



Author: Amy Zaszdzinski

## USQ Backyard Quidditch Tutorial

Just like in pickup games of soccer or football, people can play quidditch in their own backyards and community parks! Even though the field size, materials, or number of players may not be regulation standards, a successful game of quidditch can be played almost anywhere if the basics of the game are covered. It's great fun for families or people new to the sport and want to try it out! This article will explain how to play quidditch in the way that works best for the specific group playing, while also practicing the important rules and skills of the game.



Photo by: Michael Vong

### Materials

Organized quidditch has a strict list of materials that are used to play an official game, however, at home, those materials may not be readily handy! Here is a list of suggested materials to gather for a basic quidditch game, as well as some "Backyard Edition" (**BE**) material substitutions that can be used depending on the age of the players and what is available at home. Check out this [page](#) on the USQ website for suppliers of official quidditch materials as well as tutorials for making hoops and brooms!

### Types of Balls

- 1 Quaffle: Slightly deflated volleyball that can be gripped with one hand
  - **BE**: Small children will have trouble gripping a full-sized volleyball with one hand, so a children's sized volleyball or a light weight rubber ball can be used (as long as the ball is at a size where a child can fit the ball under their arm to carry it, it will work!)
- 3 Bludgers: Slightly deflated dodgeballs that can be gripped with one hand



- **BE:** If dodgeballs are a bit too hard on contact for young players, they can be substituted for balls of yarn or small beach balls
- 1 Snitch: Tennis ball inside of a sock that is velcroed to the waistband of a pair of athletic shorts. These shorts are worn by the snitch runner, a neutral player
  - **BE:** Ball and Sock can be substituted for a bandana inserted into the waistband of the snitch runner, or a single flag on a flag-football belt

## Brooms

- 3ft long pieces of PVC pipe with end caps, enough for each player on the field
  - **BE:** For small children, the broom length can be shortened to 2ft, or whatever length works best for the family
  - **BE:** brooms can be any "broom like" materials families have at home! Ex: pool noodles, wiffleball bats, plastic hockey sticks

## Hoops

- 6 hoops total: 2 with 6ft stems, 2 with 4.5ft stems, and 2 with 3ft stems
- Official hoops are usually made from a plastic tubing ring attached to a PVC stem through a T-coupler. The stem is then inserted attached to a wooden base.
  - **BE:** Families can choose to construct quidditch hoops the way they are made for USQ, or they can make basic hoops by duct-taping hula-hoops to sticks or adhering hula-hoops to a backyard fence or yard chair!

## Headbands and Pinnies

- These materials are optional, but pinnies help determine which players belong to which team, and headbands signify which position each player is playing
  - **BE:** headbands can substituted for colored bandanas or strips of fabric
- White headbands (chasers), Black headbands (beaters), Green headbands (keepers), Yellow headbands (seeker)

## How to Play

Quidditch, like most sports, has specific rules for the different positions on the field, as well as specific procedures for game play. Here are the most essential rules and procedures to play a successful game of pick-up quidditch. For a more in-depth review of Quidditch game play and sample practice drills, reference the [USQ Youth Quidditch Overview](#). For specific rules and regulations for players and referees during an official game, reference the [USQ Youth Quidditch Rule Book](#).



Photos by: Scott Rein



## Different Positions

Chaser overview:

- Game ball used: quaffle
- Chasers' job is to throw, kick, or in any way pass the quaffle to each other and send the quaffle through the opposing team's hoops
- Goals can be scored from both directions, in front and behind, the hoops

Keeper overview:

- Game ball used: quaffle
- On defense, the keeper's job is to prevent opponents from throwing the quaffle through the keeper's hoops
- On offense, the keeper has the same role as the chasers

Beater overview:

- Game ball used: bludger
- The beaters' job is to "beat" or throw the bludgers at opposing players to disrupt the flow of the game by "knocking out" those players

Seeker overview:

- Game ball used: snitch
- The seeker's job is to remove the snitch from the snitch runner
  - The snitch runner is a neutral player that controls the movement of the snitch, which is attached to the back of their shorts

There are 3 chasers, 1 keeper, 2 beaters, and 1 seeker per team.

