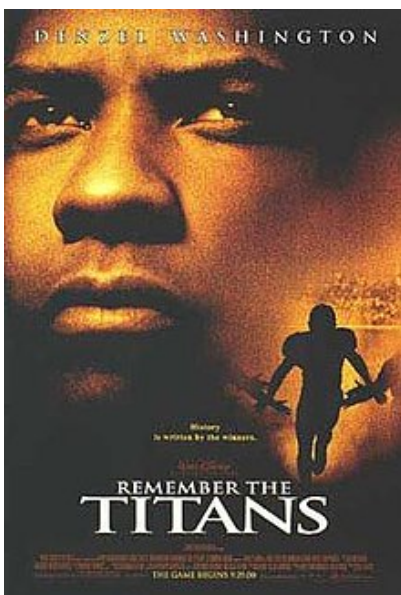


Five More Sports Movies We Love

The best movies tell unforgettable stories and introduce us to legendary characters and performances. So it is no surprise that in a culture obsessed with sports, some of the best films of all time are about them. Sports prove that truth is indeed better than fiction quite often—you will notice below and on any list of sports movies how many are based on or inspired by true stories. Movies, for their part, make us interested in sports we as Americans often are not obsessed with, like boxing, karate and hockey. The two together have given us exceptional entertainment.

Today our staff discusses five more sports films that we love. You can read our first article in this series [here](#). This is not a Top Five list; just five selections that impacted us deeply...as sports fans (most of us), moviegoers and human beings that love to be inspired.

***Remember the Titans* by Phill Lytle**



Maybe this one is too obvious. I'm not sure that matters that much to me. I love this movie. I love the story – even if the filmmakers took liberties in telling it. I love the performances, with Denzel doing what he does best, the young cast of football players/students bringing life and personality to the team, and to the unsung heroes of the film like Will Patton as the assistant coach. Everyone brings their A-game to the movie and it shows. The music by Trevor Rabin is earnest and

epic which only serves to help everything mean a little bit more.

This is a movie that calls its shot from the very beginning and unless you have never seen a sports movie before, you will know where it is headed. You anticipate the beats, the dramatic flourishes, and the building climax. None of that matters. This was Disney firing on all cylinders, perfectly delivering on their tried and true method. That might sound cynical of me. Trust me, it's not. I unapologetically love this film even if it does pretty much exactly what you expect it to from the opening frame.

It's a movie built on moments, speeches, emotions, and inspiration. It sets out to tell a heartwarming and uplifting film and it pulls it off without a hitch. *Remember the Titans* is a Titan in the world of sports movies and deserves to be on everyone's favorites list.

***A League of Their Own* by Gowdy Cannon**



"There's No Crying In Baseball!" put this film on the map so to speak, but after about 10 viewings I can say that it is so much more than Tom Hanks at his comedic finest. It's a perfect storm of untold history, tense family drama, riveting sports action and timeless storytelling that joins a pantheon of exceptional American screenplays. To me it is not just one of the best sports movies of all time, but one of the best films of any genre of all time.

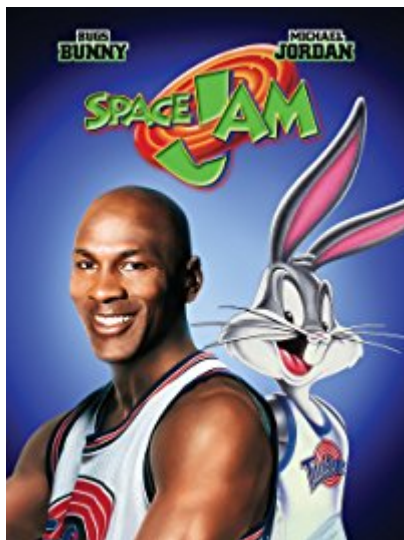
Hanks is his typical scene-stealing self. Gina Davis is great. Lori Petty is perfect as the insecure younger sibling (as the

4th of 5 children, I am fully qualified to make that call). Unheard of Megan Cavanagh, who doesn't even have a picture on her wikipedia page, is unforgettable. Even modern punching bags Madonna and Rosie O'Donnell are good in their support roles. And they all have tremendous chemistry.

Not to be lost is without of doubt my favorite Jon Lovitz performance ever, as the scout Ernie Capadino. Essentially 100% of what he says makes me and my mom laugh out loud, even after repeated viewings. To this day I can look at her and say "You see the way it works is that the train moves and not the station" and we will crack up.

