

Nine baseball movies to watch now while you wait for the MLB season to start

Celebrate what would have been Opening Day with a league of your own.

Thursday would have been MLB's Opening Day if not for the coronavirus pandemic that has put everything on hold or canceled it outright. Major League Baseball has delayed the start of the season until at least the middle of May, and I wouldn't be surprised to see it get pushed back further.



What's a baseball fan to do on an Opening Day devoid of new baseball? One option is to rewatch recent games on MLB.TV. The streaming service has opened up its vaults so you can watch every game from the past two seasons for free. Another option is Ken Burns' Baseball documentary online at PBS. All nine episodes are available online for free, thanks to Burns' thoughtful suggestion and PBS generously accepting it. It'll fill more than 18 hours of your quarantine.

With events canceled & so much closed, I asked @PBS to stream BASEBALL for free so we can participate in the national pastime together. Watch at the link below or on any streaming device. And please look out for those with greater needs. Play ball. @MLB <https://t.co/WaQLSpeYkF> pic.twitter.com/QYp1XE0SLC

— Ken Burns (@KenBurns) March 15, 2020

A third option is to pop some popcorn, maybe boil a hot dog or two, crack a beer and settle in for a baseball movie or nine. Here are my nine favorites, plus an extra-innings 10th suggestion for a film I haven't seen but plan to watch tonight, because I've heard it's awesome and I'm starved for baseball.

Bull Durham

The best baseball movie ever made IMHO, and you don't even need to like baseball to enjoy the romance and comedy of this 1988 classic. It stars Kevin Costner, Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins. You can stream it for free (but with ads) on Amazon Prime Video or Vudu, or with a FuboTV subscription. It's also available to rent or buy from a variety of streaming platforms.

Rent or buy: Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, YouTube

The Natural

This 1984 film starring Robert Redford was my favorite baseball movie until I saw Bull Durham four years later. You can catch Roy Hobbs' heroics on Netflix.

Major League

Maybe the funniest baseball movie ever made. Released in 1989, it stars Charlie Sheen and Tom Berenger as members of the Cleveland Indians who start winning to spite the club's evil owner.

Rent or buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, Vudu, YouTube

Field of Dreams

"If you build it, he will come." If you stream it, you'll see Kevin Costner as an Iowa farmer who builds a baseball diamond in a cornfield that attracts the ghosts of the disgraced 1919 Chicago Black Sox team, including Ray Liotta as Shoeless Joe Jackson.

Rent or buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, Vudu, YouTube

Moneyball

Based on the best-selling book by Michael Lewis, the 2011 film chronicles the 2002 Oakland A's and their GM Billy Beane, who managed to compete against big-market teams with a small-market budget. It stars Brad Pitt and Jonah Hill, with Phillip Seymour Hoffman and Chris Pratt in supporting roles.

Rent or buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Vudu, YouTube

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This 2013 film stars Chadwick Boseman as Jackie Robinson breaking baseball's color barrier in 1947 as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Harrison Ford plays Dodgers GM Branch Rickey.

Rent or buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, Vudu, YouTube

A League of Their Own

The plot of this 1992 film is based on the real-life All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that sprang up in 1943 when World War 2 threatened to disrupt Major League Baseball. With the 2020 MLB season disrupted, you can watch Geena Davis, Lori Petty and Madonna star as players for the Rockford Peaches, with Tom Hanks as the club's manager.

Rent or buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, Vudu, YouTube

The Sandlot

My 12-year-old son's favorite baseball movie, this 1993 movie is about a group of 12-year-old kids during the summer of 1962 playing baseball and getting in and out of trouble together.

Rent or buy: Amazon, FandangoNow, Google Play, Vudu, YouTube

Fastball

Here's a curveball for you. Fastball is not a feature film but a documentary from 2016 that attempts to answer one question: Who threw the fastest pitch in baseball history? It features Hank Aaron, Derek Jeter, Nolan Ryan, Justin Verlander and other baseball legends and is narrated by -- you guessed it -- Kevin Costner. It's streaming on Amazon Prime Video and with ads on the Roku channel.

Rent or buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, Vudu, YouTube

Bonus pick: Sugar

I haven't seen this one yet but plan to celebrate what would have been Opening Day by watching this 2009 film about a young pitcher from the Dominican Republic trying to make it to the Major Leagues. It's directed by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, who'd go on to make Captain Marvel.

Buy: Amazon, Apple, FandangoNow, Google Play, YouTube

Rent or buy: Vudu

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