

A League of Their Own

(Comedy) (1988)

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Major Characters

Dottie Hinson.....Geena Davis

A great athlete who is recruited to play in the Woman's Professional Baseball League during World War 2. She is married to a soldier who is fighting in Europe.

Kit.....Lori Petty

Dottie's younger sister, who is not as good a player as Dottie, but is still picked to play in the new league.

Jimmy Dugan.....Tom Hanks

A former professional baseball great who has wasted his last few years as an alcoholic. He is chosen to coach Dottie and Kit's team.

Mae "all the way" Mordabito.....Madonna

A colorful and sexually "loose" player on the team.

Doris.....Rosie O'Donnell

Mae's best friend on the team.

Marla Hooch.....Megan Cavanagh

A great player who is very shy and plain looking.

Ernie Capadino.....John Lovitz

A baseball scout who recruits women for the team.

Walter Harvey.....Gary Marshall

Millionaire businessman who creates the league, and also hires Jimmy Dugan to be a coach.

Plot Summary

Baseball is considered "the great American pastime." During World War 2, most of the great baseball players went into the military, and thus the professional game of Baseball was almost shut down. In response to this situation, a Chicago businessman decided to create a Woman's Professional Baseball League. This movie is about some of the women players who played professional baseball during that first year in 1943.

The film focuses on two sisters from Oregon, who are asked to travel to Chicago in order to play for the new league. The older sister, Dottie, is a great athlete and baseball player, who happens to be very beautiful. The younger sister, Kit, is an OK baseball player, though not as good as her sister. She is also not as beautiful as Dottie, and thus there is a classic "sibling rivalry" between the two sisters. Still, both sisters will play for the Rockford Peaches (Rockford is a city about an hour West of Chicago).

"A League of Their Own" is actually told from the point of view of Dottie, looking back from the 1980s. This is because Dottie and many of the other players are going to an exhibit at the Baseball Hall of Fame, which is honoring the Woman's Baseball League 40 years after its creation.

A quick summary of basic baseball vocabulary:

The goal is to score as many **runs** as possible (points). Each player tries to hit the baseball with a **bat** (the metal or wooden stick). The **pitcher** throws the ball toward the **batter**. If the batter swings and misses the ball, that is called a **strike**. If the batter hits the ball, but it lands outside the baseball diamond, that is called a **foul** (or foul ball). If the pitcher throws the ball, but it is not close enough to the pitching zone, then that is called a **ball**.

If a batter hits the ball into the field and it is not caught or thrown to a base before the batter gets to that base, it is called a **hit**. If the ball is either caught in the air, or thrown to the base before the batter reaches it, this is called an **out**. In brief, the hitter is trying to get a hit so that he can run around the bases. There is **1st, 2nd, and 3rd base**. The batter begins at **home plate**, and hopes to get back to home plate after hitting the ball and running around the bases. If he hits the ball and is able to run to first base, that is called a **single**. If he can run to second base, that is called a **double**, and he can run all the way to third base, that is called a **triple**. If the hitter hits a ball past the fence beyond the field, that is called a **home run**. If the batter hits a home run when there are other players on all the other bases, that is called a **Grand Slam**. It is the coolest thing in all of baseball!

The pitcher stands on the **pitching mound**. He pitches the ball in different ways. He can pitch a **fast ball**, **slow ball**, **curve ball** and even a **knuckle** or **spit ball**. The names are self-explanatory. Every pitch is either a strike or a ball (unless it is hit by the batter). After every pitch, there is a **count**, in which the number of strikes and balls for that particular batter are listed. For example, a 2-1 count means that the pitcher has pitched 2 balls and 1 strike so far. A pitcher is allowed to throw 3 balls, and a batter is allowed 2 strikes. So a 3-2 count is called a **full count**.

If there is a full count, on the next pitch, the batter will either get a successful hit, hit a foul ball (in which case there will be another ball pitched), **strike out** (swing and miss on the 3rd pitch, and thus he will be called **out**), or **walk** (which means he will be able to literally walk to 1st base without having to hit the ball). Thus, baseball is a constant battle between the pitcher and hitters.

