

Episode 143 - Quidditch Through The Ages (Part 1)

w/ J'Neia Stewart

PM = Past Mike

EM= Editing Mike

JS = J'Neia Stewart

If there is a mistake or mis-translation in this transcript please feel free to reach out to Mike for clarification! (potterlesspodcast@gmail.com)

PM

Hey! It's me, that email that's been sitting in your inbox for quite some time that you marked as unread that you're definitely going to reply to soon, right? Definitely, right? Look, I know the reply is awkward and you don't know exactly what you should say in this email. So, if you need some motivation to get through this overdue reply, why don't you pop on an episode of this podcast.

[Announcements 0:18 – 3:39]

PM

But, without further ado, let's get into Episode 143 of Potterless, the first of two episodes covering Quidditch Through the Ages with J'Neia Stewart from the House of Black Podcast.

Intro Music

PM

Hello, internet, and welcome back to another episode of Potterless, the tale of 28-year-old man who never read the Harry Potter series as a kid. He read them as an adult. And, unfortunately, along the way, he had to learn about Quidditch. My name is Mike Schubert. I'm that grown man and I'm here joined today, the most illustrious host of the House of Black Podcasts, it's J'Neia Stewart, who jokingly told me to introduce her to that, but I'm sticking with it. How's it going?

JS

I am very happy to be here and excited and obsessed with this podcast. I actually got to as far as the Order of the Phoenix before I was like, "Wait. I have to stop because I'm gonna hear about Sirius dying and this kind of hurt."

PM

Oh, no. Too real.

JS

Yes. So, I was like I'm gonna – I'm gonna come back later.

PM

Regardless, I'm glad we could make this crossover happen. It is long overdue. But, you know, we're going back into – I had a nice holiday vacation from her in that I was doing A

Very Potter Musical, and Sequel, and Senior Year, and all of this other stuff. So, I was avoiding the canon stuff. But now we're back to things that J.K. Rowling had a hand in because I just kind of want to get them out of the way. I just want to be done with her.

JS

Mhmm.

PM

So, in order to do that, that means we have to revisit the spin off books she wrote and then the terrible Fantastic Beasts movies that she had a hand in.

JS

Jesus Christ.

PM

It's super fun. And, now, I get a really fun cathartic way to just let out my anger on the situation vicariously through a subject that brings me so much disdain, which is Quidditch. I also think it's been quite some time since I've had a good old Quidditch rant since Quidditch isn't in a lot of the stuff I've been covering of late. What is your relationship with Quidditch? Are you a fan? Are you against it? How do you feel?

JS

I don't really care about it. The only time that it seemed exciting to me was in Goblet of Fire just because of, like, the international aspect to it where it was, like – like, not just this sport that they play at school. Like, it's a big deal in, like, the broader, you know, culture of everything. So, I thought that that part was kind of cool. But that's just because, like, I watch the World Cup every four years and follow soccer at no other point in my life. And, like, I love that. And I love the Olympics. Like, I just love multiple people from multiple places like coming together to do sports. I think that that's so cool. But, aside from that, like, I would get to the chapters of Quidditch in the book and I'm like, "Okay. Like, what – is there – can we – can we please get – I don't care about this." That's why Goblet of Fire is great because there is no Quidditch.

PM

Yeah, there's just in the beginning and then they get out of the way. And even – they don't even, like, describe much of the World Cup match. It goes pretty quickly.

JS

Mhmm. Yeah.

PM

I think that is the fun approach. And, yeah, I think that's what I wanted this Quidditch Through the Ages book to be like. You get into it in the second half of the book, which I'm assuming we won't get to in this episode. So, that's very fun. But I feel like the second half of this book is more fun in that you get to learn more about Quidditch throughout the world. But the first half – and I know that these are written to be textbooks, but it reads like a textbook. And I don't think anyone's ever been like, "Yo, this textbook is tight." You know, like, I don't think anybody ever enjoys reading a textbook.

JS

Right. And I'm fresh off of grad school. Like, I graduated last year with [Inaudible 7:19].

PM

Oh, congrats.

JS

So, I'm, I'm reading this and it's bringing back like dark memories of --

PM

No.

JS

-- academic text and everything. And I'm like, "This is -- I mean I guess it's sort of interesting." But, like, even as I'm reading this, I'm like, "As a Quidditch player, like, why would I care about anything in this book? Like, it's not -- there's not really anything helpful in to me."

PM

There are glimmers of entertaining aspects of it. And then I feel like they get overshadowed by just mundane things that are either confusing or boring or both. And I know J.K. wrote these for charity. I get that it's not as intense of a production as some of the other contributions she's made to the series, but it really feels like these were mailed in.

JS

Yeah. It was like, "Oh, you want me to write something? Let me just put -- let me just throw something together."

PM

Let me just throw some stuff together. It'll be about Quidditch. A lot of it won't make sense with what I've already established. It'll contradict things that are already happening in the book. But, yeah, it'll be fun. People will love it. Yay.

JS

Right. And I'm like, "Okay. If there was any subject, you know, that I want to read a book on in the Harry Potter universe -- like, I'm into transfiguration. It's giving me Physics. It's giving me Biology. I want to know more about that. What are the rules?"

PM

Right.

JS

That sounds fun. But -- and there was like this one part in the Quidditch Through the Ages about someone getting turned into a bat and having, like, the brain of a bat. And I was like, "That's cool. I want more things about whatever this is." But it's just like Quidditch. Like, I don't -- I just don't care. I don't dislike it, but I just truly -- it's just not even -- it doesn't even register for me. Like, I'm just so indifferent to it.

PM

For sure. Well, let's get into the book that you're indifferent towards and I dislike. But, you know, here – that's – it's where we're at and that's the best we're gonna do here for Quidditch Through the Ages by Kennilworthy Whisp. So, this book, like the other books in the Hogwarts Library series, have the fun, very confusing, lore/kayfabe/canon/whatever you want to call it, where these books are written by J.K. Rowling, but they are written “by the author” because they are like an in-universe textbook. But then they are adapted into a way where they are sold to Muggles, but then altered so that Muggles think they're fiction. But then, also, the book still mentions that it's a fundraiser for charity. So, we have this introduction, this foreword, by Dumbledore that tries to explain all of this. And it made my brain turn into a liquid mush. It was awful.

JS

I was like, “I really didn't need this.” This could have been at the back of the book to be honest.

PM

I can understand trying to do a cute way of establishing what is happening because it is a bit confusing here. But, instead of doing it in the character of Dumbledore outside of the textbook, which is inside of the canon, just have a page that's just straight up from J.K. Rowling that's like, “Hi. My name is J.K. Rowling. I wrote this book myself. It is raising money for charity. Let's pretend” – like it's – I don't get why you have to be so fucking cute about it. Just tell us what this is.

JS

Explain what is happening in a clear way. Explain it to me like I'm five.

PM

Please. So, that's all of this. And that's the whole foreword. But let's get into the actual meat and potatoes of the book, which begins with Chapter One, which is called The Evolution of Flying Broomstick.

JS

Hmm. Mhmm.

