



Cinema/Chicago and the 47<sup>th</sup> Chicago International Film Festival

Education Outreach Program Screening: *Undefeated*

Director: Dan Lindsay and TJ Martin

113 minutes, not rated

In English

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas/questions and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students are required to respond to the screening with a one-page essay. Essays (either all or select) must be sent to Cinema/Chicago.\*

**Synopsis:** Set in Memphis, *Undefeated* chronicles the Manassas Tigers' 2009 football season as they strive to win the first playoff game in the high school's 110-year history. A perennial whipping boy, in recent decades Manassas had gone so far as to sell their home games to the highest bidder, but that all changed in the spring of 2004 when Bill Courtney, a former high school football coach turned lumber salesman, volunteered to lend a hand. The football program began resurrecting itself and, in 2009, features the most talented team Manassas has ever fielded.

**Recommended for:** humanities, cultural and social studies, film and video students.

**Appropriate for:** 6-12 grade students.

**Study Ideas/Questions:**

1. Coach Bill Courtney is a positive influence on the football field. How is he an influence to the players when they aren't on the field? What characteristics does he possess that make him a leader to the team?
2. The Manassas Tigers are underdogs. What is an "underdog"?
3. Coach Courtney explains to the Tigers that "football reveals character." How does playing a sport or being involved in a competitive extracurricular develop and strengthen character? Why is character on the field so important to Coach Courtney?
4. What are some of the differences and similarities between the Tigers and the other teams/schools they play? Think about economics, race, culture, and resources.
5. When the Tigers win their third game, why does the win seem less exciting than the others? How does Chavis's outburst before that game affect the whole team morale?
6. Coach Courtney worries that doesn't spend enough time with his family because he focuses his attention on Manassas. Do you think he is wrong to spend time with the Tigers?

7. Why does Coach Courtney decide to make his sixth season his last? How do you think the Tigers will perform without him coaching them? Do you think he made the right decision to leave, and how do you think his leaving might have a positive impact on the team?
8. Think about Chavis, Money and O.C.'s stories. Whose story was your favorite and why?
9. Chavis, Money, O.C. and Coach Courtney lost their fathers. How does this loss affect each of them differently, and how does the loss influence their lives and how they conduct themselves?
10. Money is upset that Chavis doesn't face consequences for his actions. When Chavis is chosen as the "Uncommon Man," he praises Money for his positive actions. If you were Money, how would you react to this? Do you think Chavis has changed by the end of the film? How has Money also changed?

**Useful Links and Resources:**

Film website (includes photos and reviews): <http://weinsteinco.com/sites/undefeated/>

Article about O.C. Brown: <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2009/feb/13/raising-oc/>

Short article about film premiere at South by Southwest Film Festival:

<http://ilovememphisblog.com/2011/03/memphis-football-documentary-undefeated-premieres-at-sxsw/>

Information about Cinema/Chicago's Education Outreach Program:

<http://cinemachicago.org/education/>

\*Schools who do not send in essay requirement will not be allowed to attend future Education Outreach Screenings.