

Heroes In the Outfield: A Study of the American Hero In Sports Film

An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

by

Patrick Wilkes-Krier

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Abstract

Mythology has been a part of nearly every culture since the beginning of man. Despite the American culture's move away from myth and towards science, our entertainment is littered with the same stories that existed thousands of years ago. Sports films today and in the early times of the motion picture have successfully kept the classic hero alive. The analysis of six major sports films over the last 64 years gives an idea of how consistent heroic journey stories are and how well patterned the American sports hero is. In *Pride of the Yankees* (1942), *Gentleman Jim* (1942), *Brian's Song* (1971), *Victory* (1981), *Hoosiers* (1986) and *The Greatest Game Ever Played* (2005) the heroic figures are not only similar amongst themselves, but similar to the heroic figures that have been in mythology for many years. I analyze these six films in the eye of the classic heroic journey, and put together a list of characteristics that modern American sports heroes share.

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Introduction

Mythology and Sport

In a thousand years, cultures will look back at a modern America that enjoyed mythology as much as the classical cultures. A criticism of modern America is its lack of imagination and resulting lack of mythology. Our scientific based culture relies more on fact than faith. But mythology figures more in our American culture than the critic may at first realize. Our culture's dependency on film and television for entertainment is not a sign of simple mindedness (although it may in part be), but rather shows our yearning for the mythic stories that have forever been a part of human culture. The Greeks had their gods. Modern America has its sports heroes.

The thriving life of mythology will be dramatically presented in an examination of six classic sports film that span both time and sport. The films to be considered are *Pride of the Yankees* (1942), *Gentleman Jim* (1942), *Brian's Song* (1971), *Victory* (1981), *Hoosiers* (1986) and *The Greatest Game Ever Played* (2005). Each will be examined to uncover the universal mythological elements and create a pattern for the classic American hero, in this case represented in sports films. In studying these six films I expect to find a consistent pattern that has long been identified in mythology. I expect the heroes of these six films will not only share a common quality in terms of their heroic quest, but will share characteristic qualities in both background and morals. I also expect the American sports hero to be a representation not only of what American people stand for and what they believe, but also a representation of American culture and its history. With this study

I hope to create an idiom for discussing the American sports hero that takes into account the central role that sports holds in American society.

Throughout human existence, mythology has played an important role in storytelling in general, and in a man's daily way of life. Mythology can serve as inspiration, teach lessons or morals and retell the great stories of history. Joseph Campbell, a respected mythology philosopher, explained in his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* that "Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind" (3). Myths tend to hold on to a universal pattern of elements in both the characteristics of the heroes or heroines and the adventure in which they take part. From an inspirational perspective, "myths deal with great human problems while providing clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life" (Mackey-Kallis 14).

Campbell makes a connection between myth and dreams. He says that "myths and dreams come from the same place... from realizations of some kind that have then to find expression in symbolic form" (*The Power of Myth*, 32). It's through this relationship of myth and dream that one can easily identify the role of myth in film. Mackey-Kallis suggests, "the entire film-viewing experience can actually be seen as a metaphor for dreaming" (20). Hence a film is more than an appropriate place for a mythological adventure to unfold. A film is a sort of public dream that is universally shared and viewed by an expansive audience. In Campbell's words, "a dream is personal experience of that deep dark ground that is the support of our conscious lives, and a myth is the society's dream. The myth is the public dream and the dream is the private myth" (*The Power of*

Myth, 40). Myths have been unveiled through entertainment all throughout history, whether it was orally or through the written work of poets. Modern mythology, which has its ties to the ancient universal patterns, is played out on the silver screen.

If film is so great an environment for mythology, why, specifically, are sports films important in the modern myth? The heroes of mythology can easily be translated to the successful athletes in sport. So often heroes execute their mythic journeys on the field of battle; in sports the playing field serves as the modern battlefield. Even more so, the typical set-up for a hero myth is that the hero must overcome one or more evil forces, the villain. In sport, a hero can easily be identified and the competition subsequently takes the place of the villain. In sports, talent, courage and will are the determinants of a victorious outcome. The talent, courage and will that make up a great athlete are exactly what classify that athlete as a hero. Those characteristics become supernatural to some extent, separating the athlete from the normal human. With his sporting ability he becomes the perfect hero. “The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms...The hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man—perfected, unspecific, universal man—he has been reborn” (Campbell, *Thousand Faces* 19-20).

The most enduring quality of a hero is his quest, or journey. Without one, a hero has no arena in which to deploy his superhuman capabilities. In all mythology, the hero’s quest is a binding characteristic that is also seen in modern mythology, including sports films. Campbell organizes the journey in three distinct phases: separation, initiation and return (*Thousand Faces* 30). “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive

victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (Campbell, *Thousand Faces* 30). Specific characteristics of each stage of the hero’s quest arise in the quest of the American sports hero. For a sports film to be a true heroic story, it must follow a loose, three-act structure of Campbell’s stages as presented in William Indick’s *Movies and the Mind*. The hero’s departure, initiation and return are the three acts. In each act, subplots exist that help define in what stage the myth is. The specific structural elements that are most prevalent in sports films, which Campbell first presented in *Thousand Faces*, are call to adventure, supernatural aid, the crossing of the first threshold, a road of trials, the magic flight and the final return (Indick 93-94). Additionally, a sacred marriage quest is prevalent in many heroic stories as detailed by Mackay-Kallis in *The Hero and the Perennial Journey Home in American Film*.

The specifics of the hero’s journey make themselves evident throughout history and in sports films over the last 70 years. The characteristics of a classic hero have been set forth in mythology over many centuries, but the modern American hero is still a fresh idea, one that is probably still growing. Through the study of the following six films, a pattern will develop from the characteristics that are shared among the heroes from each sports film. Through the analysis of these heroes a definition, or classification, of the American hero will be identified. The hero will undoubtedly be a representation of American culture and American morals.

Chapter 1

The Pride of the Yankees: Lou Gehrig

People all say that I've had a bad break. But today...today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

—Gary Cooper as Lou Gehrig in *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942)

Synopsis

Pride of the Yankees tags itself as a “great American story” which depicts the historic career of baseball legend Lou Gehrig. The film opens with the lines:

“This is the story of a hero of the peaceful paths of everyday life. It is the story of a gentle young man who, in the full flower of his great fame, was a lesson in simplicity and modesty to the youth of America. He faced death with that same valor and fortitude that has been displayed by thousands of young Americans on far-flung fields of battle. He left behind him a memory of courage and devotion that will ever be an inspiration to all men. This is the story of Lou Gehrig.”

We open on the busy streets of New York in the early 1900s, where Henry Louis Gehrig as a small boy comes across a group of boys playing baseball. As soon as he's given the chance to step in and bat he hits it out of the field and breaks the window of a nearby store. The other boys quickly vanish leaving Gehrig running the bases and sliding into home plate at the feet of a policeman.

Young Gehrig, his father, the storeowner and the policeman all sit in the Gehrig house waiting for the arrival of Gehrig's mother, Christina 'Mom' Gehrig, played by Elsa

Janssen. This first scene establishes the environment in which Gehrig lives. Money is hard to come by, and it's Gehrig's mother that is clearly the ruler of the house. Both Gehrig and his father, Henry 'Pop' Gehrig, played by Ludwig Stössel, look up to Mrs. Gehrig as boss. It's also in these first few scenes of the film that the issue of Gehrig's education is raised. His mother, who works as a cook at Columbia University, is very adamant about Gehrig attending college and graduating as an engineer like Gehrig's uncle Otto.

In the next scene we cut to Columbia University where Gehrig is a freshman. The older Lou Gehrig, who is played by actor Gary Cooper, helps his mother in the kitchen. He is serving lunch to the members of Sigma Alpha Psi fraternity who, despite the protest of a few elitist fraternity brothers, offer Gehrig a pledge pin. The brothers, all obviously jealous of Gehrig's baseball fame, pick on him and embarrass him on a daily basis. One such incident results in Gehrig's jumping across the table to start fighting with another brother. In a fit of rage, the tall and well-built Gehrig mistakes a local journalist as part of the whole joke and tosses him out too. In truth, the poor man who was thrown out really *was* a journalist—Sam Blake, played by Walter Brennan—and was looking for Gehrig to introduce him to the New York Yankees baseball scout. Later at batting practice Gehrig is offered a chance to play with the Yankees and, despite obvious excitement and interest, turns it down, for he is to be an engineer.

Gehrig is studying by candlelight, a shot framed with a portrait of Uncle Otto the engineer in the background, when the audience realizes that he and his father are tending a sick Mrs. Gehrig. The doctor emerges from Mrs. Gehrig's bedroom reporting that she must be taken to the hospital immediately. For a poor family like Gehrig's the only

option is to take her to the general hospital, which lacks the quality care of a private hospital but is free of charge. To Gehrig, who loves his mother dearly, the obvious solution to the problem is: Sign with the Yankees. In a frantic rush, Gehrig signs the contract with the Yankees without even reading it, knowing that he'll now have enough money to put his sick mother in a private hospital. The problem now is telling his mother that he'll no longer be going to school as she wanted, but instead playing baseball — a plan he already revealed to his father. When the conversation arises, Gehrig reveals to his mother that he's going to Hartford—this is where he'll be playing minor league ball for the Yankees. Mrs. Gehrig misunderstands her son, thinking he said Harvard, and is now attached to the idea that her son, “Louie” as she calls him, is going to Harvard University for Engineering School. A nervous Gehrig simply leaves her in the dark, knowing full well that one day she'll have to find out.

After a short and successful period in the minor leagues, Gehrig is called up to play for the Yankees. Mrs. Gehrig receives congratulations from neighbors and friends about the success of her son, but not until someone shows her the actual article in the paper does she know that the congratulations concern his baseball and not his academics. Gehrig returns home, obviously more mature, to find his mother seriously unhappy about his baseball career. With a little coaxing from Gehrig, Mrs. Gehrig attends her son's first Yankee game. Gehrig's arrival at Yankee stadium is slightly overwhelming for him. He paces around the storied locker room, glancing at the famous names that adorn each locker. Finally the other players arrive, most noticeably Babe Ruth, played by himself, who is still very much a hero in Gehrig's eyes as if Gehrig were still a child.

Game after game, Gehrig sits on the Yankee bench, assigned to watch and learn from the current first basemen. Although he'd been called up, he doesn't get his first playing time until a game at famous Comiskey Park against the Chicago White Sox. Yankees Manager Miller Huggins, played by Ernie Adams, calls Gehrig in to pinch hit. On his way to the plate, the excited Gehrig slips and falls on a row of bats, prompting one woman in the crowd to call him "tangle-foot". After a base hit, Gehrig is hit in the head with a ball and comes to the ground. Huggins tells him to get in the clubhouse and relax but Gehrig insists that he can stay and play. Huggins replies, "What do we have to do, kill you to get you out of the lineup?" a line that references not only Gehrig's toughness (he was known as the iron man of baseball) but also his final exit from the game. A fatal illness would, in fact, be the reason of Gehrig's retirement. On the night after the game against the Sox, the Yankees made their way out to a local Chicago restaurant. As Gehrig and Blake sit down for dinner a woman walks in—the woman that called Gehrig "tanglefoot" after his embarrassing fall during the game. In an act of retribution, Gehrig slides her feet out from under her as she walks by his table. The two call it even after her fall and she joins Gehrig for dinner. It turns out that she is Eleanor Twitchell (played by Teresa Wright), daughter of a famous hot dog company owner. Upon his next visit to Chicago, Gehrig and Twitchell act on the obvious attraction, spending four days in a row together. It's on the last night that Twitchell realizes how old fashioned Gehrig really is. He brings up the fact that this is his last night in Chicago. She responds with the understanding that he's got a girl in every town. "You must have a girl in every city. A ballplayer is a lot like a sailor, isn't he?" A somewhat awkward conversation ensues as the two slowly and uncomfortably voice their feelings for each other.

Next we pick up before a World Series game between Gehrig's Yankees and the St. Louis Cardinals. A crowd of photographers and journalists forms around a bed-ridden boy in the hospital. Next to the boy, Billy, is Babe Ruth who signs the ball for the sick boy more as a publicity stunt than anything else. (It's interesting that Babe Ruth, who plays himself, performs this scene that degrades his character to a degree.) After promising the boy a home run in the game, Ruth and the crowd leave. Gehrig is the last to leave, and he wishes the boy well himself. He signs his ball, promises to hit him two home runs and leaves him with some words of inspiration. "You know there isn't anything you can't do, if you try hard enough," Gehrig says. In the game, not only does Ruth act on his promise, but Gehrig does as well, knocking two home runs in a Yankees win.