PM

Ah, it opens with talking about how wizards can't fly without aid. So, you can't just straight up fly like you're Superman. You can levitate, but you still need some sort of object to make you actually fly. They do mention animagi, but then, as you talked about earlier, they briefly mention people getting transformed into bats. But then, when they do so, they have bat brains. So, do these people ever turn back? When you're an animagus, does your brain change? This seemingly innocuous sentence made me have so many questions.

JS

So, I think – I think I may have an answer here.

PM

Okay. Cool. Sweet.

JS

So, I think, when you're an animagi, you turn into an animal on purpose and, like, you know, work towards it. But the word that was used in the bat sentence was transfigured into a bat.

PM

Mhmm.

JS

That kind of made me think about, like, all those weird experiments in the book where they try to turn like a rat into a cup or something. Like, they try to turn a bird into like a mouse or something like that. So, I think when it's like a transfiguration, then, like, you have no, no kind of sense of self I guess.

PM

Got it. Got it.

JS

But, if you're an animagi, maybe you do because, like, I remember in the books, like, Sirius was saying, like, he – like, he has his mind as a dog, but he has more dog-like aspects in his mind, I guess, when he's in dog form.

PM

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

JS

So, maybe that's what it is, but still I hate it. I also hate that they were like, "The wizards in the west wanted to use broomsticks, unlike, their brethren in the east who use flying carpets."

PM

Yes.

JS

I was like, "Flying – do you have any idea how big the east is? Why would everyone there be using flying fucking carpets?"

PM

Yeah, the book tries to do this cute thing where they try to establish Quidditch is part of the reason as to why Muggles have this stereotype of, "Oh, witches fly on brooms and stuff." I was confused a bit about the whole flying carpet thing because the – at first, it does feel weird that they're like, "Those fucking idiots with the flying carpets." Like, I don't understand why, "Oh, yes, broom is clearly so much better."

JS

The idea of both terrifies me. I mean, with the carpet, I feel like I have more space to just kind of like spread out maybe. But, like, I don't like the idea of either of these. And I think it's

so strange that that was – can essentially like teleport places. But flying is where they draw that line and they absolutely cannot do that, but they can teleport from place to place. But I was just like, “You mean to tell me, after like thousands and thousands of years, that you guys can do this thing, but you can’t do this other thing? Like, what?”

PM

What I also find strange though about them dissing magic carpets is I feel like Quidditch on magic carpets is way cooler. That feels like way more entertaining to watch. Are you kidding me?

JS

Like, can you imagine just having to sit and, like, you can't stand and you have to try – everyone's sitting on their flying carpets and they have to try to pass and score and all this while never standing? Just sitting.

PM

Either that or they're all standing. And they look like the Silver Surfer where either option it looks way cooler than riding on a broom.

JS

And, honestly, like, Quidditch on surfboards is – like it sounds better than Quidditch on a broom. I mean, like, surfboards, like, you have to balance. And you also have to, like – there's no sitting. There's none of that. Like, you have to balance and you also have to score. And, like, people try to push you off and things like that. Like --

PM

You jump on someone else's carpet and try to steal the quaffle from them.

JS

Oh, yes.

PM

The possibilities are endless. So, they say that brooms were chosen as the flying devices as opposed to these ungodly carpets because they were discreet, inexpensive, and portable. Now, portable, I find interesting because, yes, brooms are light and you can pick them up. But I wouldn't say a broom is portable since they're usually multiple feet long and they can't fold up or anything.

JS

Right. And, honestly, the fact that that's not an invention now is just like, “Ah, like, why aren't the brooms like little telescopes, you know, or like umbrellas, the ones that you press a button and they just extend out?”

PM

Ah, yeah. Yeah.

JS

Like, how cool would that be? You know, like, so baller. Like, you start a Quidditch game and you're holding what looks like a wand, but then you like, you know, press a button and it just extends, like, into a – that's so cool.

PM

That's way cooler. The other thing that I find interesting about their broom stuff – and I know J.K. Rowling is working with the established mythology of witches fly on brooms. So, she has to write this in a way where it, you know, reckons and makes sense. But saying that a broom is discrete and in conspicuous – a broom is an extremely strange object to have outside of your house. So, if someone sees you carrying a broom, it's gonna look weird as hell. Someone's like, "Hey, Jeremy, why are you holding a broom?"

JS

I'm sweeping out the trash in the city square. Leave me alone.

PM

Oh, it's just me at lunch with my broom in case I have crumbs go on the floor. It's so, ugh --

JS

It makes --

PM

-- ayayay, yayay.

JS

-- it make me sense. And, like, there's this one part, I guess, in the first chapter, where they're talking about, like, how it evolved into Quidditch and all of these like precursor sports. And there's, like, this one part where, like, people had to, like, fly through fire barrels or something. And they said, like --

PM

Mhmm. Mhmm.

JS

-- the wizards would apparate to the end of the obstacle course to congratulate the survivors. And my note literally says Survivor.

PM

Oh, I have the exact same note in my notes. We will get to it. I have, all caps with multiple question marks, "SURVIVORS?????" So, finishing up the broom stuff, it says the earliest broom evidence was from 962 AD. There's a drawing from Germany with people dismounting brooms with discomfort due to splinters in their buttocks. So, this, I think, gives further credence to the long-raging debate on Potterless of the, "Do they wear clothes under the robes or not?" situation. And I feel like, if you have splinters in your butt from riding a broom, you're not wearing pants under your robes.

JS

Yay.

PM

So, I feel like they don't work clothes under robes or at least not pants.

JS

Yep, probably not and especially not in 962 AD. You know what I'm saying? Like --

PM

They're free balling it, for sure.

JS

Yeah, they definitely had. They just threw on, like, elaborate robes. And it literally probably was robe exactly. It's not sensible clothing at all.

PM

The final note of this chapter is that, eventually when broom design improved, people started flying for leisure and more than just transportation. But that takes us to Chapter Two, Ancient Broom Games. This actually was a very fun part of the book.

JS

Mhmm.

PM

I have to give a credit. And all of these things sound better than Quidditch. So, once brooms were designed in a way where you could change direction and speed and not just kind of go straight and up and down, games started to be played on brooms. And the earliest of which is, as you mentioned, the Annual Broom Race of Sweden, which dates back to the 10th century. Wizards fly 300 miles from Kopparberg to Arjeplog. I probably butchered those pronunciations if they are real cities even. I don't know if these are magical pretend cities. But, now, what happen is people gather in Kopparberg to cheer on the starters and then they apparate to Arjeplog to, as you said, "congratulate the survivors." And I wrote, "Survivors??" Like, it's -- it says it's just a race. I know that marathons and stuff are very hard. And this is basically a broom marathon. But people don't usually die when they're just running very far. So, I would hope --

JS

You know, that's really in the spirit of what a marathon is in the first place. You know, historically, we call it marathon because a guy ran through the City of Marathon, and then gave a message, and then dropped dead as soon as he gave the message. So, actually --

PM

People, people forget about that part a lot in that the human body should not do this.

JS

Right. Right. So, I'm just thinking, you know, like, maybe, maybe this is within the correct vein of things to be like.

PM

I guess. The only thing I could think is like, if the other racers were really rough with each other along the race and it's just like a normal race, where – usually, in a marathon, it is not encouraged to beat up your competitors, but maybe in this one it is.

