

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 9
Squad Goals
EP 915
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SQUAD GOALS

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Logline: The School of Friendship is starting a buckball team and Rainbow Dash has to come to terms with the fact that she won't be coaching the team—she'll be coaching the pep squad.

TEASER

SC. 1 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – DAY

TWILIGHT SPARKLE leads FLUTTERSHY and PINKIE PIE to the new Buckball stadium that's being built behind the School of Friendship, talking a mile a minute... "...and once Princess Celestia agreed that we should start an Inter-Scholastic Buckball League so students from different schools could play against each other, it was only natural to have the first game be between our schools and I don't think anypony could have predicted how popular the sport's become in such a short time, but here we are..."

Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie admit to being a little intimidated. Isn't there a smaller school they could play against first? Maybe a music school or a scroll making institute? Twilight isn't worried. She asked Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie to be the buckball coaches for a reason – they're the best players in Equestria. She asked Rainbow Dash to help too, but she's not sure where she is. Just then, RAINBOW DASH comes zooming in carrying a huge bag of sports equipment. "Sorry I'm late, but when Twilight said she needed me for the buckball team, I figured I'd better grab every piece of training gear I could get my hooves on, just in case." Dash asks enthusiastically what job Twilight wants her to do. Team Trainer? Offensive Coordinator? Referee? Twilight says it's something even better. Dash jumps for joy and tells Twilight that whatever the job is, she promises to give it 120%. Twilight tells Dash she knew she could count on her enthusiasm... "That's why I want you to be Captain of the Pep Squad!" Off Dash's jaw dropping in disappointment...

END TEASER

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

SC. 2 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – DAY

As coach Pinkie and coach Fluttershy head off to work with the team, Dash takes Twilight aside. She doesn't want to seem ungrateful and of course she's super excited to be involved any way she can BUUUUT... is Twilight sure Pep Squad is the right fit for her? Twilight doesn't understand and Dash tries to lay it out. It's not that she has anything against pep squads "...because they are totally important, I guess," but her thing is more about the athletics. It's great that some ponies only wanna cheer the team on, but she doesn't know how to do it and wouldn't even know where to start. Of course, she's

seen pep squads before. Peripherally. On the sidelines. But she's not even 100% sure what they do. She's just afraid that because she doesn't know anything about it, she'll make a mess of things. Twilight reassures her. She thinks Dash would make a great Pep Squad Captain. Dash keeps insisting that she doesn't know how until finally Twilight suggests that maybe that's exactly why it is the right fit. It'll be good for Dash to get outside of her comfort zone. Stymied, Dash heads off to meet her squad.

SC. 3 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – HALLWAY – DAY

Dash heads toward her classroom when SNIPS, winded and decked out in full Pep Squad attire, catches up to her. Snips explains that after the success of his buckball souvenir business, he was a natural pick to be the Pep Squad's Equipment manager/assistant coach. Dash admits she doesn't know if that makes sense or not, but according to Twilight her not knowing anything about pep squads makes her perfect for the job, so she guesses Snips is perfect too. Maybe. Who knows? Snips insists he is perfect and can't wait to show her. He also can't wait for her to meet the squad because when it comes to perfect, they are it! Encouraged, Dash follows Snips into...

SC. 4 – INT. DASH'S CLASSROOM – DAY

Dash walks in to her gymnasium-like class room to find the entire Pep Squad eagerly awaiting her arrival. Dash makes her way into the room as the students all excitedly gather around her. A pair of twin earth ponies, HOT HOOF and SWIFT MANE do an impromptu dance that they really want to work into a pep squad routine. They ask a flustered Dash what she thinks and Dash admits she's speechless. YONA YAK stomps around enthusiastically, explaining that she can't wait to cheer her fellow School of Friendship students on, but what she's really looking forward to is being the top of one of those pep squad pyramids. Not knowing what else to say, Dash tells her that sounds interesting. A small, incredibly soft spoken unicorn, GLITTER HORN, mumbles something, but Dash can't understand because he's talking so quietly. From the corner of the room, SMOLDER translates that Glitter can't wait to start working on the squad's cheers. Dash nods and admits she's surprised to see Smolder. Is she as excited as everypony else? Smolder plays it off like a disaffected teenager who doesn't want to admit she likes something, "Whatever. I guess." She explains that she didn't have anything better to do, so she figured she'd check it out. "Maybe it'll be okay. I don't know." Dash admits that she doesn't know either. Smolder tries to play it cool but is clearly disappointed when Dash goes on to explain that she really doesn't know the first thing about cheering or dancing or pyramids—any of it, really—but apparently that's fine. Maybe this is going to be one of those "teacher learns from her students" kind of situations.