During post game celebration Gehrig receives an unsigned telegram sent from Chicago. He picks up on the clue and, knowing it's Twitchell, sets off for Chicago. In the middle of the night he wakes Twitchell and they embrace. Gehrig and Twitchell return to Gehrig's home in New York to be greeted by adoring family. It's there that he announces that he and Twitchell are engaged. The overprotective Mrs. Gehrig is slightly bothered by the news at first—she's used to having Gehrig all to herself. After picking out a New York apartment, Twitchell becomes upset by the overpowering Mrs. Gehrig, who ends up choosing furniture, rugs and wallpaper without the consent of Twitchell. Gehrig is forced to help his mother understand that he no longer needs mothering in every aspect of his life. Moments later Gehrig and Twitchell have a quick and unplanned wedding right before Gehrig's game.

The later portion of the film focuses on Gehrig's streak of games played. He's touted as the "Iron Man" of baseball. But as he continues his playing streak he falls into a slump. It becomes obvious that Gehrig, an older veteran now, is ailing in some way. He suffers from shoulder pain, hand pain and fainting spells. His mobility and speed is greatly reduced, causing fans, reporters and even journalists to take notice of his slump. A stubborn Gehrig plays through his pain until even he realizes he can't go on any longer. After a doctor's visit Gehrig learns he is suffering from an illness that not only will take him out of baseball but also shorten his life significantly. As unselfish as Gehrig is, he seems less concerned with his own well-being than his wife's. Gehrig's wife learns of his ailment, although Gehrig never does tell her to her face. Gehrig is forced to retire and the Yankees pay tribute to him after a home game in New York. Gehrig is congratulated by his teammates from past Yankees teams, the mayor of New York and his former managers. In front of a roaring crowd, Gehrig stands up to the mike and addresses the audience. The humble Gehrig gives a modest speech, with the last lines being some of the most famous lines in sports history. "Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." Gehrig pauses, then, as the crowd cheers, he slowly walks off the field, disappearing into the shadows of the dugout.

Analysis

Lou Gehrig's story in *Pride of the Yankees* is a perfect example of how the American hero, especially the sports hero, stands in at times as a representation of a soldier. At the beginning of the film there is a comparison between Gehrig's heroic qualities and the heroic qualities of the "thousands of young Americans on far-flung

fields of battle” (*Pride of the Yankees*). The comparison between sports hero and soldier is common in war-time movies and exemplifies mythology’s tendency to reflect the social and political values of its time. Aaron Baker writes in his book *Contesting Identities: Sports In American Film* that the portrayal of Gehrig’s death in the film was meant to be more meaningful because it was “in the line of duty” and because he lived his life like a soldier, preserving “the values that made such success possible” (7). Additionally, Baker pointed out that *Pride of the Yankees* “defines sports in the historical context of World War II and portrays masculinity in martial terms” (65).

Beyond the obvious relationship to war-time cultural feelings, *Pride of the Yankees* follows the aforementioned structure of the heroic journey. His first call to adventure, which would signify his heroic departure, is when he displays his remarkable talent at baseball as a young boy. His dreams of playing professional baseball are born here. Two important mythological qualities are present as Gehrig responds to his call to adventure. The first is Gehrig’s resistance to accepting his call to adventure. Campbell points out that this is common in actual life and in myths. Indick proposes that the “emergent hero’s reluctance to step out onto the treacherous path of identity development mirrors the same psychological reluctance we all feel at times of identity crisis in our own lives” (73). The fear and avoidance of the call to adventure is an immature quality, one that will be outgrown and overcome by the hero, in this case Gehrig, as he assumes his position as hero. The force that prevents him from easily submitting to baseball is attachment to his mother. An important part of Campbell’s analysis of the hero’s quest, is a hero’s sacred marriage quest. Mackay-Kallis points out that “the sacred marriage quest, for male protagonists, has a mother quest embedded in it as well” (47). Not only is the

mother a representation of comfort and good, but also represents the lack of maturation and progress of the son. Campbell presents the idea of the bad mother in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. The sacred marriage quest in Gehrig's heroic story comes in the form of a return to the mother, which is marked by some fear and mostly trepidation. Gehrig's mother's wishes are that he not play baseball, his heroic path, but rather become an engineer like his Uncle Otto, significantly her brother. Succumbing to his mother would represent the death of hero Gehrig, "or at least the death of ego-consciousness" (Mackay-Kallis 47). Ultimately Gehrig achieves heroic qualities by suppressing the "bad" mother request and assuming his stature as a professional baseball player.

By submitting to his call to adventure Gehrig has successfully begun his heroic quest in the first of three identifiable stages—to use Indick's terms, he is now in the departure stage. First and foremost, the hero usually equips himself with some supernatural weapon. In Gehrig's case, the battle to fight is on the baseball field where talent is the ultimate weapon. This talent is suggestively a natural gift for Gehrig, who employs it early in the movie as a child. Through continued hard work and dedication Gehrig refines his talent to a state of supernatural power. Among his supernatural powers is not only the ability to hit well and field well, but to endure. Gehrig is known as the iron man of baseball. He played in a span of 2,130 games, a span of 14 years, before Cal Ripken, Jr. broke the record in 1995. These superhuman qualities of endurance, hitting and fielding act as Gehrig's weapons.

Indick writes in *Movies and the Mind* that the crossing of the first threshold into the world of adventure is for the hero a significant transition. In *Pride of the Yankees* this moment passes with much less importance than in other mythological stories. Gehrig

departs his common world by accepting to play for the Yankees minor league team in Hartford, Connecticut. The move is Gehrig's first time away from not only his home, but his family. The obvious change in lifestyle for Gehrig marks this as the most significant transition, thus the crossing of the first threshold.

Not all sports films fall under the same genre. More often than not a sports film that exemplifies the heroic quest well is a dramatic film, like *Hoosiers* and *The Greatest Game Ever Played*. But *Pride of the Yankees* contains the features of both romantic comedy and screwball comedy genres. Because of this the dramatic moments of Gehrig's heroic journey are downplayed to a degree though still ever present. The next stage in Gehrig's quest is the start of his initiation, the second stage that Campbell discovered. The first sign of this is when Gehrig is called up from the minor league Hartford team to the Yankees. Our hero has now come very close to the climax of his heroic efforts, but in his path are many trials and tribulations. For Gehrig these trials essentially never end. It starts first with the struggles of first joining the Yankees and not playing, but rather being forced to sit on the bench. From there our hero Gehrig reaches great heights. He amasses great success and earns great fame until the greatest of all trials begin to show their face. He is at first able to fight through the pain he feels in his body, but eventually the pain is too much for him to handle and his reign as the hero is ended. He is forced to stop playing baseball and in dramatic fashion exits from the spotlight, only to die later. It's at this moment at *Pride of the Yankees* is forced to depart from Campbell's classic heroic quest. In many stories, the hero's outcome would be altered, but because the story is a biographical representation of Gehrig, it must follow the truth. In many ways Gehrig becomes the tragic hero. Many of the qualities apply to Gehrig's fall from heroism: he

suffers more than he deserves, he possesses a flaw and he is physically wounded and eventually dies. The death of Gehrig interrupts the flow of his heroic quest, and he is never able to make a heroic return to his common land. Instead he dies tragically.

The heroic quest in *Pride of the Yankees* takes a different turn from the typical path of the classic hero. But Gehrig possesses many hero defining characteristics that will be evidently present in many sports films. Gehrig is a humble, hard working man who comes from a poor, immigrant family. Because of his financial situation, Gehrig is immediately classified as an underdog. In sport, the elite class is superior to the less fortunate and privileged lower class. All these characteristics combined—humble, hard working, immigrant family, lower class—help Gehrig become the ideal representative of American culture. He represents the rich “melting pot” background of the United States, the blue collar work ethic that is so admired and the rags to riches populist hero aspect that is the backbone of the great American story.

Chapter 2

Gentleman Jim: The Father of Modern Boxing

“There really aren’t two sides of the tracks,... there’s only the lucky and unlucky. Those that happened to have grabbed the right moment and those that don’t.”

— Victoria Ware (Alexis Smith) in *Gentleman Jim* (1942)

Synopsis

The 1942 black and white biopic of boxer James J. Corbett, *Gentleman Jim*, is one of the first great boxing films and a classic example of sports heroism. We open in 1887 San Francisco where, tucked in the back streets, a crowd of people watches an illegal boxing match. People from all social classes crowd around the makeshift ring as two giant, brutish men swing wildly at each other without boxing gloves. Shortly after the match begins the police break up the scene, arresting the two fighters and some members of the crowd, including Errol Flynn’s character James J. Corbett.

From the start it’s obvious Corbett is a fast talker. Even though he’s a lowly paid bank teller, he manages to trick Victoria Ware, played by Alexis Smith, into thinking he’s a highly paid worker at the bank. Ms. Ware visits the bank to pick up some silver for her famous and wealthy father, Buck Ware, played by Minor Watson. Corbett insists on escorting her from the bank to the Olympic Club, where she is to deliver the money to her father. Corbett continues his manipulating all the way to the club and eventually Ms. Ware invites him to sit for lunch. On his tour of the club, Corbett visits the gymnasium and talks his way into a quick boxing lesson with the world famous boxing coach that works at the Olympic Club, Harry Watson. Right from the start, Corbett’s boxing skill is

apparent, which interests some of the members of the club who are watching. Right away, one member, Judge Geary, raises the idea of giving him a sponsored membership. Ms. Ware, the recipient of most of Corbett's fast talking and flirting responds with this: "Jude Geary, this is the most amazing thing I've ever heard. Two hours ago Mr. Corbett was just a bank clerk and here on an errand. And now, well, look at him. In six months he'll own the club." She agrees to sponsor him herself.

From the high class, sophisticated atmosphere of the Olympic Club, we cut to the humble Corbett home, where the Corbett family—including James, his brothers Harry and George, sister Mary, Ma and Pa Corbett (Alan Hale)—are joined at dinner by a priest, Father Burke. The topic of discussion at the dinner table is Corbett's visit to the Olympic Club for lunch. Jokes fly around the table until Corbett reveals the real bit of news: that he is now a member of The Olympic Club, sponsored by Victoria Ware and her father. After a good dose of teasing from his brothers, Corbett finally gives in and the family rushes outside to watch what is obviously a family tradition: a fight among the Corbett brothers. Soon enough, all the neighbors are piled into the Corbett barn watching the fight as one on-looker yells, "the Corbett's are at it again."

Corbett is immediately bothersome to the elder members of The Olympic Club. His antics are enough to spur the elders to set up a fight with a former heavyweight champion to try to teach Corbett a lesson and bring his ego down a couple of notches. His opponent is Jack Burke, former heavyweight champion of the British Isles, who just happens to be in town to work with boxing coach Harry Watson. The elders eagerly await a pummeling as Corbett enters the ring, but Corbett displays his usual cockiness. The first thing we see is the difference in fighting styles. Burke moves sluggishly around the ring

throwing big punches while Corbett moves quickly, constantly moving his feet, carefully timing jabs and hooks. After a surprising first round, Corbett knocks out the favorite with a right hook late in the second round. It's the first sign that Corbett, despite a big ego, is quite a special boxer. As Ms. Ware tells him: "Oh, Mr. Corbett, what a beautiful swell head you'll have. You'll be bouncing around like a balloon."

The evening after the fight, the members, including Corbett and his friend as his guest, are enjoying the drinks in the ballroom. The over-confident, and slightly intoxicated Corbett makes a move on Ms. Ware that results in awkward situation and a hand slap (fortunately Corbett can block a good attempt). Corbett's friend, Walter Lowrie, enjoys a few too many drinks and ends up causing a ruckus in the ballroom. He's asked to leave, which of course infuriates Corbett, who, in a fit of anger, storms out with Lowrie. After a long night of drinking, the two wake up, hung over, in Salt Lake City. During his drunken tear the night before, Corbett agreed to a fight with a local Salt Lake boy. Upon this realization, Corbett and Lowrie are a little confused, but agree to the fight to get their ten-dollar payday. Corbett ends up winning the fight and his boxing career takes off from there.

Back in San Francisco Corbett's next fight is another back alley fight against a local behemoth named Joe Choynski. The two fighters trade knockout blows back and forth, each able to make it up before the ten second count. Finally, one final knockout by Corbett declares him the winner, just before the police arrive to break up the illegal fight. The crowd flees, forced to escape the scene by diving into the water and swimming away. With each win, Corbett's name earns him greater recognition and earns him more fights against better competition. He travels across the country, beating opponent after opponent

with his fast feet and left jabs. Corbett's stock continues to rise and his good looks and personality earn him the moniker, "Gentleman Jim." Not only is Corbett becoming quite famous for his boxing prowess, but is making a significant amount of money—enough for the Corbett's to move out of their small home, and the Corbett brothers and father to start their own business.

The next big fight is against the world famous, and also quite cocky, John L. Sullivan. In a personal meeting, Corbett's fast talking ways earn him a fight with Sullivan. As Corbett says, "I just told him a few things that got his goat." The fight is to take place in New Orleans with a purse of \$25,000, and a side bet of \$10,000. Corbett continues his pursuit of the beautiful Ms. Ware, but is constantly turned down by the hard-to-get woman. A conversation between the two usually starts off kindly, but the stubborn personalities of both Ms. Ware and Corbett end up starting quite an argument. In a conversation with her father, Ms. Ware figures out that unless she puts up the \$10,000 for Corbett's side bet there will be no fight with Sullivan. In Ms. Ware's case, she's eager to see the arrogant Corbett get a "shellacking" from Sullivan.

