

The Pitch
Comprehensive Synopsis
Written / Directed by Colin Sprigg
CSprigg@gmail.com / 562-577-0485

I. INTRODUCTION

A mysterious man (BURL), wears 1940's era baseball cleats, and walks his brown Great Dane (HOBBS) in the park. In the background one hears an old time radio broadcast, with crowds cheering, and the national anthem. Only his cleats and slacks are visible and there is a mystic about his identity.

The teenage female protagonist MADISON HALLEY retells this story about her father and one of the greatest games ever played.

“My name is Madison. I’ve grown up in my mother’s arms, holding my dad’s hands, and never did I imagine life without them. But one fine day, from out of left outfield came the Comets. I saw things that scared me. I need to take you there. I want to tell you a story about my father and one of the greatest games there’s ever been.”

II. MADISON AS A BABY

MOTHER holds crying baby Madison in the nursery and attempts to calm her. Her husband, COACH, arrives home late from a men's slow pitch softball game. Mother places baby Madison into her crib. Coach enters the nursery and apologizes for being late again.

Coach still holds his glove and softball. His wife tells Coach of her attempts to calm crying Madison. Coach slowly lowers the softball to Madison's side. Madison stops crying, and smiles. Mother is surprised.

Coach says, “She’s going to be a ball player.”
Mother, “You just got lucky.”

III. THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

10 years later.

Coach huddles on a softball field with his team THE COMETS. This is the championship game, the Comets are ahead 7-4, with only one out remaining out for the win.

Coach tells his team he's proud of them, and they never given up. Madison is the team's pitcher, and the smallest girl on the team, at 10 years of age.

Coach absentmindedly calls on DESTINY to lead the team in yelling, “1,2,3 – defense!” A teammate reminds Coach that Destiny doesn’t talk, and hasn’t talked since kindergarten. Coach apologizes and asks another player.

The players cheer and take their positions. Madison and her father remain in the pitching circle. Coach reminds Madison of all the work they’ve done pitching, which brings them to this game- this moment. He says, “Make it happen.” Madison replies, “Dad relax. I got it.”

The umpire announces, “Play ball.” The game’s announcer states the score 7-4 Comets, and that Madison Halley needs only one more out for the win and an undefeated season.

The Comet’s opponents are the Bat Attitudes, the best hitting team in the league. The top of their line-up is at bat.

Madison takes position on the pitching rubber. A close up of Madison’s hand reveals the worn out game ball, and rubbed out indistinguishable logo. Her first pitch is delivered and hit hard to left field... foul.

Madison smiles to her Dad about the first strike.

IV. BURL and HOBBS

The foul ball bounces to the feet of the BURL and HOBBS introduced in the film’s first sequence. His hand reaches for the ball and the camera follows his hand and ball up his body until his face is slowly revealed.

Burl stares at Madison from the left field foul line. He has found what he was looking for. He rubs the foul ball intentionally on his shirt, as if rubbing something off himself and onto the ball.

Madison watches the man with a strange curiosity from the pitching circle. Burl throws the “enchanted” ball back to Madison.

Madison repositions herself on the rubber to pitch again.

A close-up Madison’s hand and ball reveals the ball's logo changed. It now says, "Hobbs Pastballs - Since 1949." A picture of Burl’s face is adjacent to the logo.

Madison is confused. She readies to pitch again to the 1st batter, but suddenly sees Burl again, but this time behind the backstop. She blinks in confusion.

The man is wearing different clothes. He is dressed in a vintage 1949 baseball uniform. The man smiles at Madison. He gives her a nod and a friendly salute. When Madison blinks again, he’s gone.

Madison's Voiceover. "I've thrown a millions softball with my father. So what's two more strikes. But this was no ordinary softball. He came to see me. He came to tell me something."

She throws the pitch...

Transition to white

V. FAMILY ROOM

Transition from white

Madison, age 5, lays on the couch facing her father.

Her father stands over her and asks if she has a fever.

Her mother sets the dining room table and does not answer, but looks upon them with concern.

Coach continues to ask Madison to put her cleats on without success. Madison stubbornly says no and calls for mother's help. Mother opens the china cabinet door and a reflection of Madison's in her Comet's uniform is revealed. Madison (age 10) watches the scene unfold of herself (age 5), mother, and father.

Madison learns of the tensions between her parents.

Coach feels Madison's forehead, "No fever. Get your cleats on sweets." Madison protests, "I don't want to go to practice!" Coach insists. Mother defends, "She doesn't feel well for God's sake!"

Coach, "OK I'll get your cleats. And this kid's not quitting' things she starts!" Coach ties the cleats on Madison's feet.

He picks Madison up and carries her out the front door. Madison, "I hate softball!"

