

Isthmus * The Daily Page * April 4, 2002 * Going Out

For starters

The 2002 Wisconsin Film Festival features a strong opening night

This year's Wisconsin Film Festival runs April 4-7, and I thought I'd jump the gun by reviewing films that will screen on opening night.

Rocks with Wings (Bartell Community Theatre, 7 p.m.): Anyone who likes 1) women's basketball, 2) women's sports, 3) sports or 4) stories about people who overcome adversity and fulfill dreams they barely knew they had will want to check out this inspiring documentary. Director Rick Derby spent over a decade tracking the Lady Chieftains, whose home court is located in the small Navajo town of Shiprock, N.M. Perennially beaten by the nearby Kirtland Broncos (Kirtland being a primarily Anglo community), the Lady Chieftains saw their fortunes rise upon the arrival of Jerry Richardson, an African American coach whose favorite word was "discipline."

Not just one but three state championships followed, but as *Rocks with Wings* makes excruciatingly clear, it wasn't easy. Drugs and alcohol, those twin demons of reservation life, had to be exorcised, and Richardson's Fab Fives were so used to their third-class status that they had to be taught how to look him in the eye. The documentary also suggests that Richardson, who'd used sports to pull himself out of poverty, had a few things to learn about dealing with 1) women, 2) Navajo women and 3) Navajo women who kick ass on a basketball court.

Reviewed by Kent Williams