

sports flicks

On March 26, the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences will host its 72nd annual Academy Awards. But before the catty pre-show, bad jokes, awful hair, outrageous dresses and acceptance speeches more long-winded than *The Green Mile*, we here at “Out of Bounds” World Headquarters would like to propose our own anti-Oscars — The Best Sports Movies of All Time.

Keep this list handy, 'cause we guarantee any of these will beat the hell out of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

So without further adieu and knowing we're going to anger some of you, here are the best sports movies of all time:

10. *Hoosiers* — Yes, Jimmy Chitwood, the basket is still 10 feet tall, and this classic featuring Hackman and Hopper can't help but make you root for the little guy.

9. *The Longest Yard* — Burt Reynolds didn't yet have a toupee when he led a rag-tag bunch of convicts in the big game against the guards.

Violence-tinged hysterics ensue. And the old throw-the-ball-right-in-the-privates scene late in the movie should make you double-over in laughter and familiarity every time.

8. *Pride of the Yankees* — If you don't get a chill when Gary Cooper says he's the luckiest man alive, perhaps you need to seek help.

7. *When We Were Kings* — One of the two documentaries that made the final cut. This look at Ali's and Foreman's Rumble in the Jungle, certainly one of the top 10 fights ever, is fascinating even to folks who don't like boxing.

6. *Bull Durham* — Susan Sarandon,

GRAB A BEER AND A BOWL OF CHIPS. IT'S TIME TO WATCH THE BEST SPORTS MOVIES OF ALL TIME **BY MARK LUCE**

Tim Robbins and Kevin Costner make this wacky look at the minor leagues both poignant and hilarious.

5. *Slap Shot* — The Hanson Brothers hijinks alone make this hip-checking Paul Newman comedy worthy of such a high place on the list.

4. *Rocky* — Yo! Adrienne! This sleeper hit of 1976 put Stallone on the map and marks one of the times that the Academy actually got something right. Sure, Rocky III through V were drivel, but the original is a knockout.

3. *Caddyshack* — Shameless pandering to superintendents, right? Hey, I'm no dummy. But it's hard to beat the Cinderella story of Bill Murray's Carl Spackler, the greenskeeper who blasts his varmints and grows his own grass. Toss in Rodney D. and his epic golf bag, Chevy Chase when he was still talented and Ted Knight's sailor outfit and you have the funniest sports movie ever.

2. *Raging Bull* — We all know DeNiro went on an eating tear to gain 60 pounds to play Jake LaMotta. We all know that Scorsese got completely dissed in the Best Picture category at the Academy Awards (it went to *Ordinary People*). And we all should know that the gritty realism, beautifully brutal fight sequences and stark black-and-white cinematography make this film a



masterpiece.

1. *Hoop Dreams* — This powerful documentary about Arthur Agee and William Gates, two high-school hoops phenoms in inner-city Chicago, was robbed at the Academy Awards in 1994. It depicts how difficult it is to succeed both on and off the court.

All of the following were in contention for the top honors, and although they didn't make it, they are all, in their own ways, great sports movies:

The Bad News Bears, Bang the Drum Slowly, Chariots of Fire, Eight Men Out, Field of Dreams, The Hustler (yes, we consider billiards a sport), *A League of Their Own, The Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner, Major League, North Dallas Forty, Requiem for a Heavyweight* and *Running Brave*.

The Hall of Shame: These films should be avoided at all costs: *Gus* (the field-goal kicking mule), *The Babe Ruth Story, The Babe, Cobb, The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh, Hot Dog: The Movie, Ice Castles* and *One on One*.

Until next time, enjoy the movies. And keep the hate mail short.

Mark Luce, a Lawrence, Kan.-based freelance writer who's building a baseball field in his backyard, can be reached at mluce@earthlink.net.