Seabiscuit proves to be champion by too many lengths

Seabiscuit rides to victory in this story of the famed racing horse that captivated the nation. Though the film is exciting from the beginning, the presence of one false climax after another results in a less than stellar run.

By Jason Allen  
Contributing Writer

Title: Seabiscuit
Starring: Tobey Maguire, Jeff Bridges, Chris Cooper
Director: Gary Ross
Length: 140 Minutes
Rating: PG-13
Final Grade: B+

Cinematic history is cluttered with sports tales of underdogs conquering the greatest obstacles, but audiences often welcome manipulative tugs on the emotional heartstrings. Sylvester Stallone’s Rocky beats the stuffing out of his formidable foes. The Karate Kid performs that funky crane kick to defeat the cocky bully. And who can forget Rick Moranis coaching the Little Giants to a football title?

Attempting to one-up the aforementioned titans comes Seabiscuit, a seemingly never-ending true, miraculous story of a racehorse that inspired a nation recovering from economic collapse. The film takes place after the stock market crash of 1929.

A once booming country suddenly found itself in poverty, with people living in makeshift towns and forming lines for food. The revolutionary industrial
changes of the previous decade seemed trivial as citizens struggled to merely survive. In a real conflict of technology versus horse, the animal, once shunned for the progress of the automobile, again stood at the forefront as people discovered a psychological release in watching galloping thoroughbreds at the track. It certainly did not hurt that the monetary rewards from gambling could help to offset losses.

In this climate, one unlikely pairing rose to the top and reminded the working classes that anything was possible. Seabiscuit’s small size and the above average height of his jockey proved no problem. A team of average men sponsored a horse that overcame the stables of the wealthiest entrepreneurs. Thousands gawked at the animal that defeated apparent physical disadvantages, clamoring for a horseshoe “autograph,” and people flooded to the grandstands, even climbing trees for a better view.

The film’s cast includes some of today’s finest actors, and the horse functions as the uniting centerpiece of a recovery triangle of broken men. Jeff Bridges takes on the role of Charles Howard, the self-made business success and owner of Seabiscuit who suffers a family tragedy. Chris Cooper turns in a fine performance as compassionate horse whisperer Tom Smith, searching for meaning after being displaced when the ways of the Old West gradually vanish. His eyes twinkle as he saves an injured bronco from a trip to the glue factory, noting “Every horse is good for something.”

Tobey Maguire moonlights between gigs donning the Spider-man tights by inhabiting the jockey’s uniform of Johnny “Red” Pollard. With tousled locks of orange hair that could give Carrot Top cause for alarm, Maguire’s abandoned youth seethes with the same rage initially despised in Seabiscuit. The almost telepathic bond between the rider and his partner develops as they feed off each other’s fire, and the parallels of career-threatening injuries also haunt both. William H. Macy plays a supporting role as radio announcer “Tick-Tock” McGlaughlin who brings Seabiscuit’s struggle to the forefront throughout the nation.

Underneath his smarmy veneer and pencil-thin mustache, the radio announcer provides the film’s sole comic relief by operating as his entire broadcast booth staff. He peppers his calls of the races with sound effects using small instruments, including a train whistle and xylophone, while speaking at a rapid pace that would make a used car salesman blush with envy. The breathtaking cinematography includes large landscapes and pans of the cheering crowds. The introduction of Seabiscuit himself comes in a beautiful composition where he emerges in the mist of night, only the silhouette of a handler visible through the fog. The most amazing camera work springs to life during the races, and the audience is trotting alongside the jockeys in the middle of the pack. The sense of speed is thoroughly astounding, as shots capture the riders bickering back and forth or yelling encouragement in the ears of their animals.

When the slow motion kicks in and the clods of dirt fly off hooves breaking in freshly groomed soil, the imagery almost creates the magical aroma of the autumn breeze, the concession stand, and manure. Perfect period detail is reflected in everything from the costumes to the household appliances. Archival black-and-white photos from the era, depicting forlorn stockbrokers and model-T assembly lines, mix with the new movie footage to deliver a document of a forgotten time.
Much like the “foreign” sports of hockey and soccer, horseracing does not enjoy surging popularity among Americans today, but anyone can identify with a good old-fashioned David and Goliath rivalry no matter the delivery avenue. The film hits every expected thematic beat: if it were not factual, the screenwriter would deserve a critical lambasting for incorporating every athletics cliché available. The protagonists work hard, overcome setbacks and proceed to the big competition.

