



# Zombies take RIT

But humans win, too, as 500 students face off in latest version of the classic conflict

It's 6 p.m. on a Friday and most students are out of class and looking forward to the weekend ahead. However, on the field near Gordon Field House, the air is tense as a crowd of people wearing orange headbands gather, awaiting the inevitable arrival of the human clan. This is "extraction," the final mission and the climactic conclusion to Humans vs. Zombies.

For an entire week in September, about 500 RIT students participated in this campus-wide event, which involved a group of "humans," identified by orange armbands and armed with Nerf guns and sock "grenades," fighting an ever-expanding gang of unarmed "zombies" wearing orange headbands. Humans and zombies will face off again April 20-24.

The game began at Goucher College in Towson, Md., a few years ago. RIT's first event took place in 2007, organized by Zack Bessler, now a third-year computer science major from Lyman, Maine.

The object for the humans is to avoid being tagged (or "bitten") by the zombies, whose sole mission is to eliminate the entire group of humans. Students register in

advance and carry an HVZ card with name, picture and ID number during the course of the game. Humans can immobilize a zombie for 15 minutes by hitting him/her with a foam dart or a clean balled-up sock.

If a human player is tagged by a zombie, the human must immediately surrender their HVZ ID to the zombie. Once the human's ID number has been officially



Left: A group of Humans approaches the 'extraction' area in the final phase of the game.

Above: Ariana Bhalla, first-year student, says the game is a 'great way to blow off some steam.'

recorded, he receives an e-mail allowing him to return to the game – as a zombie.

The game operates on the honor system. All play is outdoors and outside of class.

It's intended to give students a chance to run around, have fun and get exercise, and it also works as an outlet for the stress that comes with college.

"Going to classes all day and being loaded down with work gets really nerve-racking, so this was a great way to blow off some steam," says Ariana Bhalla, a first-year mechanical engineering major. "It's nice to know that if school isn't easy, the administrators at least understand that and do what they can for the students."

Mike D'Arcangelo, director of the Center for Campus Life, sees several benefits to Humans Vs. Zombies. "This event is really aimed at getting many students involved, particularly freshman," he says. "You hear a lot about how this game got kids out from behind their computers and into a social environment where they can meet new people and get a much-needed diversion from their studies."

For many students, the event is irresistible. "When I got here, I wasn't interested in

joining any clubs, but then this comes along and it's like 'Kill zombies? Awesome,'" says Cameron Caceres, a first-year psychology major.

Back at extraction, the zombies finally spot the human clan, who are hesitantly approaching the "helicopter landing zone," a cordoned-off patch of land they must reach unscathed in order to win. As the two groups merge, the scene erupts in a mass of confusion and increased adrenaline as the humans dash toward the extraction point.

The zombies emerge victorious this time, with only one human making it to the extraction point successfully. With the game at resolution, the humans and zombies are now back to normal college students, some laughing together, some arguing heatedly, and all appearing to have forgotten their surroundings – too caught up in the moment to think about school.

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For more information about Humans Vs. Zombies, see <http://kdratrit.com/hvz/rules.php>



Zombies make a dash to block the Humans as the week-long game reaches a climax. All game activity takes place outdoors and outside of class.