

B-Ball's Man

Larger than life. A thoroughly worn-out expression, but how else to describe the superior athletic ability, magnetic personality, and just plain humanity of celebrated basketball player Michael Jordan? How to properly capture him in all his glory? At last the six-story-tall screen of the IMAX theater comes in handy. Michael...

By Nina Korman | May 4, 2000

Larger than life. A thoroughly worn-out expression, but how else to describe the superior athletic ability, magnetic personality, and just plain humanity of celebrated basketball player Michael Jordan? How to properly capture him in all his glory? At last the six-story-tall screen of the IMAX theater comes in handy. **Michael Jordan to the Max**, the first-ever large-format film devoted to an athlete or an individual, begins its run at the IMAX Sunset Place Theatre Friday, May 5.

Neither overwhelming nor claustrophobic in this case, the IMAX format is the perfect medium to showcase the face, name, and game known around the world. The film features biographical information about how Jordan developed his astounding athletic talent and how he aids those less fortunate than he; talking heads such as writer Bob Greene, sportscaster Bob Costas, former and present Chicago Bulls coaches, and fellow players who hold forth on the b-ball beast; plenty of dynamic game footage against rivals John Stockton and Reggie Miller; and a slew of sage comments that emanate from Jordan himself. ("Just love the game," he advises kids starting out, confiding that's his sole secret to success.)

A lasting and fitting tribute to the man who led the Bulls to six National Basketball Association championships, the film provides myriad highlights. Many moments during the 1998 playoffs are dramatically captured here, most significantly marking the very last game Jordan plays -- and single-handedly wins by one dunk -- in his charmed career. But sadness is interwoven with all the enchantment. To wit: the fact that he failed to make his high school varsity team the first time he tried out. His unhappy but temporary foray into baseball. And the somber reminder that his father was senselessly murdered, while dozing in his car, which he'd pulled over on the side of the road. "Be optimistic about everything in life," Jordan recommends, and then proceeds to take his own advice, not lamenting the tragic death of his father but appreciating that he had him in his own life for as long as he did.

Sportscaster Costas claims Jordan's legacy will be one of authenticity. Whether he's on a schoolyard court, plugging athletic wear or phone service on television, or at his sixth playoff game, Jordan, he says, is always the same guy. Humility is an inextricable element of the man as well. "There will be another player greater than me," Jordan assures confidently at the film's end. Doubt it.