The swell of Randy Newman’s score pumps through the speakers, with a tad of Moby thrown in for the ears of hipsters, prompting the points when viewers are supposed to feel something. And darn it, despite slightly guilty consciences, they do. Of course, the eventual victor is never in doubt, but as it stands, the fun is the journey and recognition of a spirit that lifted the desperate above their personal turmoil.

However, one false climax after another grows tiresome. As Seabiscuit sweeps into the winner’s circle crowned in flowers after a neck-and-neck finish, the theater lights should come up soon after a fitting end to a great movie. But what is this? More dreams must be pursued and redemptions need fulfilling.

The filmmakers are not completely at fault for sticking to historical accuracy, yet it seems as if they tried to compress too much of Laura Hillenbrand’s best-selling book into the screen adaptation. The languid pacing of the events is especially conspicuous after the goosebump inducing highs of the races, for then ensues another long stretch of character development.

This summer, Dreamworks presents a tough sell amidst standard blockbuster fare featuring violent bad boys and scantily clad angels. The film fits the mold of Oscar bait normally reserved for the end of the year. As a counter-programming offering this early in the season, Seabiscuit might follow established patterns of artsy, sentimental entertainment, but it transcends formula.

After seeing the film, city-dwelling patrons will most likely yearn to find one of those horse rental tourist traps that takes customers on carefully pre-planned paths through the “wilderness.”

That is, until they remember the last vacation when their trusty steed ran off through a field in an uncontrollable frenzy, leaving them hanging on for dear life. Anybody willing to abandon cynicism should definitely go along for the ride, so to speak.
By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Parking tickets are a common site on Tech’s campus. In fact, the Nique’s own Jason Mabry suggests taking a study break to follow the parking trucks around campus for a little fun when feeling bored or overstressed.

By C. Jason Mabry
Senior Staff Writer

The Georgia Tech social scene: it’s there. Though perhaps not readily apparent in its various aspects, it is indeed alive and even mildly thriving. Even in the past two years, Tech has made great strides toward improving campus life and removing the Institution from the category of least content students – it remains number two. However, with the exception of a few engineering majors, students need not feel at a loss because opportunities abound.

For those of the outdoor and active persuasion, investigate the options at SAC and ORGT. Organized sports and small group activities are available in a variety of skill and interest levels, perfect for the seasoned hardbody or the casual participant. If all else fails, circle the SAC field or drop by the Burger Bowl next door. Tech may not be renowned for its greenspace, but don’t let that be a deterrent.

Long hallways are perfect for challenging games of Ultimate, and Instructional Center classrooms make for interesting racquetball courts. When searching for a unique and exciting outing, whether alone or with a date, little can be more inspiring than observing the Department of Parking operating at their finest. Stop by the Architecture lot for a non-stop ticketing funfest. Best of all, the event is completely free and ongoing. A parking ticket is not hard to find at Tech.
For those who enjoy theater, DramaTech puts on many productions throughout the year. The shows are a great break from continuous studying and can be very entertaining. The students have a heavy hand in the production of the pieces, and they are quite a lot of fun. DramaTech – just do it. The Student Center also offers numerous boredom breakers. Have a few hours to kill before the drudgery of another lecture? Watch a free movie or sleep in the music listening center. The lanes and pool tables are open all day for a quick game or an all-afternoon party.

The more artistically motivated can engage in numerous activities at the craft center. These offerings are just the basics; many events are held in and around the Student Center all year, from small booths to large outdoor festivals. Organizations exist to fill most any interest, but if one does not fit, new ones can always be started. Groups are continually recruiting for their causes, especially at the Organizations fair.

Still looking for something to do? Tech sports teams have games all the time. This makes for great entertainment and provides the opportunity to support the Institute and perhaps even appear on television. Oh, and remember to wear yellow.

