

Bend It Like Beckham (2002)

Directed by **Gurinder Chadha** Genre: **Comedy / Drama** Country **UK / Germany**
Language: **English / Hindi / Punjabi** Runtime: **106 minutes**



Plot Outline: Jess is the daughter of orthodox Sikhs (an Indian religious group). She rebels against her parents' traditionalism by running off to Germany with a football team. A comedy about bending the rules to reach your goal, Bend It Like Beckham explores the world of women's football, from kicking in the park to playing in the Final. Set in Hounslow, West London and Hamburg, the film follows two 18 year olds with their hearts set on a future in professional soccer. Great talent doesn't seem to be enough when your parents want you to hang up your football boots, find a nice boyfriend and learn to cook the perfect Indian meal.

The movie, set in London, tells the story of Jesminder Bjamra, known as "Jess," (Parminder K. Nagra) who comes from a traditional Indian family. Her parents are Indian Sikhs who fled from Uganda (in Africa) to England, where her dad works at London's Heathrow airport. They live in the middle-class suburb of Hounslow, under the flight path of arriving jets, where her mother believes that Jess has two great duties in life: to learn to prepare a complete Indian meal, and to marry a nice Indian boy.

Jess plays soccer with boys in the park. In her family's living room is a large portrait of a Sikh spiritual leader, but above Jess's bed is her own inspiration--the British soccer superstar David Beckham, better known to some as Posh Spice's husband. She talks to Beckham's portrait, telling him her innermost dream, which is to play soccer for England. Of course a girl cannot hope to be a soccer star, and an Indian girl should not play soccer at all, since in her mother's mind the game consists of "displaying your bare legs to complete strangers."

Jess is seen in the park one day by Juliette (Keira Knightley), who plays for the Hounslow Harriers, a woman's team, and is asked to join them. The coach is a young Irishman named Joe (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers), and it is love at second or third sight--difficult, because Joe cannot date his players, and Juliette is interested in him, too.

Although Jess deceives her parents about her soccer dreams, she loves them and understands their point of view. Her father, who played cricket in Uganda but was discriminated against by the local London club, still bears deep wounds, but "things are different now," Jess tells him, and - of course - he sneaks into the crowd at a match to see for himself. (from a review by Roger Ebert)

Discussion:

1. Discuss the **main character**, Jesminder. Would you like to be her/her friend/her boyfriend...?
2. Discuss the differences between Jesminder and her sister.
3. Which of the **secondary characters** did you like best?
4. Which scene do you find most memorable? Why?
5. In your view, what are the main themes of the film?
6. The film has an open ending. What would you like to see Jesminder do in the future?