The defensive team consists of the **pitcher**, as well as players who play **1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, left field, center field, and right field**. In addition, there is a defensive player who crouches (sits) behind the batter at home plate who is called the **catcher**, and finally, there is a player who stands between 2nd and 3rd base who is called the **short-stop**. The people who enforce the rules of the game are called **umpires**, or **umps**, for short.

Each team that comes up to bats gets only three outs before they have to go on the defense. On the 3rd out, the **inning** is over (an inning is three outs). There is a **top** and **bottom** of each inning, so that a **full inning** is completed after both teams have had a chance to bat. There are 9 full innings per baseball game, though more are played if the score is tied at the end of the 9th inning.

The above vocabulary will be reviewed in the film glossary that follows. If you understand the basic rules and vocabulary, you can probably internalize it a lot faster. Just remember, baseball is the greatest sport in the world. ;-).....

A Final Historical Note: In 1943, "The All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League" was formed because there was a fear that there would not be enough men to play baseball during World War 2. In fact, professional baseball continued throughout US involvement in the war (1941-1945), but amazingly, this women's league survived with a handful of teams all the way until 1954. Until this film, few seemed to have been aware of it's existence.

Words and Expressions that You may not Know

It is 1988, and Dottie prepares to go to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Thinking about where she is going, she remembers 40 years earlier....

Queen of Diamonds.

Playing cards are in suites of diamonds, hearts, clubs and spades.

The Queen of Diamonds is often thought of as the most prestigious.

I don't want to get any bad reports.

"I don't want others telling me you have behaved badly."

To shoot.

In basketball, you "shoot the ball" when trying to make a basket.

Joe DiMaggio.

One of the greatest baseball players of all time
(He played in the 1940s for the New York Yankees).

Give those Nazis a go.

To "give someone a go" is to make them work hard against you.

Indians/Red Sox/Tigers.

Names of professional baseball teams.

Rumors persist.

A "rumor" is information or gossip that is spread from person to person, without it being known if the information is really true.
If something "persists," it continues to last or survive.

Figure out how to keep baseball going.

"To figure out" something is to try and understand or solve it.

Bat.

The big stick used in baseball to hit the ball (Both a noun and a verb).

A hole in the right side.

Empty space in right field where a batter could hit a ball.

Pitch, inside.

A pitch that is inside, or very close, to the batter.

No high ones!

Here, referring to pitches that are high in the pitching zone.

That's the ball game.

A colloquial way to say "the game is finished."

Your sister bailed you out.

"To bail out" someone is to help get them out of trouble.
(It can also refer to the paying of money to get a person out of jail).

I just lay off the high ones.

"To lay off" something is to stop doing it.
In this case, to stop pitching high pitches.

Mitch Swaley is a pig!

To call someone a pig is a common but harsh insult, implying that such a person is dirty or perhaps greedy or immoral.

You got chores.

An interesting word for various things that need to be done around the house, like cleaning the dishes, cutting the grass, and so on.

"Hey, yourself"

A clever way to reply when someone yells "hey" to you.

It would bruise the hell out of me.

A "bruise" is an injury, usually seen as a brown or red spot on your skin. The colloquial construction "to bruise the hell out of someone," simply means they would get a lot of bruises.

I'm a baseball scout.

A person paid to look for the best players who are not yet professional.

Girl's baseball league.

Here, the group of teams that compete against each other.

Nice retort.

A "retort" is what is quickly said in response to something else. Here, said sarcastically to mean "that's a stupid thing to say."

Pull her leg for a while.

"To pull someone's leg" is to lie to them or to make fun of them.

Plus, you're a dolly.

A stupid and never used word for a doll or good looking girl.

Lookie, no touchie.

A totally ridiculous way of saying "look, but don't touch."

She's a pitcher.

The person who throws the ball to the batter in baseball.

Glimpse into her life.

"A glimpse" is a very short look (Used as a noun and a verb).

No skin off my ass.

A crude and colloquial way to say "that's not a problem for me."