If campus does not seem the place to be after hours or on the weekends, naysayers will be hard-pressed to express displeasure of Atlanta. Sure, the city is large, largely unwalkable, atmospherically oppressive and downright dirty.

Nevertheless, Atlanta is a mecca for entertainment. Nightcrawlers and barhoppers have it made in Atlanta. The city is home to the highest number of young singles in the country. If the perfect match is nowhere to be found in those sociable and group-oriented CS classes, chances are they might be out in the city. The streets are full of people and fun and offer a greatly needed reprieve from school monotony. Most would argue that the finest in nightlife resides in Buckhead, and for founded reasons.

The amount and variety of during and after hours entertainment in the city is unparalleled, if only in comparison to Tech. The Midtown area holds some of Atlanta’s best cuisine, shopping and nightspots. The cars are flashier, the clothes seem more expensive and the music is louder. Furthermore, Little Five Points and the Moreland District offer fun on a low-key level. The area is great for watching people (versus Five Points which is great for watching the wallet). Eclectic shops, restaurants and people make this district a great afternoon hangout.

Virginia-Highlands effortlessly meshes Buckhead with Moreland for an up-and-coming stylish yet workable atmosphere complete with its own set of amazing locales for a variety of entertainment. Hang around after dinner at numerous coffee and dessert shops and be sure to partake of the vivacity of that which is Paolo’s Gelateria. It is not to be missed. Have no real aim for the day? Traverse Peachtree (street, that is). Bum around downtown and enjoy the mix of people, or the mix of drinks. Underground is the underdog and the Central Library has what the Tech Library lacks.

For real fun, try driving in the area late at night on the weekend. Sometimes the show is better than a parade. If you happen to enjoy movies, Atlanta offers a number of non-traditional movie theaters. Amongst the selection are Tara Cinemas, having shown such enigmatic favorites as Assassination Tango and Bowling for Columbine.
In addition to the Do’s around campus, here are some on the Don’t list. The Library is a great place to study, and is renowned for its bathrooms. Put more eloquently, the bathrooms are like a 1950s horror flick – eerily alive and pulsating with filth. Unless a science project is calling, avoid these outhouses at all costs.

Also, do not take classes in the Old Architecture auditorium if staying awake is part of the program. Temperatures run the in extremes, and the seats and lighting beg for dozers. Extra credit should be awarded to those who stay alert.

Finally, always know an alternate route. If Tech can inconvenience students in any way, expect it, for it is the norm. The bottom line is this: enjoy the requisite six or seven years it takes to graduate. It will be worth it.
Think you know Rock? Get to know MoRisen Records

Snatches of Pink, a local band out of Charlotte, is one of the groups signed to the exciting new record label, MoRisen. Be sure to catch this band and others at their upcoming show at Atlanta’s Echo Lounge August 27th.

By Chelsea Paxton
Contributing Writer

On August 27th, for one night only, Atlanta will get a taste of what the rest of the Southeast is already talking about. Snatches of Pink and Jennyanykind, along with The Talk, will play at East Atlanta’s Echo Lounge to kick off the release of The Talk’s forthcoming LP, “No, You Shut Up” which officially drops August 26th. All three are at the forefront of talks on who’s “about to be the next big thing in this rock revolution,” but none hail from Detroit, New York, or LA; these guys are right up the road neighbors from North Carolina.

These bands are just a few of the raw talents signed to the independent record label, MoRisen Records, based out of what could easily be mistaken for an upper-crust Atlanta suburb, Charlotte, NC. Full of soccer moms in Escalades, Charlotte is, on the surface, the epitome of upper middle class white suburbia, and MoRisen is geniusly fixed in the center, handpicking talented, passionate rockers from bars and clubs all the way to Chapel Hill and back. The upcoming album releases of not only The Talk but also Chapel Hill’s Marat (“Marat” September 23) and the first release in 7 years from Snatches of Pink (“Hyena” October 7) has the rest of us looking twice at the kids in the garage next door, shaking our heads, saying, “Rock n roll? In North Carolina?” and then quickly, “Now why didn’t I think of this?”

