

# LONDON



**Comedy Drama**  
**Film**

The Year is 1982 and the talented basketball player, Akin Numi (19) is being given a baptism of fire by the senior players during a practice session. When summoned by club owner, Dennis Rackford (50), along with Coach Cam (45) and USA import sensation Joe 'Pretty Boy' Maguire (24), the surprise revelation that Akin is going to an elite USA summer basketball camps is thwarted by the inclusion of 5ft 5in 2<sup>nd</sup> team player Denzel MacDonald, in place of upcoming mid-junior and pseudo Casanova, Sean Duffy (23).

When Akin and Joe meet Denzel at the Peckham roller hockey ring, Denzel's diminutive height, even in roller skates, begins to agitate Akin as does the fact Denzel's is playing roller hockey not basketball! As Joe outlines the pre-summer camp itinerary, only his calming voice encourages Akin to remain. When Akin and Denzel arrive in Cranston, Rhode Island, Joe takes Akin & Denzel on an extensive tour of the neighbourhood and Akin is aghast at the scale of indifference and deprivation within the black neighbourhood.

The first day of camp is orientation day. Akin leads the way with touring, only to return late to the afternoon session, much to Denzel's annoyance. By the end of the first week, the camaraderie at the camp, meeting and sharing experience with other campers, softens Akin's attitude towards Denzel, although Akin's arrogance towards the American curriculum system causes friction between him and the senior student summer resit campers. Both boys are selected for the end of camp All Star game. The gym is packed with summer students, college scouts, and local media, fanned by the hype poured upon Denzel and Akin.

When Akin turns his ankle badly mid-way through the All-Star game, media attention quickly shifts to Denzel. His Most-Valuable Player award caps a stellar performance, much to Akin's jealousy and his dismay increases when college coaches line up to interview Denzel. As both boys board the greyhound bus for Trenton State, New Jersey, Akin's ears are still ringing with the sound of Mrs Maguire's harsh sermon on how to help Denzel succeed in the all-important college entrance exams.

As Akin hobbles around the campus, his reluctance to help Denzel prepare for the exams is heavily frowned upon by the incumbent summer retake

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students. Female librarian, Rose (19) takes a liking to Akin and provides tips on how he should help Denzel prepare but Akin becomes frustrated. This frustration boils over on heatwave day when Denzel is late to the library from lunch break. A huge showdown ensues in the library in front of students, with both boys ejected by the senior Librarian. When Denzel is approached by two young female students offering to help him, Akin is virtually ostracised.

The regular morning ice bucket session with college Physio, Dan (34) soon becomes a therapy session that 'life is not about basketball'. Akin and Dan watch the playoff games on the last day before college exams and Dan points out areas for Denzel to improve physically and mentally. Rose arrives and Akin apologises to her, but she's not impressed. After the afternoon session, all students undertake last minute cramming. Akin tries to talk to Denzel but his newfound friends won't allow it. (Akin and Denzel eyeball each other, masonic sorry nod and smile. All the summer students board the bus to the exam centre, with huge excitement. Akin and Rose watch as Denzel and new friends wave goodbye. Akin shouts good luck to deaf ears. At the airport, Akin is waiting for Denzel. Denzel is late, and they board the plane late. Both are quiet for the first hour.

Four weeks later: Denzel receives the college results letter and meets Akin at the Roller Hockey Park. He opens the letter, smiles and skates off backwards away from a still limping, walking stick holding, inwardly curious Akin. Akin sits on a level wall, pulls a letter from his back pocket and waves it at Denzel. A curious faced Denzel skates over and sits a metre away from Akin. Akin passes his letter to Denzel, who reciprocates. There is a long silence and occasional glance. Akin stands and begins to apologise for his state-side behaviour, Denzel nods in acknowledgement, stands, pushes out a clenched fist, they fist pump. Denzel skates off. Akin hold both scholarship invitation letters and limps back to the bus stop.