If you want to pluck cows, that's your business

"To pluck" is to remove by pulling, and one usually plucks feathers off chickens, not cows! Note that "if you want to do x, that's your business" is a good way of telling a person they can do what they want.

I know the goods.

Ernie's silly way to say "I know who is good, and how good they are."

If you stink, it will cost you a train ticket.

If someone "stinks at" something (such as baseball), that means that they are bad at it. Thus here, it means if Kit plays poorly, she will simply have to return home.

Haven't you heard of a leash?

The cord around a dog's neck so that owners can control it.

Increased sales 100%.

Referring to amount sold in comparison with before.

I'll dig up a pistol

"To dig up" something is to search for it. A "pistol" is a small gun.

Oregon.

The Western State just North of California.

Chicago.

A major American city in the State of Illinois

Ft. Collins.

A small town in the State of Colorado, in the Rocky Mountains.

Convinced to give baseball a try, Dottie and Kit head off for Chicago .

That was good form.

"The way you did that looked very good."

An eye like DiMaggio.

The ability to see and hit pitches like Joe DiMaggio, when batting.

Now a lefty.

A common colloquial term for a person who is left-handed.

Yankees.

The New York City baseball team: The best team in baseball history.

Look who just caught on.

"To catch on" to something is to understand it, or perhaps to become good at something, such as batting or pitching.

I messed up raising her

An important phrasal verb: "To mess up" something is to do it badly.

Don't you worry about me.

Note the pronoun "you", which is not uncommon in this specific expression.

You have got to go where things happen.

In rapid speech, "have got to"---->"gotta."

Daddy.

The way children say "father" or "dad."

Cowgirls.

Female cowboys. Those who lived in the American West during the 19th century, famous for moving cows while riding horses.

Harvey Field.

The baseball field named after the businessman Walter Harvey (only in the movie).

At try outs, show them what you got.

A "try put" is where a person displays his skill to a potential employer. "To show them what you got" is a colloquial way to tell someone to do their best at showing the skills they have.

Get lost!

A very common and somewhat harsh way to say "leave!"

How long have you been working on it?

"To work on" something is to practice it in order to get better.

Your behind looks really swollen.

"Behind" is yet another word for ass, butt or derriere.

"Swollen" is blown up in size, usually due to internal injury.

"Scuze me."

Common for "excuse me."

Harvey bars.

The candy bars named for Mr. Harvey.

Young girls plucked from their families.

A sarcastic way of referring to girls who chose to leave their homes ("to pluck" literally means to remove by pulling away).

Like your candy bars, you're completely **nuts!**

A play on words: "Nuts" are peanuts or other similar food, but if a person is nuts, then they're considered crazy.

She made the team.

Note that "to make" has endless meanings:
Here, she was chosen to be on the team

Are you on the cut list?

In this case, the list of girls not chosen for the team.

Dottie, Kit and the others make it on to the Rockford Peaches, and soon begin practice for their first season.

Rockford Peaches.

The name of the team: Rockford is a suburb of Chicago.

Get fitted for your uniform.

"To get fitted" is to be measured so that the clothes or uniform that you order will be the right size.

I'm going to have to squat.

"To squat" is to sit in a crouching position, just as the person playing catcher does in baseball.

Charm and beauty school.

The quality of being pleasing & alluring (The adjective is "charming").

Every girl is going to be a lady.

Here, "lady" implies a graceful young woman.
This word seems a bit dated, and thus it's better to say "woman".

Sip, don't slurp.

"To sip" is to drink a little at a time. "To slurp" is to drink noisily.

A lady reveals nothing.

A way of saying that true ladies are conservative in fashion and behavior.

A lot of night games.

Games played at night under artificial light.

In-laws

The parents of your husband or wife.

You **let me down** on the **LA** jobs

To "let down" someone is to disappoint them.

LA is Los Angeles, which is America's most wonderful city... ;-)

Blunt.

If someone is "blunt," they speak very directly and honestly, as opposed to diplomatically. An important word.

Are you a fall-down drunk?

One who drinks alcohol so often that they're always falling over.

Very insulting, and rarely used.