In today’s pop-culture infested market no one even thinks to look to the South for anything beyond hard core rap (already well taken care of by SoSo...
Def and Disturbing the Peace) or the occasional Injected, and even then no one looks past Atlanta or maybe Athens in a pinch. No one, that is, except Chuck Morrison, genius of foresight and founder of MoRisen Records. In 2001, after several years in various facets of the music industry, Morrison had the guts and vision to combine his business bravado with his love of music and seize upon the untapped wealth of the Carolina music scene. Thus, MoRisen records had its beginnings, one part forward business and marketing label, and equal part lover of lyrics and live musical innovators. MoRisen, simply put, is the best thing to happen to music in years, promoting real, intense musicians with unbridled talent and the gift of performance.

The birth of MoRisen represents the emergence of a new kind of label that is both forward thinking, with its innovative and aggressive marketing strategies, and timeless, with a focus on great songs written and performed by pure musical talents who know how to deliver on record and on stage. A real and much needed alternative for today’s quality seeking music fans, MoRisen Records is committed to releasing albums that explore the best of North Carolina’s alternative rock and guitar-driven pop.

This is nothing new for Snatches of Pink. They’ve been on hiatus but with their forthcoming, “Hyena,” if you missed them the first time around then don’t be a victim of the same mistake twice. I slipped in my preview copy of “Hyena” nonchalantly, expecting little more than loud guitars and incoherent vocals that are the trademarks of the dime a dozen rock bands of contemporary American rock. But I was hooked from the first riff, slightly amazed and absolutely exhilarated...it was like being launched into a rowdy British dive bar in the late 60s only to find out that Chris Robinson is on vocals. The first track left me wanting to hear more and wondering exactly where I was when Rolling Stone and Spin were writing about Snatches the first time. As Magnet magazine stated so perfectly, “Snatches of Pink left me exhausted- one part drunken noise orgy, one part spiritual cleansing and numerous parts hammer of the gods. Arrogant, excessive, beautiful.” This band, considered the pioneers of North Carolina’s alternative rock, has spent time touring with the likes of The Ramones, Iggy Pop, and Soundgarden, perfecting their unabashed unruliness and lyrical depth and being praised for their unconventional musical approach by critics both big and small.

Also playing the Echo Lounge show is Chapel Hill’s Jennyanykind, twin brothers Mark and Michael Holland. These brothers of “American revival rock” have a vibe that feels at first listen like an Allman Brothers throwback. But with the first vocals, it is evident that the combination of genuine lyricism and brilliant enmeshment of both blues and pop, leaves this duo defying classification. This is John Mayer back when he played Eddie’s attic...but better. Jennyanykind’s MoRisen debut, “Peas and Collards,” is slated for a fall 2003 release.

Releasing their first CD under the MoRisen label on the 26th of August are Charlotte based alternative punk-rockers The Talk. This band’s style has all of the invigorating rowdiness of the best of the 80s combined with a knack for songwriting soulfulness.

The result is good, fun, rock and roll. Having formed only in 2002, these Charlotte boys may be new, but they have all of the ability and drive of legendary superstars. Not content to simply ride on talent, their dedication has already led to a self promoted and produced coast-to-coast tour, a strong local following. The foursome received “Best Band” honors from Charlotte’s
Creative Loafing in 2002, and studio time with well-known and unquestionably talented producer Mike Mogis (Bright Eyes, Sideshow). The Talk has already taken the Tarheel State by storm and is poised to do the same with discerning music lovers around the country.

Also on the MoRisen label is Leisure McCorkle out of Charlotte, NC whose 2002 release “Jet Set Baby” received critical acclaim and The Never. Formerly the b-sides, The Never will release their MoRisen debut in 2004. Still not convinced? Keep listening; this is only the beginning of the hype for Snatches of Pink, The Talk, Jennyanykind and all of the MoRisen artists for that matter. For more info on the MoRisen label as well as artist information and song samples, check out www.MoRisen.com.
Atlanta offers many options for movie lovers of all kinds

By Robert Hill / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Regal Hollywood 24, off Shallowford Road, is one of the many movie theaters around Atlanta. It offers stadium seating and reduced prices to students.

