Movie Review.

The school recently showed us the movie Remember the Titans. It was a movie inspired by real events.

Plot

The movie is set during 1971, in Virginia. The government had decided to integrate the Blacks and the Whites in the schooling system. African American Coach Herman Boone was appointed head coach for the American Football team in the desegregated T. C Williams High School, taking over the current White head coach, Bill Yoast. Bill Yoast subsequently worked under Coach Boon as an assistant coach. At first, Bill Yoast declined Coach Boone’s offer, but after the white players pledge to boycott the team if Coach Yoach leaves, Yoast was afraid they would lose their chance in getting the scholarships, and thus joined Coach Boone, as a defensive coordinator.

Coach Boone organised a camp, where rigorous training took place.

The black and white athletes often had fights or clashes, spurned by racial differences. But with Coach Boone’s intense (some say disciplinarian) coaching, and him bringing the boys to the cemetery where the Battle of Gettysburg was fought, reminding them what horrible things hatred could bring, the boys in the team started to bond with each other.

However, racial discrimination was all out in Virginia, with plans for Coach Boone to be fired if he loses just one game. The Titans go through the season undefeated while maintaining racial harmony within their group.

On one occasion, the school board notifies Coach Yoast that he will be inducted into the hall of fame *when* the Titans lose. During the game, Coach Yoast realises that the match has been fixed to ensure that the Titans lose. Coach Yoast, originally unsupportive of Coach Boone, decided to step up, and threatened to reveal the scandal to the police if the referee continued to fix the game. But because of this, Coach Yoast lost his candidacy in the Hall of Fame.

Later, while celebrating the victory of the current match, the Titan’s captain, Bertier, was paralysed in a car accident. This strengthened the bond between the players, and in the end, although Bertier could not play, the Titans still won.

The movie ends with the Titans meeting up, 10 years later, to attend Bertier’s funeral.

Brief History

At the time where the movie was set in, racial desegregation had just started in Virginia. The movie portrayed a thick atmosphere of racial hatred and discrimination. Although there were indeed these, it was to a lesser extent than the atmosphere portrayed by the movie. Bill Yoast said that Disney had “taken liberties with the facts, suggesting an overheated atmosphere of racial animosities and fears at the school and in the community that just hadn't existed”. But the games played by the Titans did help to bring the community together.

Main Characters

**Coach Herman Boone**

The head coach of the Titans. He took over the head coach position from Coach Bill Yoast.

Coach Boone was a disciplinarian. He expected perfection from the Titans, sending them for a camp organized by him personally. The boys at the camps were subjected to rigorous training during the camp.

In the camp, Coach Boone tried to forcefully coax the boys to accept one another. This included him forcing the white boys to pair up with a black boy, and share about each other’s life.

On one occasion he woke them up at 3am in the morning, and brought them to the cemetery, where the Battle of Gettysburg was fought. There he told them about the dangers of hatred. That, I think, was the turning point for the Titans, as each race began to accept each other after that.

Although strict, I felt that Coach Boone was also portrayed like a father in the movie. He helped a person (who called himself white trash) to improve on his results. On the day of the final match, he told the Titans that it did not matter if they win or lose. Unexpectedly, someone pointed out that the Coach always expected perfection, and with the team bonded, the team IS perfect, and it would achieve perfect results. In the end, thanks to Coach Boone’s disciplinarian yet fatherly training, the Titans won the game.

Coach Boone could be said as the team’s inspiration and the glue that stuck the team together. Without him, the Titans would have most probably fallen apart, especially with the desegregation causing uproar in the society than.

**Coach Bill Yoast**

He was previously the head of the Titans, until his job was taken over by Coach Boone. He wanted to quit the Titans, but stayed when many of the boys said they would boycott the team if he did not stay.

Coach Yoast initially had a grudge towards Coach Boone (obviously), with him often telling him that he would “take care of the defense, you take care of the offense”.

Actually, Coach Yoast learnt a lot from Coach Boone.

He disagreed with Coach Boone’s teaching style. But later on he realized that Coach Boone just did not want to spoil the Titans. Through the course of the movie, Coach Yoast finally learned to respect Coach Boone. His daughter, Sheryl, played a role in getting him to accept Coach Boone.