I wasn't **stunned**.

"Stunned" is an excellent adjective that means shocked.

You step out of the dugout.

The area where baseball players who are waiting to bat will sit.

It is usually protected by a fence so the players won't be hit by a ball.

Home runs.

Balls hit over the fence that result in the hitter getting to run around the bases and return home for a point.

World Series.

The championship between the two best American baseball teams.

Take it or leave it.

A common expression meaning "Take the offer, or go elsewhere."

Southbend and Rockford.

Two cities with baseball teams.

A line-up.

The list of players that will play the game.

Lead-off.

The first person to bat in any given inning.

The legendary Jimmy Dugan arrives to coach the team, but he's not really what the girls expected.

Bullshit! You can all kiss my ass.

In this case, a very crude way of saying "I don't care what you think."

Aien't too many people here.

A common but gramatically awful way of saying "isn't."

Let's play ball.

The words used to start many baseball games.

2 balls 0 strikes.

The count (as described in the baseball vocabulary section of this guide).

She hit the cream cheese out of it.

A colorful way of saying she hit the ball hard (This is never used).

The master strategist.

An expert at strategy or planning.

Can I have your autograph?

An "autograph" is a person's signature, often of a hero or celebrity.

I especially liked you when your scratched your balls.

Said sarcastically: "Balls" is a common slang word for testicles.

Disgusting.

An important adjective meaning gross and repulsive.

Girls are to sleep with, not coach during the day.

Jimmy's way of expressing disgust with woman's baseball.

Betty Grable has nothing on these gals.

Betty Grable was a big Hollywood star. "To have nothing on someone" means that they are not as good as that person.

Yow!

An old-fashioned and silly word that essentially means "wow, look at that."

Plays like Gherig and looks like Garbo

Lou Gherig was a great baseball player.

Betty Garbo was a beautiful movie star.

The want ads.

Ads in newspapers where people look for jobs.

I quit.

"To quit" is the verb to use when a person decides to leave a job.

He's really a sweetie.

An affectionate word for a sweet person.

Mr. Gushiella shan't be retiring.

An old fashioned and never used way to say "shall not," though "won't" is almost always used in American English.

What the hell is going on?

Adding "the hell" to "Wh questions" adds emotion and emphasis.

Throw up.

The phrasal verb meaning to vomit.

He's a suds bucket.

Very slang for "a drunk" (never used).

She was the dancer. I was the bouncer.

A "bouncer" is usually a muscular person who decides who will be allowed into a night club or party.

Thanks for the ride.

The act of sitting in a car while someone else drives.

Why don't we slip into the back seat,
and you can make a man out of me?

Back seats of cars are a favorite place to "make out" and have sex, especially in American movies, if not real life.

Why don't I smack you around?

"To smack around" someone is an old--fashioned way to say "beat up" or hit them frequently.

Let's make like a bread truck and roll buns.

Totally stupid, and never used, but cute (It simply means "let's go").

A lot of liquor.

Alcoholic drinks.

Aien't he something?

An incorrect way of saying "Isn't he special?"

The Rockford Peaches become a great team, but problems develop between Dottie, Kit, and the others.

A shot into right center.

A ball that is powerfully hit, in this case, into right center field.

She's in there!

Here, meaning "She's safe," or more specifically, that she ran to the base before the defensive team could throw the ball there.

A squeeze.

This is when a runner is caught between two bases.

Then act like it, you big lush!

"A lush" is a slang word for a drunk, or a person who drinks too much.

Is it out of focus?

A camera lens needs to be "in focus" to take good pictures.

So long, Charley

"So long" is occasionally used for "good-bye."

To get even.

This is a common way of saying to get revenge, especially after someone has done something to you that makes you angry.

Start using your head.

One way to tell a person to start thinking intelligently or logically.

He called me a big pile of pig shit.

A very crude but funny line. A "pile" is a bunch of similar things stacked one on top of another.

You chastised her too vehemently.

"To chastise" someone is to strongly criticize them. "Vehemently" is a powerful adverb meaning with great force or emotion.

A good rule of thumb.

