

Jackson shines in his portrayal of coaching legend

The real life basis of *Coach Carter* lends credibility to this potentially trite film

By Nancy Rapp
Old Gold & Black Reviewer

With the Demon Deacons having a tremendous season, and the real coach Ken Carter speaking on campus, many students will likely feel compelled to see the film *Coach Carter*.

Fortunately for them, the film delivers solid entertainment with an inspirational message, an outstanding cast and even a noteworthy soundtrack. *Coach Carter* presents the true story of Carter, a basketball coach of an inner-city high school

who brings his team to victory on both the court and in the classroom.

Samuel L. Jackson, handpicked by Carter to play the role, portrays a coach who is good-hearted yet firm as he bans the boys from playing basketball when they fail to meet the grade requirements set out in a contract the team signed. The town revolts against Carter's decisions, and both Carter's and the team's futures become uncertain.

The film was made by MTV Studios and was written by Mark Schwahn and John Gatins, who are famous for writing films like *The Perfect Score* and *Summer Catch*.

Though the studio's and writers' prior films were teen-oriented and lacked substance, *Coach Carter* contains true emotions and an intelligent storyline that people of nearly every age can appreciate.

Jackson carries the film in a near flawless portrayal. He is likable and even when he makes a questionable decision, such as punishing the entire team even though some students maintain good grades, one can't help but side with him. Jackson is an expert at playing powerful, determined men, which makes him well studied for the role as Carter.

The other main characters are the team members. While the actors are all relatively unknown, like Rob Brown and Robert Ri'Chard, their performances are professional.

The actors make the typically clichéd storylines of inner-city youth faced with teen pregnancy and drugs appear realistic and heartfelt.

The entire film does at points seem like a clichéd and is overly dramatic and sappy, but the fact is that it is a true story

overcomes the criticism. Carter himself, supervised the making of the film to make sure it was accurate.

Demon Deacon basketball fans will certainly appreciate the intensity of the many game sequences in the film.

Though the film spends a bit too much time trying to make the games nail-biters, the audience at the theater cheered and booed as if they were truly watching a game.

The movie's soundtrack helps keep the audience energized with numerous popular hip-hop and rap songs.

Considering the film was made by MTV, it is no surprise artists such as Fabolous, Chingy, Ciara and Kanye West have songs in the film.

The film does not have many flaws. It is a bit too long, as it runs nearly two and a half hours and Ashanti's portrayal as a

girlfriend to one of the boys on the team is weak. Also, more attention could have been paid to Carter and his life story.

Coach Carter will certainly be the cause of some controversy it suggests that inner-city schools do not care or try to change the fact that their students may not graduate or go to college. Some statistics are given that will likely raise a few eyebrows.

Nevertheless, the film attempts to portray the truth rather than make a statement.

Coach Carter is a movie worth seeing. The film combines sports, a biting sense of humor, likable characters and an intelligent plot to result in a wonderful entertaining movie. However, the most compelling reason to see the film is that it is the story of a remarkable man and his team. It is truly an inspirational tale.



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