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MY LITTLE PONY 6

Buckball Season

619

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TEASER**SC. 1 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – BACK FORTY – DAY**

RAINBOW DASH shows up to the semi-annual Apple Family & Friends gathering where APPLEJACK and her cousins are out in the back forty playing a friendly round of “buckball.” It’s a game loosely based on apple bucking that’s become an Apple family tradition. It looks like fun! And Rainbow Dash wants in. She swoops in and blocks one of Braeburn’s bucks, sending the apple back to Applejack who easily bucks it into her bushel basket. Score! Applejack and Rainbow Dash high-hoof and do an NFL-style touchdown dance.

But Braeburn isn’t even phased. “Oh, yeah? Well, we have a pegasus, too. And a unicorn.” Apparently, the Appleosans have made some modifications to the game. And with a pegasus blocking AJ’s shots and a unicorn levitating the basket to collect the apples, the fillies get their flanks handed to them. Applejack and Rainbow Dash want to play again – they didn’t even have a unicorn! – so Braeburn invites them to Appleoosa for a rematch. Or, rather... THE REMATCH TO END ALL REMATCHES. One Earth pony. One pegasus. One unicorn. The horseshoe gauntlet has been thrown down.

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE****SC. 2 - INT. SUGARCUBE CORNER – DAY**

Applejack and Rainbow Dash are licking their wounds over some apple cake with the rest of the MANE SIX. Applejack says, “I never really liked those cousins, anyway.” Rainbow Dash is fuming. How are they going to beat those smug Appleosans? The first thing they’ll need is an awesome unicorn on their team! Who will play with them? TWILIGHT shakes her head. “Sorry. I have to finish my dissertation on the effect of waxing gibbous light on moonflowers.” RARITY just raises a well-groomed eyebrow. That would be a definite no. It doesn’t matter, Rainbow Dash says, they need the best of the best if they’re going to beat Appleoosa (sorry, Rarity and Twilight). They decide to hold tryouts for the unicorn position of “Keeper.” But since no one in town has ever heard of Buckball, they figure they’d better drum up a little interest.

SC. 3 - EXT. PONYVILLE – DAY

Applejack and Rainbow Dash need to set up for tryouts, so they ask PINKIE PIE and FLUTTERSHY to spread the word that they’re looking for a unicorn. Pinkie Pie bounces up and down: “That sounds like FUN!” and Fluttershy is always happy to help. In a brief montage, they put up posters and flyers all over town and share the story about Appleoosa’s challenge. By the end, the two have recruited nearly every unicorn in Ponyville to try out for the team.

SC. 4 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – BACK FORTY – DAY

Thanks to Pinkie Pie’s enthusiasm and Fluttershy’s insistence that “Applejack and Rainbow Dash really need your help,” there’s a long line of unicorn ponies waiting to try out. Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy offer to scrimmage against them – that way they can try out two ponies at once. Applejack and Rainbow Dash share a look – “Scrimmage against those two? That’ll be a laugh!” But they appreciate the gesture and it will help speed up the search for their third teammate, so they say yes. After all, Fluttershy says, they’re experts now that they’ve been talking all about the game!

Applejack welcomes everypony and explains that she and Rainbow Dash are only looking for a Keeper – the position that has to be filled by a unicorn. Through a series of “old-timey” still photos, she explains the origin of the game:

- Applebucking is an ancient craft among apple farmers
- Buckball started out as a fun way to hone one’s apple harvesting skills

- **The Bucker** – an Earth pony – tries to get as many apples into their team’s bushel basket as possible (Pinkie Pie demonstrates in present day)
- **The Blocker** – a pegasus – tries to stop the other team’s bucker from scoring and can pass to her own bucker, but the blocker is not allowed to score (Fluttershy demonstrates)
- **The Keeper** – a unicorn – levitates the bushel basket and positions it to collect the bucker’s apples

Crossfade to today’s tryouts – rapid cuts of a unicorn dropping the basket, another missing several catches, and a third fumbling the apples. Frustrated, Applejack and Rainbow Dash struggle to get their apples into the basket. On the other hoof, Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy are having a blast, knocking apples back and forth to each other and easily scoring despite the bewildered unicorns. Surprisingly, they seem to be quite good!