By Joseph Jeong
Contributing Writer

You have arrived at Tech and would like to go catch a movie after a tough week of classes. But where do you go? We’ve solved that problem for you by listing some of the theaters close to campus and listing their amenities as well as their shortcomings.

AMC Phipps

3500 Peachtree Rd N.E.

Atlanta, GA 30326

404-816-4262

This is another movie theater popular with those without cars, since it is also within walking distance of the Lenox MARTA station. Like UA Lenox Square, it is located right next to a food court, but the similarities end there. It is a much nicer theater located at the very top of Phipps Plaza and much more popular than its UA neighbor. Unfortunately, it doesn’t show some of the most popular movies. However, it does make up for it by occasionally showing more obscure movies that you wouldn’t normally expect from a major movie chain. Shopping is also available to moviegoers but only for those with fatter wallets than most.

AMC Parkway Pointe
Formerly a General Cinemas theater, this theater was recently bought out by AMC and is now the newest AMC theater around town. One of the newer theaters, it is equipped with up-to-date equipment and is overall one of the nicest theaters around. An additional bonus is the Borders Bookstore located right next door, making it very easy to kill time before the start of a movie.

AMC Southlake

7065 Mount Zion Circle

Morrow, GA 30260

404-816-4262

The furthest movie theater on this list, it is located a good 25 minutes south of the Tech campus, but it is well worth the drive. A behemoth of a movie theater, this place has four major screens that can handle even the biggest of movie releases. As far as movie theater facilities go, they don’t get any better than this. If you need tickets to the next installment of the Star Wars chronicles or Lord of the Rings, don’t sweat it. AMC Southlake probably has it because it will most likely be showing on all four major screens while it is sold out at Parkway Pointe or Regal Hollywood 24. If it was just a little closer, this would undoubtedly be the most popular movie theater.

Regal Cinemas Hollywood 24

3265 NE Expressway Access Rd

Chamblee, GA 30341

770-936-5737

One of the newest players around town in the movie theater business, it didn’t make a subtle impression when it opened. Regal Hollywood 24 is a can’t-miss eyesore along Interstate 85, with a huge, bright purple neon building declaring its presence to its neighbors.

Aside from the beyond-tacky architectural design, this really is a nice theater. Blessed with state of the art facilities and 24 screens, it has risen to the top of movie theaters around Atlanta. Like Phipps, you can also occasionally find more obscure, artsy movies playing at this theater, providing a nice surprise. It was also one of the major participants in the recent Atlanta Film Festival. Perhaps the theater’s only flaw is that there aren’t many places around it to kill time or go grab a bite. Driving out and then coming back can be somewhat of a pain because of it being located on an access road. Making the recent switch from Pepsi to Coca-Cola products at the concession stands gets it bonus points in my book.

United Artist Tara

2345 Cheshire Bridge Road N.E.

Atlanta, GA 30324

404-634-6288

This is considered the “art” theater around town. Looking for the latest David
Lynch movie or the latest foreign movie with an unpronounceable name? You’ll find it here.

Not the newest theater in town, but no one really watches the movies shown at Tara for their awesome special effects or the ultra-realistic audio. It is a quaint place that has its own unique charm, and definitely a place worth checking out at least once. Plus, you will be able to catch interesting independent films.
The Hiss return to Atlanta after touring with Oasis

By Scott Meuleners / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Lead singer and guitarist Adrian Barrera plays to an enthusiastic crowd at 99X’s “The Big Rock” Friday night. The Hiss, who are considered one of the most successful bands from East Atlanta, opened for The White Stripes.

By Michael Sprinkel
Contributing Writer

[Editor’s Note: This article is reprinted, with minor modifications, from the June 27 issue of the Technique.]

In my listless nights in smoke-filled dives and low capacity rock clubs, The Hiss was a band that would periodically find their way into conversations about the local music scene. From the fragmented garble put together from my eavesdropping, I could tell that this band had a sound that left people with an extremely favorable opinion. They were the kind of band that whether or not you owned their c.d., you would find yourself singing along at one of their shows. When given the opportunity to review the music of a local band that I knew was achieving a level of acclaim, I enthusiastically snatched the c.d. and threw it into my car stereo.

