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MY LITTLE PONY
Season 9

Common Ground
EP 906

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COMMON GROUND

Outline by Josh Haber

Logline: *Quibblepants is back and he's found his special somepony, but her daughter is a total jock and he's at a loss at how to bond with her. Luckily Rainbow Dash offers to teach him all about "the sports."*

TEASER**NEWSREEL FOOTAGE**

In classic newsreel-style we see how Buckball has swept Equestria—quickly growing from a backyard hobby to the favorite sport of ponies everywhere. In VO, an ANNOUNCER PONY describes the broad appeal of the sport and how the popularity has lead to the decision to open a Buckball Hall Of Fame to celebrate Equestria's Favorite Pastime. Of course, the sport is relatively new and its only "stars" are the current championship team from Ponyville – FLUTTERSHY, PINKIE PIE, and SNAILS – who will be the Hall's very first inductees.

SC. 1 - INT. THEATER – SAME

Pinkie leans over to Fluttershy in the theater and whisper shouts, "Do you think they know that's us?" PULL WIDE to reveal all the ponies in the place are staring at them excitedly. As Fluttershy tries to sink into her seat, RAINBOW DASH leans forward from the row behind them, "Yeah. I think they have a pretty good idea." PAN TO Snails, "A pretty good idea about what?"

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE****SC. 2 - EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CANTERLOT – BUCKBALL HALL OF FAME – DAY**

Pinkie, Fluttershy, and Dash exit the theater with a trail of fans behind them and we take in the grounds of the Buckball Hall of Fame which consists of the theater, a small sports museum, and a buckball stadium. While SNIPS helps his friend Snails sign autographs, Pinkie and Fluttershy follow Dash toward the museum discussing how they'll be taking part in the inaugural Hall of Fame Buckball Tournament at the stadium. Dash bemoans the fact that she won't be able to spend the day cheering them on. Since Applejack wasn't able to attend the opening of the Hall (it's apple bucking season) Dash promised to tell her all about it. She goes to line up to be the first pony inside.

SC. 3 - EXT. BUCKBALL HALL OF FAME – CONTINUOUS

Unfortunately, Dash is stymied as the first place in line is already taken. And from the tent set up, it looks like somepony camped out over night to ensure their spot. “I mean, who does that?!” Of course the second Dash voices her displeasure she finds out, as the pony emerges and we see that it’s none other than QUIBBLEPANTS! Dash doesn’t understand why he’d want to camp out to be first into a museum, but Quibble is quick (too quick, in fact) to defend his actions, explaining, that if Dash were a true spots fan, she would understand. Before Dash has time to be insulted, a unicorn and a young pegasus join Quibble in line. Quibble introduces the mare, CLEAR SKY, as the most amazing pony he’s ever met. Dash is quick to point out that Quibble’s met Daring Do, so that *might* be an exaggeration. A slightly embarrassed Clear Sky explains that when it comes to describing your special somepony, a little exaggeration is to be expected. She turns to Quibble and tells him she feels the same way. It’s clear these two ponies were meant to be together, but Dash notices Sky’s daughter, WIND SPRINT, rolling her eyes at their PDA. Quibble notices too and falls over himself trying to get the filly excited about how “cool” the Hall of Fame is going to be. He reads from a pamphlet, describing some of the exhibits (getting some obvious things wrong about buckball in the process) which produces more eye rolling from the foal. Sky urges Wind to thank Quibble for camping out all night so they could be first inside. Wind reluctantly thanks him, but points out that she’d rather watch the tournament than go to a museum. Eager to please her, Quibble is ready to change their plans, but Clear Sky tells her daughter to be more appreciative—besides they have time for both. With that, the doors open and the line of ponies pushes all of them inside.

SC. 4 - INT. BUCKBALL HALL OF FAME - CONTINUOUS

Dash quickly picks up on how Quibble is trying to impress his special somepony’s daughter and tries to buddy up to the kid. They’re on the same wavelength after all – Dash would rather be at the tournament too, but Quibble did camp out all night, and besides, with more ponies coming in, they can’t go out the entrance. Dash goes on to explain how she promised a friend she’d check out all the exhibits. Wind Sprint balks, “All of them?” Dash suggests they divide and conquer—that way they can hit all the stuff and get to the tournament that much faster. Quibble suggests that he pair up with Dash so they can “catch up,” and Wind more than readily agrees, heading off with her mom.