Rainbow Dash and Applejack decide it’s time to stop fooling around and show these ponies how it’s really done. The unicorns, in general, have been a disaster, and Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy have played well – but that’s obviously just beginners’ luck. Snips and Snails are the next unicorns to try out, and another surprise – Snips is pretty good! He maneuvers the basket easily, allowing Rainbow Dash and Applejack to execute a complicated play and set up a really beautiful scoring opportunity.

Except that – at the last second – Fluttershy swoops in to block it, sending the apple over Rainbow Dash’s head and back to Pinkie Pie, who slam-dunks it into Snails’s bushel basket. Snails shoots some trash-talk at Snips, and despite being distracted by his own verbal banter he lifts the basket into position just in time to catch Pinkie Pie’s next shot. Fluttershy doubles back around to block yet another of Rainbow Dash’s passes, Pinkie Pie snags it mid-air and scores again. She and Fluttershy do a high-hoof and a basket dance, laughing and hooting at the incredible amount of fun they’re having!

And they’re really, really good. Snails is somehow able to mindlessly keep the basket in play while hurling slow insults at Snips; Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy are uncannily talented. It’s as if they’re channeling some magical Buckball spirits. There’s even a glow around the apple whenever they touch it! Applejack and Rainbow Dash aren’t able to score a single point – Fluttershy deflects every pass and blocks every shot. Pinkie Pie, between bounces, thanks Applejack and Rainbow Dash for teaching her this hilarious game. “It’s just SO!” (bounce) “MUCH!!” (bounce) “FUN!!!” At the top of her last bounce, Fluttershy yells (yes, actually kind of yells), “On your flank, Pinkie!” Pinkie spins effortlessly (and in super slo-mo) to receive a perfect pass from Fluttershy that hovers in mid-air like a flitting butterfly. Pinkie bucks it all the way across the field to the waiting Snails. He floats the basket up to catch it, and then the three of them bump flanks while doing a victory dance.

Rainbow Dash: “They make it look so easy!”

Applejack: “They make it look so fun!”

But whether Rainbow Dash and Applejack are having any fun is another question.

SC. 5 - EXT. PONYVILLE – MAIN STREET – DAY

Applejack and Rainbow Dash walk through town, rehashing the tryouts. Who knew Snails would be such a good Keeper? Snips wasn’t bad, either. And they’re shocked at how good their friends played. “It must have been a fluke. How could anyponies be better at Buckball than us?”

And as it turns out, they’ve created quite a lot of excitement about the game. Word of tryouts has spread, and Ponyville is starting to get swept up in Buckball Fever. As Rainbow Dash and Applejack continue to debate, they hear whispers and rumblings and cheers: “Which unicorn will make the team?” “We’ve got to show those Appleosans.” “Go Ponyville!”

With the game in Appleoosa coming up the day after tomorrow, it’s time they make a decision and get to work! Applejack turns to Rainbow Dash. “I think we know what we need to do.”

SC. 6 - EXT. PONYVILLE – TOWN SQUARE – DAY

They arrive in the Town Square, where a bunch of cheering ponies have gathered to hear the results of the tryouts. Applejack clears her throat. “We’d like to tell y’all who made the team.” The town holds its collective breath. “Your Ponyville Bucking Mavericks are...” Whip-pan to reveal: “Snails! Pinkie Pie! And Fluttershy!” Off Pinkie and Fluttershy’s shock...

END ACT ONE**ACT TWO****SC. 7 - EXT. PONYVILLE – TOWN SQUARE – CONTINUOUS**

Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy (not to mention the townsfolk) are confused. “What?!” “We weren’t trying out, we were helping out!”

Applejack and Rainbow Dash smile broadly. They aren’t in the least upset – they’re thrilled! “You two waxed our tails. You outflew, outbucked, and straight up outplayed us!” “We want to beat Appleoosa – and YOU are the best ponies for the job!”

And with the stamp of approval from the most respected athletes in Ponyville, the town really goes wild!! Hooray!

SC. 8 - EXT. PONYVILLE – MAIN STREET – DAY

Everyone in town is excited, offering congratulations and encouragement to the newly-formed team. Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy are honored and kind of enamored at the attention they’re getting. Rarity offers to design their uniforms. The Cakes make them protein shakes. The CMCs want to hold their water bottles. Snails starts trash talking about how Ponyville is going to kick Appleoosa’s flanks... and Snips, who’s thrilled his best friend made the team, coaches him in trash-talk etiquette. “Put a little more ‘ooo’ in your ‘Boooooo-yaaahhh,’ Snails!”

