

Wood was working the team harder than ever. Even the endless rain that had replaced the snow couldn't dampen his spirits. The Weasleys complained that Wood was becoming a fanatic, but Harry was on Wood's side. If they won their next match, against Hufflepuff, they would overtake Slytherin in the House Championship for the first time in seven years. Quite apart from wanting to win, Harry found that he had fewer nightmares when he was tired out after training.

Then, during one particularly wet and muddy practice session, Wood gave the team a bit of bad news. He'd just gotten very angry with the Weasleys, who kept dive-bombing each other and pretending to fall off their brooms.

"Will you stop messing around!" he yelled. "That's exactly the sort of thing that'll lose us the match! Snape's refereeing this time, and he'll be looking for any excuse to knock points off Gryffindor!"

George Weasley really did fall off his broom at these words.

"*Snape's* refereeing?" he spluttered through a mouthful of mud. "When's he ever refereed a Quidditch match? He's not going to be fair if we might overtake Slytherin."

The rest of the team landed next to George to complain, too.

"It's not *my* fault," said Wood. "We've just got to make sure we play a clean game, so Snape hasn't got an excuse to pick on us."

Which was all very well, thought Harry, but he had another reason for not wanting Snape near him while he was playing Quidditch. ...

The rest of the team hung back to talk to one another as usual at the end of practice, but Harry headed straight back to the Gryffindor common room, where he found Ron and Hermione playing chess. Chess was the only thing Hermione ever lost at, something Harry and Ron thought was very good for her.