

Film Review: Brad Pitt, Baseball Evolve in Magnificent ‘Moneyball’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 22, 2011 - 5:50pm

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CHICAGO – Using sports, especially baseball, as a metaphor for life can get dicey – sometimes the symbolic pieces don’t fit universally for everything. But “Moneyball, ” starring Brad Pitt, hits a grand slam with this old allegory, and educates regarding the true nature of modern large dollar sports.



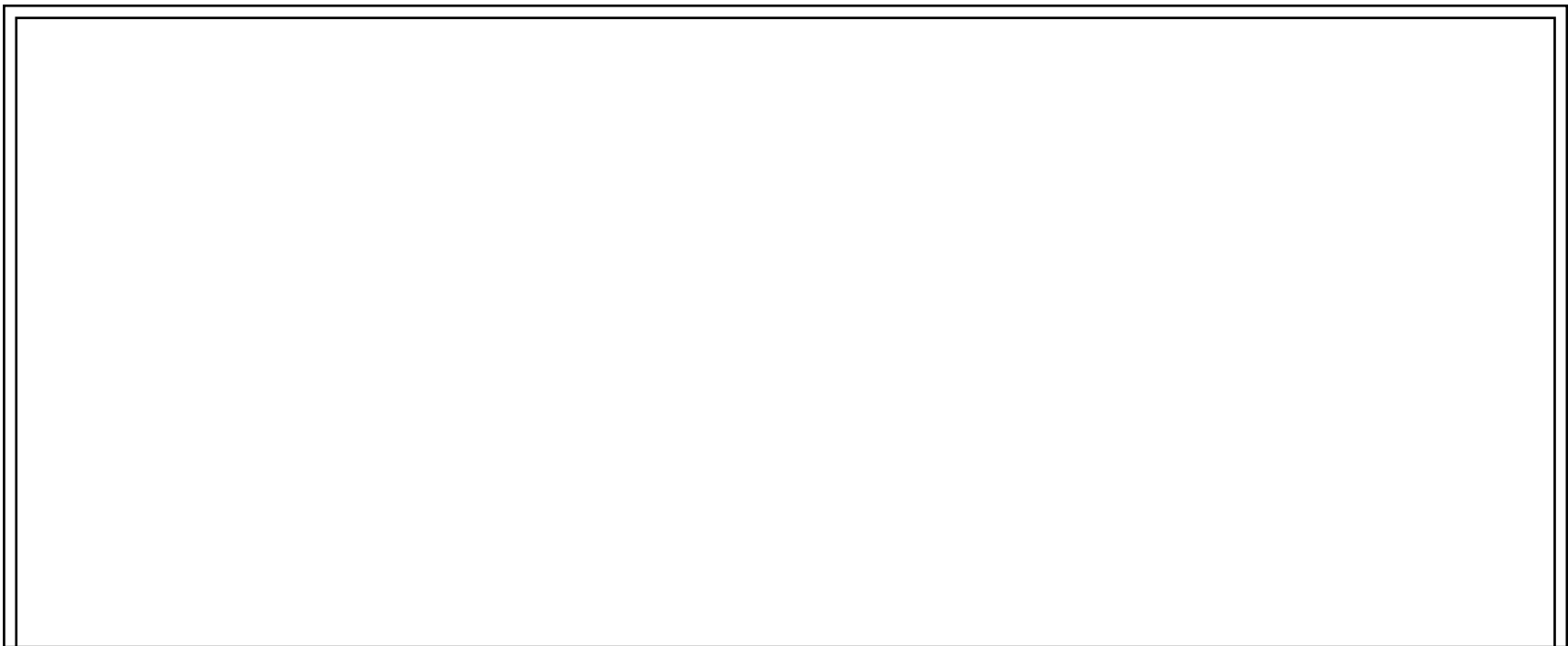
As he did in “Capote,” director Bennett Miller guides a real life story as a basis for the bigger picture. Just as we saw Truman Capote get sucked into the fame machine and spit out in less than favorable ways, baseball is targeted in this based-on-truth narrative for what it has become – a cynical, cash oriented, mercenary shadow of its simple roots. The game though, as we are taught in the film, is never over, and that is where Moneyball displays its best intentions and heart.

Brad Pitt is Billy Beane, the real life general manager of the Oakland Athletics. The year is 2002, and the Oakland A’s have lost their two best players to free agency, and “only” have \$41 million for their payroll, as opposed to the New York Yankees with \$125 million. Faced with the prospect of competing in such a market and trying to avoid a lost year, Beane is willing to roll the dice, and he hires a economics major from Yale as Assistant General Manager. Peter Brand (Jonah Hill) has developed a new system for signing players, based on their statistical on-base percentages. Basically, Beane and Brand go after the undervalued players in the market with high on-base stats.

This of course goes against the established baseball scouts in the Oakland system, and their on-field manager, Art Howe (an understated Philip Seymour Hoffman). The crew of cast-offs that Beane and Brand assemble at first have difficulties on the field, but their paper statistics slowly begins to show some promise. At the same time, Beane deals with a daughter from a previous marriage, and his devotion to her factors into his work. When the risky player experiment begins to yield some fruit, the next era in baseball is launched.

“Moneyball” opens everywhere on September 23rd. Featuring Brad Pitt, Jonah Hill, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Robin Wright, Bob Costas and Tammy Blanchard. Adapted for the screen by Steven Zaillian and Aaron Sorkin. Directed by Bennett Miller. Rated “PG-13”

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In the Field: Brad Pitt as Billy Beane in ‘Moneyball’
Photo credit: Melinda Sue Gordon for © Columbia TriStar

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