Pinkie Pie goofs around and Fluttershy tells everypony how much fun the game is. It’s clear to the town that these are the right ponies for the game – and that they’re really, really enjoying themselves. Ponyville rallies around its newest heroes!

But Rainbow Dash and Applejack clear away the crowd. It’s time to get down to business. Serious business.

SC. 9 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – BACK FORTY – DAY

Applejack and Rainbow Dash – wearing whistles around their necks – put the team through a series of drills. Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie play well and they’re really enjoying themselves... but not necessarily taking it as seriously as they’re supposed to. Pinkie keeps bouncing away from Applejack (PP: “I’m just so excited!!” AJ: “I’m just trying to help you boost your buck!”). Fluttershy looks worried when Rainbow Dash tells her to think like a predator. (“I think I’m more like a butterfly...”) Snips continues to school Snails in talking smack, and somehow, Snails manages to put the bushel basket in right place at the right time to catch all of Pinkie’s bucks.

But finally, when Applejack hollers at Pinkie to take this game seriously, Pinkie bobbles the apple and drops it. “Oops! Hee hee!” Fluttershy feels bad for Pinkie and gets flustered, then whiffs on her pass. “...sorry...” Rainbow Dash and Applejack share a look, but tell them not to worry. Everyone goofs once. They just need to keep practicing and drilling and they’ll be unbeatable!

SC. 10 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – BACK FORTY – THE NEXT DAY

Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie stand in the back forty, ready to practice. Except neither really knows where to begin. Snips and Snails are both there, but Snails is distracted with his delivery of “In Yo Face.” Snips says it needs more “yo” and less “face.” Pinkie Pie suggests they work on the drills Rainbow Dash and Applejack taught them.

Fluttershy agrees. But Pinkie sends a buck wild, and Fluttershy has to duck to avoid getting hit. “Let’s try that again.” This time, Pinkie misses it altogether. Fluttershy tries a gentle pass, but it falls short. This is NOT going well.

They remember that Applejack said she liked the way Pinkie Pie curls her hoof when she bucks. Maybe she should try that move again. Pinkie gets super excited... but it turns into complete frustration because she can’t recreate the perfect curl. “It was like this! No... THIS!” She keeps trying it over, and over, and over again. Meanwhile, Fluttershy decides that maybe Rainbow Dash was right about thinking like a predator. She screws up her face into the most ferocious expression she can muster... but when she tries to block one of Pinkie’s bucks the apple disintegrates in front of her.

With their futile attempts to recreate what they were doing before, the magic goes out of their play. That faint glow around the apple fades, and eventually completely goes out. The girls are dejected. (Snails, intent on his insults, is still completely unaware.) Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy admit that for whatever reason, they’ve lost it. And yet...

...the town is counting on them to play Appleloosa. In fact, isn’t that all they can do? Try their hardest? Go out there and give it their best shot?

SC. 11 - EXT. PONYVILLE – MAIN STREET – DAY

They put their heads up and stroll into town, ready to represent Ponyville the best way they know how. “We’ll do our best. I’m sure no pony will expect more.” But as they turn the corner into the town square...

SC. 12 - EXT. PONYVILLE – TOWN SQUARE – CONTINUOUS

...they’re greeted by a terrifying roar. The whole town has come out, adorned with Pinkie Pie wigs and Fluttershy cutie marks, face paint and foam fingers (hooves?). They’ve got pennants and banners, even a hand-made poster of Fluttershy – cruel look on her face – taking a bite out of Braeburn’s rump. Another shows Pinkie Pie stomping up and down on an Appaloosan with “Xs” for eyes.

Snails loves it! He starts in with all of his trash talk and the town goes crazy! Buckball Fever has heated up into a frenzy, and all anyone wants is the dramatic demise of the Appaloosans. “Our heroes!” “Take those smug ponies down!” “Ponyville forever!!”

Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie share a very worried look.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SC. 13 - INT. FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS – THE NEXT DAY

The train pulls away from Ponyville station, rabid fans cheering from the platform. Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy try to hide in a private car, but the townsfolk can’t help themselves. They want autographs, hoofprints, somepony even asks Fluttershy to bite his flank like she’s “going to do to Braeburn.” She nearly faints.

Applejack and Rainbow Dash clear the crowd away. These prime athletes need some space to get their heads in the game. They’ve got to focus. Get in the zone. Psych themselves up. AJ and Dash leave them to it. A quiet car at last. (Especially quiet because Snails has fallen asleep.)

Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy look horrified. There’s no way they can go out there and play now. The town is counting on them to win. How can they possibly disappoint everypony? Fluttershy turns to Pinkie Pie. “I think we know what we need to do.”

SC. 14 – EXT. APPLEOOSA – TRAIN PLATFORM – CONTINUOUS

The crowd of well-wishers has dispersed. The game is set to start in one hour. Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy look across town toward the rodeo stadium where the match will be held. Take a deep breath. Walk up to Applejack and Rainbow Dash.

In a rush, Pinkie Pie blurts it all out. They're awful. They stink. And they need Rainbow Dash and Applejack to take their places in the match against Appleoosa. It's not that they just won't win, they'll be CRUSHED.

But Applejack and Rainbow Dash brush it off. "Aww... you're just nervous." "Let's run a few drills and you can show us what's wrong."

SC. 15 - EXT. APPLEOOSA – OUTSKIRTS – CONTINUOUS

So they do. And holy pony but they're right. Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy have never been worse. Pinkie gets on a jag trying to find her curved hoof buck, Fluttershy flies into a tree, into a bush, and finally right into the bushel basket itself.

Rainbow Dash and Applejack are shocked. And worried. But they immediately recognize the problem. "You guys, you're not having any fun!" Pinkie Pie maniacally screams, "THERE'S NO FUN IN BUCKBALL!" And Fluttershy points out, "Where's the fun in letting everypony down?" Neither of them EVER want to play buckball again.

The last thing Dash and AJ want is for their friends to be humiliated in front of everyone – the results could be devastating. They agree to take their place in the game. On one condition. Dash and AJ haven't run any drills, or had a single practice. They need to play a quick scrimmage, and there's no one else to play against. Would Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy be willing to play one more time? (And luckily, Snips is there giving Snails last-minute bad-mouth pointers, so they'll have a second keeper.)

Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy reluctantly agree. It's the least they could do, since they're backing out. They start out in a pretty sorry state. Rainbow Dash and Applejack easily dominate. But without any pizzazz or finesse. AJ: "I don't know, Rainbow Dash, I feel like I need more oomph." Pinkie Pie perks up a bit. "Try this!" She bounces once. Then again. Gives a little giggle. Fluttershy looks at Rainbow Dash's face. "Less predator. More butterfly." She floats a pass to Pinkie Pie, who casually bucks it back into the air. "Wheee!" She bounces higher. Dash picks up the apple, but Fluttershy blocks her pass to AJ. "Pinkie Pie! On your flank!" And once again, Fluttershy sends an effortless, hovering pass to Pinkie, who spins mid-bounce (and in super slo-mo again) to rocket-buck the glowing apple into the bushel basket. Hooray!! This IS fun!

The magic has returned, and Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy are having fun again. Applejack reminds them to just go out there and have a great time – that's what ponies have come to see. If we win – GREAT! But the real joy for the fans is to see a good game, and to watch players who love the game. Pinkie Pie leaps into the air, yells, "HIT ME, FLUTTERSHY!" and as she kicks back for the perfect buck...

SC. 16 - EXT. APPLEOOSA STADIUM – DAY

...the crowd goes wild!!!! They're in the real game now – it's the end of the fourth quarter. Five seconds left on the clock. The score is 75-74. Appleoosa. Pinkie Pie's buck hits her mark, and ties it up, 75-75.

But Appleoosa gets the next apple. Braeburn bucks it into the air, and the Appleosan pegasus swoops it up. Braeburn moves into perfect scoring position. Two seconds on the clock! The pegasus rockets a pass to Braeburn, and...

...Fluttershy blocks it. Tosses it over to hover in front of a bouncing Pinkie Pie (Wheeee!!!), and she bucks it all the way across the field. Everything slows down... Snails raises the bushel basket... the apple almost seems to stall out mid-air...

The crowd jumps to its feet. Will the apple hit its target? Less than a second on the clock.

The apple comes out of slo-mo, rockets toward the basket, hits the rim, rings it, teeters on the edge and...

...FALLS IN! PONYVILLE WINS!!! 76-75.

The fans rush the field and toss the three players up on their withers, carrying them around in a victory parade...

SC. 17 - EXT. EQUESTRIA – VARIOUS LOCATIONS

...as ponies big and small all around Equestria start learning how to play – and love – the game: “Buckball party!”
“Let’s go out and kick around the apple.” “Funnest. Game. EVER!”

END