A common expression for a general truth, or just good advice.

There is a tractor show in town, but the crowd is light.

"Tractors" are big truck-like machines used on farms.

A "light crowd" means that there are few people.

Life Magazine

A very popular magazine with excellent photography.

A real human interest story.

A story in a newspaper that lots of people would find interesting, often about the hopes, dreams and problems of average people.

What's the matter?

"What's wrong?" or "What is the problem?"

They're talking about closing you down.

"To close down" a business is to permanently stop its operations.

Give them everything you've got!

A good way to say "Do your very best."

A double would be nice.

A hit where the batter gets to second base (hits are either singles, doubles, triples or home runs)

Foul.

A ball hit outside the boundaries of the field.

Look sharp!

One way to tell someone to try and look good, or at least in good form.

Your bosoms.

A very old-fashioned term for female breasts. If you want to be colloquial, "boobs" is probably a better choice.

Your kid ate the line-up.

The list of players, with the order in which they will bat.

See you next season.

American sports are played in seasons, and for baseball, that season is summer! (ie... "See you next year").

Slide! Safe. Out.

A player may "slide" into a base (feet first and almost horizontal on the ground). If he is "safe," he reached the base before the ball, and if he is "out," he did not, and must therefore return to the dugout.

Good looking.

An extremely common way to say pretty or handsome.

Assistant manager at the dairy.

A "dairy" sells milk and other milk-related products like cheese.

He's in combat.

"Combat" refers to the actual day to day fighting of a war.

I have no cartilage in my knee.

The elastic, fibrous tissue found in various parts of the body.

You're lousy.

An excellent word for "really bad."

Fair ball.

A ball hit within the field (The opposite of "foul ball").

Time out!

When "time out" is called, the game clock is stopped. However, unlike basketball and football, there is no official clock in baseball.

Once again, Kit faces the reality of her older sister always being better at whatever they do.

On the mound, a hurler.

The "mound" here refers to the "pitcher's mound," the raised little hill of land from where the pitcher throws the ball.

"A hurler" is a pitcher who throws (or hurls) the ball very fast.

I'll strike her out.

"To strike out" someone is when the pitcher makes the hitter swing the bat three times without hitting the ball.

I've never been taken out before.

Here, meaning to be taken out of the game.

She's battling.

"To battle" in this case means to struggle or have difficulties.

Bases loaded, bottom of the 9th.

Near the very end of the game, with players on all three bases (!!)

Do you know what they **go through?!**

If people have to "go through a lot," this means that they have to endure or experience a lot of difficulties.

Double header.

This is the playing of two separate games, one right after the other.

There's no point to it anymore.

Here, meaning that there is no more satisfaction in doing it.

They're through.

Again, meaning finished, or in this case, "they're going to lose."

Don't start with me!

An interesting way of saying "don't start bothering me with whatever it is that you want to say."

My rear end hurts me

Another useful term for butt, ass or derriere.

I treated you like a pitcher who lost her stuff.

If an athlete "loses her stuff," she loses the skills she needs to win.

You could've backed me. Instead of holding me back.

"To back someone" is to support them, usually emotionally.

"To hold someone back" is to impede or stop them.

I have to **pull something off**.

"To pull off" something is to accomplish something that is hard to do (A person may ask "How did you pull that off?!")

I can arrange a trade.

In American sports, players are often traded between teams.

I'll **work it out** by tomorrow

"To work out" something is to find an appropriate solution.

Bitch.

A common and crude word for a mean or unpleasant woman.

I've been traded to Racine. I told them to trade me.

Racine is another city in Illinois.

I knew if I was too good, you'd **push me down**.

"To push someone down" is to treat them poorly, or in this case, to try and stop their progress.

Blow it out your rear end!

A rare and crude variation of "fuck you."

You know who to blame.

"You know who is responsible."

Piss on your hat.

Another insult that is no longer used.

That seems uncalled for.

If something is "uncalled for," this means there is no reason or justification for having done it.

Listen up!

A colloquial version of "listen" when said to a group.

I get a bonus when we get to the World Series.

