

# TEDxIIT continues preparation for 'X-FUSION'

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Friday nights at The Bog at IIT are typically buzzing with activity, as it is the time that students take to unwind from the week and have fun. On Friday, March 27, TEDxIIT was one of the parties contributing to the buzz by hosting a few activities to create awareness of the organization.

The TEDxIIT event, or rather, 'pre-event,' was mainly to promote the global conference that will be taking place on Sunday, April 12, 2015 in the IIT Tower main auditorium. The night began with bowling at about 7:30 p.m. In addition to being an opportunity for the planning team and volunteers to let off some steam, it was a way for interested students to build connections with TEDxIIT members through a shared activity. Bowling lasted for about an hour and a half after which

the people present proceeded to the stage area in The Bog.

At 9 p.m., everyone gathered for the second part of the pre-event, emceed by some members of the TEDxIIT 2015 planning team - Sai Krishna (Vice President of Operations), Vishak Chandra (Treasurer), and Shyamoli Gramopadhye (Chair of Hospitality Committee). This part involved playing selected TEDxIIT videos to show the audience what they could expect from a TEDxIIT talk. The presentations viewed were 'Why you must start a business while in school' by Nik Rokop (TEDxIIT 2013), and 'Uncertainty' by Jessica Hubert (TEDxIIT 2014).

Other acclaimed non-IIT videos were also played to share ideas and inspire the audience. The TED and TEDx presentations viewed were 'Augmented Reality, techno-magic' by Marco Tempest and 'Dance, tiny robots' by Bruno Maisonnier. Next on the agenda,

was an interview of the two student speakers Mark Milhouse, a third-year ITM student, and Sunny Shah, a first-year Psychology student. Several questions were directed at the speakers including "What can the audience expect from you on the day of the event?" and "What has your journey to the TEDxIIT stage been like?" As a response to the former question, Mark Milhouse explained his idea of the fusion of 'sleep' and 'work' by utilizing idle computer resources in the supercomputer of the future. And to the latter question, Sunny Shah responded with some insight into his high school and early college involvement. According to Shah, doing what you love is the key to success.

The last activity for the night was the trivia game. The crowd was divided into eight teams of three students each and was competing for free tickets to the main event on April 12. Like the previous activities, this

was also a way to create awareness about TED and TEDxIIT. The first question asked was the meaning of the acronym TED. For those that do not know, the answer is Technology, Entertainment and Design. This was followed by questions about past TED global speakers, previous TEDxIIT event themes, previous TEDxIIT presidents, and more.

The trivia continued in the form of the game 'Twenty Questions,' and the teams played until about 11 p.m., when the night ended and the winners were announced. If the pre-event is an indication of what to expect of the main event on Sunday, April 12, then the attendees are in for a treat! Apply to attend the live event now, or save the date to watch the live stream online, or with fellow students in the MTCC Auditorium. Visit the TEDxIIT website at <http://mypages.iit.edu/~tedxiit/>.

## Brooms up, Muggles: It's QuiddIITch time

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No, you cannot actually go to the Hogwarts grounds and play the sport among hovering Dementors. We are yet to find a dragon, let alone learn to ride one, and invisibility cloaks still haven't gone on sale on Amazon. But hey, guess what? You can play Quidditch on the Quad next week with fellow Muggles from IIT. It seems like we have managed to translate the phenomenal game of chase, shoot and seek from J.K.Rowling's wizarding world into our real one - at least in some form.

One fine Muggle group from Middlebury School enchanted this game right out of the books and formed a modified version of the fictional Quidditch which is on its way to being established as a recognized sport and game. The game has been around for quite sometime now in colleges, and there is also a world cup organized for it. The Intercollegiate Quidditch Association (IQA), the sport's surprisingly professional organizing body, now manages close to 1,000 teams in over 40 countries with 600 teams in the United States alone; there are so many teams, in fact, that the Quidditch World Cup (QWC) is no longer an open invitational but a serious tournament at which the top 80 teams earn their spots after battling it out in one of nine regional tournaments. The IQA is just a disguised name for the Department of Magical Games and Sports, if you don't know that already, then you haven't read the phenomenal series thoroughly.

So how does one play such a sport you may ask? I wouldn't blame you if you did. Brooms don't fly, snitches are still in books and Dumbledore is still dead. How else does this sport work? It's simple actually. It's essentially the same game in terms of objective and types of players, except there is no flying involved. Players mount broomsticks and run on their feet. One may argue that the essence of the game is lost by this Muggle form but tell that to the 1000+ athletes who compete intensely at the QWC. Other rules that apply include the

following. The Snitch is a person who has a tennis ball enveloped in a sock hanging by his clothes or a similar detachable ball tied around him and he would run around the field with the seekers behind him, hoping to grab the ball.