The Sullivan versus Corbett fight finally arrives, with a John L. Sullivan parade through the streets of New Orleans. The fans arrive at the fight, most eager to see Sullivan destroy the less intimidating Corbett. The enormity of the fight makes Corbett's managers and trainers nervous, but Corbett himself seems quite calm. Upon Corbett's introduction the crowd responds with a few cheers and mostly boos, which is quite the contrary to the huge applause that Sullivan receives when introduced. Right from the start of the fight, the styles of boxing are obviously different. Corbett dances around the ring, avoiding the slow but powerful lunging punches of Sullivan. Corbett hits Sullivan with

quick left jabs, while Sullivan moves slowly landing a few big hooks. As he wales away with poorly aimed punches, Sullivan tends to lose track of the much quicker Corbett. At the end of the twenty-first round, Corbett lands a heavy enough punch to knock out the much larger Sullivan and keep him down. To the surprise of everyone, except Corbett himself, the man known as “Gentleman Jim” is named the new heavyweight champion of the world. The victory was enough to turn around all his doubters, including the elders at the Olympic Club and his love interest Ms. Ware.

In the middle of the post round celebration, Sullivan, in an act of pure sportsmanship, congratulates Corbett on his win and hands down to him his champion fighter pin. In quiet fashion, Corbett accepts his gift and the passing of the torch is complete. The spectacle of Corbett’s win was enough to turn around Ms. Ware’s feelings about him, although she is still aware of his cockiness. After his noble acceptance of Sullivan’s gift, it turns Ms. Ware around even farther, enough to get her to say that she loves him and the two embrace. To complete the film, a window breaks and the other two Corbett brothers start fighting. “The Corbetts are at it again,” Lowrie yells.

Analysis

Gentleman Jim, which is also a film from 1942 along with *Pride of the Yankees*, takes a less direct approach to the comparison of sports hero with soldier, although the points of comparison are there. Most notably in *Gentleman Jim* is the pro-American propaganda that made its way into many American films during war time, including *Pride of the Yankees*. Virginia Ware, James Corbett’s love interest, tells him “there really

aren't two sides of the tracks, ... there's only the lucky and unlucky. Those that happened to have grabbed the right moment and those that don't." Baker writes in *Contesting Identities* that "Corbett certainly does not miss his chance at equal opportunity, which comes in the ring and also when he marries Virginia, whose father made his fortune in silver mining and banking" (63).

Gentleman Jim recounts the life of famous boxer James J. Corbett. Much of the plot of the film is historically accurate except for some minor details. In the book *They Were San Franciscans*, the author, Miriam Allen DeFord, validates any of the movie's events and shines light on some of the fiction. In the film, Corbett shares his house with his parents and three siblings. In real life Corbett was one of 9 children, most of whom experienced athletic success just as Corbett did. He quit school when he was 15 and shortly after would take a job at a bank as a messenger. He was gradually promoted at the bank, leaving with the position of teller. He joined the Olympic Club and took lessons from then boxing instructor Walter Watson. During the early stages of his boxing Corbett suffered from delicate hands, which would break and split after training and fights. It's because of this that he learned "shadowboxing." While many other boxers of the time depended on brute strength, Corbett relied on speed and mental superiority. This would eventually lead to his tag as the "father of modern boxing." The movie makes no mention of it, but Corbett ended up taking over the position of boxing instructor before becoming a touring professional boxer. In 1886 at the age of twenty, Corbett married Olive Lake. Less than ten years later she would secure a divorce and Corbett would move on to marry Jessie Taylor and the two remained a couple the rest of his life. Ware's character in the film seems to be based in fiction, not fact, and serves as a love interest to Corbett's

character and a vital part of his heroic quest. Of the matches that are shown in the film, almost all are historically recorded to have taken, including the highly touted match between Gentleman Jim Corbett and John L. Sullivan.

In the film, Corbett's quest, or heroic departure, begins with his visit to the Olympic Club where he is instantly recognized as a talented boxer. Unlike Gehrig in *Pride of the Yankees*, Corbett experiences no delay in decision when posed with his call to adventure. When offered a sponsored membership to the Olympic Club by Ware and her father, Corbett takes advantage of the opportunity not only with boxing, but by attempting to mix in with the elite social class. The movie moves quickly through the heroic departure stage, avoiding any dramatic identity crises to focus instead on the light hearted comedic aspect. Like *Pride of the Yankees*, *Gentleman Jim* falls more into the category of romantic comedy than drama. Because of this the emotional and sometimes painful aspects of the heroic journey are downplayed significantly, but the general structure still exists. Like Gehrig, Corbett's supernatural weapon or aid is his natural boxing ability—an ability that is refined with practice and work at the Olympic Club. His talent is even more refined when the viewer understands that it's not his strength that is his greatest gift, but his style of fighting with quick feet and defensive boxing. This becomes Corbett's supernatural talent in a sense and leads to his heroic success. Corbett obviously crosses his first threshold when he fights and wins against the favored British Isles heavyweight champion Jack Burke. To the surprise of the club elders, Corbett wins and opens up a whole new world of opportunity for himself, including a whole world of egoism.

As mentioned earlier, *Gentleman Jim* puts very little focus on the negative aspects, or saddening parts of Corbett's career and life. He comes across as very cocky, but with much to be cocky about. For this reason, the road of trials that Corbett surely endured is harder to find in the film. It seems as though as Corbett boxed, he won, and suffered few tribulations and sadness. As easy as boxing came to Corbett, dealing with his social class was another issue. He came from a poor Irish-American family and was constantly made aware of his economic status when in the Olympic Club. In the film he expresses his thoughts that his boxing success caused jealousy among the elite members and it is for that reason that he was somewhat of an outcast. Maybe so, but as Corbett continues to fight and win he suffers with the fact that he is not of the same social order of his love interest, Ware. Surely, as most athletes do, Corbett in real life faced significant trials with his boxing, especially in training and matches, but the presentation in the film make it seem, in effect, easy. It's obvious that his quest is not to become just a great boxer, but of a higher social class as well. It's his struggle with this that makes up his road of trials.

Campbell points out that for a hero, "the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron" (*Thousand Faces*, 197). This is known as the magic flight, and it serves as the last great action sequence in a hero's quest before his return to the common world. In *Pride of the Yankees* we didn't witness a magic flight because of the tragic death of our hero. In *Gentleman Jim* the magic flight is a full-scale fight between John L. Sullivan and Gentleman Jim. The fight is obviously important in Corbett's career and is also his heroic quest in the film. Indick notes that "often times, a large part of the third act is dedicated to a chase scene in which the action is visibly swift.

In sports movies like *Rocky*, *The Karate Kid*, *Hoosiers*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Victory*, *The Bad News Bears* and many others, the third act is the big game, race fight or competition that is always hurried and action packed” (89). Such is the case in *Gentleman Jim*, where great attention is paid not only to the pre fight hype, but what actually happened during the action sequences of the fight. As the heroic story would have it, Corbett wins in dramatic fashion, landing a final knockout blow to the bigger Sullivan.

The final return is as obvious as the magic flight. Corbett, who is a supernatural hero in the ring, returns to his friends and family in the post round celebration. He becomes one again with his common world. To cap things off a recurring theme signifies that Corbett indeed has returned to his world— “The Corbetts are at it again.”

Gentleman Jim not only provides us with a fit to form example of the hero’s journey, but also exemplifies Mackay-Kallis’ idea of the sacred marriage quest. The ultimate prize for the male hero Corbett is the woman at the end, Ware—as Campbell describes it, is the prize at the end of “the ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome” (*Thousand Faces*, 109). After Corbett successfully beats Sullivan his heroic quest is complete. The embrace and kiss with Ware symbolizes this completion along with satisfying the mythological sacred marriage quest. Mackay-Kallis points out that the hero’s sacred marriage with the female figure at the end often represents a sexual union as well as a spiritual maturation—the final piece of the hero’s maturation process.

Beyond the similarities to a war-time figure, Corbett and Gehrig share American hero traits as well. Corbett comes from an immigrant family from a lower social class, instantly setting him from the elite class and labeling him as an underdog. Corbett differs

in the respect that he is not as much a loner, but instead relies heavily on the attention of others with his fast-talking and social networking. The qualities he has—from the athletic, talented man to the fast talking charming man—are all desirable from an audience perspective. This is key in the creation of a heroic figure. The audience must relate to the character and desire his traits. Again, his geographic and socio-economic background set up the perfect American story of rags to riches. And Corbett delivers, becoming a wonderfully famous and rich professional boxer.

Chapter 3

Brian's Song: Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo

“When they think of him it’s now he died that they remember. But rather how he lived—how he did live.”

—Coach Halas’ monologue in *Brian’s Song* (1971)

Synopsis

The film *Brian’s Song* chronicles the relationship of Chicago Bears teammates Gayle Sayers and Brian Piccolo. The film was originally released November 30, 1971 as a made-for-TV movie on ABC network. Because it was so well received – it won a Golden Globe for best movie made for TV – that it was later released in theaters.

Under the direction of Buzz Kulik, James Caan plays Chicago running back Brian Piccolo opposite Billy Dee Williams who plays Hall of Fame back Gayle Sayers. The story is based on the book written by Gale Sayers himself, “I Am Third”, an autobiography that describes his maturation into one of the greatest running backs in football history and the story of his friendship with fellow Chicago Bears running back Brian Piccolo who died of cancer.

The movie is famously known for it’s ability to evoke strong emotions from the story of a growing friendship between a black man, Gale Sayers, and a white man, Brian Piccolo, which is unfortunately cut short by cancer. The movie introduces the main characters on the training grounds of the Chicago Bears football team during preseason practices. Gale Sayers joined the Chicago Bears after a successful college career at the University of Kansas where he was a two-time All-American. It’s during his rookie

season with Chicago that he is befriended by fellow running back Brian Piccolo. Piccolo played his college football at Wake Forest University where he earned ACC Player of the Year honors in his senior year while leading the nation in rushing yards.

Jack Warden, who plays Coach George Halas, narrates the story, and introduces the dichotomy between Sayers and Piccolo.

“This is a story about two men. One name Gale Sayers the other Brian Piccolo. They came from different parts of the country, and competed for the same job. One was white the other black. One liked to talk a lot, the other was as shy as a 3-year-old. Our story’s about how they came to know each other, fight each other and help each other.” (*Brian’s Song*)

In the film, the initial relationship between Gale and Brian is somewhat rough. The edgy, outgoing personality of Brian Piccolo is a contradiction to the shy, quiet character of Gale Sayers. Because both Sayers and Piccolo are running backs, during training camp they are competing for spots on the team.

Sayers enters training camp as a highly touted rookie, but when placed on a team of veterans, a rookie can feel quite alone. Sayers’ reluctance to befriend the childish, extroverted Brian Piccolo suggests that his loneliness may not be unwanted. But Piccolo’s persistent efforts eventually break down the stoic Sayers. Towards the end of training camp Sayers is called into Coach Halas’ office. Sayers sits nervously, surrounded by heralded veteran player J.C. Caroline, executive Ed McCaskey and Halas himself. Under the presumption that they want Sayers to play a position other than running back, he dips his head low in disappointment. The real truth is that they want Sayers, a black man, to be roommates with the white Brian Piccolo. To the request Sayers responds,

“That’s all?” To Sayers the issue was a no-brainer, a non-factor. Rooming with a white player presented no problem to him. Not being able to play running back? Now that would’ve been a problem. But in all truth, a black player rooming with a white man *was* a big deal. It’d never been done before in the NFL.

Despite the possibility for friction, the two hit it off. Sayers became the starting running back while Piccolo squeezed his way on the team but would not play during his rookie year.

The friendship grows quickly, in part due to a natural attraction, and in part due to the fact that the two players spend most of the entire season together. The selfless Piccolo internally and subtly struggles to get some playing time. His generous actions towards the instantly successful Sayers suggest that he’s more concerned with Sayers than he is himself. Piccolo was on the sideline of every game, cheering Sayers on all the way to the end of the season. When Sayers wins Rookie of the Year honors, Piccolo is right there, helping him prepare his acceptance speech.

The film jumps ahead to 1968, the fourth year Sayers and Piccolo were playing for the Bears. Sayers continued to hold the starting running back spot and was making a name for himself in the NFL. Unfortunately in the ninth game of the season he suffers a massive knee injury against the San Francisco 49ers. The injury forces Sayers to the sidelines for the remainder of the season and Piccolo would take his spot in the starting lineup. The injury, although providing him with a wealth of playing time, was almost as devastating to Piccolo as it was to Sayers. In a moving scene that takes place in the crippled Sayers’ house, Piccolo explains that although he’s earned the number one spot at running back, he’s done so for all the wrong reasons. The true competitiveness and

heroism in Piccolo's character shines brightly in this scene as he explains to Sayers that he will not accept taking the starting role away from Sayers simply because of injury.