## Positions BE:

Most likely, a family will not have enough members to field two whole teams with an accurate number of positions, and that's ok! Group members can choose which position they would like to play, and go from there.

- A recommended choice for families with few players or young children is to play the game with just the quaffle and no beaters/bludgers or snitch. The chaser position is a good beginner position, and the game play involved is the most similar to sports the family members may already be familiar with. If the family wants to use bludgers, but does not have enough players to have two beaters per team, then they can alter the number of bludgers on the field to be equal to one less than the total number of beater players on the field (example: 2 bludgers, 3 total beaters on field).

## Starting the game

- To start, the quaffle and bludgers being used should be lined up along the halfway line of the field
- Have each team line up parallel to their hoops on their side of the field, each player on one knee with the brooms on the ground between their legs
- A member of the audience or an adult should shout the following:
  - Team 1, are you ready? (Team 1 responds)



- Team 2, are you ready? (Team 2 responds)
- "Brooms down".... "Ready" (on Ready, the players should grab their brooms so they are ready to run) .... "BROOMS UP!"
- On Brooms Up, all players can run towards the quaffle and bludgers to try and gain possession
  - **BE:** Families with young players can also opt to start with the quaffle and bludgers in hand already at the start of the game to avoid accidental collisions with older players at the half-way line
- Once the balls have been picked up by players, the team with quaffle possession can begin to try to score

## Game-play

- All players on the field should have a broom between their legs at all times. If a player drops their broom or takes their broom out from between their legs, the player must run back to their side of the field and touch one of their hoops before coming back into play
  - **BE:** For young players, especially if they are using brooms that are over half their height, this rule can be much more lenient! It is important to emphasize that this is a rule so that young players can practice the procedure, but this should be more of an expectation for older players
- Once one team scores a goal, that team earns 10 points, and the quaffle is then given to the keeper of the opposing team and the game resets
- When a player is hit by a bludger, they must perform the *knock-out procedure*, which is drop any ball they are carrying, remove their broom from in between their legs, run back to their own hoops, and touch one of their hoops. Once this is completed, they can remount their broom and resume play
- Beaters can only hold one bludger at a time, no team should have possession of all the bludgers on the field at once
- All balls are in play, whether they are in the air or on the ground
  - **BE:** Families can determine boundaries that players and balls must stay within, and once a ball exits the boundary, it is given to a member of the team that did not send the ball out of bounds (like in soccer and basketball)
- Quidditch is traditionally a full contact sport where players can use one arm to tackle a player that is carrying a ball as a form of defense. However, for young players, the focus is limited to defensive guarding and using their hands to steal the ball from other players, not using their arms to wrap around other players.
  - **BE:** Families can decide the level of physicality involved in the game-play

## Ending the game

- The snitch runner enters the field at the 15 minute mark of the game, and the seekers from both teams enter the field at the 16 minute mark
- The game ends when one team's seeker pulls the snitch off of the snitch runner, and the team that catches the snitch gets an additional 30 points
- If no snitch is being used, then whichever team has scored the most points at the end of the game wins



Most importantly, have fun and get your family involved! Together we can help grow the popularity of quidditch in our communities.

### **COVID-19 Precautions**

As we continue to navigate COVID-19, please reference [USQ's COVID-19 web page](#) for additional measures and precautions to keep in mind for any quidditch games you might be organizing. Be mindful to check on local and state regulations as well.

### **Questions**

Email [youth@usquidditch.org](mailto:youth@usquidditch.org) with any questions you have! USQ's youth team is also happy to set up a virtual call to help walk you through any steps for organizing your own backyard quidditch game as well.