



Movie Review: Moneyball

Drop what you're doing. I mean it. Stop whatever it is that you're doing and go online to find out when the next showing is. Take a friend, go alone, doesn't matter. Moneyball isn't about baseball. No way. This is about taking a chance, taking a risk, putting it all on the line. This is what it feels like to try to (and succeed in) overthrowing the existing order of things. It's about finding out not only who your friends are, but how it feels to be alone.

I don't even like baseball. And I don't particularly care much for Brad Pitt. You probably don't, either. Doesn't matter. In this movie he is Billy Beane, GM of the Oakland Athletics, which just lost the American League Division Series to the New York Yankees in 2001. No wonder. The Yankees had a \$114 million salary budget to finance their race for the pennant, compared to the A's \$39 million.

But when the A's lost three of their best players to free agency, leaving Pitt with nothing but last year's winners and not enough money to buy new ones, Beane finds a young man in the Cleveland Indians office — Peter Brand (Jonah Hill), a Yaley with a degree in economics — who has figured out how to buy last year's has-been players for a song, based upon one asset: they get on base. You get on base, you score. You score, you win. You win enough.... and are persistent enough.... In 2006 the A's finally won the American League Division Series West against the Minnesota Twins.

So Beane goes all in. Nothing held back. He meets resistance, scoffing, ridicule — not only from his scouts but also his manager, Art Howe (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who think Beane's lost his mind. Beane persists, intervenes, questions, doubts, and moves ahead anyway. After a simply terrible early season in 2001, the A's begin to win...and win...and, well, I won't give it all away.

Suffice to say, *Moneyball* is about making life decisions, and finding out what you're made of. Bean counters and bureaucrats won't enjoy this movie, and will think they've wasted their money. They probably have. But for those who root for the underdog, or who *are* the underdog — whether in business or in the freedom fight — this movie will...well, it will explain as well as any movie I've seen in recent memory exactly why we're in the fight. It's not for the money, and it's not for the glory. We're in the fight for ... well, see the movie! It's such a cliché to say if you're only going to see one movie this year ... so I won't say it.

But when it comes out on DVD, I'll buy it. And watch it again. And then will it to my kids.







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