The first track, “Clever Kicks,” opens with an oscillating tremolo bar guitar solo, reminiscent of something one might hear on an old Sonic Youth album. After a few seconds, the drums kick in on top of guitar feedback. I immediately knew that I was going to like the remainder of this album. In a musical climate rife with Clear Channel generated playlists and pop icons produced on a mass media assembly line, the art of imperfection in the recording process has been lost. It is seemingly inappropriate to print an album where the guitar player inadvertently brushed his palm on the high “E” string in the forty-second measure of song two.
Heaven forbid that the buzz from a Marshall Amplifier finagles its way onto the final cut. The insipid practice of overproduction has taken the essence out of the crass and ornery roots of rock and roll. The Hiss managed to record a real rock album, complete will all of the buzzes and squeals we desperately want to hear again. Regarding their music, The Hiss is quite simply, an awesome band. Most of the members hail from Gainesville, Florida where they were immersed in the dynamic and influential scene that produced bands such as Palatka, Panthro UK, Radon and Less Than Jake. Five years ago when America’s musical canvas was whitewashed with insipid formulaic corporate productions, the band found a safe haven away from the monotony. I interviewed the band before their set at 99X’s “Big Rock” event in Stone Mountain Park where they were opening for The White Stripes.

Regarding their experience in Gainesville, Adrian Barrera, the band’s vocalist-guitarist had this to say, “[The popular music scene of five years ago] didn’t really hit us because we were still living in Florida. We were really spoiled because they had this really cool music scene in Gainesville... We weren’t really paying attention to modern rock and MTV. It was horrible. Five years ago, we were definitely more in to underground stuff. Gainesville was like its own little universe. There were so many bands there. There were so many bands that were good there...You didn’t need to pay attention to what was on the radio.”

The Hiss produces a rough vintage sound conglomerated from classic British rock and late seventies punk. Imagine Led Zeppelin mixed with The Clash with a dash of The Ramones and a pinch of The Rolling Stones for flavoring. This eclectic mixture yields a set list that is sure to appeal to everyone, not just a minute selection of the rock crop. In an era where popular music has instituted a de facto system of fan base segregation, a band that can break down these barriers is a welcome change.

If a dynamic and worldly new sound were to come from anywhere, it would not be unlikely that it would come from Atlanta where the local music scene is harshly divided between different genres, leaving musicians to struggle for a fan base. According to Barrera, “The music scene is definitely more rigid here in Atlanta...Ya’ know, there’s the ‘rock and roll’ kids that come out to see us. I believe our shows are a bit more diverse. Ya’ see, I just like music. I don’t like only one genre of music. [The music scene] doesn’t blend as much here, but, little by little, I think all of those lines will start to fade away.” The Hiss just finished a tour of Germany with Oasis, which the band enthusiastically described as “absolutely amazing...coolest guys ever.” Every member of The Hiss has been a fan of Oasis for many years, so the opportunity to tour with them must have been surreal, especially for the band’s lead guitar player, “Noel Gallagher has been one of my favorite guitar players for a while...he’s one of my heroes really.”

When asked about the conflict between the Gallagher brothers, the band assured me that the media has grossly exaggerated its magnitude, “It’s overplayed. They’re brothers, know what I mean? We’d be talking to one of them, and the other would just be waiting for him to say something – try to egg him on and whatnot. It was really funny, actually. I would do the same thing to my brother. I could understand. It’s just typical sibling rivalry.”

The Hiss is currently putting the finishing touches to its debut album to be released on Loog/Polydor Records in the United Kingdom and Europe this summer. The band will be laying down the tracks under the guidance of the
respected U.K. producer Owen Morris (The Verve, Oasis). Named after an obscure sixties art movement featuring “the staged murder of a rabbi and a giant vagina.” Their single, “Riverbed,” is permeating the radio waves of fourteen different stations across the U.S and can be purchased in various record stores throughout Atlanta (FYE, Best Buy, Corner CD, Criminal, Eat More, among others). If you are interested in hearing other artists in the Atlanta area, The Hiss recommend The Tom Collins Band and Vin Correjo. Vin Correjo recently played at the Cotton Club and earned a spot at Music Midtown.