

see lamp posts once again but Carrà also depicts buses and trams moving throughout the square. He does this to show the innovation in Italy, Italy is moving away from its past times and is becoming more modern. His unblended brush strokes show everything in the painting moving and conveys the energy of the scene, from the light radiating from the posts to the buses avoiding the people in the square. . You can see the traffic in this area, people trying to get through to where they are going avoiding these transportation vehicles that are now becoming more popular. Instead of a painting of nature which would have been painted before Futurism Carrà instead focuses more on the streets and industrialization that is happening in Milan. This move to modernity and industry is what artists like Carrà wanted to depict in their works. The people involved in this movement wanted all of Italy to see these advancements and change that was happening.

Zach Forte wrote this article for his FORL 360 class during the Spring of 2023

Comedy and Sports: An Analysis of *Kicking and Screaming* by Micah Hurd

Kicking & Screaming (2005) is a sports comedy that follows a father, Phil Weston (played by Will Ferrell) in his quest to lead his son's soccer team, the Tigers, to victory in the league championship against the rival team coached by his father, Buck (played by Robert Duvall). Phil strives to defeat his father's team, the Gladiators, to show him that he is in fact capable of achieving sport accomplishments to make up for the many years of abuse in childhood for not being athletic. However, he runs into many comical difficulties due to the disfunction and unathleticism of his son's team. Aspects such as this mitigate the challenges common for sport films.

The use of comedy in a sport film mitigates one of the biggest challenges with sports films, which represent sports in a realistic way. Films often attempt to portray sports in a serious tone to capture their stakes and excitement. Much of this relies on the skill of the actors in both sport ability and acting ability. The idea is to evoke the same

emotions one would have while watching a real game. However, the feelings are not easily evoked in audiences for reasons such as predictable clichés and the dramatization of films, as Seán Crosson, a critic that studied the portrayal of sports in movies, has detailed in his study *Sport and Film*. Comedy, however, is unserious in nature, so in the context of sport films capturing realistic emotions and environments is not as essential. We are aware that sports are an element of the film, but the main focus is the comedy. The sport is just a vessel for comedy. Other elements are used to create a sense of reality. For instance, in *Kicking and Screaming* a parent in the bleachers performs a chant with a big Italian flag for the Italian players on the Tigers, Massimo and Gian Piero. Taunting is also seen. During the championship, Phil provokes one of the opposing players, calling him a "fart face," resulting in the child attacking him. In an extreme example reminiscent of behavior from the ultras (the most hardcore soccer fans), Phil throws a chair onto the field and pushes down a player from the opposing team. He also follows them around yelling "loser" through a cone which results in him being restrained for his erratic behavior and excitement. These examples still employ elements of comedy because these are not typical behaviors or events seen at a kids' soccer match.

The plot elements of the film, specifically the unathletic abilities of the children on the field, make the need for a serious tone less essential. We are supposed to find humor in their athleticism, or lack thereof, not admire it and treat it as an actual soccer game. Like many sport films, *Kicking and Screaming* focuses less on the playing field and more on the circumstance that surrounds the sport. Crosson says that: "the sporting context may offer a commentary on the larger issues, predominately of a personal rather than social nature, with which the film is concerned" (55). In this movie this is the personal vendetta of Phil against his father and his need to defeat his father in the championship to prove he can achieve athletic success. Even when time is spent on the field, sports are not the focus, but rather the comedy. In the third game of the season, for instance, many scenes show kids getting injured in comical ways such as taking a ball to the face and falling. Actions and reactions are also used to create

comedic situations such as Byong Sun taking the toupee of the referee and running off the field with it and Phil's surprised reaction to the Tiger's first goal of the season.

Children as the main cast also mitigates much of the need for a serious tone, since children are inherently playful and goofy. This eliminates the challenge of needing good actors who can portray sport seriously and realistically. After the Tigers lose badly in their second game of the season to the Gladiators, Phil attempts to talk to them and give them some words of encouragement. However, one of the players, Byong Sun, keeps interrupting by repeatedly slamming a cup on his knee, making a popping sound. In a similar example, before the championship game, Phil's speech is interrupted by a player who asked why Phil was whispering, to which Phil replies: "for dramatic effects". In the speech, he talks about the stakes for him rather than the team and does not say much of anything that is encouraging. He does not expect his team to perform in any way outside of the standards of passing the ball to the Italian soccer players.

The expectations that we have for children are not the same that we have for adults, so children are able to perform outside of professional standards. Besides the Italian players, the good athletic abilities of the other members of the Tigers were hardly showcased. For instance, drills consisted of goofing off and training consisted of chores that had no relevance to soccer such as washing the coach's car and moving heavy bags of leaves. For most of the film, whenever the Tigers did do anything athletic it was through unconventional means or lucky circumstances like distracting the goalie by eating a worm or forming a protective circle around a player as they walk the ball down the field while it was balanced on a teammate's neck. When skills are actually showcased, they are portrayed using film techniques such as close-up floor shots of the ball and legs of the player that could belong to anybody, or the use of transitional cuts that make it seem as if the actors actually scored in the circumstances shown in the film. This again does away with the challenge of needing actors who can perform really well athletically to create excitement as if spectators were watching a real game.