The Beaters would be people who would hurl Bludgers (dodgeballs) at opponents. Those who get hit by an incoming Bludger have to drop the Quaffle (volleyball) if they are in possession of it and dismount their broom and run back to the posts before resuming the game. The game in many aspects is a combination of dodge ball, rugby and flag football. It involves the running around and dodging of the Bludgers similar to what one would do in dodgeball; the passing of the Quaffle and teamwork is similar to Rugby. The battle between the Seekers for the Snitch is very much like a game of flag football.

The story of Quidditch at IIT begins with Amy Zasadzinski, a Harry Potter fan wanting to relive some of that magic from the books in the most athletic way. She founded the QuiddIITch club here at Illinois Tech in her sophomore year. She drafted a presentation as a proposal for the club's initiation to the Student Senate and got things moving. It has been over a year and a half now since this club has been started. The club had a lot of starting trouble with games and funding in the first year. They did not have a lot of players to choose from and played no games in the first year, but as things moved on, it heated up. Initial hurdles such as coming up with a logo and brand along with a design for the jerseys were inevitable and they gained experience building hoops - which turned to be quite a process and setting up schedules and practice sessions. Ryan Miller from Office of Campus Life (OCL) who also happens to be the club's advisor was a key factor to the progress. Zasadzinski was nothing but thankful for Miller's tremendous help towards the club. Upon being asked if the funding allocated was timely and reasonable, she only had accolades for OCL and Finance Board, who were very supportive to the club by

providing a lot of the required funds in the beginning to get things moving and also continued to reimburse the players for miscellaneous costs during tournaments.

In the previous semester, the last game was against Northwestern and it was the first time they gathered a bunch of players, organized team props and basics before competing in a tournament in which they finished second. This semester has been no less amazing for the club; they took part in two tournaments, one at Northern Illinois University and another at Illinois State University. The club went on to secure second place at the latter tournament. Zasadzinski owes this impressive record to hours of scrimmage and practice on the Quad. The team usually practices twice a week and during winter they switch grounds to Keating Sports Center owing to the weather conditions.

Apart from mainstream game practice and prop building, the QuiddIITch club organizes several promotional and fun events both for the fostering of awareness about the club and also to help spread word about the Harry Potter movement. Last year a Yule Ball was hosted at The Bog by the club which saw a decent number of people dressing up as Harry Potter characters and dancing the night away. Other notable mentions would include a Halloween party and Quidditch pong. Upon being asked about the objective of the club, Zasadzinski had this to say: "The purpose of the team is not to be a Harry Potter club but to take the sport up to the next level here at IIT. We are pushing to be a part of the IQA by getting official, so that we can obtain regional rankings and qualification and eventually take part in the world cup."

The Quidditch community in general is a very friendly and helpful atmosphere, according to Zasadzinski, and the other teams have donated players to fellow teams in case they don't have enough. She claims that the club is always looking for more players and would love to have more people join the team. Having a healthy number of substitutes is al-

ways good, as it ensures that the team has more variety and that no one tires quickly. "We want more people to turn up to the meetings and join the team for games," added Zasadzinski.

A very interesting fact about Quidditch is that it's a co-ed sport. Title 9 is a prevalent education amendment meant to achieve just this and to be keep sports at the school level very non-discriminatory. A Harry Potter version of the educational amendment called Title 9 and three quarters is in place in every official Quidditch game. A minimum of 2-3 women is mandatory for them to even play a game and also to practice efficiently.

Currently Zasadzinski is training a couple of players to be treasurers and she is hoping that one from the team would step up and take over as president, so that she can pass the baton forward. The first step is to become officially intramural before any of the long-term goals get accomplished. On a final note, the president of the QuiddIITch club thanked her team and all those people who came to practice regularly and believed in each other. Nothing but good sportsmanship and hard work could have got them this far. She especially was grateful for the former Vice President, Ryan Cummings, who helped a lot with the inception of the club and is a key reason for its current status.

Here is a list of the team members who won second place last semester: Amy Zasadzinski, Ryan Cummings, Stoyan Stoyanov, Harold Heo, Morgan Kretlow, Denisse Lara, Brendon Kepple, Amairani Lopez, TJ Ayodele, Chris Lutzo. The team that won the second place this semester included the following students: Amy Zasadzinski, Ryan Cummings, Lindsay Zasadzinski, Morgan Kretlow, Stoyan Stoyanov and Sufyan Sher. Many congratulations to the team for exceeding expectations. One can join the club for its next practice and join the club's mailing list by contacting the president. So gather your brooms and put on your robes folks; it's QuiddIITch time.



Photos courtesy of Amy Zasadzinski