JS

Yeah. And I mean I just really admire the spirit of not giving a fuck that [Inaudible 18:21]. Like, they were totally willing to engage in games that would more than likely almost certainly result in their death or serious injury. And I, I love it. I love that spirit. I think it's fascinating. I love the lack of self-preservation.

PM

Honestly, it extends to all of wizardry. You see it in these sports here. And, even in this book, there's multiple things where they're like, "Yeah, some people died." But then a lot of people started dying so then they stopped it. It's the same thing with the Triwizard Tournaments. Like, "Oh, yeah, they died, but there was so long ago. Let's do it again. Yeah, it'll work. This time, it'll be fine."

JS

And they're children. So, it's even [Inaudible 18:53].

PM

Yeah, I mean, hey, they haven't lived that long. So, you know, is it really that – is it really that bad? So, then the book just lists these other flying games that existed. And they all are incredible. So, the first one is Stitchstock. It is a German game, where there is a 20-foot high pole, topped with an inflated dragon bladder, and the bladder-guardian, this is his official name. The bladder-guardian is tied to this pole with a 10-foot rope so that they can't fly more than 10 feet away from this inflated bladder. Players then try to fly towards the bladder and puncture it with the sharpened ends of their broom tips. And the guardian can use their wand to defend it, which seems very overpowered, but it is one versus everybody. The game ends if the bladder is punctured, or if all attackers have been hexed, or if the guardian faints from exhaustion.

JS

My note here is literally, "What the fuck?"

PM

I think that's all there is to be said. So, we move on to Aingin – Ain – Aingingin, which is an Irish game. A player takes the gallbladder of a goat. Already, we've had two bladders and there are more bladders throughout this book. We've hit our max bladder capacity here.

JS

Absolutely. Absolutely.

PM

The player takes the gallbladder of a goat and speeds through a series of burning barrels that are placed on top of stilts. The gallbladder is to be thrown through the final barrel. Whoever does so fastest without catching fire is the winner.

JS

Wonderful.

PM

Great. Love a sport where not only is there fire present, but, if you get caught in the fire, in addition to the danger of getting burned, you also lose. Just adding insult to fire-related injury. There is also a game called Creaothceann. Creaothceann, it's Scottish. I don't know if this is an actual Scottish word or could be pronounced better.

JS

Knowing the Scottish and the English and their penchant for putting a bunch of extra letters in really simple word, it's probably like Cron or something.

PM

Crothen, but we just threw in 12 other consonants. So, this Scottish game has players wearing cauldrons strapped to their heads. Already ridiculous. I'm already onboard. At the sound of a horn or a drum, up to 100 rocks that were hovering above the ground begin to fall towards the Earth. Players try to catch as many of these rocks as possible. And this game was made illegal because there were "many fatalities."

JS

I would imagine so.

PM

Yeah.

JS

But this is already way more fun.

PM

Yes, it is bad that people died. Yes, it sounds terrifying. Does it sound incredible to watch? Yes.

JS

Absolutely. It seems like something that drunk people would do. It seem like something that, when you're drunk, like, it seems like a really good idea.

PM

Hey, tie this cauldrons into your head and I'm gonna throw rocks.

JS

And whoever catches the most wins. Like, it's like beer pong, except, it's just they put a cauldron on their head with like fire whiskey in it. And you have to try to throw rocks, you know. And you have to drink like a cauldron's worth of fire whiskey. Like, that sounds really fun. I'm down.

PM

Yeah. Oh, gosh. I mean, Scottish, kind of makes sense. It feels like the most Scottish game of all of this in that it is the most ridiculous, but I'm onboard same.

JS

Same.

PM

So, we then move on to a game that also sounds incredibly interesting called Shuntbumps. Now, a lot of these other games in the book have pretty lengthy descriptions, paragraphs long, about how the game works. Shuntbumps, this is literally the only things they say about it. I'm reading verbatim from the book. Shuntbumps was popular in Devon, England. This was a crude form of jousting, the sole aim being to knock as many other players as possible off their brooms, the last person remaining on their broom winning. That's it. That is all they wrote. This is clearly the best thing. We finally have wizard jousting. And they wrote two sentences about it?

JS

Like, honestly, like, I'm just imagining like wizard jousting being like an early Hogwarts sport, you know. Like, I feel, in my spirit, like, definitely, you know, like Godric Gryffindor and Salazar Slytherin me're definitely like jousting. And maybe Slytherin lost and that's why he left. Like, I keep waiting for, like, some book about the founders to come out, only for us to find out that Salazar Slytherin left the school for, like, some really petty reason. Like, he left to go to the local village, but he got blocked by a snowstorm and, like, died before he could come back or something. Like, just some really ridiculous reason. And wizard jousting sounds like in line with what I would think.

PM

I think it's fantastic. I also think that this is a better solution to dueling. If you keep wizard jousting around, this seems like a much less harmful way to settle disputes and is more fun to watch, too.

JS

I agree. I agree. And I also think that, like, thinking about, like, Chamber of Secrets and how they had like that wizarding duel, whatever the fuck that was.

PM

Mhmm. Mhmm.

JS

But why would you make 12-year-olds do that?

PM

Because Hogwarts is a poorly run school. It's just the most poorly run institution possible.

JS

It needs to be shut down. Everyone needs to be fired, except for, like, two people. Like, I need an overhaul. You know, maybe, maybe Umbridge has some points in that no one was

getting teacher observations before she got there. Nobody was trying to do anything remotely bureaucratic in this school before she got there.

PM

It's – it's just everything's bad. The Board of Governors is just out there to try to spite people that they don't like instead of, you know, make the school safe. It's just poorly run all the way – all the way to the top.

JS

Yeah. I mean just thinking, like, Draco and Harry during wizard jousting, like, how many – how many problems could that solve? They probably would have been friends so much faster if they could just get the animosity out the way.

PM

Yeah. And then we could get a Knight's Tale but wizards. So, a Wizard's Tale and, boom, now, we have Heath Ledger as a wonderful dreamboat wizard. All good things. The, the final sport that they talked about is Swivenhodge, which is from Herefordshire which I did have to Google and it is a small town in England. It says that, in this game, players sit backwards on brooms and they bat an inflated bladder again back and forth across a hedge with the brush ends of the brooms. The first to miss gives the opponent a point and first to 50 wins. So, I guess this is just like more complicated wizard tennis.

JS

Yeah, it's giving me like part tennis, part baseball.

PM

Mhmm. Yeah. Yeah, because more swinging. And also part like the floor is lava.

JS

Yeah. Now, how is that not a thing? You mean to tell me they played early Quidditch and all these wild scenarios and nobody ever thought let's play Quidditch over lava? Like --

PM

Come on. Quidditch in a volcano? Ooh.

JS

Yep. I bet, the Hawaiian witches and wizards, their Quidditch games are probably like elite. Like, it's probably like, you know, rainbow road levels of Quidditch. Like, just absolutely wild.