Alone, Dash comments on how great Quibble and Sky seem together and Quibble turns to his friend in a panic. “You have to help me!” Dash is confused. She thought Q was happy. Quibble insists that he is, in fact, he’s never been happier—but he has a confession to make: He literally knows nothing about buckball, or any other sport for that matter. As Dash tries to hide her lack of surprise, Quibble goes on to explain that as great as his relationship with Sky is, he’s terrified that her daughter doesn’t like him. Wind Sprint’s dad was a super athlete and the young pegasus is too. She’s fast and strong and coordinated with a real love of all things sport—everything that Q isn’t. He’s tried his best to fake it, but he’s pretty sure Wind is on to him. At that moment, Wind looks over from across the museum to see Quibble holding a buckball basket upside down, or tripping over a ball, or some other hilarious beat of him being the opposite of sporty. Dash tries to humor him, explaining that she bets Wind hasn’t even noticed. Regardless,

Quibble is in a state. He wants his relationship with Sky to work out so much, but not if Wind isn't on board. He'd never ask Sky to sacrifice her daughter's feelings. As much as it would hurt, if Wind is against the whole thing, he'll bow out.

Dash promises to check it out and switches places with Sky to see what she can get out of Wind. Sky tells Quibble that he doesn't need to try so hard to impress her daughter, but Quibble is too busy keeping tabs on Dash and Wind's conversation to hear her. Despite being genuinely impressed that Dash is a Wonderbolt *and* best friends with buckball's biggest stars, Wind isn't very forthcoming with her feelings about Quibble (in typical kid fashion). No matter how slyly Dash broaches the topic, the most she can get out of the foal is a half-hearted shrug. This, coupled with more hilarious takes to Quibble across the museum being clueless about all things sport, gives Dash reason to think Quibble's fears might be justified.

SC. 5 - INT. BUCKBALL HALL OF FAME – GIFT SHOP – SOON AFTER

Finally ready to exit the museum, Quibble presents Wind with a “surprise”—a book about buckball! Wind is unimpressed, “Oh. Great. A book.” Quibble doesn't do himself any favors, over-enthusiastically describing how the book contains every buckball statistic ever recorded. Starting to get excited himself, Quibble marvels at the contents. He had no idea there were so many numbers involved in the game—it's practically an RPG! In a surprise to nopony, this falls on deaf ears and Wind politely thanks Quibble, but asks him to hold the book for her, clearly not interested in it in the least. As Wind slouches off, Sky turns to a disappointed Quibble and tries to reassure him—she knows her daughter will come to realize what a perfect pony he is just like she has. With that, Sky heads off after Wind and a panicked Quibble turns to Dash again for advice. He doesn't know what he's going to do. Dash tells him not to worry. All Quibble needs to get in good with Wind is a little infusion of athleticism and there's no better pony to do that than her. By the end of the day she'll turn Quibble into the sportiest pony in Equestria!

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SC. 6 - EXT. BUCKBALL HALL OF FAME – DAY

As Wind and Sky head over to the stadium to watch the tournament, Quibble hangs back with Dash. He's nervous about her plan—turning him into an athlete is a tall order. Maybe he should just be himself and they should focus on stuff he knows like comic books, Ogres and Oubliettes, and Daring Do. Dash assumed he's already tried all that and Quibble admits that he has. He even got Wind a first edition of “Daring Do and the Quest for the Sapphire Stone”—signed! But for some reason she wasn't impressed by an “old, used book.” Dash, “Ouch. Maybe being yourself isn't such a good idea.” Dash tells him it looks like he's out of options and Quibble agrees, but he's not sure Dash understands just how uncoordinated he is. Dash is confident (of course), and tells him to trust her. Of all

the problems he could have come to her with, this is something with which she can absolutely help.

MONTAGE

Committed to helping her friend, Dash goes through a series of sporty activities designed to discover which (hidden) athletic traits are his strong suit: speed, strength, or agility. She starts small, trying to just kick a ball back and forth, but Quibble misses the ball completely and lands on his hind-quarters. He wasn't lying about being uncoordinated—looks like agility is out. Next she sets up a race between, Quibble, Snips, and Snails, but when Quibble is completely winded four steps in, Dash quickly decides speed isn't his thing either. And when Quibble struggles to lift even more than one book at a time, it looks like strength is out too. If she had more time, Dash is certain she could mold Quibble into the perfect athletic specimen—well, maybe not perfect, but definitely improved. But Quibble doesn't have that kind of time and when it doesn't look like Dash can turn him into an athlete in one day he starts to freak out again. Dash tells him not to worry. She has an even better plan.

SC. 7 - EXT. STADIUM – CONTINUOUS

Dash and Quibble head back to the tournament and in between games, Dash introduces Sky and Wind to Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy. Wind is duly impressed by two of the biggest buckball stars around. Dash almost convinces Wind that Quibble is cool by association, pointing out that buckball stars and Wonderbolts are the kinds of ponies he hangs out with all the time, but Pinkie is slow to pick up what she's laying down. "Ooooh. Rainbow Dash told us all about how you two met at a Daring Do Convention and she thought you were the most annoying pony she ever met, but then you eventually became friends!" Fluttershy tries to recover, pointing out that Quibble is obviously the kind of pony you like more and more over time, but the moment is ruined. Quibble tries to get back into the conversation, but Wind doesn't notice, focusing instead on grilling Fluttershy and Pinkie about what it's like to play buckball. Thinking fast, Dash tries to help her distraught friend by telling Wind she will soon find out for herself since Quibble has another "surprise" for her. Wind: "Is it another book?" To Quibble's surprise (and horror), Dash explains that he's entered himself and Wind in the Buckball Tournament!