An additional amount of money given to workers for a job well done.

Straighten this out.

"To straighten out" something is to simplify or solve a problem.

A sniper.

One who fires a gun at others, usually from a hidden place.

Batting practice.

When players practice hitting balls before a game.

Avoid the clap.

An interesting colloquial term for gonorrhea, which is a sexually transmitted disease.

I gave away five years to drinking.

Here, meaning that he wasted five years by drinking too much.

Chicken shit!

A crude and often used term for a coward.

Sneaking out like this.

"To sneak out" is to try and leave secretly.

It's what lights you up.

"It's what makes you happy."

Dottie and Kit, now on opposite teams, face each other in the most important game of their lives.

History in the making.

A common expression for a very important event.

Cut it out!

A great colloquial way to say "Stop it!"

Two box seats.

Very good seats at a stadium.

For lead off, they're going to bunt.

The "lead-off" batter is the first batter of the new inning.
"To bunt" is to hit the ball as softly as possible, in hopes of getting to first base.

Help them see it all the way through.

A nice way of saying "until the end."

This is it!

Here, meaning "this is the most important moment."

If she doesn't have anything, tell me.

"Tell me whether or not she has good pitches."

I'm no quitter!

"I always stay until the end."

You're still missing the cut off man.

The defensive person who the outfielder should throw the ball to (usually the person at 2nd base).

Way to make something happen!

A common way of starting a sentence when you want to compliment someone on an accomplishment: "Way to go!"

Bring me home!

Here, meaning "get a hit so I can run to home base!"

The tying and go-ahead runs with two outs.

A go-ahead run is the point that will give your team more points than the other team.

He almost took her head off.

"The ball was hit so fast it almost killed her."

Retiring the side.

Baseball expression for getting the necessary three outs in an inning.

The damage has been done.

A common expression, in sports and life.

One run and we're back in this game

"If we get one run, then we can still win."

One down.

Another way to say one out (and therefore two outs left in the inning).

She delivers.

Baseball term for "she pitches" (as opposed to delivering a baby).

She is one for three today.

"She has one hit out of three times at bat."

High fast balls.

A type of pitch that is thrown to be fast, and high in the pitch zone.

This should tie it up.

"To tie it up" is to even the score, so that each team has the same number of runs or points.

Lay off them.

"To lay off" something is to stop doing it. In this case, to stop throwing a certain type of pitch.

We'll stick with it.

"We'll keep the same strategy."

We had it until that last inning.

"Things we're going well until the last inning."

Who are you routing for?

"To rout" for a team is to cheer, or support them.

Get dirty.

A funny way of saying "play hard."

I'd just be **in the way.**

If someone is "in the way," they are generally taking up needed space and are not wanted by others.

You couldn't **give this up.**

"To give up something" is to stop doing it.

Gear.

Athletic equipment (such as gloves and baseball shoes).

Line drive at your head!

A "line drive" is generally a ball that is hit very hard.

***Dottie returns to the Hall of Fame,
to reunite with all her old teammates....***

Triple A.

The name of a "minor league" division, below the famous "major league" teams of Professional baseball.

A mule "neighs."

The sound a mule makes (as in "a dog barks").

"All the way Mae"

Nickname, here referring to the fact that May "went all the way," in a sexual sense (May is appropriately played by Madonna!).

I married a plastic surgeon.

A surgeon who tries to make bodies and faces more attractive.

I got butterfingers.

When you have "butterfingers," you don't catch well because your hands are slippery (It's also the name of a famous candy bar).

Baseball Hall of Fame

A museum in Cooperstown, New York, where baseball's greatest players are honored.

A League of Their Own

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. In some ways, this movie is about great social changes that took place in American society at a certain point in history. How is this so? What were the circumstances?
2. Why have men's sports been so dominant compared to women's sports? Is this situation changing? Will women's team sports ever be as much loved and discussed as men's team sports are now? Why or why not?
3. Who was your favorite player for the Rockford Peaches? Why?
4. How would you compare Dottie and Kit?
5. Why is baseball the most wonderful sport in the world?