PM

I can imagine the Hawaiians playing Quidditch and then, the first World Cup, there's people from all over the world meeting. And these people who play in volcanoes come and they meet the other people. And they just ask, "You guys play on – you play on top of grass? You mean there's no stakes?" Oh, gosh. So, we moved to Chapter Three, which is The Game from Queerditch Marsh. So, this is the first true history of how Quidditch actually came to be.

JS

As a word. As a word.

PM

Which is so – what saddens me most about this chapter is that we learn that Quidditch probably came from the location in which it was played, Queerditch, especially because, in one of the parts, one of the pieces of evidence that they have is a written letter and Quidditch is spelled with a KW. So, I saw something on Tumblr that was saying, “Oh, the name of Quidditch is actually really clever because it's a combination of the balls in Quidditch; Quaffle, Bludger, and Snitch. And you put those altogether and that makes Quidditch.” Now, that would be a very cool name thing, but it makes me think J.K. Rowling did not think of it because she has an entire chapter of this book that disproves that.

JS

I really feel for the people on Tumblr because the amount of head canons that I've seen on Tumblr are just miles beyond anything J.K. Rowling could ever conceive and far more intriguing.

PM

This stuff that people come up with, I think, is very impressive. I think too many people give her credit for stuff that she just kind of picked and then people read between the lines of.

JS

Absolutely. She's like the MCU in that way.

PM

And she never would admit to these things. She'd be like, “Oh, yeah, I thought of it the whole time. Nagini has been a snake for 20 years,” you know, that whole crap. So, we know these beginnings from the diary writings of a woman named Gertie Keddle. She wrote a diary complaining about people playing Quidditch near her. And I gotta say Gertie Keddle has the right idea.

JS

All I could think of was this lady has to be related to Hermione somehow. She has to be. I just know it. And, like, there's a part where she's like, “Tuesday, hot. That lot across the marsh has been at it again. A big leather ball landed in my cabbages.” And it reminded me of, like, on Avatar: The Last Airbender, there's like that dude with his cabbage cart. And something happens and he's cabbage just get knocked over. And he's just pissed. And I'm like, “Yes, that's what I'm getting. I'm getting Hermione. I'm getting the cabbage man from Avatar.” Like, it's just like pointless rubbish. And I'm like, “Yes, this is Hermione.”

PM

I've never seen a second of Avatar, but cabbage man is now my favorite character.

JS

Absolutely. Absolutely.

PM

He's the cabbage bender. I can only assume.

JS

Mhmm.

PM

So, her first note is, as you mentioned, a ball landed in her cabbage patch. And, when someone went to retrieve it, she did a hex. And this hex is not your average hex. It took the person's knees and changed them so they bent in the other direction.

JS

Gross.

PM

Gertie Keddle is a boss.

JS

I love it. She's just like, "Get off my lawn." Like --

PM

This is peak, "Get off my lawn." Her next entry in the journal says, "Broomstick idiots playing again." And this is my favorite spin off of the Dropkick Murphys, the broomstick idiots. But it's just she is -- ah, I want a whole backstory on just Gertie Keddle.

JS

Yeah, give me more. Like, her next one she says -- like, I guess one of her friends came to visit her and they went to go watch. And she said, "Now, they have two big heavy rocks flying around trying to knock them all off their brooms. Unfortunately, it didn't happen while I was watching."

PM

Incredible.

JS

[Inaudible 29:27] told me that she often plays, herself. Went home in disgust.

PM

It's just -- it's the best. My friend says she likes it. She's dead to me now.

JS

I love it. I love it.

PM

It's so good. It's so good. What is not good though is the narrator, this Kennilworthy Whisp character, then goes on to dunk on Gertie, basically, implying that she is not smart in that she only knew one day of the week because every entry says, Tuesday. Tuesday. Tuesday. Now, what I think is much more likely than her not knowing the difference between days of the week and thinking everyday was called Tuesday. It makes much more sense if these people just play Quidditch on Tuesdays.

JS
Right.

PM
That makes so much more sense. And I don't get why the narrator is going out of their way to dunk on this character. And then a step further back. J.K. Rowling wrote a character and then made fun of a character. What are we doing?

JS
Right. And it's not like people didn't know what days were back then. Like --

PM
Right. Oh, this person is clearly unintelligent because they don't know what days of the week are.

JS
These people just probably harassed her once a week by gathering on Tuesdays. And, now, she has to be --

PM
It makes so much more sense to be like, "Hello, Quidditch playing friends. Let us play Quidditch once a week on Tuesdays. Great."

JS
Because it is the Middle Ages and, like, we don't have time to play Quidditch every single day. Like, what?

PM
Yeah. Oh, it seems so unnecessary to go out of their way to dunk on her. So, then there is no further mention of Quidditch being played. Until a century later, there is a letter. And this is the letter where Quidditch spelled with a KW. All of the positions have different names. The chasers are called catchers. Bludgers are called Bladders. The trees now have become barrels on stilts. And there's still no snitch until the next chapter.

JS
Oh, god.

PM
The Arrival of the Golden Snitch. Hooray.

EM
Oh, god is right, J'Neia. Hey, it's me Editing Mike. How's everyone doing? Before we get ready to hear discussions at length about snitches, I think we need to prepare ourselves and what better way to do so than with a little segment we like to call WINGARDIUM
AD-READ-OSA!

[Ads 31:24 – 36:04]

PM

And, just when you think I couldn't dislike the snitch anymore, we also learned that the origins of the Golden Snitch involve endangered animals.

JS

Oh, god. This chapter, I was infuriated. I'm so pissed.

PM

It's so ridiculous. J.K. Rowling is writing this book to say Quidditch is this fun thing I wrote in the books. I'm gonna make a textbook about it being fun. Oh, I'm also going to make Quidditch responsible for the endangerment of an animal. Like this bird, as we'll get into, was not endangered before Quidditch. And then, explicitly because of people hunting this bird and then them taking that hunting into Quidditch, it became endangered. She's writing this fun book for kids. It's a fun happy-go-lucky book for charity. But what are we going to put in here? We're going to put in animals getting endangered.

JS

Not just endangered. Literally, like, getting crushed. Like, that's the whole thing.

PM

Yeah.

JS

It's you have to catch this little baby-sized bird. And you have to – like, it's going to get crushed from the force of you trying to catch it. And then there's, like, the part where they're saying the bird tried to fly out of the fucking Quidditch pitch and they use spells to repel it so that it couldn't get out and it was freaked out. And then it would die because people were crushing it.

PM

Mhmm.

JS

What? Why? Why would you do this? And then they're like saying the origin of how many points it is because this guy --

PM

Oh, we will get into that.

JS

Oh, god.

PM

Let's take it from the top of this chapter.

JS

Yes.

PM

It says that, in the 1100s, Golden Snidget-hunting became popular. So, Golden Snidget is the small, spherical-looking bird. There's a drawing of it in the book. It looks very cute. Thankfully, now, it is a protected species, but this hunting along with Quidditch made it endangered. So, people just trying to hunt these birds because they were very hard to catch was responsible for a lot of Muggle sightings of wizards on brooms because people would fly around trying to catch them for sport. Now, in 1269, the crossover of hunting these birds and Quidditch happened. The Chief of the Wizard Council, Barberus Bragge, was in attendance at a Quidditch match. And we know about this because a woman named Madam Modesty Rabnott or Rebott or Rebow of Kent sent a letter to her sister Prudence in Aberdeen. Now, first, this family decided to name their two daughters, Modesty and Prudence? Love a themed kid. Like, what?