Dash turns to Snips and asks him what they should do now. Snips and the students all look at her like, "Shouldn't you tell us?" Dash tells them that if they were a buckball team, she'd be able to. She'd know exactly what to do—drills, exercises, scrimmages—but the pep squad thing is totally foreign to her. Maybe they should just show her what they've got? Snips thinks that's a great idea and turns on some music. The twins

immediately start dancing, ignoring everypony else, and Yona starts stomping around. Glitter Horn rushes over to Smolder and whispers into her ear. Smolder rolls her eyes and starts a half-hearted cheer, “2, 4, 6, 8...” then points to Glitter Horn who picks up the rest, but his voice is so quiet the words are impossible to make out. Yona’s stomping gets more and more exuberant and when the twins finish their routine with their hooves in the air, Yona takes that as her opportunity to be “Top of pyramid!” She rushes toward them, but trips on her braids and tumbles into the whole group who sprawl out on the floor in a pile. Snips turns to Dash with a wide smile, “What did I tell ya?!” Off Dash’s look of horror we...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SC. 5 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – HALLWAY – DAY

Rainbow Dash walks through the halls, Snips at her tail trying to keep up. Dash explains that she may not know anything about cheering or pep squads, but she definitely knows bad when she sees it. The thing is she isn’t sure how to improve the situation. What does a cheer practice look like? It isn’t like making them do laps or pushups will make them better at—whatever it is they are doing. How could Twilight think she’d be perfect for this job? How in the world is getting out of her comfort zone a good thing in this instance? Snips points out that Twilight is the Princess of Friendship and that they’re at the School of Friendship. Maybe the answer has something to do with that. Struck by a sudden thought, Dash tells Snips he’s right! The answer is so obvious. She just needs to get her friends to tell her what to do!

SC. 6 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – DAY

Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy watch as SNAILS leads the students on the buckball team in a ‘zen’ concentration exercise. He puts on a blindfold and has the rest of the team throw balls at him—all of which he catches easily. The secret he says it to not think about anything. As he starts to prepare the team to empty their minds, Dash comes ZOOMING in to tell Pinkie and Fluttershy that she really needs their help. The two coaches look over at the team meditating with Snails and agree they’ve got some time. Dash leads them to the side of the field. Since she’s out of her depth with the whole pep squad thing, she wanted to ask them what they thought was the key to a great pep squad. Pinkie says that’s easy. “Lots and lots of confetti and streamers. Ohh! Do you have a party canon? If not you can totally borrow mine.” Fluttershy insists that the key is to make sure that all of the cheers really come from the heart. “Like this... yay.” Dash nods eagerly. That all make sense and at this point it’s all she has to go on.

SC. 7 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – RARITY’S CLASSROOM – DAY

Dash listens patiently as Rarity expounds upon the idea that the key to a successful pep squad is the uniforms. As she digs through boxes of clothes, she explains how color

coordination is imperative, but one can never underestimate the importance of the fabric itself. It should be light weight, and flexible, with a good amount of sheen. She pulls out a collection of purple, rhinestone-studded, jump suits. “These should do nicely.” She dumps them on Dash explaining that she’s happy to do any alterations. Fit is the most important thing of all. Off Dash, overwhelmed...

SC. 8 – EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – DAY

In a bit of contrary advice, APPLEJACK explains that for her the real essence of a good buckball pep squad is getting back to basics. Ever since she introduced buckball to everypony (thank you very much), the whole sport has just spiraled out of control. What started out as a fun backyard pastime now has its own hall of fame! She remembers when just having your family cheering for you from their seats on a few hay bales on was all anypony needed. Off Dash, confused...

SC. 9 – INT. MYSTERY LOCATION (ZECORA’S HUT) – DAY

TIGHT on Dash as she explains to a pony off-screen. Dash says that she’s gotten a lot of advice, but nopony has addressed the actual cheers. She’s pretty sure they have to rhyme which is why she’s here. PAN OVER TO REVEAL she’s talking to ZECORA who just gives her a look like, “Really?” Off Dash’s sheepish smile...