Although the film does not rely on serious tones as other traditional sport films do, the film becomes more serious when it needs to showcase stakes and wants to create excitement. In these instances, the film utilizes different film techniques. For example, the introduction of Massimo and Gian Piero is tense. There is no music, so the focus is strictly on the athletic skills of the players. It is also a continuous shot, which showcases authentic skill plainly. The way that the camera follows the ball, and the use of aerial shots make it seem as if we were watching a real game. The field chemistry between the two players and the grunts of opposing players as they miss the ball also add a sense of realism. Realism is also created with the use of commentators. Commentators are used to mitigate the challenges of the representation of sport. Crosson writes that: “the ubiquity of the sports commentator in sports films” “attempt[s] to respond to this challenge by seeking to emulate aspects of the televisual presentation of sport.” (54) Commentators create a tense tone by establishing stakes and creating a fast-paced rhythm, especially during the last minutes of the game, which makes the audience feel as though they were watching an actual game. Commentators in the film were only used during the championship game, which added a heightened level of importance and excitement.

Although the film is not a traditional sports film, it follows much of the same repetitive structure of sports films that has contributed to the genre’s relative unsuccess. Crosson, quoting Rick Altman, writes that: “The repetitive nature of genre films tends to diminish the importance of each film’s ending, along with the cause-and-effect sequence that leads to that conclusion” (62). Like most sport films this film is an underdog story about the Tigers. There is a big game coming up, the league championship. The team starts advancing and improving. At the championship they are met with a challenge but overcome the challenge to win the game by putting to use the values and lessons learned throughout the film. In the final moments of the championship game, Phil’s unathletic son, Sam, is able to outperform his rival on the field by using the skills he observed while sitting on the bench. The scene attempts to be tense with its choice of music and use of

slow motion, but the ending is very predictable. Sam scores the game-winning goal to no surprise. The comedic quality of the film, however, does create some uncertainty. In a scene like this, with a tense tone and much at stake, it would be very comical if things did not go as intended. I believe this would add a refreshing element of realism to the film. The message of the film would also still hold true. In the film, Phil is eager to validate himself and bring honor to his competitive father by beating him in anything athletic. Phil carefully models his parenting in a way that contrasts that of his father’s parenting, so his son does not go through the same treatment Phil experienced from his father. Phil, however, loses sense of his values as he becomes more motivated to beat his father, which results in his son experiencing the treatment from which he initially tried to protect him. Phil realizes that sports are not about winning, but rather having fun, which is how the underdog, the Tigers, are able to win the championship game. Despite the clichés and inaccurate representation of sports, those who have an interest in sports will be taught or reminded of an important lesson.

Micah Hurd wrote this article for his FORL 370 class during the Spring of 2023

The Culture of Italian Soccer and Its Global Context

by Davin Kim

The fascist regime was initially uninterested in competitive sports but during the mid-1920s, with the rise and popularity of football, football became a national institution. Football brought in a wide range of people from the spectators, the players, and the fans of the sport. As a result, the Fascist regime began to focus its attention on the Italian sporting infrastructure. In *Football and Fascism* by Simon Martin, the chapter “Fascist Football Foundations” identifies the desire to unite the nation culturally and politically as the reason for restructuring their sporting infrastructure. In addition, knowing the reasons why Mussolini joined the war—make Italy important and unified—shows how valuable and important football was in reaching the

government’s goal of making Italy a unified country nation and their way of utilizing the popularity of football to their advantage. The original governing body of calcio was Federazione Italiana del Football (FIF) that converted to the Federazione Italiana Giuoco del Calcio (FIGC). With the growth of football, more clubs were born but this would also bring many conflicts between the big and small clubs and the football league. The initial person assigned in overseeing the restructuring of football was Vittorio Pozzo, who had successful past experiences with sport that included taking an Italian squad to the Stockholm Olympics in 1912. Pozzo provided his plan for the reform but due to the voting power of the smaller teams they quickly rejected the plan as they believed that his changes favored the bigger clubs. This would be one of the many conflicts that occurred over the course of restructuring the league. Other conflicts involved financial issues and bigger clubs hoarding all the best players. This foreshadows how big soccer clubs like Juventus or Inter will be from mostly cities in the north that had large economic booms, allowing them to be able to afford the best players and build extremely strong teams.

With all of the conflict the Italian journalist Bruno Roghi asked himself “What will become of Italian Football?”, before prescribing a ‘tonic of discipline, to free matches from the incendiary hyperbolic passions, to make it a healthy and chivalrous game that tempers the energies of the race” (Martin, 2005). He worried about the consequences of the exaggerations and negative clashes that football can bring; although the chants and dramatization of sports like football can be exciting and energizing, it should be kept with respect and honor. “As calcio’s popularity increased, large and sometimes volatile crowds became regular features, with some fans encouraged to travel to away matches by subsidies from the clubs” (Martin, 2005). This quote mentions the “volatile crowds” which shows that there were hardcore spectators even during the rise of the Fascist regime, similar to what we will see later around the 1970s, when these volatile crowds would eventually become the Ultras-fans who often go great lengths and do extreme actions in order to support their team. In addition, this