Mother watches Coach and Madison leave the house, and closes the china cabinet door and unknowingly ends Madison's watching of the scene.

Transition to White

VI. CATCH WITH DAD

Transition from White

Madison and her father play catch in their front yard. Madison is engaged and her father smiles. Madison demonstrates she is skilled at softball.

Madison's voiceover. "My grandfather died when my Dad was just a boy. My Dad said that after, it always felt like playing baseball in bare feet. My great grandfather played baseball with Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio. No one really knew him through, because something happened to his family. My Dad says that success in softball is the same road to success in life. I can't say I really get it, but I've followed his advice as best I could."

Madison misses a throw from Coach, and coach walks over to Madison.

Coach, "Madison, you're twenty-pounds lighter than most kids in your division. If you want to be good at this game, you're going to have to put twenty-pounds more effort into everything you do out there on the field."

Madison, "What's 20 pounds?"

Coach steps to his equipment bag to get two ten-pound weights and places them into Madison's hands.

Madison, "Oh My Gosh!"

Coach, "Hold on sweets."

Madison drops the weights that clank onto the ground.

Transition to white

VII. CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Transition form white

Umpire, "Ball Four!"

Madison reacts with frustration in walking her first batter.

The first batter runs to first.

Coach, "That's alright, shake it off." Madison tries to shake it off.

Bat Attitudes batter # 2 takes the plate.

VIII. THE ARGUMENT

Mother and Coach pull along side of their home in their SUV.

Mother asks, "What's Madison's schedule next week?"

Coach explains that Monday, Wednesday is practice in Walnut, and Tuesday, Thursday is Chino Hills, and there are two games on Saturday.

His wife retorts, "And a pitching lesson on Friday night?" Coach, "Yea, and a pitching lesson on Friday night." His wife calls him a jerk! Coach gets upset asking, "What! You want her to be good don't you?" Coach gets out of the truck and walks to the tailgate.

A symbolic pair of distressed cleats is visible to the audience. Coach does not see them.

Coach lifts the tailgate and a box softballs spill onto the street and slowly begin to roll down the hill.

Coach complains to his wife that they just had a nice weekend together on their anniversary. His wife shoots back that she does not come a close second to his pitching net or his bucket of balls.

Coach accuses his wife of attacking something he loves to do with his daughter. Mother lays down an ultimatum, "It's me or your bucket of balls." Coach says, "Careful what you ask for!"

His wife had transferred to the driver's side.

She puts the truck in gear and speeds away with the tailgate open. The load of softball equipment is ejected all over the street.

Madison is revealed as the truck moves away. Madison experienced the argument between her parents. She stands bare foot in her Comets uniform watching her father. Coach is unaware of her presence as he watches his wife drive away.

Fade to white.

IX. CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Umpire, "Ball four! Take your base young lady." Bat Attitude batter # 2 walks and takes 1st base. There are Bat Attitude runners on first and second.

Coach walks over to Madison, "Breathe Madison. Relax. Slow down."

Madison, “Are you and Mom in a fight?” Coach, “What does that have to do with your pitching?” Madison tells her father she is scared.

Coach says, “Just throw your fastball.”

Madison steps back to the pitching rubber. Bat Attitudes batter # 3 is at the plate. Madison throws the pitch...

Transition to Black.

X. DOUGHNUT SHOP

Slow Transition from Black... (Thunder and rain)

A father-daughter walk out of the rain and into the neighborhood donut shop. They interact with each other to choose donuts.

A slow pan down from the father and daughter reveals Madison on the floor of the donut shop. She’s barefoot, and watches the two interact.

Madison turns her head and sees her father at a small table with a man in a suit. The two have a serious conversation.

Coach is unaware of Madison’s presence. She watches the man pull a document from envelope and present it to Coach.

The LAWYER, “Just get your wife alone after Madison’s game and give her the damn paperwork, and stop talking yourself out of this.”

Madison watches her father sign divorce paperwork, and return the document to the envelope.

Coach folds the envelope in half and holds it in contemplation. He stares into the abyss about what he is doing.

A distressed symbolic pair of cleats lay on the floor near Madison and her father. Coach cannot see the cleats. The father and daughter walk out of the donut shop together.

Transition to Black

XI. CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Transition from Black

Coach, “Time Blue!” He walks onto the field and to the pitching circle. The infielders huddle around Coach and Madison.

Coach, “Madison that’s twelve straight balls. Come back to me now.”

Madison, “You’re leaving me.” The players become quiet.

Coach, “What?”

Madison, “I saw you with your lawyer friend.”

