

1 of 2 DOCUMENTS

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December 29, 2008 Monday 1:19 AM EST

Blu-ray Review: Coach Carter

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LENGTH: 604 words

Dec. 29, 2008 (Blogcritics.org delivered by Newstex) -- I must preface this review with the statement that I'm a sucker for inspirational sports movies that use the sports as a building block for building a better life for the people playing it. But, this review is about the new release of *Coach Carter* on Blu-ray, and while it still has it's inspirational charm, it's one of those films that doesn't benefit much from the format upgrade.

The Show *Coach Carter*, which originally came out in 2005, is based on the true story of Ken Carter. Ken, who is played superbly by Samuel L. Jackson, runs a sporting-goods store in the neighborhood when he is approached to coach the local high school basketball team. As it turns out Ken is somewhat of a legend at the school, and holds most of the records from his playing days. The team is in shambles, and while the players have talent, they are more interested in themselves than the team. They don't attend class, most are in danger of never graduating, and others even sell drugs to make a living. It's hard to grow up in downtown Los Angeles. Ken Carter comes in to coach the team and realizes he has his work cut out for him. But, creating a winning basketball team is the least of his worries. He is more interested in creating decent hard-working men who will have chances to go to college someday. Coach Carter's motives are pure, but they are met with hostility from both his players and their families. Sports isn't everything, that's the message *Coach Carter* brings to the table. One man can actually make a difference. Of course the movie comes down to that deciding game. The last seconds are nail-biting. What's going to happen? Are they going to win or lose? It doesn't matter anyway. The real victory is in what happens to the players and the community after the basketball season is over. **The Quality** The 2.35:1 widescreen presentation is nice, and looks clean, but as I said before there's nothing much to see in *Coach Carter* in the first place. Don't get me wrong, the story is fine, but there's no visually spectacular scenes that will make the high-definition experience better than that of standard DVD. It's the same with the Dolby TrueHD 5.1 audio. Nothing really spectacular stuck out to me. At times the dialogue was outdone by the blaring hip-hop soundtrack making it hard to hear. **The Special Features** "The Man Behind The Movie" is just under 20 minutes long and it examines the life of the real Coach Carter. There are interviews with his family and son. The famous lockout is discussed in detail with the real Carter and the students who were a part of it. "Fast Break at Richmond High" is an 11-minute extra chronicling the work it took to get the basketball scenes right. Some of the actors had limited or even know prior basketball abilities, which they had to learn for their roles. "Making the Cut" is an 18-minute making-of feature with the standard cast and crew interviews. **Ending Thoughts** There's not much to look at in this show. There is no point where the movie really showcases exactly what Blu-ray can do. Urban California is a dreary, run-down place and all the high definition does is accentuate that to the tiniest degree. There's nothing overly amazing here, as a matter of fact there's not much that separates this version from the DVD version. Let me put it this way. If you were to invite someone over to your house to show them what Blu-ray could do, *Coach Carter* should be the last on your list. College student at **Utah State University** and movie reviewer for the university newspaper, The Utah Statesman. Newstex ID: CRIT-0003-30761342

LOAD-DATE: December 29, 2008

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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PUBLICATION-TYPE: Web Blog

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