'Everyone Wants Some!!': Meanders, but has its moments

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 08 April 2016 04:21

Rating: «««« out of 4 Stars

Running Time: 116 min.

Occasionally, there's a downside to seeing so many movies. When one really makes an impression on you, it's tough for any sort of follow-up to compete. Such is the case with *Everybody Wants Some!!,* a "spiritual sequel" to *Dazed and Confused* (1993) and to some extent, *Boyhood* (2014). I'm a big fan of the earlier title, which captured the last day of school for a varied group of kids in a local high school. It depicts a day of celebration and consternation about the future and is pretty much one of the best coming-of-age movies you're likely to see.

Truth be told, there's nothing wrong with *Everybody Wants Some!!* It's very well-acted, fun and captures the early 80s perfectly. This follow-up is set on the weekend before first day of classes at a Texas university. Jake (Blake Jenner) is a freshman pitcher who is roomed with his teammates. After arriving, he and his newfound compatriots decide to spend the weekend on the prowl, wandering from club to club in an attempt to pick up women. Naturally, there's a romantic interest for Jake in Beverly (Zoey Deutch), a young theater student.

Along the way, the group joke around and discuss how to engage females. Some even espouse their personal philosophies. The two elder teammates who seem to have the biggest impact are smooth-talking Finnegan (Glen Powell) and low-key, pot-smoker Willoughby (Wyatt Russell). However, most of the characters are interesting and their interactions are often amusing.

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There's a very loose and natural approach to their discussions which at time almost appear improvisational.

And between the goofiness of starting a fight at a club or playing various pranks on one another, the movie reveals some insight into their social clique. They all want to be professional athletes and are highly competitive in everything they do (not just baseball), leading to some amusing disagreements. In fact, the more eccentric bits of behavior make the biggest impression and entertain with their funny observations.

While the freewheeling approach adds authenticity and naturalism to the events, it also means that the story itself meanders greatly. There are definitely some slow patches. And there aren't any immediate, pressing problems for the players to address. Of course, realism is what the filmmaker was going for. Yet with such a narrow focus (they interact briefly with other groups but it's mostly a bonding experience for the leads), the endeavor occasionally feels like it lacks forward momentum. The jocks simply wander from party to party, shooting the breeze.

And by the close, Jake addresses his values and beliefs so clearly and succinctly that he appears to have everything all figured out. It's a pretty impressive feat after one weekend of partying and one wonders what he'll actually get out a post-secondary education.

Regardless, the cast are great and even if the movie doesn't appear to be going anywhere in particular it is fun watching many of their escapades. The soft photography is perfectly suited to 1980. It is muted with plenty of browns and oranges that visually encapsulate the era. The soundtrack features loads of great tunes that also assist in setting the mood.

I enjoyed *Everybody Wants Some!!* even if I didn't feel it was as compelling as it could have been. In some respects, the style of the feature straddles the line between
Dazed
and
Boyhood
. It doesn't worry about plot, drama or conflict and instead presents a character focused slice-of-life. Call me a traditionalist, but I prefer
Dazed
. Still, it's a matter of personal preference. If one is willing to embrace the loosely constructed narrative, they should still find plenty here to take pleasure from.

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