JS

I love that she gives all of these people like the most ridiculous names. And it's like, "Dude, like, this is still England. There's no reason why no one would just have just the most regular name ever. Like, everyone is not named like, you know, water bottle, a piece of paper. You know, like, they can be named John. Okay? It's okay. They can be called John Smith. There's nothing wrong with that."

PM

It's okay. So, the second thing I have note about here is, if this letter that Modesty wrote to Prudence doesn't open with Dear Prudence, I will be very upset.

JS

Missed opportunity.

PM

So, Bragge, this Head of the Wizard Council, brought a Snidget to the match. And he said that he would pay 100 – 150 galleons to whoever caught it. Now, the book clarifies that this is a million galleons today with inflation. And I believe, the last time I tried to do the math, a galleon is like \$7. So, we're talking about \$7 million being put on the line by some dude in attendance of a game.

JS

Yeah. And I – my only note at that part is, "I don't like this."

PM

Nope.

JS

That's my note.

PM

It is ridiculous.

JS

Absolutely, like, horrifying. Like, I was like, "Okay. Okay. I don't like what this is going." And then the very next part is about this poor little baby bird who --

PM
Right.

JS
-- is trying to get out, but the wizards keep forcing it back in. And this lady is just, like, telling her sister like how piss she was that she ran into the pitch to try to rescue this bird. And they were like, "Get the fuck out of here, weirdo." And they threw a bird cage at her.

PM
Uh, huh. And they hit her with a 10 galleon fine for ruining the game.

JS
And she's like, "Yeah. Well, I don't have that money. So, I had to sell the house."

PM
Yeah.

JS
What?

PM
And then, on top of that, she ends the note by saying, "Chief Bragge would have lost my vote if I had one." So, in addition to all of the sad things, J.K. Rowling is also letting us know, early witches didn't have the right to vote either. Thanks, J.K. I love this very fun book I'm reading.

JS
It's terrible. Just tells me everything I need to know about, like, how awful it would be to be in this universe, at least, in England. Like, I'm convinced that all of the real fun in magic is happening in, like, other parts of the world.

PM
Brazilian wizards, just thriving.

JS
Absolutely. Like, I know the Hawaiian wizards and witches are having the best time. Like --

PM
So, yeah, as you mentioned, the bird was let out. Of course, everybody stopped playing Quidditch and just tried to catch this bird, because, you know, \$7 million were on the line. And the bird -- even despite Modesty ruining this particular game by doing Accio bird and saving it, Snidget still became a part of almost every Quidditch match going forward. And the seeker was originally called the hunter. And, as you mentioned, they had to kill the bird in order to get the 150 points, which they assigned in memory of the outlandish prize from Bragge.

JS

Yeah, I hate it.

PM

It's awful in so many ways. You have the bird needing to die in order to get the point. You have tons of these birds getting killed. And then, also, you have a scoring system that makes no sense in that it's only 150 because this guy put together this bounty that was ridiculous. So ridiculous that the narrator had to clarify that people didn't think he was actually going to pay that amount of money. It was so high. So, why are you basing the scoring system of your game off of that? When you make a sport, you, usually – I don't know – pick rules that make sense. Not pick rules that pay homage to this shitty person.

JS

Yeah, it's just making me think. Like, I'm imagining, like, you know, American football. And that's like saying, you know, a touchdown is worth 50 points and a field goal is worth one. Like, What? What?

PM

I have gone into the weeds so much about why the scoring system itself doesn't make sense. So, I won't even get into that aspect of it. But the fact that you've determined a part of a sport based off of some dude that was at a game back in time is just not how the world works, especially if he did an objectively terrible thing of endangering these animals. Like, if someone was playing basketball and they tweaked a rule. When someone invented the three point line, they were like, "Yeah. But, if an Asian guy makes a three pointer, it's worth only one point, because fuck them." You know, like, you're not gonna like, "Well, the guy who invented it, yeah, he was a big racist, but we got to pay homage to him." Like, why are you paying homage to this person that was clearly very bad?

JS

So bad, in fact, that the government has to step in and protect these birds. And then I'm like, "Okay. But why would you still use" – like, actually, I don't know why I'm asking why because this is all very British. This is all a very British thing to do. Hunt down all these animals until they're practically extinct and then still keep processes that are honoring really problematic and awful things and act like it's not bad at all. That's a very British thing to do. So, I actually don't know why I'm shocked by that. I shouldn't be. It's not surprising. It's really not surprising.

PM

I will let all of the British listeners direct their tweets towards you and not to me.

JS

Yes. Yes. Yes. Throw it. Throw it. Throw it this way.

PM

The final note from this chapter is it says that, by 1250, Snidget numbers were so low that the new Wizard Council Head, Elfrida Clagg, whose name rhymes with the previous head, I guess, outlawed it. The Golden Snitch was then invented by Bowman Wright of Godric's

Hollow. He was a metal charmer. He made it fly like a Snidget but charmed it in a way where it would stay within the pitch. So, it wouldn't fly out of bounds.

JS

Why not do that first? Why use birds? Why use real life birds?

PM

That's the thing. Even if you're introducing the bird catching element to this game, why was it necessary that the bird had to die? Was that essential? Why can't it just be you catch the birds?

JS

There's no protection charms on the bird to protect its life. There's no – nothing. They were just like, "Fuck this bird. We don't care." Like, what? That's like playing baseball with pigeons. Like, [Inaudible 44:16].

PM

Catch and release fishing is a thing. Why can't we just catch and release the Snidget?

JS

Oh, my god.

PM

Ugh.

JS

Just truly terrible.

PM

Thankfully, one of the notes in this chapter is that there was a conservatory put in place to protect Snidgets. And it was in the name of Modesty. So, that's kind of cool, Modesty, the person. Not modesty, the concept. So, at least, we have that I guess, but I don't know. We move on to Chapter Five, Anti-Muggle Precautions.

JS

Yeah. Yeah. I was expecting – you know, expecting is a strong word. But I would hoping for more on it just because like one of the things that I think is just so interesting is just, like, the broader idea of, like, how the hell do witches and wizards have their own culture and society apart from Muggles, I guess. And, like, how does it never seem to overlap? And, so, they were just like, "Oh, no reason."

PM

It's very much yadda, yadda over.

JS

Yeah. It's like, "Yeah. We just decided to play on brooms just away from people." And I'm like, "I'm sorry that's not enough."

PM

So, yeah, in 1398, the first set of rules was made by Zacharias Mumps. Of course, it has to have a silly name. The first section of this rule book was about how to protect the game from being seen by Muggles. So, the council basically had to keep instituting rules where you first had to play in an abandoned field. Then this abandoned field would have to be 50 miles away from any Muggles. Then it was up to 100. And then it got to a point where you had to play in these fields where there was no possibility of a Muggle seeing it. The author then goes into how Muggles knew about broom flying. Quidditch played a part in that. It's wizard's worst kept secret. But then, keeping on brand with dunking on people for no reason, they talk about children's drawings of witches on brooms. And they go, "None of the brooms that are drawn by these kids could fly." But, earlier in the book, the first broom, that German one, was just a fucking tree branch. So, what do you mean?