“I am going to work your tail off to get that leg back to shape – for my sake”

(Brian's Song).

The two are forced to spend some time apart while Sayers undergoes rehabilitation in Chicago and Piccolo travels with team, having great success. The movie reveals the complex, yet comforting relationship the two have. Sayers is shown limping around Chicago scenery listening to the results of the most recent Bears game, one in which Piccolo earned the game ball. In triumphant symbiotic fashion, Sayers trashes his walking cane, as if to say he will not let this injury keep him off the field any longer. Sayers motivation turns up a notch from here on out, and through the loneliness of rehabilitation and pain, he grinds his way back on to the field. Piccolo has not lost all thought for his old pal Sayers. In fact, it seems that while Piccolo is enjoying the sweet taste of success (or at least some playing time) his thoughts are still on Sayers' recuperation.

The touching development of the friendship between Sayers and Piccolo over the course of the first half of the film only builds up to the sadness Sayers and the audience feel over Piccolo's eventual death. Sayers enters his coach's office before a game when he's told that Brian Piccolo has cancer. He deflates and leans up against the door, using it as a crutch to hold up his almost lifeless body. The normally reserved Sayers addresses his Bears, unable to speak without crying. It's during the hardest times that Sayers reveals how much he truly cares for Piccolo.

When Gale Sayers first visits Piccolo in the hospital James Caan does a wonderful job of portraying the normally energetic Piccolo as a sick and tired cancer patient. As Piccolo's cancer slowly draws the energy from his body, his pride and character stay strong. His positive and, at times, unrealistic attitude is counter balanced with his wife's struggle with facing the simple truth: that her husband will die.

The cancer is aggressive and Piccolo's body doesn't hold up. Doctors are forced to perform surgery after surgery to try to remove the tumor. Piccolo's last moment on the screen is shown with his hand embracing Sayers'. The symbol of hand in hand is not only a symbol of friendship, but of shattering the walls of discrimination.

Brian's Song, which was released in the 70s, obviously lacks the technical advances from which many films today prosper. For a made-for-TV movie, the acting is surprisingly good. Caan's reenactment of the near-death Piccolo is almost difficult to watch. The pain that Sayers feels when holding his dying friend's hand will bring tears to most men's eyes.

The film closes with the narration of Jack Warden (who played Coach Halas) over the slow-motion images of Piccolo and Sayers running together during the off-season. With the poignant theme song from the film, composed by Michael Legrand, Warden attaches a heartwarming statement as the final words of the film: "It's not how he died that they [his family and friends] remember. But rather how he lived, how he did live."

Analysis

Two heroes appear in the mythological structure of *Brian's Song*. Sayers serves as the more typical American hero, while Piccolo is another example of the tragic hero, as in Gehrig's case. Socially, one huge aspect in Sayers' character is that he is a black sports hero, which was important for a film released in 1971. The audience gets little background on his life and how he came to be drafted by the Chicago Bears, but we assume that he has followed the path of the classic American hero. We assume he wasn't born to greatness, but rather worked and earned his way to the starting spot on the Chicago Bears lineup. The layout of Sayers' heroic story is comparable to Campbell's three part hero quest of departure, initiation and return, but the analysis of the film will emphasize Mackay-Kallis' "quest for home" idea. She explains that a departure from home causes a great feeling of loss and provides the motive for the journey "home." In *Brian's Song* the figurative home is the football field. These two special athletes, Piccolo and Sayers, are at their most comfortable state at home on the football field. The attempt to overcome the obstacles that prevent them from being on the football field is what creates an interesting and heroic journey.

In Sayers' case, he experiences success early. As a rookie for the Bears he gets a significant amount of playing time and attention, eventually earning the NFL award for rookie of the year. Sayers immediately, and humbly, takes advantage of his call to adventure when he is given a spot on the team. From there he experiences immediate success thanks to years of hard work. Just as in *Gentleman Jim* and *Pride of the Yankees*, the supernatural power or weapon that Sayers possesses is his uncanny talent as a running back. With this skill he becomes an instant hero. In the case of *Brian's Song*, much of the

attention is placed on the relationship between the two heroes, which in itself creates a heroic journey in itself. Because of this, the heroic quest of both Sayers and Piccolo is less dramatized. As a viewer we see no significant crossing of the first threshold, but instead dive right into the road of trials. For Sayers, his road of trial is his dealing with a season ending knee injury. The montage of scenes as Sayers recuperates after the injury is a wonderful example of how sports films display the heroes' overcoming of the road of trials. Often backed by inspirational music, the film displays successive images of pain and suffering that eventually led not to the failure of the hero, but rather to the victory over a long road of tribulations. Through hard work Sayers eventually finds his way back to his home, the football field. The battle he fights is against no villain other than the injury itself. We witness no magic flight, but the return to home is inspirational, and successful, as Sayers continued his storied career after his knee injury.

Piccolo's hero quest is much more complicated, and differs greatly from Sayers. Their home is the same—the football field. Piccolo is more obviously at a disadvantage when it comes to talent and ability. His quest to victory lies at the hands of pure hard work, and little supernatural talent. This may also be why Piccolo ends up suffering death and is the tragic hero. His main obstacle is not a knee injury, but a fatal sickness which removes him from the football field. He struggles during the road of trials but the hope remains. He once mentions his plans to return to the field by being a kicker, instead of a running back. But tragically the obstacle he faces is cancer, and it ultimately takes his life. Just as a classic tragic hero would, Piccolo suffers more than he deserves and is handed pain and death despite his heroic qualities.

The larger heroic quest, and maybe the more important one is the development of the friendship between Piccolo and Sayers. It relates to any heroic quest, even that of a sports figure, in terms of its structure, but varies greatly in the obstacles and credentials for success. Both Sayers and Piccolo act as heroes in this journey, the call to adventure being the proposition by Coach Halas that they share a room during team travel. As presented in the film, no black player had ever shared a room with a white player before Sayers and Piccolo. The two exude heroic confidence in each other and accept the adventure without hesitation. The crossing of the first threshold is implied and not entirely acted out. It serves as a realization of how significant this quest is. Piccolo and Sayers realize, when the media point it out, that a black man and a white man sharing a room in the NFL was a socially controversial and important move. Although it's not displayed, the audience imagines that both Piccolo and Sayers understand the relevance of the situation, but happily move along. The return of the heroes is marked by the magic flight, when the two are faced with the obstacle of Sayers' injury. Instead of the possibility of jealousy and hatred, the two fight through to remain friends and from the obstacle grow stronger. The final return is marked by the enjoyment of the successful return of Sayers from his injury, most notably in the run through the park the two share. Just as the two are completing their heroic quest of friendship, and preparing to return to the common world and live from their heroic experience, Piccolo gets sick. The two immediately embark on another journey that is cut short with the death of Piccolo.

Sayers' character follows the already apparent pattern of the American sports hero—he's quiet, humble, hard working, successful and individualistic. Piccolo, on the other hand, falls more along the lines of a Corbett-like hero—one that is more of a fast

talker, with greater charm, but still admirable. The qualities most present in Sayers and Piccolo are their work ethic and stubbornness. Americans identify with the idea of earning what you get, which in turn requires hard work for success. It's these qualities in Piccolo and Sayers that American culture wants to identify with. It's these qualities that help shape these two men as perfect examples of the American sports hero.

Chapter 4

Victory: Escape to Heroism

“Hatch, if we run now, we lose more than a game.”

—Pelé as Luis Fernandez in *Victory* (1981)

Synopsis

John Huston’s film *Victory* is a quintessential example of sport and heroism. The tagline for the film is “now is the time for heroes.” Released in 1981, *Victory* depicts an intense soccer match during World War II between a German Nazi team and a team composed of allied prisoners of war. Playing the heroes on the allied prisoners’ team are actors Sylvester Stallone, Michael Caine and Pelé.

We open at night, on the grounds of a prisoner camp. As a prisoner attempts to escape through the barbed wire he’s met with attack dogs and shot down by guards. The audience gets a better understanding of the situation over the course of the next few minutes as the camera reveals the war time situations—streets lined with gunmen—as a caravan of two cars arrives at the rather desolate German prisoner camp. A small group of Germans is in attendance to inspect the conditions of the prisoners. Among the group is Major Karl Von Steiner, played by Max von Sydow. While on the grounds, Von Steiner approaches a group of prisoners playing soccer. We first see Stallone’s character, U.S.A. Army Captain Robert Hatch, and meet Caine’s character, English Captain John Colby. During Von Steiner’s and Colby’s conversation it is revealed that Colby was a British soccer player before the war gobbled up his career. He’s now forced to organize and play in a small league of prisoners.

The next day, Von Steiner approaches Colby and proposes that Colby's team play a match against a group of German officers. At first, Colby seems hesitant but after negotiating he realizes he can get new soccer clothing and double food rations for his players and himself. Meanwhile, Hatch approaches English Colonel Waldron, played by Daniel Massey. Waldron serves as the head of the inner camp escape committee, one that tries to help prisoners escape the camp. Hatch proposes a rather detailed escape plan that involves his leaving during the prisoners' shower time. Waldron, his committee and Hatch go on to discuss the details.

Later Colby holds a tryout to organize a team of the best players. During the tryouts we meet several of the international prisoners who at one point played professional soccer in Europe. The athletic looking American Hatch is also trying out, but has clearly never played soccer. Among the other players who are given spots on the team is Brazilian Corporal Luis Fernandez, played by world famous soccer player Pelé. Hatch is persistent in his attempts to get on the team, but Colby won't even consider him because of his obvious lack of skill. Colby and Von Steiner meet again to discuss the specifics of the match. It turns out that the idea of the soccer match was well received by German authorities and the game is now to take place in a large stadium in France. Colby begins a recruitment process, organizing former professional soccer players who are now international prisoners of war and bringing them into his camp to be part of the Allied soccer team.

Meanwhile, Hatch's escape preparations continue—he studies the timing of the guard changes, takes fake passport pictures and creates a fake French identity. Unfortunately, part of his escape plan was based on the presence of two guards—two

guards that were reassigned to watching over the soccer team. Hatch's plan was essentially ruined. So, after previously quitting his attempts to join the team, Hatch shows up in the team's barracks hoping to act as team trainer. Colby hesitantly accepts. The team eventually comes together and begins training. They receive boxes of new practice and game clothing, including shirts, shoes, shorts and socks. Bill Conti's wonderful composed soundtrack backs images of the team stretching, training, running, practicing and working hard. The most exciting of the highlights involve Pelé's fantastic dribbling and shooting tricks. Colby, the acting coach, organizes the practices, showing them techniques and diagramming plays.

Hatch again meets with Waldron to discuss the escape and it's here that Waldron requests that, after his escape, Hatch head to Paris to contact the French resistance and help organize the escape of the Colby and his soccer team. Hatch accepts although he is disappointed that the soccer team has again found a way to make his escape plans more difficult. Hatch says somewhat jokingly, "This freaking game is wrecking my life."

Later, in the shower, Hatch begins the escape. While Colby distracts a few of the guards, Hatch climbs up some poles and ledges to the top of the shower room. He pries open a vent that leads into an unguarded storage room. From there he waits for dark. A dressed mannequin takes his place at role call, successfully fooling the guards. Hatch times his exit from the storage room and climbs onto the roof of the building. He cuts through the barbed wire, slides under and makes his way to one of the officer's cars. He clings onto the side of the car as it exits the campground. The escape is a success. Hatch's next move is to hop on a train at a nearby station using his false French name and passport. He does so successfully and arrives in Paris where he navigates his way to a

French safe house. Hatch, along with the some French allies, orchestrates a plan to help the soccer team. The only twist is that in order for the plan to work, Hatch must return to camp to serve as a contact. Again, the soccer game has changed Hatch's escape plans — he now must return to the prisoner camp from which he just escaped.

Upon Hatch's return to the camp, he is put in solitary confinement. The only way the escape plan can work is if Hatch makes the trip to Paris with the team. Colby's plan to get him out of confinement and back on the team is to play him as goalkeeper. The current goalkeeper, Tony Lewis, intentionally has his arm broken so that the allied team's only available goalkeeper is now Hatch. The plan works. Von Steiner allows Hatch to join the team, and they head off to Paris for the match. As fans arrive at the game, the allied team dresses and prepares for the game and the French escape team climbs their way into the sewer to navigate directly under the visiting team locker room. From there the allied team will climb into the sewer system and make their escape. This is to happen after the first half of the game.

The crowd is made up of French locals who, of course, cheer heavily against the German team. From the start the referees are obviously in favor of the German team. Despite great efforts by the allied team, the Germans take an early 4 to 0 lead, injuring two of the allied players including their star, Fernandez. In the closing moments of the first half, the allied team, bloodied and overplayed, makes a dramatic charge down the field and scores a goal, igniting the crowd and raising the hopes for the team.