If a litmus test for movie grade is how rewatchable it is, *A League of Their Own* gets an A.

***Space Jam* by D.A. Speer**



Everybody get up, it's time to slam now! A few years back, shortly after my wife Kate and I were married, we thought it would be great fun on a whim to hold a *Space Jam* party. We invited friends over, had some snacks, and watched the movie. You never really know just how well a movie will hold up over the years, because over time, a movie can seem so much better in your mind than it actually was. We took the gamble...and it held up well!

At lunch today, I asked my wife, "What is it that made *Space Jam* such a good movie?" She looked at me for a second and said, "What about it isn't a good movie?" I had a hard time answering. On paper, I'd have expected the movie to be a failure. MJ teams up with the Looney Toons to challenge aliens for their fates over a theme park. What could possibly go

wrong with an idea like that?

Well, somehow director Joe Pytka was able to pull off movie magic. The story is compelling enough to make it fun. The music inspired everything from couple's skates at the local roller rink (I Believe I Can Fly), to endless current-day internet remixes of the theme song by Quad City DJ's. The star power is perfect for the time. This is right in the height of Jordan mania, after his first return to the NBA. As a teenager, I had a poster of him on my wall, slamming in it with his tongue out. Would I want to see him play against cartoon monsters? Psh, I could have watched him shoot free throws in practice and would have been enthralled. Bill Murray is there. Charles Barkley is there. Larry Bird is there. Heck, even Newman shows up.

Yeah, it's not the most epic movie by today's standards, but it will forever be a classic in my mind, half court dunks and all.

***Warrior* by Phill Lytle**



I hate MMA, or mixed martial arts. It's one tiny step up from to-the-death, gladiatorial combat, and I honestly don't understand or appreciate its appeal in the least. Which makes my reaction to *Warrior*, a movie about two brothers who are MMA fighters, so perplexing. I never thought I would love a movie about MMA fighting, let alone like a movie like that, but *Warrior* defied my expectations and had me from very early on. The story is nothing groundbreaking – if you have seen any boxing movie or many sports movies for that matter, you can sort of guess where everything is going – but the execution of

the story is what makes this film work so well. Nick Nolte, Tom Hardy, and Joel Edgerton give amazing performances as a father and his two estranged sons. I've never been a huge Nolte fan but he is incredible in this film playing a very damaged and broken father. Hardy is just pure intensity and he brings a real menace and danger to his character, but with just enough cracks in his facade to show that there is a lot more to him than just anger and passion. Edgerton plays the most "normal" role, but he gives his character so much depth that I hate to classify it as normal. The fight sequences are well shot – they are brutal and very effective. The film is shot low budget style which lends the film more realism and immediacy. The music is great as well, with a song by *The National* that closes the film perfectly.

Warrior is first and foremost a movie about a broken family trying to find healing. That is what drew me in and what knocked down my walls. I was prepared to hate this movie due to my hatred of the sport it showcases. I was not prepared to fall completely for it.

***Over the Top* by Gowdy Cannon**



Millions know Sly Stallone from the *Rocky* and *Rambo* series. Far less remember him in this movie about an estranged father, his spoiled son and...arm wrestling? How many movies about arm wrestling are there? I don't know, but when you've conquered the world as Rocky and Rambo, you get to take these risks. And while I may be in the minority, I think it yielded a reward. The superbly named Lincoln Hawk (Stallone) has the lovable humility of Balboa yet is still very much a unique character. And

the journey he embarks on to earn back the love of his only

son and to win an arm wrestling tournament (Really! It's about arm wrestling!) is one I have enjoyed numerous times.

A few years ago I began a tradition of having a "Man Movie Night" with other men at my church and this was the first one I showed. Because most people have seen Stallone's other work and this is a hidden treasure to me. Yet despite its manliness, I think the heart of father-son reconciliation can appeal to most people.

The movie has some faults for sure, like the arm wrestling (arm wrestling!) tournament format of double elimination is not consistent, and the drama is at times pretty contrived, but Lincoln's secret finger re-positioning weapon vs. Bull Harley in the final and all the memories he makes with with his son son along the way render all the flaws forgotten. Complete with a fantastic antagonist role by Robert Loggia and some of the best terrible wonderful cheesy 80s sports montage music ever, I adore this movie.

There you have it. Five more sports movies we love. Our last list got some pretty strong feedback – both positive and negative. Hopefully this one will as well as we always enjoy a good back-and-forth with our readers. Use the comment section below to post your praise or ridicule of our selections today.