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SC. 8 - EXT. STADIUM – FIELD – SOON AFTER

Dash tries to calm Quibble down as they stretch, getting ready for the game, but Q is beside himself. This is the worst idea in the history of ideas! He's going to make a fool of himself in front of Wind, Sky, and a whole stadium of fans! Dash eases his fears, explaining that she's already talked to Pinkie and Fluttershy and they've agreed to help him look good. Slightly reassured, Quibble agrees to go through with the game, but from

the first buck of the ball, it looks like no amount of help from Pinkie and Fluttershy can save Quibble. Despite their best efforts, Quibble's gameplay is tragic as he does everything from falling over his own teammates (i.e., Wind and Snip—who's stepped in as keeper for their team), to accidentally scoring in his own goal. Left with no athletic option, Quibble starts to nit-pick the rules, arguing vehemently with the ref over obscure technicalities (which he reads from the Big Book of Buckball he got for Wind). When Quibble digs in trying to at least get the goal he scored against his own team reversed, Wind finally shouts at him to stop. It doesn't matter if the goal gets turned over or not—they are down by ten! Quibble is a terrible player and she doesn't want to play with him anymore. Heartbroken, Quibble watches as the young pegasus storms off. To make matters worse, Clear Sky approaches and reiterates that she told him not to try so hard. She apologizes, but tells him it looks like they might need to rethink this whole thing. Dash stares in shock as a devastated Quibble slinks off.

SC. 9 - INT. MUSEUM – DAY

Worried she's done a better job of driving Wind Sprint and Quibble apart than bringing them together, Dash rushes off to find Wind herself. Oddly enough she finds the foal back in the museum at an exhibit dedicated to athleticism. Wind tells Dash that her dad was a real athlete and that if she had been out there playing buckball with him instead of Quibble, they probably would have won. Dash agrees that Quibble isn't much of an athlete, but there are a lot of other things about him that are pretty great. Wind asks if they all involve books and Dash admits that they probably do. But Dash points out that she's pretty sporty and she also likes books. She likes Quibble too—and so does Clear Sky. Dash bets if Wind gave Quibble a chance, she might like him too.

SC. 10 - EXT. MUSEUM STEPS – LATER

Outside, Dash finds a distraught Quibble leafing through the buckball book he'd intended Wind to have—reading stats seems to be about as close to sports as he can safely get. He thanks Dash for trying, but admits it didn't do much good. It looks like not even Sky thinks there's much hope, but he's decided to save her the trouble of breaking up with him. Clear Sky and Wind Sprint deserve to have a pony they both like in their lives. He told Dash earlier that if he couldn't connect with Wind, he'd bow out and it looks like it's time to do just that. Dash tells him he might want to reconsider and steps aside to reveal Wind, who asks if Quibble would like to watch the last game of the Buckball Tournament with her.

SC. 11 - EXT. STADIUM – STANDS – LATER

As Quibble and Wind watch Pinkie and Fluttershy play the final game of the tournament, Wind tries to point out a few things about the sport that might be helpful, should Quibble ever want to try playing again—like keeping track of which goal you're supposed to score in. Quibble smiles, then predicts exactly how Pinkie will score the next goal. When it happens exactly like he said, Wind is amazed. How could Q possibly know that would happen? Quibble pulls out the Big Book of Buckball and shows Wind a statistic. Pinkie

bounce-bucks over 83% of her shots from the northwest section of the field whenever the wind is blowing from the east. Impressed, Wind takes the book and starts to comb through it, admitting it might be worth looking over after all.

While Wind looks through the book, Dash brings Sky over. Quibble tells her that he knows she's thinking of breaking it off with him, and he doesn't blame her since things didn't look very hopeful between Wind and him, but he really thinks he's made a connection. Sky tells him she wasn't planning on breaking up with him. When she said they had to rethink things, all she meant was coming up with a different way for him and Wind to find common ground, but it looks like he's already done that. Just then Wind comes over excitedly pointing to a new thing she's found in the book. Even Sky is impressed—it looks like all Quibble had to do to make a connection with Wind was be himself instead of trying to turn into some kind of athlete! Dash seconds the thought. “Obviously! Of course he just had to be himself. Who in the world would have told him not to do that!?”

END