

Film Reviews

The Final Season - PG

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Heartwarming-but-trite drama for baseball fans.

Rating: PG for language, thematic elements and some teen smoking.
Studio: [Yari Film Group](#) **Directed By:** [David Evans](#) **Cast:** [Tom Arnold](#), [Sean Astin](#), [Michael Angarano](#) **Running Time:** 114 minutes **Release Date:** 10/11/2007 **Genre:** [Drama](#)

Common Sense Note

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Parents need to know that even though this is rated PG, there's some inappropriate content for the movie's target market -- 8-10-year-olds. One of the movie's central characters, high school student Mitch, acts out because of his mother's recent death. He smokes cigarettes, tries to get some pot, and steals his grandfather's truck. But baseball eventually helps set him back on the right path. There are some intense moments when the team's bus goes off the road in an accident, kids get injured by baseballs, and there's some fighting among the boys. Language includes some fairly strong terms for the PG rating, including "s--t."

Families can talk about the fact that this particular tale was based on a true story -- how much of what you see on screen do you think actually happened the way it's portrayed? They can also talk about Mitch's reaction to his mother's death. Do your kids know anyone whose parents have died? How did they respond? You can use this as an opportunity to allay their fears.

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Common Sense Review

Reviewed By: [Heather Boerner](#)

The makers of THE FINAL SEASON were smart when they decided to release it during Major League Baseball playoffs. It's almost like they're extending the season, providing fast cuts, lots of field action, and a heartwarming underdog tale (which is even based on a true story).

In Norway, Iowa, baseball is more than a tradition. It's more than a religion. It's everything to these people: The whole town turns out for the high school team's practices, and the town sign features a baseball diamond. "Baseball is as rich as Iowa soil," explains head coach Jim Van Scoyoc (Powers Boothe). "We grow ball players here like we grow corn."

With 19 state championships to its credit, the Norway High team is hoping for an even 20 when the axe comes down. The school district is merging with the district next door, where, parents fear, their star players won't even make the team. And without baseball, the town could die out. Given one last season to make their mark and seal their legacy, smarmy school district chief Harvey Makepeace (Marshall Bell) fires multi-award-winning Van Scoyoc and replaces him with former girls volleyball coach Kent Stock ([Sean Astin](#)). Can Stock motivate the dejected team and lead them to their final, glorious win?

What *The Final Season* does well is remind viewers why they love the game so much. It's not just that it's fun to watch and takes courage, tenacity, and endurance. It's that baseball -- and other sports -- have saved legions of kids from self-destructive behavior by giving them a place to put their energy and loving support for what they do. It's [Field of Dreams](#) goes to high school -- or [Friday Night Lights](#) about baseball.

The final game is likely to leave both kid and adult baseball fans screaming at the screen -- much like they do at playoff games. And zany newspaper reporter Roger Dempsey (the incorrigible Larry Miller) lightens what could easily be a far too schlocky and serious film.

All of that said, if you're not a baseball fan, *The Final Season* probably isn't for you. The jargon and heavy-handed sentimentality ("We don't take anything for granted around here," says Van Scoyoc's wife, "we're just grateful for baseball") can be too much, and you get the feeling that the story might have been white-washed just a bit (the real-life Van Scoyoc and Stock both consulted on the film).

The movie insists that everything bad comes from the big city and that small-town life is free of drugs, violence, and alienation. For anyone who's ever been bullied by a jock or lived the not-so-rosy parts of small-town life, this depiction is likely to come off as naïve at best.

Fans might like other baseball movies -- including *Field of Dreams*, [Pride of the Yankees](#), [The Rookie](#), and the [Sandlot](#) series. Or try other teen sports movies like [Gracie](#) and [The Miracle Match](#).

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Content	CS	adults	kids
<p>Sexual Content</p> <p>Kent is shown just in a towel. Patrick is shown just in jeans. Kent and Polly kiss.</p>			
<p>Violence</p> <p>Some baseball-related injuries: A ball hits a catcher's wrist, and Sammy gets hit on the back by a 90-mph fastball. Patrick beats Sammy up (punches, threats). Mitch and Patrick scuffle, and Mitch punches Patrick. The team is involved in a bus accident, but no one is injured.</p>			
<p>Language</p> <p>Some swearing, including "bulls-t," "hell," "damn," "s-t," "half-assed," and "chicken s-t."</p>			
<p>Message</p>			
<p>Social Behavior</p> <p>Overall, the movie's message is that finding a hobby and doing something you love can help heal pain. Mitch takes his grandfather's truck without permission and flips Patrick off. Two reporters gamble on a game.</p>			
<p>Commercialism</p> <p>Billboards at the baseball diamond advertise Pella Windows, Quaker Oats products, Jolly-Time popcorn, Hy-Vee, and Transamerica. The team wears Nike cleats, and Stock wears a St. Louis Cardinals baseball cap.</p>			
<p>Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco</p> <p>Underage Mitch smokes cigarettes, and his grandfather smokes a cigar -- but both are repeatedly told not to and how bad it is for them. Mitch asks where he can get pot. Polly (an adult) drinks a glass of wine. Roger (also an adult) drinks from a flask.</p>			

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