He even gave up his Hall of Fame Nomination for the Titans to win, something that he would not have done in the past.

I really admire him for standing up and doing what is right. It was not easy. Indeed, many times we may be tempted to not do the right things when the going gets tough. But we need to have this determination to do the right thing, even if it means sacrificing something.

**Gerry Bertier**

A person who thought of himself as superior to blacks. He was the captain of the Titans. He spoke to Coach Herman Boone rudely, saying that he was the only all-American on the team. Bertier demanded that Coach Boone do what he says, or else he would leave. Needless to say, Coach Boone dealt with him by publicly shaming him in front of everyone.

Gerry was initially hostile to his black teammates during the camp. But after Coach Boone’s speech at the cemetery, he attempted to change. At the end of the camp, the black and white players were considerably friendly to each other.

Through the course of the movie, he treated blacks more nicely, to the extent of him kicking out his friend who was purposely underperforming because of the blacks in the Titans, and persuading his mother and his girlfriend to be more accepting to the African Americans.

He was met with a car accident, and could not play the final game. But because of this the team became even more united against their opponent, and the Titans won the state championships.

Most impactful scene

The most impactful scene must be the one, where Coach Boone brought the team to where the Battle of Gettysburg was fought. He said this:

Anybody know what this place is? This is Gettysburg. This is where they fought the Battle of Gettysburg. Fifty thousand men died right here on this field, fightin' the same fight that we're still fightin' amongst ourselves today.

This green field right here was painted red, bubblin' with the blood of young boys, smoke and hot lead pourin' right through their bodies. Listen to their souls, men:

**'I killed my brother with malice in my heart. Hatred destroyed my family.'**

You listen. And you take a lesson from the dead. If we don't come together, right now, on this hallowed ground, we too will be destroyed -- just like they were. I don't care if you like each other or not. But you will respect each other. And maybe -- I don't know -- maybe we'll learn to play this game like men.

This really let me realize how dangerous hatred was. It could tear a nation apart! Therefore, it is important to forgive, and not bear a grudge against anyone.

Lessons learnt

**Acceptance, Overcoming Prejudice and hatred**

From this movie we can learn lessons of acceptance. Most of the white members in the Titans were initially very hostile towards the black players, so the Titans were on the verge of imploding within themselves. However, with their determination to win the championships, they forged ahead, bonding together, and finally triumphing, not just over the championship, but also the societal segregation of blacks and whites. Even Coach Yoast learnt this, and forfeited his Hall of Fame in order to do the right thing. This teaches us an important truth—Most people are nice, when we finally see them. Even with all the racial prejudice and hatred, in the end, the Titans realized that regardless of their skin colour, they were all human, and there was thus a spirit of acceptance within the Titans.

**Staying positive in the face of adversity**

Also, the Titans persevered, and fought for the titles with their opponents, believing they could win, even though their opponents were very tough ones. Their determination and perseverance helped them stay positive in the face of adversity, which in turn helped them win all the games, and clinch the state championship title.

**Responsibility of a leader**

Gerry Bertier shows the importance of a leader. When his attitude started to change, the majority of the whites also started to be more accepting to the blacks in the Titans. Sometimes it only takes one man to change a situation. Even 10 years later, when he died from another car crash, the entire Titans team came back together to attend his funeral. Thus, it is important for us, if we become leaders in the future, to be a good role model, as a leader influences everyone under him.

**Standing up for what is right**

Coach Yoast did the right thing by standing up for what was right, even if it meant sacrificing something that he had worked for so hard. Although he lost an excellent opportunity, I feel that he has already become a winner in life by being honest. What defines a person is not how much awards he has received—it is about his character.

Conclusion

I feel that this movie is an excellent one. This movie shows us that nothing is impossible, if we all try our hardest. Blacks and whites working together to accomplish something—that was unheard of during the movie’s time setting. But they did it. This movie is inspiring because a group of people could overcome the odds and triumph over everything in their way. It shows that we can all work together to accomplish great things, in spite of any differences, be they racial, religious, or in other mindsets. Even if we disagree with someone, we should take time to understand them, as most people are really quite okay when we finally understand them.