

Film Reviews

The Game Plan - PG



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The Rock scores in cute (if predictable) comedy.

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Rating: PG for some mild thematic elements. **Studio:** [Walt Disney Pictures](#) **Directed By:** [Andy Fickman](#) **Cast:** [Kyra Sedgwick](#), [Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson](#), [Madison Pettis](#) **Running Time:** 115 minutes **Release Date:** 09/27/2007 **Genre:** [Family and Kids](#)

Common Sense Note

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Parents need to know that this cute family comedy features football violence and pratfalls. Lots of people, including young girls, fall and only get minor injuries, and a parent's death is addressed. Peyton runs away to find her father and ends up in some very mildly perilous situations (being left alone at a club, etc.). It's worth noting that although the film makes fun of the insane commercialism of football, it also mentions more than a dozen products and plugs the Disney Channel and Elvis movies.

Families can talk about why kids want to see this movie -- because of the story, or because of Disney's marketing campaign? What usually makes you want to see a movie? Families can also discuss the importance of telling the truth and being generous. Why does Joe feel differently about his game after spending time with Peyton? And, parents, remind kids about why they need to stay with safe adults and not run off on their own, as Peyton does.

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Common Sense Review

Reviewed By: [Heather Boerner](#)

THE GAME PLAN isn't *Baby Boom*, but it's close. For years, Hollywood has been making movies in which anti-maternal women are saddled with kids and become better people. Well, switch the driven career woman for a football player, throw him in some ballet tights, and you've got THE GAME PLAN -- an adorable, if predictable, family movie from Disney.

NFL star Joe Kingman (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) thinks a lot of himself. He calls himself "the king," has giant pictures of himself around the house, proudly displays his collection of trophies, and works hard to make sure everyone else loves him, too. He's not just a man -- he's a brand. He's got action figures with his likeness, hawks limited-edition sneakers that bear his name, and does lots of fast-food tie ins. He's also on the verge of having the biggest year in his career. As quarterback for the (fictional) Boston Rebels, he could take it all the way to the championships this year.

But there's something missing. None too subtly, an ESPN announcer intones: "Joe, you're 30-something now, not 20-something. The clock is ticking, ticking on your career." Something else just might be ticking away, too: his bachelorhood. Before long, adorably doe-eyed and curly-haired Peyton (Madison Pettis) shows up at Joe's door all but swaddled and pinned with a note from the stork.

Surprise, Joe -- you have a daughter! And for a month, he has to figure out how to be a dad, prepare for the play-offs, and defend his way of life from tutus, Bedazzler, and lack of respect for his protein shakes and carbo-loading. But when Peyton gets seriously sick and returns home, can Joe go back to his playboy life? Does he even want to?

The answer should be obvious. What Disney always does well -- and what it does well here again -- is to create a world of safe adults in which kids can have their adventures. Peyton may have snuck away from home, but she's surrounded by mythic football players: They're all giant, harmless teddy bears whose worst qualities is their penchant for playing practical jokes on each other. Even when she's left at a club, she's never really in danger. That kind of mild peril is perfect for children.

The other thing Disney does perfectly in *The Game Plan* is squeeze every last bit of cute from every scene. Joe, of course, has an adorable bulldog worthy of CuteOverload.com, and he's even more fetching in a tutu. The Rock clearly has fun with all of his character's funny faces, funny voices, and tantrums -- and so does the audience. He's genuinely charismatic, taking what could be sappy platitudes and making them entertaining for young viewers. Scenes like those in which Joe improvises car safety gear for Peyton or tries his hand at ballet are some of the best in the film.

There's so much that's genuinely adorable in this film that it's easy to overlook small problems like the predictable storyline, Pettis' limited acting abilities, or the fact that the fight between her and The Rock falls as flat as a deflated football. What's harder to forgive is the frequent product placement. *The Game Plan* pokes fun at athletes who all but plaster brands on their jerseys, but then it manages to showcase more than a dozen products. And then there's the nearly two-hour running time, which may make young kids a little fidgety.

Still, this is a film with a great message. Essentially, Joe learns to share -- share success, share his house, share his heart. And what child doesn't need to learn that lesson? If it comes from a football hero -- even a fake one -- all the better.

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Content	CS	adults	kids
Sexual Content Stella kisses a man when her team wins. Joe spends many scenes shirtless and lifting weights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violence Lots of football-related roughness, including sacks, tackles, and close-up shots of Joe being taken down. Joe breaks a rib and hurts his shoulder. Joe slaps another player and accidentally bumps into dancers, knocking them down and dropping others.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Message	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social Behavior Peyton runs away from home and lies to Karen and Joe. Stella schemes to use Peyton for publicity. Joe forgets Peyton in a club. Joe is initially selfish but eventually learns to share and think of others first -- a great lesson for kids.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercialism Lots of brands and products are visible or mentioned in the film, including Chanel, ESPN, Cold Stone Creamery, Jell-O, iPods, the Bedazzler, BlackBerry, Dunkin Donuts, Nike, Dasani water, a Sidekick cell phone, and Cingular wireless. And, of course, shots of the Disney Channel and popular Disney shows like Hannah Montana are featured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Adults drink at a party, but they don't appear drunk. Peyton shows she knows what a margarita is.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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