

Bend It Like Beckham (2002)



British release poster (Wikipedia)

TOMATOMETER

All Critics

85

Average Rating: 7.2/10 Reviews Counted:
149 Fresh: 127 | Rotten: 22

Top Critics

83

Average Rating: 7/10 Critic Reviews:
36 Fresh: 30 | Rotten: 6

Inspiring, compassionate, and with a sly undercurrent of social commentary, Bend It Like Beckham is a lively feel-good movie that genuinely charms.

AUDIENCE

68

liked it Average Rating: 3.2/5 User
Ratings: 468,148

[www.rottentomatoes.com]

Movie Info

An independent-minded young woman discovers the joys of football, much to her family's chagrin, in this upbeat British comedy drama. Jess Bhamra (Parminder Nagra) is an 18-year-old growing up in West London, where her family has taken every effort to stay in touch with its Indian heritage. Jess' father and mother (Anupam Kher and Shaheen Khan) are after their daughter to go to law school, learn to cook a traditional Indian dinner, and settle down with a nice Indian boy -- the latter of which is high on the agenda of her older sister Pinky (Archie Panjabi), who is soon to wed her longtime beau Teetu (Kulvinder Ghir). However, her family is unaware that Jess has a secret passion -- football (or soccer, as it's known in North America). While Jess' enthusiasm for football star David Beckham is obvious, given the fact his photos cover the walls of her room, her parents don't know that in her spare time she likes to play a friendly game in the park with some of the boys in the neighborhood. One day, while Jess and her pals kick the ball around, she meets Jules (Keira Knightley), who is quite impressed with Jess' skills. Jules plays with a local semi-pro women's football team, the Hounslow Harriers, and she thinks Jess has what it takes to make the team. Jess knows that her parents would never approve of their daughter playing football, so she doesn't tell them, and starts spinning an increasingly complex series of lies as she tries to keep up a double life as a student and a footballer. Jess soon discovers a number of her new friends have their own problems to overcome; Jules dreams of playing pro ball in America, but has to deal with her stubborn and disapproving mother (Juliet Stevenson), while Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), Hounslow's Irish coach, still struggles with the disappointment of a career as a professional athlete which was dashed by a knee injury. Bend It Like Beckham was a significant box-office success in Great Britain and Europe, but didn't reach American theaters until nearly a year after it debuted in the U.K. ~ Mark Deming, Rovi

PG-13, 1 hr. 52 min.

Drama, Comedy

Directed By: Gurinder Chadha

Written By: Gurinder Chadha, Guljit Bindra, Paul Mayeda Berges, Paul Mayeda Berges

In Theaters: Aug 1, 2003 Wide

On DVD: Sep 30, 2003

US Box Office:\$32.4M

Fox Searchlight Pictures - [Official Site](#)

Bend It Like Beckham

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Directed by	Gurinder Chadha
Produced by	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Gurinder ChadhaDeepak Nayare</div>
Written by	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Gurinder ChadhaGuljit BindraPaul Mayeda Berges</div>
Narrated by	Charlotte Hill
Starring	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Parminder NagraJonathan Rhys MeyersKeira KnightleyArchie PanjabiShaznay LewisAnupam KherPreeya Kalidas</div>
Music by	Craig Pruess
Cinematography	Jong Lin
Editing by	Justin Krish
Studio	British Sky Broadcasting British Screen Productions Helkon Media AG
Distributed by	Redbus Film Distribution (UK) Fox Searchlight Pictures (US)
Release date(s)	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">12 April 2002 (United Kingdom)1 August 2003 (United States)</div>
Running time	112 minutes
Country	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">United KingdomGermanyUnited States</div>
Language	English Punjabi German Hindi
Budget	\$6 million (£3.7 million) estimated
Box office	\$76,583,333

Bend It Like Beckham is a 2002 British comedy-drama film starring Parminder Nagra, Keira Knightley, Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, Anupam Kher, Shaznay Lewis,

and Archie Panjabi, first released in the United Kingdom. The film was directed by Gurinder Chadha. Its title refers to the football player David Beckham and his skill at scoring from free kicks by bending the ball past a wall of defenders.