At halftime, the allied team is in the locker room when their French rescue team breaks through, opening a hole into the sewer. Hatch quickly explains their rescue plan and the team begins to climb their way to freedom. As the players make their way down,

several of them protest the escape, saying they still have a chance to win the game. Colby and the rest of the players are insistent upon going back and trying to beat the Germans. Hatch, who's already missed several escape chances because of this "freaking soccer game," as he says, urges them to continue with the escape plan. It's Fernandez' words that eventually convince Hatch to return to the field with the allied team. "Hatch, if we run now, we lose more than a game."

The allied team returns to the field to the great applause of the French crowd and the surprise of Waldron, who expected the escape had gone off according to plan. With renewed hope and spirit, the allies raise their play and score early in the half. Hatch, who was once a useless soccer player, is now in the game making miraculous diving saves, keeping the allies' hopes of winning alive. They manage to score yet another goal, closing the gap to just one. After an equalizing goal was denied by the corrupt referees, Fernandez returns to the game obviously ailing from his injury. His fancy dribbling and passing move the ball down the field. He passes to the outside and after a centering pass in front of the Germans goal, Fernandez rises in the air and performs a miraculous backwards bicycle kick sending the ball into the goal for the tying score. A dramatic play that encourages even Von Steiner to stand and cheer. At the very end of the game, with the score tied, the allies incur a penalty in their own goal box. The German team is now afforded a penalty kick with the game on the line. The German player meets face to face with Hatch. One kick will determine the outcome of the game. The whole crowd and allied team watch as Hatch prepares to defend the penalty kick. In a dramatic dive, Hatch lays himself out and successfully blocks the goal. The game is over, tied at 4. The crowd cheers wildly and thousands of fans rush the field despite the preventive attempts of

German soldiers. The local French fans rush to the players, stripping them of their uniforms and covering them with coats, hats, sweaters to disguise them from the guards. The team successfully rushes their way out of the stadium, escaping from the guards with not only a tied game, but with freedom as well.

Analysis

Of all the films analyzed in this thesis — *Pride of the Yankees*, *Gentleman Jim*, *Brian's Song*, *Victory*, *Hoosiers* and *The Greatest Game Ever Played* — *Victory* is the most fictional.. Some of the movies alter history in order to improve the heroic and entertainment qualities. In *Victory* the inspiration is a true story, but the plot of the film is probably a departure from the truth, which is actually hard to come by regarding this great soccer game of the WWII era. The myth that developed over the years saw the game as a “death match.” Ukraine at the time was part of German occupied territory. Among the many Ukrainian prisoners in the German camps were members of the professional soccer team Dynamo Kiev. One story goes like this: The Dynamo Kiev team was corralled and ordered to play against a German all-star team for entertainment value. The poorly fed, imprisoned Dynamo team managed to make a game of it in the first half. German officials applauded their efforts, but warned them that if they beat the German all-star team they would be shot to death. They continued to play well and ended up winning. Almost immediately after the game the team was brought together and each one shot. This myth of the “death match” seems to have grown out of proportion. A more accurate picture of the story was published in Andy Dougan’s novel *Dynamo: Defending*

the Honour of Kiev. According to the Web site theglobalgame.com, Dougan's book explains that the Dynamo Kiev team played several matches against several different opponents. At one point they did beat a German team but there were no deadly reprisals. The Web site points out that some of the players on the team may have in fact died at Babi Yar, a ravine in Kiev that was the site of a massacre of many prisoners and civilians by the Nazis during World War II.

In *Victory* there is no threat of death, and the team is composed of international allies. In comes Robert Hatch, a United States captain and prisoner of war in the German camp. Hatch is our American sports hero. He is a bit of an outcast and loner in camp. A group of the prisoners band together and play soccer on a team headed by English captain John Colby. Hatch's attempt at mixing in with the soccer players usually fails because of his lack of soccer skill. In the story, Hatch exemplifies many of the standout qualities of the American hero. First and foremost is that Hatch really is a soldier. We saw in several of the previously analyzed films that the American hero often stands in as a representation of the soldier. In *Victory*, Hatch is our sports hero and American soldier at the same time. Among Hatch's other heroic qualities is the fact that he does not start off as a hero. It is not obvious that he is destined to be a soccer hero, most obviously because he's not even very good. This feature of the American hero is mentioned by Indick in *Movies and the Mind*: "The key to the hero's adventure is that the protagonist is not a hero in the beginning — he must become a hero through the process of his journey" (72). After earning a spot on the team as a goalie, he serves as the hero at the end of the game against the Germans with a fantastic diving save to end the game.

The heroic quest for home is most literally displayed in *Victory* in comparison with other films analyzed. The allied soccer team is on a quest for freedom—more specifically a quest for their home. In Colby’s case it’s England; in Fernandez’s case it’s Brazil; and in Hatch’s case it’s the United States. The initial attempt for freedom is through escape, which seems to be perfect for the soccer team, which is traveling out of the camp to Paris. But as the soccer team is just about to go along with their escape procedures, they face a serious call to adventure. Their quest all of a sudden involves more than just reaching freedom, but rather, reaching freedom in the most heroic way possible. Their job is much more than to just play the game, but it is to try to win the game for themselves and the French fans who support them. For Hatch, who seems intent on skipping the second half and escaping, there is a serious reluctance to play. Eventually he submits and returns to the field with the team. The reception from the crowd acknowledges that this is not the same team in the first half—they returned from the locker rooms as heroes.

In many ways Hatch has already endured his road of trials during his stay at the prisoner camp. Although he doesn’t realize it, the soccer game is his quest for heroism. Through much of the film Hatch comments on how this particular game against the German’s is “wrecking” his life. He faces even more trials during the first half of the game when the German team kicks him, bullies him and draws blood. Hatch feels as though he’s endured enough simply by the fact that the existence of this game ruined several of his escape plans. The fact that during the play he was beaten and bloodied seems too much. But the hero that Hatch is can’t deny the opportunity for total greatness. As soon as the second half begins the audience witnesses a classic “magic flight” scene.

The superhuman play of the allied team's Fernandez helps them pick away at the German team's lead. The final and most important part of the game lies on the American hero's shoulders. Hatch and the team return to mortal existence instantly as the fans rush in, helping them escape and signifying the heroes' final return.

Hatch has qualities that are in line with an obvious patterned American sports hero. Most notable is his persistence and hard work. At first he's denied any chance to be on the team but eventually earns his way on. Many of the heroes so far discussed mirror the "down but not out" situation that Hatch finds himself in. Of course, at the end our hero prevails. There is a love story too but it is much less significant than those found in *Gentleman Jim*, *Pride of the Yankees*, *Hoosiers* and *The Greatest Game Ever Played*. Nonetheless, one of Hatch's quests as a hero is to be free to talk with women—he mentions this after his first escape. Accordingly he and his love interest embrace after the soccer game is over, marking the completion of his heroic quest. Not only does Hatch have the work ethic and attitude shared by many American sports hero icons, but he embraces perhaps the single most important aspect of the classic American sports hero: he is an underdog. Consistently through the films studied, the hero finds himself in situations where he is an underdog. Hatch is on the underdog allied soccer team and also an underdog because of the low expectations of his skill level. No wonder Sylvester Stallone made such a good Rocky Balboa.

Chapter 5

Hoosiers: Small Town, Big Heroes

“Let’s win this game for all the small schools that never had a chance to get here.”

—Merle Webb (Kent Poole) in *Hoosiers* (1986)

Synopsis

Hoosiers is a wonderful cinematic presentation of a true Indiana basketball story—a story that originally found its way into the hearts of true hoosiers across the state of Indiana, and has since become a staple of all basketball fans country wide. The film depicts the emotional come from behind story of Hickory High School basketball team lead by volatile retreat coach Norman Dale, played by Gene Hackman.

The classic tale of redemption sets off with its heroic theme song as Dale drives his car through the lonely farmland of 1951 Indiana. The normally dull scenery of the flat Indiana landscape is beautifully portrayed in an early morning sun, its character highlighted by young boys shooting baskets to a hoop attached to a weathered barn. The first scene paints the picture of Indiana with about all it has to offer: farmland and basketball.

Dale, a former college coach whose volatile instability lost him his previous job and marred his reputation, steps a few notches down on the coaching ladder and accepts a job at a relatively unsuccessful small town high school. Dale, who’s not coached for 12 years, has been given this second chance by the principal of the high school, with whom he shares a friendship from years past. He faces significant resentment when trying to fit

into the tightly knit town and he gets his first taste of this when he meets fellow Hickory schoolteacher Myra Fleener, played by Barbara Hershey.

“This is where it all happens,” the coach says as he brings Dale into the gymnasium.

The home court for the Hickory team was filmed in the gym now known as The Historic Hoosier gym, which sits in Knightstown, Indiana. The success of the touching little Indiana basketball story has turned Knightstown’s gym into a state landmark. It’s in this gym that Dale first sets eyes on Hickory’s basketball star, Jimmy Chitwood. Dale unfortunately learns that since the passing of the previous coach, Chitwood has vowed not to play. As the principal puts it, “the coach was kind of like an old man to him.”

The next scene Dale is surrounded by a group of men, all from Hickory, all supporters and followers of the Hickory Husker basketball team. It serves as just another example of how obsessive a small Indiana town can be when it comes to basketball. In the smoke-filled barbershop, Dale is hit left and right with tough questions about his volatile past and absence in coaching. The group’s attempt at being cordial comes off quite brash.

“This town doesn’t like change much, so we thought we’d get together here tonight and show you how we do things here,” says one of the men.

But as the stiff group tries to impose their will, Dale reveals his tough character, kindly smiles at their backhanded remarks and leaves gracefully, leaving the group of men displeased with the meeting.

George, one of the men in the barbershop (Fleener refers to them as the “boys”), had taken the role as an interim coach. When Dale walks into the gym for his first

practice with the team, he finds George already running a scrimmage. After the abrasive meeting between the “boys” and Dale earlier, it’s obvious the two sides won’t be getting along. Dale attempts to keep things friendly, but his imposing character and stubborn will won’t allow. George ends up leaving practice in a fit, shouting back obscenities to Dale as he walks out.

It’s in this first practice that we see Dale’s aggressive coaching tactics in action. After his first few minutes in the gym he kicks one of the players out. In a sequence of camera shots Dale has the players doing team drills, including running up and down the court, dribbling around chairs and passing back and forth to each other. The rigorous work provokes one of the players to remark that the practice “ain’t no fun,” to which Dale responds:

“My practices aren’t designed for your enjoyment.”

In the next scene, Dennis Hopper’s character, Shooter, stumbles his way into a diner, running into Coach Dale and the principal, Cletus. This is where the viewer first witnesses Shooter’s troubled life, obviously marred from alcoholism. After being introduced to Dale, Shooter tells the story of his near-heroics when he played basketball in high school. Shooter, unshaven and dressed poorly, proceeds to ask Cletus for some “small change.” Everett Flatch, Shooter’s son, wanders over dressed in his varsity basketball letter jacket and confronts his hopeless father, making him return the change he just received. The troubles between the drunkard, Shooter, and his son Everett, serve as an interesting sub-plot through the film.

When Dale approaches Chitwood he is instantly warned by Fleener to keep his distance. Fleener looks after Chitwood, whose mother is sick and whose father passed

away. The two decided that it's best if Chitwood focuses on academics rather than basketball. As soon as Dale makes an attempt to get to know the young man, Fleener is right there, quick to warn Dale and unveil her disapproval for "men like him" as she says.

An obviously nervous Dale attempts to get his players to adhere to his strict method in their first game of the season. The players slowly get angry and less willing to play in Dale's style, and the townsmen, or the "boys," sympathize with the players' dissension and end up storming in the locker room at half time. After a disappointing loss, Dale addresses his players in the locker room, making it clear that his methods will not change and it's up to them if they want to stick around.

Over the next few scenes Dale gets closer to two important characters in the film: Fleener and Shooter. After a brash first few run-ins with Fleener, who is overprotective of Chitwood, the two share some more personal stories and an obvious connection is born. The loveable, yet sad, Shooter makes his way to Dale's house the night before an away game at Cedar Knob. In his visit to the house, Shooter reveals not only his vast knowledge of basketball, but also an off the wall personality obviously affected by alcoholism.

Dale's character is a complex one. On the basketball court he seems volatile, unfriendly and unappealing. During the course of the season he makes a habit of arguing calls and getting ejected. A more noble and sympathetic side shines through when he makes an attempt to help out troubled Shooter by offering to make him an assistant coach under the condition that he no longer drinks. At first Shooter is embarrassed and angry at Dale's attempt to sober him up, but Shooter takes advantage of the offer and arrives at the next game clean shaven, in a suit, nervous and sober. It's in this game that Dale again

gets ejected and hands his playbook to Shooter, announcing that he'll take over. Dale makes his way out of the Hickory gym, getting boos and things thrown at him from his home crowd — a crowd that has issued a petition requesting a referendum on Dale's removal as basketball coach.