JS

And just the idea of someone just yanking a tree branch off a tree and be like, "I'm gonna hop on it." Like, what?

PM

Yep.

JS

It's already a terrible idea.

PM

I don't get it. And then they say that the international Statute of Secrecy from 1692 finally made these Quidditch precautions against the Muggle stick. The Department of Magical Games and Sports was formed. And they set up designated pitches for people to play Quidditch on so that people couldn't see. And, you're right, I would have loved to hear more about the specifics of how they hide to the giant World Cup stage, what charms they use, and all this stuff. But, basically, the book just goes, "Yeah, they make some charms so Muggles can't see it. Chapter Six."

JS

Yeah. And I'm wondering if, like, the whole international Statute of Secrecy thing is, like, 1692, like, is that a result of the Salem witch trials. Like, what? I want to know more.

PM

It is something that's alluded to in a couple of the spinoff books because I've read the Beddle the Bard one and the Fantastic Beasts one. And they also talked about this in Fantastic Beasts, the new movies. I think that this particular Statute of Secrecy was a big deal. And I think the big thing was wizards and Muggles used to live in the same town and very much along the lines of Salem witch trials. Wizards were getting treated poorly by Muggles. So, they decided to just kind of hide. So, I can see that. But, yeah, it does seem like the way we learn about this thing is just different specific hodgepodge kind of ways this statute relates to other things. It would be a nice Pottermore entry. Maybe it is one. I don't know. But, yeah, it seems like a pretty big deal that should be written about in more detail.

JS

Yeah, for sure.

PM

But, anyway, we move on to Chapter Six, which will be the final chapter we're covering in this episode of Potterless. And this is Changes in Quidditch Since the Fourteenth Century. And here's where my gears really start to grind because this is when they start talking about rules, and fouls, and the logistics of how the game works. And works is used in just the most generous sense of the term because this game does not function properly.

JS

I can't even lie. This was probably the funniest chapter to me. I am a teacher.

PM

Okay.

JS

I live in an area where people love pretending COVID is like not a big deal. And, so, like, schools are trying to roll out all of these protections and be like, "Hey, we don't want to open schools until these things happen so that everything is safe." And, like, there's like the parts where the people who are trying to make the rules of Quidditch, like, more fair and more safe just keep getting shit thrown at them and people telling them how terrible they are and harassing them. And I'm just like, "It's so close to home right now."

PM

It was strangely way too close to home because, you're right, they have little newspaper clippings in this chapter where people get upset about rule changes. And, when I first read this book a while ago, I thought it was funny, especially as someone that is big fan of basketball. When people change rules or things happen, you get these basketball purists that complain, "Oh, this isn't how it used to be. And I'm so upset." And that is something I found funny. But, yeah, this time around, when people complain about stuff, you're right, it hit way too close to, "You don't get it. I can't wear a mask. This is my right to be a piece of shit." Like, it felt way too real.

JS

Right.

PM

So, this chapter first states that the referee in Quidditch was originally called the Quijudge, which I feel like is a pun J.K. Rowling came up with. After she wrote the seven books, she was like, "I got to sneak this in. And this is gold," which it's not.

JS

It's terrible.

PM

So, the trees that they originally played with became baskets on stilts. Those became goalposts. And this is where we get our first newspaper clipping of purists being angered

that they've changed baskets into goalposts, which just make more sense from a logistical standpoint.

JS

Absolutely.

PM

Then they go on to say that the scoring area was instituted, which is a part in the pitch close to the goalposts, where, once you cross this line, the only person who can do so is the person with the Quaffle, the chaser who is trying to score. And that also makes sense. They also go into details about the actual Quaffle itself. Originally, it had a strap on it so people could catch it. Then it had finger holes in it, which does not make sense, and has big bowling ball vibes. And then it, eventually, became a smooth ball with a charm that makes it kind of grapple to someone's hand, a catching charm of sorts.

JS

Yet again, why was this not a thing at first? I, I don't want to believe that the early witches and wizards were just like this – not smart. But, like, it just seems like a thing that you would just do is make sure that you charm it to do whatever. It's almost like the early witches and wizards, like, barely used any kind of magic at all.

PM

Right.

JS

Like, never – they never use it because I mean they use a dragon bladder or go chase dragons or something like that. But we don't ever actually really see them using magic, like, for things that would be helpful and make things less inconvenient. So --

PM

It's absurd. So, then there's something in this book that I find very confusing. It states that the Quaffle was changed to be the color scarlet after there was a particularly muddy game of Quidditch, where all of the mud that got onto the Quaffle made it look like the ground. Unless, I am misreading this, why did they decide to make the ball look more like the ground? Wouldn't they want to make it a color that stands out more? Like, how a tennis ball is yellow because the cord is green and how a baseball is white, et cetera?

JS

That really will make way more sense. I was just confused. And I was just like, "They're really not doing a good job like using their magic to just be great." Like, I'm almost certain the Muggles actually would have come up with better ways to play Quidditch.

PM

They probably would have. I mean look at every sport. Most balls are designed in a way where they're easy to see. A basketball is bright orange. Soft balls are bright yellow. There's so many different things you can do.

JS

Yeah, I agree. I agree.

PM

So, then we actually get something that is smart. They added a charm onto the Quaffle where it would sink more slowly than normal due to gravity because wizards got annoyed with having to keep flying down to get the ball after they threw it through the goalposts. So, that is actually pretty smart, surprisingly.

JS

I, I think that is super smart. But, also, it's just like – I don't know – why not just make the Quaffles to the point where they don't fall in the first place? Maybe they hover instead, instead of falling.

PM

Yeah, I can see why it would need to fall when you're just passing it normally over the course of the game because gravity makes sense. And then defense makes more sense too. But, at the very least, you could charm the goalposts to, if the Quaffle goes through it, maybe the Quaffle just teleports to the middle of the pitch because that's where it resets anyway. You are a wizard. So, you can do this. I'm not asking that much.

JS

Yeah, I just – all I'm getting from this book is, like, we have magic and we don't use it for anything important.

PM

Yeah.

JS

We use it for really ridiculous things that don't even matter.

PM

We could have used magic for this thing, but, instead, we went with this other more complicated choice.

JS

That makes all of our lives so much harder.

PM

So, then the book says, originally, Bludgers were rocks. And that had to change once people started inventing beater bats that were so powerful that they started breaking the rocks. And they do have a note here, which I think is a very fun visual. It's that people would break the rocks. So, then it would just be piles of gravel flying around chasing people, which I think is very fun and reminds me, if you ever see those big mess of bugs, like when it's a bunch of gnats flying together and stuff.

JS

Yeah.

PM

Like a big old bug orgy and you kind of run through them when you're just going for a run or a walk. It made me think like that but with gravel chasing me while I play Quidditch. I thought it was fun.

JS

I think that that sounds way more fun than just like a massive rock. It's more like annoying than it is --

PM

Yeah.

JS

-- unsafe.

