

FILM REVIEWS

'Rudy' needs a chill pill... Sean Astin overacts in grating performance



Fortune (Charles S. Dutton, right), the head groundskeeper for Notre Dame's football stadium, befriends and encourages Rudy Ruettiger (Sean Astin) to try out for the football team in the classic underdog story, "Rudy."

By Dena Dizdar

THE BATTALION

"Rudy" Starring Sean Astin, Ned Beatty and Charles S. Dutton Directed by David Anspaugh Rated PG Playing at Schulman VI

"Rudy?" More like "Fruity."

The film is based on the true story of Rudy Ruettiger's (Sean Astin) struggle to get into the coveted University of Notre Dame and join the Fighting Irish football team. Despite his small size and lack of athletic and academic ability, Rudy goes against all odds to gain acceptance his junior year.

Sounds like a good story, right? It is, but the story is clouded by Astin's goofy portrayal of this phenomenally hard-working man.

The film begins with a scene from Rudy's childhood in Joliet, Ill. It's snowing, and Rudy is attempting to play football with his brothers and some neighborhood friends. Rudy finally gets to

play a key position, but he botches the play because he is smaller than the rest.

In that crucial first scene, one boy stares Rudy in the face and sums up Sean Astin's entire performance when he yells, "Spaz!"

I wanted to like Rudy, and I wanted to like this film. It is the story of the classic underdog. Everyone roots for the underdog.

But throughout the film, Astin periodically erases every ounce of support the audience gives him with his quirky performance.

At one point, Rudy has secured a job in the Notre Dame athletic maintenance department, and he is overcome by the fact that he is actually in the team's locker room. He stands on a stool and recites an old Fighting Irish pep talk he had memorized as a child.

This scene could have been poignant and touching, but Astin's execution is grating and lispy. He has not yet mastered effective elocution and his undeveloped style shows through in this scene.

Astin once again ruins the moment

in the critical scene when Rudy is told he has actually made the team. His adolescent jumping and screaming tantrum is irritating rather than endearing. His overacting sours the moment, and one begins to hope Rudy doesn't pull his groin before he even practices with the team.

But Astin's performance is not the film's only problem. Much of the film's time is spent on the two years Rudy attends Holy Cross Junior College trying to get into Notre Dame and his rejection each semester. The story drags during this time, leaving the audience to wonder if Rudy will ever actually make it to Notre Dame.

The saving grace of this film is Charles S. Dutton's performance as Fortune, the athletic field groundskeeper who gives Rudy a job and a reason to keep pursuing his dream. His lines are few and far between, but Dutton adds class and professionalism with his role.

If "Rudy's" story line sounds intriguing enough to overcome these problems and you think you can stomach Astin's antics, take a chance and see the film.



Cloris Leachman as Granny.

'Beverly Hillbillies' a hit with refreshing family fun

By Jacqueline Ayotte

THE BATTALION

"The Beverly Hillbillies" Starring Dabney Coleman, Lily Tomlin, Lea Thompson and Rob Schneider Directed by Penelope Spheeris Rated PG Playing at Post Oak III

Peeling a band-aid off an extremely hairy arm could be more fun than watching previews for "The Beverly Hillbillies."

Oh yes, these painfully corny excerpts hurt that bad.

But, surprise surprise — this new Twentieth Century Fox release proves looks can be deceiving.

"The Beverly Hillbillies" is more hilariously refreshing than the original television series. And it just may be the most appropriate family comedy released this fall.

With the return of the most hyperactive hicks in all of television history, not one moment of "The Beverly Hillbillies" is boring. The characters are played out perfectly with Jim Varney as Jed, Erika Eleniak as Elly May, Cloris Leachman as Granny and Diedrich Bader as Jethro and

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