At a town meeting, where his future will be determined, Dale stands among the town citizens, most of them seated in the pews of the church they are in. He voices his defense: "I was hired to teach the boys the game of basketball and I did that to the best of my ability. I apologize for nothing. You may not be pleased with the results but I am. I'm very proud of these boys." It's in the next moments of this scene that a great turnaround for Dale and the team occurs. On the brink of being voted out of the coaching position, Chitwood walks into the church to everyone's surprise. Chitwood, who's been absent all season dealing with the loss of the last coach, makes the announcement that he'll come back to play, but only if Dale stays. This humble Indiana town revolves around high school basketball, which makes Chitwood a town hero. After the surprise announcement, it's decided: Coach stays.

Chitwood's return sparks a dramatic turnaround of the Hickory team. The classic theme song for *Hoosiers* plays in the background as highlights of the newly successful team gets win after win. Not only is the team having success but so is Dale and his attempt to reform Shooter's bad habits. This, unfortunately, comes to an end at the Sectional Finals game. Shooter stumbles onto the court, drunk, during the middle of the game causing a fistfight to break out between Shooter's son and another player. The distraction is still not enough to derail Hickory from winning the sectional championship.

Shooter ends up in the hospital where, during a visit from Dale, is clearly struggling from the effects of withdrawal from alcohol.

After the sectional championship comes the regional championship — the last step before the state finals. Coach Dale provides his players with an inspirational pre-game speech before they head onto the court clapping and cheering. The game is hard fought and close all the way down to the wire. Near the end of the game, Hickory player Buddy Walker fouls out of the game and is forced to the bench. The only player left on the small Hickory lineup that can enter the game is Ollie McClellan, the undersized and unconfident eighth man on the team. His nervousness is instantly obvious in the game — the first time he touches the ball he dribbles it right off his foot and out of bounds. The opposing team, the Wildcats, manage to claw their way back from a three point deficit with just one minute remaining. A Wildcat jump-shot cuts the lead to just one point, and they end up intentionally fouling little McClellan, whose underhand free throw attempt ends up a good two feet short. The Wildcats proceed to make another basket taking a one point lead with just 10 seconds remaining. The Huskers bring the ball down the court and after a near steal the ball ends up in the hands of McClellan who launches up a shot that barely misses. To their fortune, however, the Wildcat defender fouls McClellan, sending him to the free throw line for two shots and a chance to win the game. McClellan's small frame is overwhelmed by not only the screaming fans and cheerleaders, but also by the pressure of the situation. On the line is the chance to go to the state finals, or as they say in the film, "go all the way." The first free throw goes in. Game tied. McClellan hoists the second attempt and it hits of the back of the rim and falls through the hoop. The

Wildcats last shot attempt is off the mark and McClellan is lifted in the air by teammates and fans.

From the high energy of the game the film cuts to a calm, and obviously cold, winter day where Dale and Freener take a walk around the uninspiring Indiana cornfields. It's on this walk that Freener confronts Dale with the volatile incident from years ago that temporarily ended his coaching career. Dale had lost his temper and hit one of his players. Instead of making excuses Dale offers that he can't explain what happened, and that he only regrets it. The walk gets even more personal when Dale and Freener embrace and kiss. The acting from both Hackman and Hershey is wonderful throughout the film, but the embrace and kiss in this one scene seems awkward — most likely from the fact that the wrinkles Hackman is almost twenty years older than the young-looking Hershey.

Hoosiers is a true basketball movie, but Dennis Hoppers' performance is fantastic enough to bring a good amount of focus on his character's battles with alcoholism and a shattered relationship with his son Everett. Shooter's most emotional scene occurs shortly before the state championship game. Everett visits his father in the hospital, to find him improving, yet admittedly still struggling with the effects of withdrawal. As Shooter sobers up he sees more clearly how important his son is to him and how much he loves him. Everett, obviously proud of his father's attempts to get healthy, tells him they'll get a house together in a couple of months, as soon as he's out of the hospital. The realization that Shooter is slowly gaining control of his life and rekindling his relationship with his son brings him to tears. He exhibits a mixed bag of emotions because at the same time, the die-hard basketball fan inside of him is excited that Hickory is going to the state finals. "No school this small has ever been in a state championship," Shooter yells.

The Husker team arrives at the Butler Fieldhouse where the championship game will be played and, upon realization that the building is exponentially larger than their gym in Hickory, their jaws drop to the floor. The story of the championship game is presented on the radio as the “hoosier-land version of the Cinderella story.” What is so dramatically different between the two teams is that compared to Hickory’s student enrollment of 64, their opponent, South Bend Central has an enrollment 2,800. Images of families and people, including Shooter in his hospital bed, are shown listening to the radio broadcast of what is called the “game of the century.” The game starts off as many suspected — despite a charge of emotion in the locker the Huskers find themselves in a hole early, down 10 points with 6 minutes remaining in the first half. Good shooting from Chitwood energizes the team to narrow the deficit and bring the Huskers back close to the South Bend Central Bears. With just 30 seconds remaining, the Bears throw a bad inbounds pass and Chitwood steals it, makes a layup, and ties the game at 40. On the very next possession the Huskers make another miraculous steal and call a timeout. With just 19 seconds left, Hickory takes the ball down the court and instantly passes it to their star, Chitwood. He stands patiently about 30 feet from the basket. With five seconds remaining he drives down the right side of the court, pulls up for a jump-shot and as time expires the ball goes in. Hickory wins. Players and fans rush the court, picking Chitwood up on their shoulders. The camera cuts to shots of Shooter screaming in joy in his hospital bed, the South Bend team in agony and local fans, including Fleener, cheering out of excitement.

The final scene emphasizes how legendary a story *Hoosiers* really is. A young boy is in the Hickory gym shooting baskets as Dale’s voice echoes magically in the air. The camera travels slowly up toward a framed picture overlooking the now historic

basketball court. It's Coach Dale and his 8-man roster, posed in front of their state championship trophy. Memorable lines of Dale's continue to echo through the gym, and as the picture fades to black we're left with sound of Dale telling his players, "I love you guys."

Analysis

Hoosiers is a unique heroic tale in that it has more than one hero. There are at least two heroes and potentially three. Coach Norman Dale is the most interesting and remarkable hero of them all. His heroic journey follows the pattern as presented by Campbell, but his characteristics differ from the classic American sports hero. Instead he more resembles the classic Byronic hero. Jimmy Chitwood could also be classified as a hero but the audience is left without a complete telling of his tale. Finally, the Hickory Husker team as a whole is a heroic figure—one that inspires the entire town.

Dale's heroic journey begins with a chance at redemption. It's this issue of redemption that marks him as an example of the Byronic hero. The most defining characteristics of Dale are that he is a loner and from out of town. Coming into the small town of Hickory, he is an outcast. A real Byronic element to his character is his troubled past. Dale comes into the system that defines the lives and ways of the Hickory population. He quickly dismisses any intention to follow previous plans and institutes his own methods of leadership. A strong parallel can be drawn between Dale and the typical Byronic hero as defined in Atara Stein's book *The Byronic Hero in Film, Fiction and Television*. "The Byronic hero is an outlaw and an outsider who defines his own moral

code, often defying oppressive institutional authority, and is able to do so because of his superhuman or supernatural powers, his self-sufficiency and independence, and his egotistical sense of his own superiority” (8). Dale’s superiority and supernatural powers are not at first visible, but after leading a team to an unexpected championship his superiority becomes apparent. However, from the start Dale seems plenty confident in himself, which results in a good deal of dissension between Dale and the community and the basketball team. In many ways Dale’s character is unlikable. His brash behavior, tattered reputation and stubbornness make it hard to view him as a hero. But as his journey moves along his superiority becomes admirable and not detestable. “Such heroes appeal to a wide audience. No matter how democratic our own impulses, there is still something satisfying about the fantasy of the all-powerful leader who will serve us as protector and guide” (Stein, 4).

Dale’s ultimate heroic quest is a journey of redemption. He immediately submits to his call to adventure, even showing up at the job earlier than his boss, principal Cletus, expected. Dale’s great leap into the journey, or the crossing of the first threshold, is obvious. Before his first official game he stands just off the basketball court and says to himself, “Welcome to Indiana basketball.” This is Dale’s acknowledgment that he has entered a potentially difficult quest and certainly a whole new world. There is a lack of any supernatural presence or aid during Dale’s heroic departure stage. It does however arrive in the initiation stage, after the road of trials. For Dale his greatest trials come in the form of lost games, frustrated fans and uninterested players. He struggles through all these hardships during the first few weeks. The suffering is obvious but Dale, the Byronic hero, refuses to believe that he can’t overcome the difficulties, and he remains confident

in his superiority. His greatest trial comes in the form of a town meeting to vote him out of his position as coach. He addresses the crowd in great Byronic manner, refusing to apologize for his lack of success, presenting an air of confidence and superiority. Just as he is about to succumb to the vote of the community, he receives aid from the supernatural. In this case the superhero is Jimmy Chitwood, the town's star basketball player. Chitwood agrees to rejoin the team if Dale stays.

From here the heroic journey of Dale, Chitwood and the team come together. The three heroic units of the story mold beautifully as they pursue their quest, which is the state championship. The magic flight portion of the heroic return is beautifully represented in *Hoosiers*. As mentioned earlier, the magic flight is the final action scene, in this case the state championship. The hero in this case is the Hickory Husker team, battling the big city South Bend Central villain. An interesting and very important cultural aspect of *Hoosiers* becomes apparent at this point. The Husker team comes from a small Indiana town, a population with a huge majority of whites. In the final battle scene, the state championship basketball game, their opponent and villain is a team of mostly black players. In *Contesting Identities*, Aaron Baker says this: "A nostalgic basketball film like *Hoosiers* shows a time before black culture became a common response to white anxiety over identity. Instead it celebrates small-town Indiana basketball and the values of homogeneity and community cohesion. An all-black team from the city becomes the threatening Other that must be defeated in the climactic contest in order to reaffirm the traditional white values that matter in this film" (33). The Huskers do finally win after a fast paced dramatic final match victory, and a triumphant celebration ensues for the victorious small-town and white basketball community. The

heroic quest pattern is followed closely, but there is an obvious cultural reflection of not only the time of the film, but the location: small-town Indiana.

Hoosiers illustrates some important features of heroism in sports film. The heroic journey on which Dale and his team travel is a wonderful example of how Campbell's heroic pattern can fit into the story of a modern day hero. More importantly, the *Hoosiers* story was altered from truth to fit the heroic pattern. This alteration of the truth is frequently done in film to increase entertainment value, and in many sports films it's done to increase the value of the story. For *Hoosiers* some very significant changes were made. First and foremost is the character of Dale. In truth, the underdog team that eventually won the title was from the small town of Milan, Indiana. The real coach's first year was indeed the year that they made a victorious charge to the state finals. His past was nothing like that of Dale's. His name was Marvin Wood, and in his first year at Milan as coach he was just 24 years old and only 2 years out of college. As described by his former players on the *Hoosiers* DVD extras, he rarely raised his voice. It's obvious that Dale's Byronic characteristics were employed to increase the drama of the story and create a more fitting centerpiece of the heroic journey. Chitwood is the theatrical version of the Milan star named Bobby Plump. There are great differences between the two. Chitwood is displayed as the quiet, humble and at times "lost" hero. On the court his demeanor stays constant and he rarely speaks. Plump, despite sharing similar basketball talents to the on-screen Chitwood, was a fast-talking, confident, and at times arrogant teenager. In the *Hoosiers* DVD extras, David Anspaugh, director of *Hoosiers*, says this of the comparison: "Our Jimmy Chitwood and the real Bobby Plump couldn't be more different."

The last most notable alteration of the truth is the relationship between Dale and schoolteacher Myra Fleener. Again, the developing relationship between the two satisfies the important heroic element known as the sacred marriage quest. Just as the character Virginia Ware symbolized the culmination of James J. Corbett's heroic quest in *Gentleman Jim* (1942), Fleener symbolizes the completion of Dale's journey. Her character in real life, although perhaps inspired by some true events, did not exist. She was planted for dramatic and heroic effect.

Chapter 6

The Greatest Game Ever Played: Francis Ouimet

“And if Mr. Ouimet wins tomorrow it’s because he’s the best—because of who he is. Not who his father was, not how much money he’s got but because of who he bloody is.”

— Harry Vardon (Stephen Dillane) in *The Greatest Game Ever Played*

Synopsis

The words “This is a true story” flash across the first screen in *The Greatest Game Ever Played*. In director Bill Paxton’s third film, he chronicles the story of Francis Ouimet’s U.S. Open victory in 1913. The camera pans across the landscape of the Isle of Jersey, England, in 1879. It drops back to reveal a small cottage where the Vardon family lives. Young Harry Vardon wakes up to the sight of four tall men dressed in black with tall black 10 gallon hats. The men explain to him that a golf course is being built on his land. Vardon, oblivious to what golf is, is told it’s a gentleman’s game, and not for the likes of him.

