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July 2003

Girlfriends



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Ball-Kicking Babes

Sporty chicks play hard, kiss harder.

by Candace Moore

Based on Susan Orlean's article

"Surf Girls of Maui," this feel-good surfer-chick flick is *Karate Kid* retrussed and set on Oahu's North Shore. The ocean's wrathful undertow and head-busting coral reefs act as villainous dojo to abandoned-by-her-parents teen Anne Marie (Kate Bosworth). Blonde-mopped Anne Marie works as a maid to put her fourteen-year-old sis through high school, all the while battling



Blue Crush wipes out.

Blue Crush

dir. John Stockwell
Universal Pictures, 104 min.

(warranted) fears of drowning to board it out in the high-stakes Pipe Masters Tournament. "Cruel Summer" crashes over hip-hop as Anne Marie struggles to realize her dreams of sluicing through monster waves and getting sponsored. Sultry-mouthed Michelle Rodriguez (*Girlfight*) is appealing as one of Anne Marie's "hang ten" gal-pals and the movie cameos a cadre of real-life surf girls, including Keala Kennelly, Kate Skarratt, and Megan Abubo. All the action's in the water, not in the script. Grade: **B**

Die Another Day (MGM, 2002)

If ass-kicking counts as a sport, Halle Berry flexes a sex-infused brand of athleticism in the latest (poorly written) 007 thrill ride. Berry, as American spy Jinx, and Madonna, as a sword-savvy fencing coach, add grrl-power to another Ian Fleming-inspired, heterosexual clambake. The Internet-rumored hot kiss between the two super-starlets never surfaces; instead, a floppy tête-à-tête exchange of comebacks between James and his Bond-girl (Berry) that sounds floppy. One wishes the whole film were an elongated Madonna video with hovercraft chases, melting ice palaces, swashbuckling, and characters who keep their mouths shut. Grade: **C+**

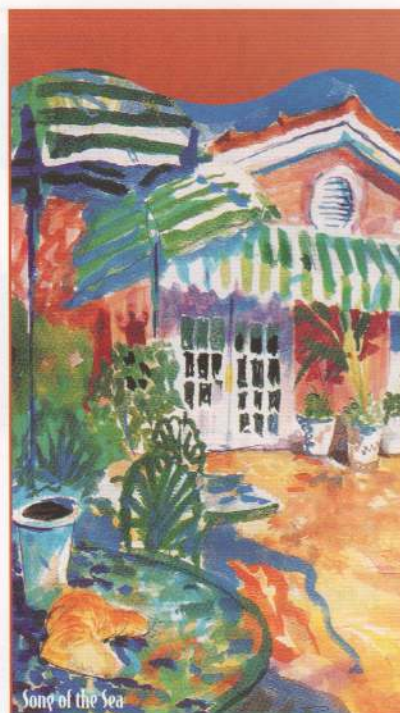
2 Seconds (France Film, 1998)

A cute, quirky flick about a queer Canadian downhill bike racer who suffers from starting-gun jitters and stalls out before plunging into love. Deemed too old for her sport at twenty-eight, Laurie (wide-eyed Charlotte Laurier) retires to Montreal, attempting to use her trusty two wheels (and the principles of physics) to trick time while delivering packages as a downtown messenger. Vodka-swigging philosophical sessions with a sour bicycle-shop owner about the nature of suffering help the sexually frustrated speed demon open up. Laurie soon basks in the arms of a shy girl who (suitably) develops still photos. Grade: **A-**

Raising Tennis Aces: The Williams Story (Xenon, 2002)

For a snarky moment, one wonders whether this documentary would have better been titled *Raising Tennis Automats*. The footage, shot mostly at the Williams' large Florida estate—a sort of resort-cum-training center with painted affirmation signs up everywhere—one-sidedly trumpets the child-raising philosophies of Richard Williams, proud millionaire father of tennis champions Venus and Serena. Although he may have been a great pop, no one pauses to ask if the grand-slamming sisters, born under a master plan to create toned, agile tournament winners, ever wanted to do anything different with their lives. Grade: **C-**

Freelance writer Candace Moore co-edited the book *Revolutions of the Mind*.



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UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Locker Room Closets

Each year when we put together our annual Sports

Issue, I'm always amazed by the fortitude of lesbian athletes. Like straight athletes, they tune, tone, and hone their bodies into high-performance machines. But unlike straight athletes, they have to develop the power, mentally, to endure the closet. No other space in American culture locks the closet shut as tightly as sports.

In the military, lesbians are technically allowed to be gay. They just can't announce it. But in professional sports, lesbians aren't allowed to ask, tell, or even *be*. For example, look at the persistent problem of negative recruiting in collegiate athletics. This January, the *Washington Post* published an exposé on college coaches who—in an attempt to lure new talent—

drop woeful hints about the competition's coach's "lifestyle" to prospective athletes' parents. (Stanford's b-ball superpower Tara Vanderveer is, according to the *Post*, a common scapegoat.)

This is not the stuff of pulp novels, B-movies, or paranoid parental fantasies. Damir Dokic, the father of professional Serbian tennis player Jelena Dokic, was widely ridiculed when last December he said, "more than 40 percent of women in world tennis are lesbians. I couldn't stand it if Jelena turned out to be one of them. I'd kill myself." But Dokic's comments only made explicit the fear—hushed but hugely

prevalent—that lies behind negative recruiting, the fear that women's sports breed lesbians. It's this pervasive fear (to paraphrase coach and author Pat Griffin) that keeps the strongest women in the deepest of closets.

Surely, cover girl Missy Giove's story is a sign that all this is changing. But in sports with higher symbolic stakes—TV ratings, celebrity, and money—than mountain biking, the Missys are too few and far between.

When I interviewed Martina Navratilova a few years ago, she laughed at the accusation that women's pro sports are filled with dykes. "I wish!" she told me. "I'm the only one I know of in tennis." In hopes that someday she (and now Amélie Mauresmo) have more company, *Girlfriends* dedicates a whole issue to sporty lesbians, the challenges they face, and the hurdles they've cleared. Have fun on the mat with Lauren Dockett's lesbian martial artists, and don't miss a word of coach Laura Noah's halftime pep talk on women's soccer on page 18. Break a leg!

(Oh wait, Giove did that already.)



Fierce competitors on a different field: *Girlfriends*' new sales gals, Kelly Fisher, me, Sid Mahnke, and Heather Petrocelli

RANI GOEL

Heather Findlay, Editor in Chief

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