Plot

Jesminder "Jess" Bhamra (Parminder Nagra) is the 18-year-old daughter of Punjabi Sikhs from Hounslow, west London. Juliette "Jules" Paxton (Keira Knightley) is the daughter of an English couple. Jess is infatuated with football, but because she is female (and Indian), her parents do not allow her to play, and due to a burn scar on her leg, her mother forbids her from wearing shorts. However, she sometimes plays in the park with various boys and her good friend Tony, a closeted homosexual. When Jules discovers Jess' skills, she invites Jess to try out for her local team, the Hounslow Harriers, coached by Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) who is impressed with her play and puts her on the team. Jess becomes best friends with Jules, until their friendship sours over a budding romance between Jess and Joe, on whom Jules also has a crush. Meanwhile, Jess' parents learn that she has been playing on the team and become more strict, while Mrs. Paxton suspects that Jess and Jules are in a lesbian relationship. Jess keeps sneaking out to play football while the elder Bhamras are distracted by the elaborate preparations for the upcoming wedding of their older daughter, Pinky (Archie Panjabi).

As the Harriers make their way towards the top of the league, Jess and Jules must sort their differences, make peace with their parents, overcome cultural prejudice, win their way to a prestigious scholarships to Santa Clara University in California, and most importantly, dance at a big fat Indian wedding.

Cast

- Parminder Nagra as Jesminder Kaur "Jess" Bhamra
- Keira Knightley as Juliette "Jules" Paxton
- Archie Panjabi as "Pinky" Bhamra
- Jonathan Rhys Meyers as Joe
- Shaznay Lewis as Marlena "Mel" Goines
- Anupam Kher as Mohaan Singh Bhamra
- Shaheen Khan as Mrs. Bhamra
- Juliet Stevenson as Paula Paxton
- Frank Harper as Alan Paxton
- Ameet Chana as Tony
- Kulvinder Ghir as Teetu

- Pooja Shah as Meena
- Preeya Kalidas as Monica
- Trey Farley as Taz
- Saraj Chaudhry as Sonny
- Paven Virk as Bubbly
- Nithin Sathya (*uncredited*) as Waiter
- Louise Walker team player

Reception

Critical reception

The film surprised the critics, and it was met with mostly positive reviews. Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* noted that the film "was really full of easy humor, an impeccable sense of milieu that is the result of knowing the culture intimately enough to poke fun at it while understanding its underlying integrity." *The Times of India* noted that *Bend It* "is really about the bending of rules, social paradigms and lives – all to finally curl that ball, bending it like Beckham, through the goalpost of ambition [...] The creeping divide shows that Britain is changing, but hasn't quite changed yet. The stiff upper lip has travelled miles from the time Chadha's father was denied a pint at some pubs at Southall, but like dollops of coagulated spice in badly stirred curry, discrimination crops up to spoil the taste, every now and then, in multi-racial Britain."

Planet Bollywood gave the film a 9 out of 10 and stated that the "screenplay not only explores the development of Jesse as a person, but also the changing values and culture of NRI teens: Jesse's urge to break the social norm of the Indian homemaker, her sister's (Archie Punjabi) sexually-active relationship, and the gay Indian [Tony, played by Ameet Chana]." *The Hindu* argues, "if ever there is a film that is positive, realistic and yet delightful, then it has to be Dream Production's latest venture directed by Gurinder Chadha [...] Light hearted, without taking away the considerable substance in terms of values, attitudes and the love for sport, the film just goes to prove that there are ways to be convincing and honest." The BBC gave it 4 out of 5 stars and argued that "Mr. Beckham ought to be proud to have his name on such a great film."

Review aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes gives *Bend It Like Beckham* a rating of 85%, based upon 147 reviews (125 fresh and 22 rotten).

The film's plot originally resolved with the two female leads ending up together romantically, but director Gurinder Chadha rewrote the script for fear of upsetting conservative Indians. The film retained its message

challenging homophobia and the role of women in society, but the two female leads fight over their male coach instead.

The British film went on to set the record in India for most number of tickets sold during a single weekend for a foreign movie. It also went on to become the highest-grossing Indian-themed film ever in the US with \$32 million in box office revenue.

