

“The Miracle Season”

By Helen Lutz

For those of you who read my review and entrepreneurial suggestion for the movie “Midnight Sun” a couple of weeks ago and failed to open a small business selling tissues at tear-jerker movies; well, you’ve missed out on another opportunity with the release of “The Miracle Season.” Had you paid attention, you could be rolling in dough right now.



The true story of the Lady Trojans volleyball team from Iowa City’s West High School focuses a refreshing spotlight on sports movies in the new film “The Miracle Season.” Most sports movies revolve around the guys and usually football, however, Director Sean McNamara tells the story of a girls’ championship volleyball team. The girls are a big deal in their small town of Iowa City with each game packed with fans.

Caroline ‘Line’ Found (Danika Yarosh) is the team captain. A wonderful leader and terrific player, she ignites the girls to always deliver their best while having fun doing it. Caroline and Kelly (Erin Moriarty) have been best friends since the term best friend was invented – their entire lives. Caroline, always the daredevil, fears nothing; while Kelly has a bit more of a level head. Some of Caroline’s recklessness stems from an internal need to find ways to deal with a serious family problem – her mother is dying of cancer (tissues needed here).

The night of a volleyball team party Caroline shows up riding a Moped borrowed from her boyfriend, he’s out of town. Has she mastered the art of riding a Moped, well ... not really, but how hard can it be? While Kelly helps her hide the bike out of parental sight, she’s not real wild about Caroline riding it. After promising to go slowly and be extremely careful, Caroline sets off for home. She has an intimate meeting with a tree; sadly, the tree wins (more tissues).

The loss of someone, especially someone as electric and loved as Caroline puts a damper on just about everything. It’s hard enough to show up at school let alone play volleyball. It is interesting to watch Caroline’s packed funeral (and easy to miss) when even the Lady Trojan’s rival volleyball team from City show up to pay their respect (how about those tissues?). The first few games of the season are forfeited – the girls have no leader, no spirit and no real light at the end of the tunnel.

The team’s coach Kathy ‘Bres’ Bresnahan played by Helen Hunt, also torn apart by the loss of such a special young lady, persuades Kelly to step forward and encourage her teammates to emulate Caroline, it’s what ‘Line’ would expect of them. Is there a chance that they can repeat the state championship – hardly, with so many forfeits; but it’s time to try. The team’s mantra ends up being “live like Line” and it’s time to step up and try to act as champions even without their best player and leader; a daunting task.

The characters pull us into the story and its many subplots like Mrs. Found’s cancer and the difficulties faced by Caroline’s father (William Hurt) but McNamara falls short when it comes to helping us understand Coach Bres who is fighting her own demons, demons we don’t fully understand. I love Helen Hunt (has nothing to do with her name) and she does her best at being a driving force giving the girls the strength and fortitude they need to pick up the pieces and go on with their lives while struggling with her own coping mechanisms.

“The Miracle Season” highlights ‘girl power’ in a positive way and is a great outing for any girls’ team; especially if the coach buys a large popcorn to share. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “The Miracle Season” ... TWO 1/2 HARTS. I wouldn’t count on anyone taking my advice to ‘Hart’ and hawking tissues to the audience prior to the start of the show, so be sure to bring your own.