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Film Reviews

Gracie - PG-13



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Gritty girl soccer drama with a powerful message.

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Rating: PG-13 for brief sexual content. **Studio:** [Elevation Studios](#) **Directed By:** [Davis Guggenheim](#) **Cast:** [Dermot Mulroney](#), [Elisabeth Shue](#), [Carly Schroeder](#) **Running Time:** 122 minutes **Release Date:** 05/31/2007 **Genre:** [Family and Kids](#)

Common Sense Note

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Parents need to know that the 15-year-old main character in this '70s-set sports drama is a strong heroine who acts out after one of her family members dies early in the film (a loss that may be upsetting for sensitive kids). She sneaks out of the house, steals her mother's car, shoplifts, and makes out with a guy she met at a bar. She also does a good deal of lying and teenage sulking until her father -- who, along with her brothers, says a lot of sexist things to her -- takes her seriously. Language includes "s--t" and "bastards," as well as some derogatory terms for lesbians. Some underage smoking, as well as a fair amount of rough soccer action (Gracie is knocked down, punched in the face, etc.).

Families can talk about how the perception of girls playing sports has changed since the 1970s, both in real life and in the media. How are girls and women portrayed in contemporary sports movies? Kids: How do people at your school talk about girls who play sports? Are any of the stereotypes or assumptions made about the girls in this movie still in effect today?

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Common Sense Review

Reviewed By: [Heather Boerner](#)

Before girls could [Bend It Like Beckham](#) on their own soccer teams, there was no place for them to play or be taken seriously. GRACIE is a story about how all that changed, and it's a fast-paced sports movie to boot.

Fifteen-year-old Gracie Bowen (Carly Schroeder) is growing up in 1978 New Jersey surrounded by her soccer-obsessed dad and brothers. When her brother dies in a car accident early in the movie, Gracie is destroyed -- but also determined. One day she walks into the dining room and puts her family on notice: She plans to honor her brother's death by joining the varsity soccer team ... so she can beat the team to which her brother lost his last game.

The problem? Oh, just a couple of small matters: first, that the school doesn't have a girls' soccer team and, second, the utter chauvinism of both the school and her family. "It's this simple," her dad Bryan, played by the wonderful [Dermot Mulroney](#), declares. "You're not tough enough." (For anyone who's ever wanted their parents' approval, watching Gracie

literally beg her father to help is heartbreaking.)

So Gracie decides to go after it herself. She trains in isolation, sneaking into the boys' weight room before school starts (the girls' gym doesn't have weights) to strength-train. But can she convince her father, her brothers, and even her mother -- not to mention her schoolmates -- that she's good enough to try out and play on the varsity team?

There are great things about this admittedly predictable plot. Gracie is a real teen, full of rebellion, bad decisions, and moping along with her more-inspiring traits -- in other words, she's someone that teens can probably relate to and that parents can knowingly roll their eyes over. And the movie has great music, including [Bruce Springsteen](#) (hey, it's set in Jersey, after all!). Plus, it's based on the real experience of co-star [Elisabeth Shue](#), who was the only girl on *her* high school soccer team. That's pretty cool.

Perhaps most importantly, this is a truly great sports movie. The extensive field-action scenes aren't drawn out or laborious. They're quick, well-shot, and get even the most anti-sports viewer caught up in the thick of it. Don't be surprised if you find yourself ducking and weaving as Gracie makes her way down the field. It's enthralling and really makes it clear why Gracie loves the game so much.

The film's only downside is its heavy-handed preaching about Title IX, which requires that girls be given equal sports opportunities. Yes, this is a debate that really happened, and yes, it's a great education for kids who didn't know there was a time when people didn't think girls could play soccer. But it's also blatant and not nearly as much fun as the rest of this well-told story.

Besides *Beckham*, fans might also like [The Heart of the Game](#), [Her Best Move](#), and [A League of Their Own](#).

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| Content | CS | adults | kids |
|--|----|--------|------|
| <p>Sexual Content</p> <p>Gracie kisses and makes out with Kyle. She also makes out with a stranger she meets at a bar who knows she's underage.</p> | | | |
| <p>Violence</p> <p>A main character dies in an off-screen car crash. Gracie is the object of a lot of soccer-field violence, including getting punched in the face, knocked down, tripped, and tackled.</p> | | | |
| <p>Language</p> <p>Language includes "s--t," "hell," "bastards," damn," "dyke," and "lesbo."</p> | | | |
| <p>Message</p> | | | |
| <p>Social Behavior</p> <p>After a family tragedy, Gracie acts out, sneaking out of the house to go on dates, stealing the family car to drive to the shore and meet older boys, shoplifting, etc. There's also a lot of sexist language, including overtly diminishing Gracie's worth and her ability to play sports as well as any boys. But she's a strong heroine with a fierce resolve to achieve her goal.</p> | | | |
| <p>Commercialism</p> <p>Gatorade is prominently featured at the beginning of the movie.</p> | | | |
| <p>Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco</p> <p>Gracie and her friends smoke cigarettes and go to bars, but they aren't shown drinking.</p> | | | |

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