SC. 10 – INT. DASH’S CLASSROOM – DAY

Rainbow Dash addresses the Pep Squad. She knows they all probably expected their captain to have a much better grasp of all things pep squad than she does, but she’s got good news. She drags in everything from her pep squad fact finding mission: hay bales, boxes of costumes, Pinkie’s party canon etc. Since the cheers are important to Glitter Horn and they’re supposed to come from the heart, she hands him a rhyming dictionary she found in the library—Zecora was way less helpful than she thought she’d be. She tells them that all this stuff is supposed to turn them into the best pep squad in Equestria. At least, that’s what she’s been told. With that, she turns to head out. When Smolder stops her and asks if she’s going to help, Dash doesn’t understand why she would. She knows literally nothing about it and she just gave them everything they need. They’ll be fine when they perform for the team tomorrow. Oh, did she forget to mention that? Anyway, she’s sure it’ll be great.

SC. 11 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – DAY

Dash sits with Pinkie and Fluttershy on the sidelines as the team finishes up their practice. Dash compliments them on the good job they are doing with the actual team. She can’t wait for their first game. Pinkie thanks her and explains that she can’t wait to see what Dash has been doing with the pep squad. Dash isn’t sure how it’ll turn out, but it’s just the pep squad—she’s sure it’ll be fine. Plus, she gave them everything she learned about what makes a good pep squad. None of it really made sense to her, but she trusts her friends’ advice. Besides, anything will be better than the last thing they did.

Before the others can ask what she means, the Pep Squad comes onto the field in their fancy, tight uniforms. The twins start another dance routine, in time with nopony but themselves, while Yona tries to stomp along, catching her hooves on the fringe of her costume. As Snips shoves out two hay bales with Pinkie's party canon balanced on top, Smolder half-heartedly tosses a few streamers and calls out a lackluster chant. "School of Friendship Rah-rah-rah..." She looks to Glitter Horn, who pages frantically through the rhyming dictionary, then whispers in her ear after which she continues, "...let's win this game and hit the spa?" As the twins finish their dance, Yona tries to climb onto their shoulders, but her restrictive uniform causes her to fall backwards—right into the party canon, tilting it downward as it explodes into the hay bales, sending bits of hay and confetti everywhere.

Dash looks out at the hay-covered field and shrugs. They had all the elements so that was probably okay, right? She looks over to see Fluttershy and Pinkie's shocked expressions. Pinkie puts a hoof on her shoulder. "I know I said I couldn't wait to see what you did with the pep squad, but I actually think I could have waited a little longer." Off Dash's disgruntled frown we...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SC. 12 – INT. DASH'S CLASSROOM – LATER

Rainbow Dash stares at the Pep Squad in disbelief. She gave them everything they needed and apparently they were even worse than last time! It's almost like they aren't trying. At this, Yona bursts into tears and runs from the room. Confused, Dash asks what she's so upset about. Fed up, the twins give Dash a piece of their minds. All Yona wants, all any of them want, is to be a great pep squad, but they can't do that because their captain gave up before she even started. If anypony isn't trying it's Dash! With that, they turn and storm out. Dash tries to defend herself. Of course she was trying. She got all that great advice. They were the ones who didn't make anything out of it. Off this Glitter Horn angrily says something inaudible and walks out. When Dash asks Smolder what he said, Smolder tells her that she doesn't want to know. Dash turns to Smolder. She understands, right? All this pepping and cheering stuff just isn't her. It's fine, but it's not like it's the actual sport. She gets that someponies love it, but she doesn't understand why and probably never will, but she did the best she could. Smolder does NOT agree. She tells Dash that she knows she tries to hide it, but she was actually excited about the pep squad and was even more excited to find out that Dash was going to lead it. If any pony could bring the excitement out of her it's Rainbow Dash. Everything's always "AWESOME!" or "20% COOLER!" She's the most enthusiastic pony in Equestria—when it's something she cares about. "It's just too bad we weren't one of those things." With that she walks out, leaving a guilt-ridden Dash in her wake.

SC. 13 – INT./EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – VARIOUS – MORNING

Rainbow Dash surprises each of her students by waking them up super-early the next morning. She tells them all to meet her on the buckball field for practice. Smolder asks if this one is gonna last more than three minutes. Dash, “You could say that.” Off of her smile...

