

DREAM ON

Documentary tells the story of two young basketball players

Whether you're a sports fan or a film aficionado, one thing is for certain about the basketball documentary *Hoop Dreams*. It's nothing but net.

And we're not talking about no cheap lay-in. This is a 360-degree-tomahawk-jam-in-your-face type of film, and it commands respect — like

Michael Jordan and the rock with three seconds on the clock. But don't let the title of the film or my metaphor fool you. *Hoop Dreams* extends far beyond the realm of mere athletics. It is a tale of human drama, sacrifice and family. A gritty story

that grabs a hold of reality and squeezes from it the quiet moments as well as the cheers.

Filmed over the course of five years, *Hoop Dreams* follows the lives of two young black men and their families, who deal with success and failure within the Chicago projects.

Pegged as roundball prodigies in elementary school, Arthur Agee and William Gates are shadowed by the camera throughout a crucial time in their young lives. Basketball is the dream that connects them both, but the realities and similarities of their separate lives are the heart of this film.

Hoop Dreams begins with Agee and Gates being "recruited" into the prestigious basketball program at St. Joseph's High School. St. Joe's is a magnet for young urban talent with its high media visibility and famous alumni (which includes former Detroit Piston Isaiah Thomas), but it's also a world away from the urban decay of Chicago's innercity. With its predominantly white student body and suburban socioeconomic



William Gates is one of the two basketball players whose life is documented in the film *Hoop Dreams*. COURTESY PHOTO

Hoop Dreams

Arthur Agee, and William Gates

Director: Steve James

Rated: R

★★★★★

Story by Greg Hamilton

culture, the gap between the haves and have-nots is painful.

The basketball program at St. Joe's is also brutal in many ways. Although it prides itself on competitiveness, the program subtly treats its urban recruits like acquired properties, lording its status and athletic "responsibilities" over them at times. Those who live up to the expectations as players are rewarded with outside aid and "preferential" academic treatment. Those who fail, or mature slower than expected are "let go" and left to fend for themselves.

The message is clear. Succeed or die.

During the course of events, one

of them succeeds and ends up being "sponsored" by a white alumni family. The other is forced to leave for "financial reasons" that are more closely related to his inability to adapt and play ball in alien surroundings.

It's an ugly game of survival that leaves an indelible stain upon the purity of the sport: a "game" that even in its infant stages revolves around money.

It's a harsh truth that even the youngest of players seems to understand. In order to improve your fiscal surroundings, you must learn to jump through hoops, as well as be

Campus Dreams

Oregon basketball players Kenya Wilkins and Henry Madden share their opinions of the movie *Hoop Dreams*.

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Forget the trial, and bring back soap operas

There is this trial going on right now. Perhaps you know the one. I won't say who is involved because my editor has forbidden me to. Let me just say that this certain trial is broadcast on TV all day, preempting regularly scheduled programs. Namely, soap operas. In particular, ABC's *All My Children*.

Freshman year my roommate in the dorms introduced me to *All My Children*. We met every afternoon in the basement of our dorm. Since I hadn't watched it much, Elisa spent most of the time filling me in on the characters and the history of the show. She had me hooked.

Ever since then, I watch *All My Children* when I can, and I tape it, and watch it later, when I can't. I look forward to watching it. It is my treat at the end of the day. And when this silly trial is on instead, it makes me a little mad. But I'm not the only one.

People are crazy about soap operas. And when their soap operas



TRISTA NOEL

are cancelled, they do crazy things. When the pretrial was broadcast a few months ago, soap fans flooded ABC with calls. *General Hospital* was being shown during the noon hour, which is the time *All My Children* is on. People were upset because not only was *General Hospital* being shown in AMC's spot, but no one knew why that decision had been made.

So now, as the trial begins again, ABC has created Soap Line. There is a special reporter who is supposed to keep viewers up to date on how the trial will affect the programming of ABC soap operas.

So far, she hasn't done much good. I turned my TV on at noon the other day, hoping *All My Children* would be

on. Instead, I had my first glimpse of the Soap Line reporter in action.

It was time for *All My Children*, but all she said was that *General Hospital* would be airing soon. After all the commercial breaks it was almost 12:15, and the reporter said she would give an update of what we had missed on *General Hospital* so far. She also told us that she had been watching it for us, but she read the update off of cue cards. Sorry, but soaps aren't so complicated that you need to write down what has happened to remember. The show had only been on for 10 minutes; what could have happened in that amount of time that she couldn't remember?

She never mentioned why *All My Children* wasn't on. She doesn't offer any information. This Soap Line is worthless, and soap fans are still in the dark about what's happening.

Trista Noel is the entertainment editor of the Emerald.



Weaver, Kingsley star in film about justice, torture

Death and the Maiden is the story of a woman who makes captive the man she believes was responsible for torturing her in a South American prison years ago. How far will she go to settle the score?