We cut to Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1900 where a young Francis Ouimet finds a Vardon Flyer golf ball on the course while caddying. His interest in Vardon is instantly sparked by this find, and an encouraging mother takes him to downtown Boston to see Vardon in a public appearance. It’s here that Vardon and Ouimet have their first meeting. During a presentation Ouimet accepts Vardon’s request for a volunteer and hits his first golf shot with some advice from the noble Vardon.

We learn more about Vardon after he wins the U.S. Open. On his return to London, he is hopeful for a membership invitation to a prestigious golf club. No golf

professional had ever before been offered a membership to a club. As he sits in the office with the club personnel he is gravely disappointed that they don't want to invite him to be a member, but would rather have him work for them. For Vardon, who grew up poor, the voice of the man in black echoes through his head: "Golf is a game played by gentleman. Not for the likes of you."

We cut back to Boston, where Ouimet is much older now. His mother, played by Marnie McPhail, is woken by the sounds of Ouimet putting a golf ball across his wooden floor. In the morning, Mrs. Ouimet proudly pastes a newspaper clipping with the headline, "Ouimet wins public high school championship." The older Ouimet, played by Shia LeBeouf, is still a caddie at the Brookline Country Club. One member, Ted Hastings, shows an interest in his talent and, breaking the club caddie rules, he invites Ouimet to play a round with him. Ouimet leaves a good impression, encouraging the member to help him apply for sponsorship from the club to qualify for the U.S. Amateur Championship. The arrogant club officials refuse to sponsor him, but Ouimet, with the support of Hastings, needs only to muster up \$50 to apply for himself. Ouimet's father, played by Elias Koteas, reluctantly loans Ouimet the money to apply, but not without a deal. If Ouimet does not qualify, his father requires him to quit golf and begin earning an "honest wage." The tension between Ouimet father and son is obvious. Mr. Ouimet's disapproval of his golf aspirations is counter-balanced by the unending encouragement of his mother.

Ouimet's considerable likeness to Vardon becomes more apparent in his pursuit of golf. Because he comes from a poor family and is the caddie at the Country Club, the wealthier gentlemen who make up the golfing crowd look down upon Ouimet—this

especially rings true in his pursuit of the U.S. Amateur. Ouimet finds comfort in studying golf, where he focuses his attention entirely on Vardon's book about golf. In Ouimet's U.S. Amateur qualifying pursuit he plays well. With a short putt to qualify on the last hole he sees his father watching in the distance. The putt fails to go in, not only taking away Ouimet's chance of qualifying, but, because of his father's orders, forcing him to quit the game he loves. Ouimet finds a job in nearby Boston miserably working in a sports retail store. He's interrupted one day by Hastings and the president of the United States Golf Association, Robert Watson. The two arrive with an invitation to qualify for the U.S. Open, which is being played in Brookline, at The Country Club. After some hesitation, Ouimet accepts, not being able to pass up the urge to play in the Open against his idol Vardon. In the qualifying round Ouimet birdies his last six holes to qualify for the U.S. Open.

The night before the Open starts, Ouimet is confronted by his father who threatens to kick him out of the house. Ouimet shows up the next day and his only option for a caddy is an extremely short, but humorous, fifth grader named Eddie Lowery. Lowery's support helps Ouimet find himself in 5th place after one round. Part of the way through the second round Ouimet birdies a hole to climb to within one stroke of lead. President Taft makes an appearance and Ouimet's control over his nerves falters, resulting in a few bad holes in a row. Again, Lowery's advice helps Ouimet regain his focus and continue his great play. The tale that begins to unfold is that the tournament is a battle between the Americans and the British. On the American side is defending U.S. Open champion, John McDermott, and Ouimet. The Brit's battling it out are Ted Ray and, of course, Harry Vardon.

Round three is played in heavy rain, making the conditions much tougher.

McDermott clearly begins to struggle while Ouimet continues to hang near the top of the leader board with solid play in the rain. At the end of the day Vardon, Ray and Ouimet are in first, second and third place respectively. As Ouimet continues to perform well he gains the support of the American crowd, the admiration of the press and a growing respect from Vardon and Ray. Mr. Ouimet, however, is still weary of his son's choice to play and argues with him about the fact that as an amateur, Ouimet can't even win any money.

Good weather returns for round four and Ray and Vardon are on the course ahead of Ouimet. Vardon continues to struggle with his fears of the men in the black hats from his childhood, but is able to focus enough to be tied for the lead with Ray after four rounds. McDermott falls completely apart during the fourth round, ruining his chances of another U.S. Open title. While Ouimet is still on the course finishing his fourth round, Ray and Vardon, who have completed their rounds, come out to watch him finish. The presence of the two cause Ouimet to falter. Lowery is able to calm Ouimet's nerves toward the end of the round and he makes a charge in the final holes. On the last hole Ouimet makes a long, big breaking, putt to tie Ray and Vardon and force an 18-hole playoff.

Just before the playoff round the members of The Country Club approach Ouimet with the idea of replacing his current caddy, Lowery, with a more knowledgeable and older one. Ouimet, now in a much more respectable position, sitting tied for first in the U.S. Open, warns the gentlemen never to talk to his caddy again. As Ouimet heads to the tee with Ray and Vardon the crowd of thousands cheers him wildly. After fifteen holes of

the playoff Ray has put himself into too much trouble and is essentially out of contention. On the seventeenth hole Ouimet makes a putt for birdie to take the lead by one going to the final hole. After Vardon makes a par on the final hole, Ouimet is left with a 6 foot putt to win the U.S. Open. His ball finds its way to the hole and the crowd goes wild. Ray, Vardon, Ouimet's mother, Hastings and many more look on adoringly as Ouimet celebrates his feat. Ouimet and caddy Lowery are raised on the shoulders of the fans. Ouimet connects with the fans and is pleasantly surprised to grasp the hand of his father, who has realized the significance of his son's achievement. The gesture from his father makes the win all the more special. After a surreal conversation between Ouimet and Vardon in the empty locker room, the film fades out as we watch Ouimet and the tiny Lowery walk down the fairway with the U.S. Open trophy.

Analysis

In *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, director Paxton creates a magical heroic world in which the true story of golfing legend Francis Ouimet unfolds. The story is based on a large amount of fact when it comes to the tournament scores and the paths on which he travels, but many of the heroic aspects of Ouimet's character and surroundings are fictional. Not only does the sacred marriage quest have a part in Ouimet's heroic journey, but so does a father quest. Ouimet satisfies the most important characteristics of the American hero, and the adventure he endures embodies a patterned heroic journey.

Ouimet comes from an immigrant family, his parents both Irish descendents. This immigrant aspect has been seen in several of the movies analyzed. Beyond that, Ouimet

is poor, which instantly places him as an underdog. It is in American society that the poor are at a disadvantage, and this is made painfully clear for Ouimet, a hopeful golfer. Instead of being a playing member at a golf course, Ouimet is a caddy, which from the point of view of successful amateur and professional golfers is at the bottom of the barrel. The fact that he is poor and a caddy only sets up his heroic status even more. Ouimet is not a hero from the start. He is essentially a “nobody” who rises from nowhere. These elements exemplify Campbell’s theories as mentioned earlier and typify the classic American success story of rags to riches.

The story presented in *The Greatest Game Ever Played* has two call-to-adventure moments in Ouimet’s heroic career. The first is his opportunity to qualify for the U.S. Amateur. Because he’s just a caddy, having a chance to qualify is notable. He unfortunately misses a putt on his final hole to miss by a stroke. This would have been a wonderful call-to-adventure, but Ouimet failed. Because of the failure he is more reluctant to submit to his next call-to-adventure. This follows the form of Campbell’s stages of the heroic quest, where he discusses the refusal of the call in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. Ultimately, in true heroic fashion, Ouimet cannot resist and attempts to qualify for the U.S. Open. After a fabulous finish to his qualifying round, Ouimet finds himself now in the same playing field as his idol, Vardon. This is Ouimet’s crossing of the first threshold on his heroic journey.

Ouimet’s heroic quest is shortened to just a matter of weeks but the trials he endures are easy to identify. He deals with a good amount of pressure and nervousness because the situation he is in is entirely foreign to him. He faces resentment from the elite, who generally make up the golfing population. Ouimet’s father also puts pressure

on him by making it clear he resents his decision to play golf and not work. Ouimet battles to overcome each obstacle, sometimes with the help of his sidekick, Eddie, who could possibly stand in as his supernatural aid.

Through good play and endurance, Ouimet earns his way into an 18 hole playoff, and it's this match that serves as the magic flight scene. Dramatic camera work coupled with a truly exciting story create a good final match, and the true American hero, who comes from hard work and persistence, finds himself on top. His return is dramatic—he is lifted above a crowd of his own common people. Ouimet was a simple poor young man turned hero and upon the completion he returns to his common world to share the victory.

A significant mark of this heroic quest is Ouimet's sacred marriage quest. As we saw in some of the previously mentioned films, Ouimet's completion of his quest is marked by a connection with a young woman, Sarah Wallis. Although the sacred marriage quest is important in the heroic journey of our hero in this case, a more significant quest is the father quest, often referred to as "atonement with the father," as Campbell calls it in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. From the start of Ouimet's interest in golf, his father expresses stern disapproval. Ouimet, unable to deal with his father's resentment on his own, runs to his mother, an encouraging and safe figure for the budding golfer. The relationship of hero, father and mother is described in Campbell's *Thousand Faces*:

It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic (pollen charms or power of intercession) he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father's ego shattering initiation. For if it is impossible to trust the terrifying father-face, then one's faith must be centered elsewhere (131).

Ouimet's father, although he shows early signs of disapproval, is the ultimate sign of completion of the heroic quest. In one of the final scenes of the movie, as Ouimet is being carried on the shoulders during celebration of his victory, he makes a connection with his smiling father. The paternal acceptance marks an important stage in Ouimet's heroic journey. Campbell asserts that "whether he [the hero] knows it or not, and no matter what his position in society, the father is the initiating priest through whom the young being passes on into the larger world" (136).

Conclusion

Recipe for an American Sports Hero

Mythology is alive and well. Through the six studied films— *Pride of the Yankees* (1942), *Gentleman Jim* (1942), *Brian's Song* (1971), *Victory* (1981), *Hoosiers* (1986) and *The Greatest Game Ever Played* (2005)—a pattern for a classic American sports hero has been identified. Additionally, Campbell's original ideas about the heroic journey added with the work of a few other notable authors shine through in the heroic quests found in sports film from the early 1940s to 2005. Inspirational stories and films, especially sports films, exhibit the existence of modern mythology. Despite a society's reliance on fact or science, fiction and myth always have a place in the minds and hearts of American culture. As Campbell said, "It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation" (*Thousand Faces*, 3).

Before examining the films, the pattern that Campbell laid out in *A Hero With A Thousand Faces* and the ideas presented in Indick's *Movies and the Mind* were used as a standard when analyzing and comparing the six films. After analyzing the stories it's obvious the heroic quests closely follow the pattern laid out. Most heroes find themselves facing a significant call to adventure, which marks the beginning of their journey. Just as Campbell noted in his works, some of the heroes have a reluctance to submit to their heroic quest, as in *The Greatest Game Ever Played* and *Victory*. In each heroic quest an obvious crossing of the first threshold takes place, whether it is Coach Norman Dale's realization of Indiana basketball in *Hoosiers* or James J. Corbett's first win in *Gentleman*

Jim. One of the most consistent elements of the heroic quest presence in sports films is the road of trials. Evident in all the films is a series of difficult events that the hero endures in his ultimate success. Just as Indick noted of in *Movies and the Mind*, the magic flight stage, or final battle scene of a sports movie, often translates into “the big game, race, fight or competition that is always hurried and action packed” (89). The completion of the heroic journey is consistently marked with a final return, where the hero rejoins his common people in celebration. The dramatic denouement is often marked by a huge crowd of fans rushing in joy to the hero, as seen in *Hoosiers*, *Victory* and *The Greatest Game Ever Played*.

Other elements in Campbell’s work, and mentioned in Indick’s book, are found in the heroic journeys of these six films. In *Pride of the Yankees*, *Gentleman Jim*, *Hoosiers* and *The Greatest Game Ever Played* there is a visible female figure who symbolizes the culmination of the heroic quest. In *Greatest Game* we also witness the hero go through a stage of “father atonement,” which is an important piece in Campbell’s studies. In *Pride of the Yankees* and *Brian’s Song* the hero suffers a tragic death before the final return of his heroic quest. This doesn’t take away from the story’s validity as an heroic journey; one simply cannot play too much with what truthfully happened—in these cases it was the deaths of Lou Gehrig and Brian Piccolo.