Coach, “Hey kid. I am always your father, no matter what happens between your MOM and I. But I’m your coach, and I’m their coach, and we are a team of thirteen. Neither you, nor I, shall give up a championship to talk about business between your mother and I. I’ll tell you everything after the game.”

Coach shifts the attention to the game. “Bring it in. We’re undefeated. You’re undefeated kids because we never quit, and we’re not going to change a thing now. Give Madison some encouragement out there, because we know she can do it. Brianna... defense on three...”

The team breaks for their positions. Destiny touches Madison’s arm with her glove to console. Madison turns around to face her father and yells, “Hey Coach! You’re a Quitter!” Everyone can hear this.

Coach is stunned and embarrassed. He awkwardly sits down.

Madison and her father exchange long heavy looks.

Madison’s teammates yell encouragements. Bases are loaded and the Bat Attitudes slugger Amaya, and the winning run, takes the plate. Madison needs only more out or the win.

Madison delivers the pitch...

It’s a smash to deep center field.

XII. CHAMPIONSHIP GAME – THE GRANDSLAM

The ball flies magically, slow motion, through the air. Madison’s teammates watch in awe. The coach watches silently.

The ball bounces into the deep outfield and up an embankment and out of view from the ballpark. Celebration begins for the Bat Attitudes.

Madison strangely runs towards center field and the homerun ball. Some of the Comets start to walk in. The game is over.

Destiny the second baseman, and the girl who never talks, observes the runners round and touch her base.

Destiny sees that one of the runners missed second base.

THE COMETS walk toward the dugout. The Bat Attitudes celebrate at home.

Madison runs deeper into the outfield. Some of the players yell to Madison that the game is over!

Madison runs up embankment and sees the Burl suddenly appear and walk straight towards Madison. He holds the ball in his hand. When they meet at the top of the embankment, Burl says, "Hey kid, I think this your ball."

The man holds out the ball for Madelyn to take. Madison takes hold of the ball, but Burl does not let go. Their eyes meet and he says, "Twenty pounds." He nods to Madelyn to return to the field. Madison pauses to look into this man's eyes, and turns to return to the game.

Madison runs back from center field with the ball in her hands. She says repeatedly, "Twenty pounds! Twenty pounds!"

Madison runs through the infield toward home plate and the Bat Attitudes celebration. She starts to randomly tag the Bat Attitude players around home plate.

Coach yells at Madison, "The game's over. Madison the game's over, bring it in!" Madison's teammates stand still on the field to watch the spectacle unfold.

Destiny closes her eyes and tries to muster the courage to speak. She knows something that no one else knows that can change the outcome of the game.

Coach puts his head in his hands in defeat in this game, and with his daughter.

Destiny yells, "Madison throw it to me!" Everyone turns and sees Destiny standing on second base with her arms in the air. Madison runs toward second and throws the ball to Destiny.

Destiny catches the ball from Madison.

The Umpire says, "You're out, that's game!"

Coach cannot believe what is unfolding.

The Comets run to second base to celebrate the win with Destiny.

The Comets run to their dugout to celebrate.

XIII. DAD AND MADISON

After the game, Madison and her father walk together.

Coach says, “Madison, that was the most inspirational play I’ve ever seen, ever. All-Stars is yours.”

Madison, “Dad... I really don’t like softball. I only play to be with you... ...Why do you do what you do Dad?”

Coach is subtly taken by Madison’s words.

As they walk, without Madison seeing, Coach lifts his shift from his back pocket and pulls out “the envelope.” He drops the envelope into the and says, “To be with you too kid.”

Madison sees Burl, now in street clothes. “Hey Mister I think this is your ball.”

Burl, “Good game kid. One of the best there’s ever been.”

Coach believes he’s seen this man before but cannot put his finger on it. Burl clarifies, “I’m just a pitching coach. I travel the ball fields to help kids like your daughter. In fact, little Billy Lancaster is on the mound tonight, right Hobbs? He’s scheduled to “Bear Some Bad News” and could use a little help staying on the strike zone.” *(This is homage to Bill Lancaster screenwriter of the film The Bad News Bears, which influenced the creation of The Pitch)*

Madison, “Say Hi to Billy for me.” Coach, “whose Billy?” Madison, “He’s a pitcher, like me.”

Burl, “Hey Coach...” He nods to his right

Madison sees her mother and runs to her. “Mom!”

Coach attempts to join his daughter and wife, and accidentally kicks over the bucket of balls. Madison and his wife laugh, and walk over to help Coach pick up the balls.

Mother, Madison, and Coach, walk together as a family from the ball field.

Madison voiceover. “I believe in Destiny. I believe life is like a bucket of balls. Sometimes they get away from you. But if the whole family does not let them get to far away, they can be put back, to where they belong.”

Credits roll.