SC. 14 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – DAY

Outside, Dash explains that everything they said got her thinking and she’s decided they were right. She’s been pretty awful, but all that is about to change. In an inspirational pep talk she explains just what she plans to do. She might not know much about cheerleading, but she knows enthusiasm and if that’s what it takes, she’s got plenty to spare. What’s more, she can tell each of them has it too. In fact, they have inspired her. She hopes they are ready to be the most awesome pep squad Equestria has ever seen. They are going to motivate their team to play their best. They are going to dance. They are going to yell. And she doesn’t know how yet, but that yak is getting to the top of a pyramid!!! Off of the squad exchanging excited looks we start a...

EYE OF THE TIGER-STYLE MONTAGE

- Dash has the twins do push-ups while Yona stomps a beat to get them to listen and respond to something other than each other.
- Close on Dash as she works on something with great concentration. PULL WIDE to see she’s worked Yona’s braids into an updo so she doesn’t trip. After that she rips the fringe off of her uniform and has the yak run a tire course, working on her coordination and busting out of the outfit’s restrictive seams in the process.
- Dash uses semaphore-style flags to direct the flight of Smolder overhead who does a few flips.
- Dash looks down at Glitter Horn and holds out her hooves. The unicorn gives her the rhyming dictionary and in return Dash hands him a megaphone. As Glitter’s eyes light up they are all covered with a BLAST of confetti as we turn to see Snips, still trying to figure out the party canon. Off the squad laughing we...

END MONTAGE**SC. 15 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – DAY**

It’s the first game of the season and the score is tied 3 to 3. Twilight and Celestia talk about what a great game it’s been. Celestia is grateful everypony agreed to allow the school of magic to compete, even if they had to use transformation spells to turn a few of her students (who are all unicorns) into pegasi and earth ponies for the games. Twilight is just glad everything is coming together.

Down on the field Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie are tense. It’s such a tight game. They really hope they can pull it off. PAN to Dash, who agrees, more nervous than either of them—

though she isn't talking about the game. She's talking about her pep squad. Just then the buzzer sounds to end the first half. Fluttershy and Pinkie turn to Dash apprehensively. Is she sure her squad is ready? Dash looks at them, "Are you kidding? You know I'm their captain, right?"

With that, <MUSIC> plays as the pep squad takes the field. Yona starts to STOMP. Soon the crowd is stomping along as the twins start a dance routine in perfect sync with Yona and the crowd. Glitter Horn cartwheels out onto the field and grabs his megaphone. Finally the yell leader of his dreams, he shouts out a TBD cheer and gets the crowd to shout along as Smolder does a stadium fly-by, dropping streamers as she goes. As the routine reaches its climax, Yona runs and jumps onto a small trampoline and bounces high into the air. The crowd gasps, realizing the yak intends to land on the twin's shoulders, but at the last minute Smolder swoops in, catches Yona and gently sets her squadmate on the twin's shoulders as she spreads her wings and breaths a BLAST of fire into the air. Glitter Horn does the splits in front of them as Snips fires the party canon at the exact right time. The crowd loses its mind as a shocked Pinkie and Fluttershy turn to Dash, impressed. Dash is beside herself with pride, but plays it cool. "See? I told you."

SC. 16 – EXT. BUCKBALL FIELD – LATER

As the final buzzer sounds, the score is School of Magic 6, School of Friendship 5. And even as Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie bemoan the loss, Twilight and Celestia congratulate them on a game well played. Seemingly oblivious, Dash rushes out onto the field and congratulates her squad. They did it! THEY REALLY DID IT!! Smolder isn't so sure. They cheered their hearts out but their team still lost. Dash looks up at the scoreboard. She hadn't even realized. It's too bad, but totally beside the point. Her squad rocked it! She knows she wasn't 100% on board at the start, but after working with her squad and bonding with them over their mutual infectious enthusiasm, she's learned that Twilight was right. She is the perfect pony to lead the pep squad and now she is on board 120%!!! Overhearing, Twilight wonders if things would have moved along faster if she had just come out and said what Dash needed to realize from the start. Dash looks at her. "Kinda, yeah." Celestia laughs and admits the whole thing where a pony has to learn a lesson for themselves is kind of her thing. Off of everypony laughing we...

END