

'Bad News Bears' still hits home 40 years after original release

ca.sports.yahoo.com/blogs/mlb-big-league-stew/-bad-news-bears--still-hits-home-40-years-after-original-release-180753202.html

By Israel Fehr

4/7/2016

It was 40 years ago Thursday that "The Bad News Bears" hit theaters as one of the first edgy sports comedies. All these years later, the central themes from the classic movie still resonate with audiences.

The Bears were a rag-tag bunch made up of the colorful characters that ultimately came together after numerous trials and tribulations but still came up short, and for them that was OK. Much like how "The Sandlot" hits the [sweet spot on the importance of neighborhood pickup games](#), "The Bad News Bears" brilliantly captures some of the absurdities that are prevalent throughout youth sports and the subtleties that make it all worth it.

Why are so many people still drawn to it the original movie all these years later? "It was honest," Erin Bluth, the actor who played who played Bears right fielder Ahmad Abdul Rahim, [told the New York Daily News](#) as part of an in-depth feature celebrating the film's 40th anniversary.

I was lucky. My dad was heavily involved with my organized sports teams growing up, especially baseball. No, I never played for a Little League team quite like the North Valley League Bears or had a coach quite like Morris Buttermaker, but there were more than a few instances where we got pretty close.

"The Bad News Bears" presented a hyperbolic, almost satirical look at the environment of playing sports as a kid. It's completely relatable and refreshingly realistic. Is it a bit crude? Yes, but that's part of the charm. This [paragraph from Rolling Stone's](#) ode to why it's the best baseball flick ever made totally encapsulates that:

*Who among us didn't know a [s***]-talking red-[a**] like Tanner Boyle (Chris Barnes), a stat-crunching nerd like Alfred Oglivie (Alfred W. Lutter), an obnoxious fat kid like Mike Engleberg (Gary Lee Cavagnaro) or a booger-eating outcast like Timmy Lupus (Quinn Smith)? And who among us didn't play against smug, more talented kids like Joey Turner (Brandon Cruz)?*

Did you know they actually filmed two endings to the movie? One had the Bears winning the league championship and the other, the one they rightfully chose to roll with, suffering an agonizing loss.

It's been a few years since my dad and I sat down to watch what is one of my dad's favorite movies. This summer seems like the perfect time to take a few hours and catch up with coach Buttermaker, star pitcher Amanda Whurlitzer and bad-boy outfielder Kelly Leak and reminisce about the hilarious stories from all the days we spent together at the Little League diamond or the batting cage.

And just like "The Bad News Bears" those memories will still be just as meaningful 40 years later.

[Israel Fehr](#) is a writer for [Big League Stew](#) on Yahoo Sports. Have a tip? Email him at israelfehr@yahoo.ca or follow him on Twitter.