nerds.”

## Seaside hoop-shooters move to district finals

The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Seaside Elks Lodge No. 1748 held the local Hoop Shoot Contest Dec. 5 at Seaside High School. The participants were the top shooters from the previous week’s contests held at Broadway, Gearhart and Seaside Heights schools. The winners will now advance to the District Contest on Feb. 6 in Toledo.

The local winners in the girls’ divisions are as follows:

- 8 to 9 years old: first place, Mickey Blach; second place tie, Sayla Morris and Kiana Thornburg.
  - 10 to 11 years old: first place Abby Nofield; second place, Joslyn Roberts.
  - 12 to 13 years old: first place, Emerson Landwehr; second place, Emma Meyer.
- The winners in the boys’ divisions are:

- 8 to 9 years old: first place, Jordan Westerholm; second place, Haydn Edwards.
- 10 to 11 years old: first place, Cash Corder; second place Luke Toyooka.
- 12 to 13 years old: first place, Justin Morris; second place, Jackson Bassett.

The Elks Hoop Shoot provides a character-building, competitive experience for youth as they learn the importance of respect and good sportsmanship. The program is free to all contestants, and the Seaside Lodge helps sponsor contestants and their families at every level of competition. National winners will have their names inscribed in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, and two National Champions will receive the Getty Powell Award for most baskets.

For information, go to [www.elks.org/hoop-shoot](http://www.elks.org/hoop-shoot) or call 503-738-6651.

## Fishermen wrestlers to host 4-way meet

The Daily Astorian

The Astoria wrestling team is set to host a four-way dual meet Wednesday, with the action set to start at 5 p.m..

Three Washington schools will take part, including Ilwaco, Mark Morris and R.A. Long. The Fishermen will also be the home team for a Freshmen/Novice meet at 4

p.m. Friday, and will compete in the annual Wahkiakum Tournament Saturday.

The Fishermen are coming off a third-place team finish at the Warrenton Tournament last Saturday, “the first time we earned a team trophy in quite a few years,” said coach Roy Sanchez.

Astoria’s Tyler Ranta won the individual title at 132 pounds, while teammate Juan

Jimenez placed second at 106 in the first tournament of his career.

Kaden Gilbert took second at 182 (losing to Knappa’s Andrew Goozee, the fourth-ranked wrestler at the 2A level).

Devon Keiner added points with a tie for third at 220, where Bronson Holthusen placed fifth; and Andrew Poplin took fourth at 285.

## SCOREBOARD

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<b>TODAY</b>		<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	
<b>Girls Basketball</b> — Warrenton at Portland Christian, 6:15 p.m.; Knappa at Life Christian, 6:15 p.m.	<b>Boys Basketball</b> — Warrenton at Portland Christian, 8 p.m.; Knappa at Life Christian, 8 p.m.; Ilwaco at South	<b>Girls Basketball</b> — C.S. Lewis at Jewell, 5:30 p.m.	<b>Boys Basketball</b> — C.S. Lewis at Jewell, 7:15 p.m.
		<b>Wrestling</b> — Astoria 4-Way, 5 p.m.	

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