Awards and nominations

Wins

- 2004 Pyongyang Film Festival: Music Prize
- 2002 British Comedy Awards: Best comedy film
- 2003 ESPY Awards: Best Sports Movie ESPY Award
- 2004 GLAAD Media Awards: Outstanding Film – Wide Release
- 2002 Locarno International Film Festival: Audience Award – Gurinder Chadha
- 2002 London Film Critics Circle Awards: British Best Newcomer – Keira Knightley
- 2002 International Film Festival of Marrakech: Special Jury Award – Gurinder Chadha
- 2003 National Board of Review of Motion Pictures: Special Recognition
- 2002 Sydney Film Festival: PRIX UIP – Gurinder Chadha
- 2003 The Comedy Festival: Film Discovery Jury Award – Gurinder Chadha

Nominations

- 2006 Billie Award – *Entertainment* (Best film)
- 2004 Writers Guild of America Award – Best Screenplay
- 2003 British Academy of Film and Television Arts – Best film
- 2003 Golden Globe for Best Film – Musical or Comedy

Soundtrack

The UK release of the soundtrack features bhangra music, songs by Spice Girls' Victoria Beckham (whose song "IOU" can be heard during a scene involving Jules' mother but was not included on the original soundtrack) and Melanie C (Melanie C's song "I Turn To You" was used in the film but is not included in the soundtrack) and the band Texas. It also features

"Baddest Ruffest" by Backyard Dog, the aria *Nessun Dorma*, from Puccini's *Turandot*, and excerpts from the dance band Basement Jaxx. The US release rearranges the tracks, and excludes some material. The single "Dream the dream", which is recorded by Shaznay Lewis (portrays Mel in the film) appears in the movie, but didn't make it the final cut on the soundtrack.

UK release

1. Craig Pruess & Bally Sagoo Feat. Gunjan – "Titles"
2. Blondie – "Atomic"
3. Backyard Dog – "Baddest Ruffest"
4. B21 – "Darshan"
5. (Movie Dialogue) – "It's Beckham's Corner"
6. Victoria Beckham – "I Wish"
7. (Movie Dialogue) – "Learn To Cook Dahl"
8. Malkit Singh – "Jind Mahi"
9. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan – "Tere Bin Nahin Lagda"
10. Bally Sagoo Feat Gunjan – "Noorie"
11. (Movie Dialogue) – "Juicy Juicy Mangoes"
12. Basement Jaxx – "Do Your Thing"
13. (Movie Dialogue) – "Eyes Down"
14. Texas – "Inner Smile"
15. Melanie C – "Independence Day" (New Version)
16. (Movie Dialogue) – "Can't Make Round Chapattis"
17. Hans Raj Hans – "Punjabiyan Di Shaan"
18. Gunjan – "Kinna Sohna"
19. Tito Beltrán – "Nessun Dorma"
20. (Movie Dialogue) – "The Offside Rule Is"
21. Bina Mistry – "Hot Hot Hot"
22. Craig Pruess & Bally Sagoo Feat. Gunjan – "Hai Raba!"
23. Curtis Mayfield – "Move on Up"

US release

1. Craig Pruess & Bally Sagoo Feat. Gunjan – "Titles"
 - (Movie Dialogue) – "It's Beckham's Corner"
2. Texas – "Inner Smile"
3. Malkit Singh – "Jind Mahi"
4. Bally Sagoo Feat Gunjan – "Noorie"
 - (Movie Dialogue) – "Learn To Cook Dahl"
5. Victoria Beckham – "I Wish"
 - (Movie Dialogue) – "Juicy Juicy Mangoes"
6. Gunjan – "Kinna Sohna"

7. Partners in Rhyme (featuring Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan) – "Tere Bin Nahin Lagda"
 - (Movie Dialogue) – "Can't Make Round Chapattis"
8. Melanie C – "Independence Day"
9. B21 – "Darshan"
 - (Movie Dialogue) – "Eyes Down"
10. Bina Mistry – "Hot Hot Hot"
11. Blondie – "Atomic"
12. Craig Pruess & Bally Sagoo Feat. Gunjan – "Hai Raba!"
13. Tito Beltrán – "Nessun Dorma"