

The sandlot movie essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ The Sandlot” represents the foundation of sport. The kids in this movie played baseball at every opportunity, simply for the love of the game. This attitude towards sport is the purest form of play because they had no one to direct their practice. They did not need a fancy field or fancy uniforms to play well. They were good, because they thought they were good. To them baseball was the only reason to go outside, where they could spit, curse, and act like the pros until suppertime. “ Sandlot” takes place during the summer in a small California town, in the early nineteen-sixties.

A boy, who in the movie goes by the nickname of Smalls, moves into town. He is trying to adjust to his new stepfather (a baseball fanatic), but moving to a new place does not make this easy. The boys in his new neighborhood play baseball religiously, especially since it is summertime. Smalls has no baseball experience but his new friend, Benny Rodriguez, quickly teaches him. After a very brief period of rejection and name-calling, because of his lack of baseball skills, Smalls is accepted into the sandlot gang. The gang plays an endless game of baseball everyday, stopping only when the heat becomes unbearable.

They cool off by going to the pool where one of their own steals a kiss from the lifeguard. At one point in the movie, they encounter another distraction from their routine when a rival team, with sponsors and uniforms, drops by to harass them. It’s not long before the sandlot gang pummels the rival team on their fancy field. One day Benny smacks a ball so hard the leather splits, ruining it. Smalls runs to his house and gets his stepfather’s favorite ball, the one with Babe Ruth’s signature on it, so that the gang can resume the game. Smalls ends up hitting his first home run, courtesy of his stepfather’s ball.

Over the fence it goes, into the yard that no one dared to venture. The yard guarded by "The Beast," a huge junkyard dog. So began the rising action of the film. The boys try many schemes to retrieve the ball but all of their inventions just end up as lunch for the beast. One night Benny has a dream and gets the message from Babe Ruth to "just hop over and get it." The next day, Benny does just that and this begins a crazy dog chase that goes all over the town and ends up back at the junkyard. The dog is only stopped when the fence falls on him.

Realizing that the dog is hurt, Benny and Smalls cautiously rescue him, and the boys come to realize that the beast was just a blind retired baseball player's friend. The boys end up telling the blind man the whole story and in the end they make a deal that gets them a replacement ball, better than the first. This one is signed by all of the Yankees (Murderers Row), including Babe Ruth. The boys also find a new friend in the old retired player, someone who understood their love of baseball. I believe this movie is done very well; although I thought the part of Benny Rodriguez could have been played a little better.

The character seems so anticlimactic about everything. When Benny busted the baseball, he did not act like a normal twelve year-old who had just smacked the leather off of a baseball. He was just disappointed that they could not play anymore. That was not very realistic. I do think, however the movie does a very good job of portraying how baseball breaks down barriers in all aspects of social interaction. For example, a game of catch breaks down a barrier between Smalls and his stepfather. A lesson in throwing and

catching breaks down the barrier between Smalls and the rest of the boys in the sandlot gang.

Finally, a ball signed by Babe Ruth breaks down the barrier between the neighborhood boys and a lonely old blind man. This movie displays some of the normal characteristics of sports movies. There are very few women, except for a lifeguard whom one of the boys likes and Smalls' mother. This shows women being portrayed as accessories or mothers, because the only two women are not pivotal roles. The movie also supports our culture's way of treating athletes and their reputations as being larger than life with lines like, " heroes get remembered but legends never die".

Which means the story of a hero will last a week or two, but the story and likeness of legends get passed down through generations. As in many other sport films, the real conflict is in the lives of the boys playing the game, not in the game itself. Individually they had dreams and fears and, in many ways, belonging to the sandlot gang helped them discover their own identity. The boys were all terrified of the Beast and the old man because of rumors they have heard and their imagination.

After that fateful hit, they learned the truth and eventually had to open themselves up to somebody they had feared for so long. This developed character and tolerance in all of them. In conclusion, " Sandlot" is a very amusing movie that maintains the innocence of youth, throughout the whole picture. The kids were a pleasure to watch and the baseball scenes were great. I also thought this movie shows us what " play" really is. It's not about

strikes and media promotions, at least not for a bunch of kids. It's about friends and the lengths they go to become legends on their own battlefields.