PM

It feels like the more logical way to play the game because they would be annoying and distracting, but not, you know, break people's arms and stuff.

JS

Right.

PM

So, then the "evolution," I guess, of the Bludger is that it became a steel ball and then a lead ball, which was too soft. So, now, it is a 10-inch diameter iron ball, which I did not realize how big and heavy and painful the Bludgers really are. But, a 10-inch diameter iron ball, that sucks.

JS

Yeah, I mean I'm just imagining like a bowling ball that can fly --

PM

Pretty much.

JS

-- that's made of iron.

PM

I mean I've played enough sports where, if you get kicked with a soccer ball, which is leather and air, that hurts a lot. So, imagine getting hit by a 10-inch diameter iron ball.

JS

As a kid and kids are playing with it in school.

PM

I get that it's supposed to knock people off of brooms, but why did we settle on giant iron ball?

JS

Yeah, I, I'm not understanding at all.

PM

It's ridiculous.

JS

And I mean you would think that, by the time, like, Harry is in school, that, like, they would be made of some kind of, like, plastic, carbonate, or something like that.

PM

Yeah, at least, the kids would be playing with some sort of material that makes more sense. Something softer, at least, for the kids.

JS

Yeah, they're like, "No, we had to play with iron balls. So, you have to do that, too. If you don't die, good luck. You deserve to graduate."

PM

So, then it starts talking about the Snitch. There is a tale that, in one game in 1884, a Snitch couldn't be found for six months, which sounds like the worst thing ever.

JS

I love that the next thing in that quote is like they're saying, "Legend still has it that the snitch still lives. It's a wild snitch just on the moor." I don't know what a moor is. I assume it's like the woods or something.

PM

It is a big open field. I also had to Google it. It's just a big empty plains basically in the English countryside.

JS

If it's a big open field, it sounds like you would know if there was a Golden Snitch around there all the time. Like, you be able to see it.

PM

I will say give me the spin off story of this Golden Snitch that is out in the wild still to this day.

JS

You know, I would like to believe that somewhere there's a fan fiction about this wild Snitch and then like the Weasley's car from the wood.

PM

They fall in love.

JS

Yes, they're deciding to just terrorize everyone and just like make everything really terrible.

PM

I ship it. I ship it. I ship it. I ship it. So, it starts talking about the other positions. It clarifies that keepers are allowed to score. They can leave the goalposts. That's fun. The biggest change with the Chasers, as I mentioned before, is that only the Chaser with the Quaffle can enter the scoring area. The reason that they did this was to stop a tactic, which sounds brilliant, called Stooging. It is a tactic where the other two Chasers would ram the keeper out of the way so that the Chaser with the Quaffle could just easily score. And then we get another newspaper clipping where purists screaming anger that their Chasers aren't cheating. How dare you outlaw this tactic?

JS

This reminded me a lot of like, with basketball a couple of years ago, they made some kind of adjustment to, like, a certain thing that didn't used to count as a foul, like, suddenly was. And, like, all of these older basketball people were like, "Yeah, basketball these days, there's too many rules. We didn't have all these rules when I was playing it." Like, stuff like that. And they were like, "It's just not the same anymore because of all the rules."

PM

What's so wild about that is, if you look at old basketball footage – pull up a game from the 1970's, it is so boring. It is laughably boring.

JS

Boring. Boring. Boring.

PM

The three point line is the best invention ever in the history of sports. And people want these old games where Bob Cousy just dribbled around and shot it from two. It's – oh, it's pitiful. So, the seekers, the book says, have the most glory out of any of the positions, but they also get the most fouls and the most injuries. There's a very fun note where they say that, "Take out the seeker is the first rule in Brutus Scrimgeour's" – Rufus Scrimgeour was the president, right? The Minister of Magic. So, is this his relative?

JS

I would imagine so. But I also have heard that Scrimgeour is, like, a not uncommon last name. [Inaudible 57:29].

PM

Ah. Okay. Okay.

JS

But I'm choosing to believe that they are just because, like, the other Scrimgeour, he seems like very, like, no nonsense. And I think, if he was a Quidditch coach, he'd probably say the same thing.

PM

So, this is the first rule in his book, the Beater's Bible. So, it's fun that he is a notorious Quidditch beater. I think it's fun that the sibling of the Prime Minister would be a famous athlete. That would be a very fun dynamic.

JS

Very cool. I love it.

PM

So, then it gets into the rules. And it lists seven rules. First, players can't go out of bounds laterally. You can vertically. There's no rule against how high you can go, which I guess, sure, if you do, it's a turnover. That makes sense. You can call a timeout, which I've already talked at length about why this makes no sense at all on Quidditch because you just call a timeout right before someone scores. It doesn't make any sense. But you can make this timeout to be two hours long if the game has gone over 12 hours, which just sounds like the worst thing.

JS

It reminds me of, like, I think, in the first Harry Potter book, they mentioned something about like the longest Quidditch match took like three months or something. And I was just like, "So, since we're making all these rules, why is there no time constraint on Quidditch? Like, why is there no --

PM

Because that, that would make too much sense.

JS

Because I imagine like trying to catch the Snitch within a certain amount of time would just be way more fun to watch.

PM

Yeah.

JS

Like, knowing like, "All right. I'm just gonna settle in. This could be two seconds, or it could be two hours, or it could be two days. Who can say?" Like, what? Why is there no time constraint on here? Just be like, "All right. You've got 15 minutes. Go. And then we'll stop." And, like --

PM

Also, how stressful would it be to be a spectator in a Quidditch match? Because you just have to schedule out the next month just in case.

JS

Yeah.

PM

You know, when I go to a basketball game, yes, overtime can happen. But, usually, I can know it's going to take about two and a half to three hours. But, if I go to a Quidditch match, I have no idea how long I'm going to be there for. Do I pack food, a change of clothes, a pillow, a sleeping bag? What do I bring?

JS

And that's the other thing. It's like, "What do the spectators do in that situation? Like, can they leave and come back? Like --

PM

Right.

JS

-- how does that work? And, so, do they have like little cops that appear so you can just like fall asleep during the game? Like, what exactly is happening in case of these long extended, really inefficient Quidditch matches?" Because they even say that, like, if there's an injury, there's no substitution of player.

PM

Mhmm.

JS

That doesn't make any sense. Like, every other sport has people who sit on the bench and they sub people out. Like, in Quidditch, it's just like, "Good luck. Don't die."

PM

You might be here for a couple months.

JS

Who can say?

PM

It's just ridiculous. And, also, on the flip side, what if you paid a bunch of money to go to the World Cup final and then someone catches the snitch in 45 seconds?

JS

I'd be pissed.

PM

And you've dropped thousands of galleons for a minute of entertainment.

JS

But I mean it's a lot like boxing in that way because it's --

PM

I guess. Yeah. Yeah. You could just knock out in the first round.

JS

Yeah, there's been like a couple of fights like this year and last year, I think, where, like, someone lost within, like, the first two minutes. And people have paid like \$99 on cable to watch the game.