Campbell’s studies of the heroic journey have roots in Greek history, Asian history, African history and more. But the elements are obviously present in American history, specifically in American sports film. The mythological hero is wonderfully represented in sports films, and the elements transcend time and sport. In *Pride of the Yankees* and *Gentleman Jim*, inspiration was drawn from World War II (both films were

released in 1942). The heroes share similar characteristics, despite different sports and different eras. A pattern for the classic American sports hero shines through when analyzing these six films, and reveal an obvious attachment to the heroic quest that Campbell discussed in his works.

Not only do the stories mirror the elements of Campbell's and Indick's work, but the heroes themselves are similar in their characteristics and backgrounds. One common element is the immigrant history, which is shared by Gehrig, Corbett and Ouimet. All three heroes reach success and all come from immigrant backgrounds—Gehrig's parents are German immigrants, Corbett's family as well as Ouimet's are Irish-American. The representation of different immigrant backgrounds mirrors the qualities of American culture in general and its "melting pot" tradition. Another element that finds its way into several of the films is economic status. Gehrig, Corbett, the Hickory Huskers and Ouimet were all poor and suffered some setbacks because of it. These heroes, and all others in the six films found their way to success not because of social or economic status, but thanks to hard work and effort. The idea of earning your success is a long-time tradition in American culture, where the idea of "rags to riches" is embraced. A handful of the heroes in these films share similar behavioral characteristics. Gehrig, Chitwood, Sayers and Ouimet are all humble, modest and considerate, soft-spoken and shy. These behavioral elements are admirable and respected in an American society that seems to prefer a quiet hero. The idea of "all talk and no walk" is looked down on in the sports world—performance is what matters. The most important shared aspect among all the heroes in all six films is the underdog element. As mentioned in Campbell's *A Hero With A Thousand Faces* and Indick's *Movies and the Mind*, the protagonist is not a hero at

first, but rather a member of the common world. In these six films the heroes are doubted and not expected to succeed. But upon completion of their heroic journeys, success is exactly what they earn. All the heroes begin as underdogs, but just as all heroes do, they transcend.

Filmography

Hoosiers (1986). Director: David Anspaugh. Producers: John Daly, Derek Gibson. Screenplay: Angelo Pizzo. Cinematographer: Fred Murphy. Art director: David Lubin. Music: Jerry Goldsmith. Editor: Carroll Timothy O'Meara. Associate producers: Graham Henderson, Carter DeHaven, Angelo Pizzo. Set decorator: Janis Lubin, Brendan Smith. Sound: Pieter Hubbard, Hal Sanders, Mike Warner. Assistant director: Herb Adelman. Makeup: Ronnie Specter, Daniel Marc. Script supervisor: Marilyn Bailey. Cast: Gene Hackman (Coach Norman Dale); Barbara Hershey (Myra Fleener); Dennis Hopper (Shooter); Sheb Wooley (Cletus); Fern Persons (Opal Fleener); Chelcie Ross (George); Robert Swan (Rollin); Michael O'Guinne (Rooster); Will Dewitt (Rev. Doty); John Robert Thompson (Sheriff Finley); Michael Sassone (Preacher Purl); Gloria Dorson (Millie); Mike Dalzell (Mayor Carl); Skip Welker (Junior); Eric Gilliom (J. June); Ralph H. Shively (Doc Buggins); Ray Crowe (Coach at State); Ray Craft (Official at finals); Tom Carnegie (Finals P.A. announcer); Hilliard Gates (Finals Radio announcer); Brad Boyle (Whit Butcher); Steve Hollar (Rade Butcher); Brad Long (Buddy Walker); David Neidorf (Everett Flatch); Kent Poole (Merle Webb); Wade Schenck (Ollie McClellan); Scott Summers (Strap Purl); Maris Valainis (Jimmy Chitwood);. 115 mins.

Brian's Song (1971). Director: Buzz Kulik. Producer: Paul Junger Witt. Screenplay: William Blinn. Cinematographer: Joseph F. Biroc. Art Director: Ross Bellah. Music: Michel Legrand. Editor: Bud S. Isaacs. Associate Producer: Tony Thomas. Set decorator: Frank Lombardo. Assistant director: Eddie Saeta. Cast: James Caan (Brian Piccolo);

Billy Dee Williams (Gale Sayers); Jack Warden (Coach George Halas); Bernie Casey (J.C. Caroline); Shelley Fabares (Joy Piccolo); David Huddleston (Ed McCaskey); Judy Pace (Linda Sayers); Abe Gibrón (Abe Gibrón); Jack Concannon (Jack Concannon); Ed O'Bradovich (Ed O'Bradovich); The Chicago Bears Players (Themselves); The Chicago Bears Coaches (Themselves); The Chicago Bears Staff (Themselves); Harold Hairston (Veteran Player #1); Ron Feinberg (Veteran Player #2); Ji-Tu Cumbuka (Roommate); Jim Boeke (Veteran Player #3); Larry Delaney (Dr. Fox); Stephen Coit (Mr. Eberle); Allen Secher (Hotel Man); Jack Wells (Toastmaster). 73 mins.

The Pride of the Yankees (1942). Director: Sam Wood. Producer: Samuel Goldwyn. Screenplay: Jo Swerling, Herman J. Mankiewicz. Cinematographer: Rudolph Maté. Art Director: Perry Ferguson. Music: Leigh Harline. Editor: Daniel Mandell. Set decorator: Howard Bristol. Assistant director: John Sherwood. Cast: Gary Cooper (Henry Louis 'Lou' Gehrig); Teresa Wright (Eleanor Twitchell); Babe Ruth (Babe Ruth); Walter Brennan (Sam Blake); Dan Duryea (Hank Hanneman); Elsa Janssen (Christina 'Mom' Gehrig); Ludwig Stössel (Henry 'Pop' Gehrig); Virginia Gilmore (Myra Tinsley); Bill Dickey (Bill Dickey); Ernie Adams (Miller Huggins); Pierre Watkin (Frank Twitchell); Harry Harvey (Joe McCarthy); Bob Meusel (Bob Meusel); Mark Koenig (Mark Koenig); Bill Stern (Bill Stern); Addison Richards (Jim); Hardie Albright (Van Tuyl); Edward Fielding (Clinic doctor); George Lessey (Walter Otto, Mayor of New Rochelle); Edgar Barrier (Hospital doctor); Douglas Croft (Lou Gehrig as a boy); Gene Collins (Billy); David Holt (Billy, at 17); Veloz (specialty dancer); Yolanda (Specialty dancer);

Ray Noble (Band); Walter Anthony (Merril); Lane Chandler (Mark, Yankee player in locker room); Spencer Charters (Mr. Larsen); Eva Dennison (Mrs. Worthington); Vaughan Glaser (Doctor in Gehrig home); Dave Manley (Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia); George McDonald (Wally Pipp, Yankee first baseman); Emory Parnell (Chicago policeman O'Doul); William Roy (Joe Fabrini); Rip Russell (Laddie); Jack Shea (Hammond); Jack Stewart (Ed Barrow); Fay Thomas (Christy Matthewson); Max Willenz (Mr. Colleti). 128 mins.

Victory (1981). Director: John Huston. Producer: Freddie Fields. Screenplay: Yabo Yablonsky. Cinematographer: Gerry Fisher. Music: Bill Conti. Editor: Roberto Silvi. Associate producer: Annie Fargue. Set decorator: Sydney Ann Smith-Kee. Sound: Leslie Hodgson, Giorgio De Vincenzo, Bonnie Koehler, Anthony Palk. Assistant director: Elie Cohn. Makeup: Allan Apone, Tony Lloyd, Michael Westmore. Cast: Sylvester Stallone (Robert Hatch); Michael Caine (John Colby); Pelé (Luis Fernandez); Bobby Moore (Terry Brady); Osvaldo Ardiles (Carlos Rey); Paul Van Himst (Michel Fileu); Kazimierz Deyna (Paul Wolchek); Hallvar Thoresen (Gunnar Hilsson); Mike Summerbee (Sid Harmor); Co Prins (Pieter Van Beck); Russell Osman (Doug Clure); John Wark (Arthur Hayes); Søren Lindsted (Erik Ball); Kevin O'Callaghan (Tony Lewis); Max von Sydow (Karl Von Steiner); Gary Waldhorn (Coach Mueller); George Mikell (Kommandant); Laurie Sivell (Goalie); Arthur Brauss (Lutz); Robin Turner (player); Michael Wolf (Lang); Jürgen Andersen (Propaganda Civilian); David Shawyer (Strauss); Werner Roth (Baumann, Team Captain); Amidou (André); Benoît Ferreux (Jean Paul); Jean-François Stévenin (Claude); Jack Lenoir (Georges); Zoltán Gera (Victor); Tim Pigott-Smith

(Rose); Julian Curry (Sherlock); Carole Laure (Renée); Clive Merrison (The Forger); Maurice Roëves (Pyrie); Michael Cochrane (Farrell); Jack Kendrick (Williams); Daniel Massey (Colonel Waldron). 110 min.

The Greatest Game Ever Played (2005). Director: Bill Paxton. Producers: David Blocker, Larry Brezner, Mark Frost, Jason Reed, David A. Steinberg. Screenplay: Mark Frost. Cinematographer: Shane Hurlbut. Art director: Martin Gendron, Pierre Perrault. Music: Brian Tyler. Editor: Elliot Graham. Set decorator: Suzanne Cloutier, Anne Gallea. Sound: Bob Beher, Randy Kelley, Mark Ormandy. Assistant director: Pedro Gandol. Makeup: Christophe Giraud, Catherine Lavoie. Script supervisor: Kimi Webber. Cast: James Paxton (Young Harry Vardon); Tom Rack (Black Top Hatted Man); Armand Laroche (Black Top Hatted man); Peter Hurley (Black Top Hatted Man); Gergory Terlecki (Black Top Hatted Man); Jonathan Higgins (Embry Wallis); Matthew Knight (Young Francis Ouimet); Luke Askew (Alec Campbell); Amanda Tilson (Young Sarah Wallis); Elias Koteas (Arthur Ouimet); Jamie Merling (Young Louise Ouimet); Eugenio Esposito (Young Raymond Ouimet); Marnie McPhail (Mary Ouimet); Stephen Dillane (Harry Vardon); Robin Wilcock (Bernard Darwin); Peter Firth (Lord Northcliffe); Michael Sinelnikoff (Lord Bullock); Shia LaBeouf (Francis Ouimet); Just Ashforth (Ted Hastings); Arthur Holden (Club Secretary); Len Cariou (Stedman Comstock); Peyton List (Sarah Wallis); Nicolas Wright (Phillip Wainwright); Max Kasch (Freddie Wallis); Danette Mackay (Mrs. Wallis); Scott Faulconbridge (Billy); George Asprey (Wlifred Reid); Stephen Marcus (Ted Ray); Joe Jackson (Piano Player); Luke Kirby (Frank Hoyt); Tim Peper (Walter Gibbs); Mike Nahrgang (Baritone); Dawn Upshaw (Soprano); James

Bradford (Robert Watson); Marc James Beauchamp (Assistant Pro); Michael Weaver (John McDermott); Pierre Boudreau (Northcliffe's Valet); Josh Flitter (Eddie Lowery); Dennis St. John (Wallis' Butler); Terry Reid (Vernon's Caddy); Stephen Spreekmeester (Ted's Caddy); Philip Pretien (Comstock's Assistant); Patrick Whitebean (McDermot's Caddy); Walter Massey (President Taft); Melissa Carter (Reid's Escort); Melanie Beaulne (Reid's Escort); Jeremy Thibodeau (Raymond Ouimet); Alexina Cowan (Louise Ouiment); Frank Fontaine (Wallis' Chauffeur); Marcel Jeannin (Office Worker); Charles S. Doucet (Irish Crew Boss). 120 min.

Gentleman Jim (1942). Director: Raoul Walsh. Producer: Robert Buckner. Screenplay: Vincent Lawrence, Horace McCoy. Cinematographer: Sidney Hickox. Art director: Ted Smith. Music: Heinz Roemheld. Editor: Jack Killifer. Set decorator: Clarence Steensen. Sound: C.A. Riggs. Assistant director: Russell Saunders. Makeup: Perc Westmore. Cast: Errol Flynn (James J. Corbett); Alexis Smith (Victoria Ware); Jack Carson (Walter Lowrie); Alan Hale (Pat Corbett); John Loder (Carlton De Witt); William Frawley (Billy Delaney); Minor Watson (Buck Ware); Ward Bond (John L. Sullivan); Madeleine LeBeau (Anna Held); Rhys Williams (Harry Watson); Arthur Shields (Father Burke); Dorothy Vaughan (Ma Corbett); Georgia Caine (Mrs. Geary); Wallis Clark (Judge Geary); Joseph Crehan (Duffy); Pat Flaherty (Harry Corbett); James Flavin (George Corbett); Art Foster (Jack Burke); Frank Mayo (Gov. Stanford); Mike Mazurki (Jake Kilrain); Henry O'Hara (Colis Huntington); Marilyn Phillips (Mary Corbett). 104 min.

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