



Sports Movies Filmed in and About Indiana

Indiana is renowned not only as a state that loves its sports, but one that has contributed many indelible moments in basketball, football, auto racing and more.

It's no surprise then that over the last three-plus decades, Indiana has been the setting for some of the greatest sports films ever made – most of which are based (albeit some more loosely than others) on real-life events and Hoosiers. Enjoy this stroll down memory lane that mixes the basics and perhaps the not-so-well-known details of three classics.

Breaking Away

Summary: Four close friends – all recent high school graduates from working-class families in Bloomington – reflect on their uncertain futures and band together to win the Indiana University Little 500 bicycle race.

Year released: 1979

Domestic total gross: Approximately \$16.4 million

Director: Peter Yates

Actors: Dennis Christopher, Dennis Quaid, Daniel Stern and Jackie Earle Haley

Filming locations: Bloomington and Nashville

Major awards:

- Academy Award winner (Best Original Screenplay)
- Golden Globe Award winner (Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy)

Ranking among top sports movies:

- No. 8 American Film Institute
- No. 8 Sports Illustrated

Famous quote:

Mike (one of main character Dave Stoller's best friends): "They're gonna keep callin' us 'cutters.' To them, it's just a dirty word. To me, it's just somethin' else I never got a chance to be."

Trivia:

Howdy Wilcox Jr. founded the Little 500 in 1951. He modeled the 200-lap (50 mile) race after the Indy 500, which his father won in 1919. Since its inception, the Little 500 has raised scholarship money for working students.



Food fight! When Indiana University students try to intimidate the "Cutters," a brawl breaks out at the student union cafeteria (*Breaking Away* photos courtesy of 20th Century Fox).

The radio announcer for the Little 500 is David K. Blase, who inspired the role of Stoller. The Italian-loving cyclist competed with *Breaking Away* writer Steve Tesich in the race in 1962. Blase led his team to victory by completing nearly 140 of 200 laps on his own.

It didn't really happen:

In real life, only IU students are allowed to participate in the Little 500. In the movie, the "Cutters" team was comprised of a group of non-students to stand up to university bullies and others who targeted the "townies" for their blue-collar backgrounds.

That's a wrap:

Since *Breaking Away*, the Little 500 has expanded to two races (in 1988) – one for men and one for women. Today, more than 25,000 attend the events each year, which are also shown nationally on HDNet television. Proceeds from the 2008 races allowed the IU Student Foundation to give away more than \$35,000 in scholarships to working students.

Hoosiers

Summary: Based loosely on the real-life story of southern Indiana's Milan High School team, *Hoosiers* depicts a controversial basketball coach at a small town high school leading his team to the 1952 state basketball championship.

Year released: 1986

Domestic total gross: Approximately \$28.6 million

Approximately 1,000 extras were recruited to fill the stands at the Hoosier Gym in Knightstown.



Director: David Anspaugh

Actors: Gene Hackman, Dennis Hopper and Barbara Hershey

Filming locations: Cities include Brownsburg, Danville, Frankfort, Indianapolis, Knightstown, Lebanon, Milan, Muncie, New Richmond and Nineveh

Major awards:

- Academy Award and Golden Globe Award nominations (Best Supporting Actor Dennis Hopper)
- Academy Award nomination (Best Original Score)

Ranking among top sports movies:

- No. 1 ESPN (both by expert panel and fans)
- No. 1 Sports Illustrated
- No. 1 USA Today
- No. 4 American Film Institute

Famous quotes:

Coach Norman Dale: "If you put your effort and concentration

into playing to your potential, to be the best that you can be, I don't care what the scoreboard says at the end of the game. In my book, we're gonna be winners."

Hickory Huskers player Merle Webb: "Let's win this game for all the small schools that never had a chance to get here."

Trivia:

Jack Nicholson was originally offered the role of Coach Dale.

All of the actors portraying Hickory Huskers played high school basketball except Maris Valainis, who portrayed star player Jimmy Chitwood. Yet, Valainis drained 12 consecutive jumpers in one scene – in the only take – before missing the final one as Coach Dale walks away. He also nailed the winning shot at Hinkle Fieldhouse on the first try.

It didn't really happen:

Coach Dale recruits Wilbur "Shooter" Flatch, the alcoholic father of one of his players, to serve as an assistant coach. The character is fictional.

In an interview with *The Saturday Evening Post*, Milan basketball star Bobby Plump noted, "The final 18 seconds were the only thing factual in the movie about the Milan-Muncie Central game. From the time the ball was in bounds after the final timeout, the movie was accurate." In a separate interview with *The Washington Post*, he said, "... the important thing is they got the last 18 seconds right."

That's a wrap:

Knightstown – the home court for the Hickory Huskers team – has become the focal point of the movie's legacy for the state. At the aptly named Hoosier Gym, visitors are welcome seven days a week to relive *Hoosiers* and shoot baskets if they like. The gym and small museum are free of charge. People from as far away as Europe, Asia and Australia have made the pilgrimage.

For the past five years, the site has hosted the Hoosiers Reunion All-Star Classic, a doubleheader featuring the state's best graduating high school senior boys and girls basketball players. In June 2010, ESPN put the Hoosier Gym atop its list of the nation's five best sports movie sites to tour.

Rudy

Summary: Since childhood, Daniel Eugene "Rudy" Ruettiger has dreamed of one thing: playing football at the University of Notre Dame. At just 5-foot-6 inches tall and 165 pounds, he hardly fits the typical football player mold. But, what he lacks in stature, he makes up for in determination. This film shows how the real-life Rudy overcame the odds to realize his dream.

Year released: 1993

Domestic total gross: Approximately \$22.8 million

Director: David Anspaugh

Actors: Sean Astin, Ned Beatty and Charles S. Dutton

Filming locations: South Bend (at the University of Notre Dame), Whiting and Illinois

Ranking among top sports movies:

- No. 4 ESPN25: "The 25 Best Sports Movies" (fans)
- No. 24 ESPN25: "The 25 Best Sports Movies" (expert panel)

Famous quote:

Fighting Irish captain Roland Steele: "Rudy, are you ready for this, champ?"

Rudy: "I've been ready for this my whole life!"

Steele: "Then you take us out on the field."

Trivia:

The real Rudy was the first player in Notre Dame football history to be carried off the field on teammates' shoulders in celebration. In the film, he has a cameo in one of the final scenes as a fan. He's in the stands directly behind Ned Beatty, who plays Rudy's father.

Sean Astin, the actor who played Rudy, is the son of actress Patty Duke. He also played Samwise Gamgee in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

It didn't really happen:

The inspirational scene in which players drop their jerseys on Coach Dan Devine's desk never took place. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Rudy commented, "Dan made the announcement that I'd be playing at practice and everybody cheered."

In real life, the fans chanted Rudy's name after he tackled the quarterback, not before Devine allows him to play.

That's a wrap:

After his story hit the big screen, Rudy Ruettiger became a sought-after inspirational speaker. He has also written several motivational books.

The legendary Fighting Irish jersey, one that Rudy coveted to wear in a Notre Dame game.