PM

At the very least, you do get a bunch of other boxing matches like the previous card stuff. But, yeah, still. It does have a lot of analogies to that. So, the other rules are about penalty shots, fouls, about you're allowed to grab the Quaffle and steal from someone, but you can't grab someone's body parts. So, basically, like a reach and reach-in foul in basketball. Like you mentioned, if someone gets injured, you can't sub, which makes no sense. Wands can be on the pitch. A player can have a one on them because there's some right to carry law, which felt very second amendment to me. But they can't be used, which just do some sort of charm where people's wands can't work. I feel like there's a way around this. And then, finally, the final rule is that a game ends when the snitch is caught or there's a mutual agreement between the captains to end the game.

JS

Which made me think about that three-month long Quidditch game. You mean to tell me that the two captains weren't at some point like, "I'm tired? Can we just agree to not like --

PM

Right. Right.

JS

-- keep [Inaudible 1:01:19]?"

PM

I don't get it.

JS

There's that part where they say that there are -- when they're talking about fouls, that they're saying there's like 700 Quidditch fouls that are listed and all of them happened in, in one game.

PM

Yep. So, fouls, 700 of them are listed. They all took place in the first World Cup final in 1473. They have not made this list public because the Department of Magical Games and Sports thinks that, "People might get ideas." That is ridiculous. How are people going to learn how to play your sport if they don't know the fucking rules? It is the most absurd thing I've ever heard.

JS

It's also weird because it's like, "Okay. Just because you have the list of fouls, like, there had to have been people who wrote like other historical documents. Like, you can't just hide the documents."

PM

Yeah.

JS

And then he goes on. Like the very next line, he's like, "Of the remaining 10 percent of all the fouls, most of these wouldn't occur to the dirtiest player. Like setting a fire to opponents

broom tail, attacking an opponent's broom with a club, and attacking an opponent with an axe. On my note, all I could put was an axe [Inaudible 1:02:23] that around.

PM

It's just ridiculous that the notion of they might get ideas. These rules say things you can't do. And, if you make them illegal in the game and you attach punishments to them, people won't do them. When you learn about the rules of baseball, you don't think, "Oh, I'm not allowed to throw my bat at someone. I'm gonna throw my bat at some." No, it's against the rules. You will get ejected. Like, your team will be punished for doing this. It's so strange that that is a concept. It shows the J.K. Rowling just knows nothing about sports. And then, yeah, as you mentioned, the narrator goes on. He says that 90 percent of these fouls deal with wands. You could just simplify these rules to say no wands. No weapons. Boom. Now, instead of 700, we have a list of 20. I don't know.

JS

Yeah. Yeah. And, like, there's that. There's them saying that like referees were being killed at these game at some point.

PM

Yeah.

JS

And, like, one of them randomly, like, they would turn the referee's broom into a portkey. And this one referee ended up in the Sahara Desert. I'm just like, "What is this game? It makes no sense."

PM

It's ridiculous. Ridiculous. The referee note, they had that thing that you mentioned. In 1357, somebody died. People think that the person who killed the ref was someone from the crowd. So, that's not great to think that – I guess because all these wizards and witches have wands on them. Imagine being a baseball umpire and you make a bad call. And then someone shoots you with a gun from the crowd because they disagree with your call.

JS

Right. Like, I just – there's nothing – the more I read this book, I was like, "Yeah. I really" – I went into it like, "Ah, I don't really care about Quidditch" to now. At the end of this, I'm like, "Well, fuck this game. This is terrible." Like, I'm just so mad. Like, as a teacher, I'm like, "I cannot believe children are playing this game." Like, no – and it's the only game. That's the thing. It's the only game at Hogwarts. There are no other choices for sports. You either play this or you – or you play fucking marbles in a circle. Like, that's it.

PM

Yep. Your options are this or marbles. Get used to it. Oh, it's ridiculous. It's absurd. It's awful. And I think this is a perfect place to end this first episode of Potterless about Quidditch Through the Ages. So --

JS

Yes.

PM

Oh, man. J'Neia, how do you feel? I mean I feel like you've summed it up. But how, how – I think – I think you were right in that this book could turn someone indifferent about Quidditch to a fellow Quidditch hater like myself.

JS

Absolutely. Like, after reading it, I'm just like, "Yeah. I don't like it." I think the only time Quidditch would be interesting is like at the World Cup. But, aside from that, I have no – like, why is it a thing that – why are there no other sports? You know, like, America has like football, basketball, baseball, hockey, all these other things. And this is – in 1,000 years, this is the only sport there is.

PM

Yeah.

JS

This is it. Nobody else decided to come up with like, fucking wizards on ice or something. Like, nothing.

PM

Oh, bring back wizard jousting. Bring back game where you catch the rocks in the cauldron strapped to your head. Come on. Let's do it.

JS

This book, I was just kind of like, "I don't know. The British wizards seem very like unoriginal. And, like, where's the innovation? Where's the imagination? We're not – we're not really using our big brains here. I'm not understanding."

PM

What a time. We'll cover more of this in the future. But, in the meantime, if people want to find you doing stuff or your podcast, where can they go? Where can they find it? What's it all about? Let the people know.

JS

Okay. So, House of Black Podcast is a podcast that I am rereading the books from my perspective, as a black woman who is now an adult. I made the name after thinking about the fact that there weren't very many like podcasts geared toward, like, black and other people of color Potterheads. So, I used the House of Black from Sirius Black, who's my favorite character. And I used it as like a play on words because I consider my podcast to be like a house for unrepresented fans in the fandom. And, so, if you would like to listen, my podcast is available on Spotify, Stitcher, and Apple podcasts. This past Monday was actually the one year anniversary of the podcast.

PM

Congrats.

JS

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So, I'll be starting Goblet of Fire. I'm very excited. And you can follow the podcast on Twitter [@houseofblackpod](#). You can also follow my personal Twitter [@TheLady_Artemis](#) on Twitter as well. And yeah.

PM

Awesome. Thank you. No. I appreciate your podcast existing, especially in the Harry Potter space. I mean it's important that we have spaces where people feel represented. And I think Harry Potter is an especially important area because we could serve to better have appreciation for diversity in the books, in the fandom, in so many areas.

JS

Absolutely.

PM

So, I think it's a great place that your podcast lives in for the fandom, especially given everything going on, at least, in America, also, throughout the whole world. And then, on top of that, with J.K. Rowling, I – it's just a whole whirlwind of I appreciate that your podcast exists and what it's doing. And I think it's an important thing to the community. So, I highly recommend everyone check it out.

JS

Thank you so much for having me. This is like the – this is like my, I think, I've made it moment.

PM

Oh.

JS

Yes. Yes, because this was – this was one of like the podcast I was listening to that I was like, "I want to be like this podcast one day." So, like --

PM

I love it.

JS

Yeah, that DM, I like sent it to my sister. I was like, "This is it. [Inaudible 1:07:37]."

PM

You're flattering me way too much. No, I am – I'm so happy to have you on the pod. I'm glad that we could talk about Quidditch. I'm glad I could turn you into a hater. And I'm excited to talk about this more in future episodes.

JS

Yes.

PM

Mhmm. Well, J'Neia, thank you so much for joining. Listeners, thanks for listening. And, as they say in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter before all of these 100 of rocks fall from the sky and fall into people's cauldrons, Wizard On!

[1:07:58]

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