

# 12 Mighty Orphans

*12 Mighty Orphans* is a 2021 American sports film which was directed by Ty Roberts from a screenplay by Roberts, Lane Garrison and Kevin Meyer. It is based upon the non-fiction book *Twelve Mighty Orphans: The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football* by Jim Dent. The book is based on the Masonic School for Orphans in Fort Worth, Texas.<sup>[2]</sup>

The film stars Luke Wilson, Vinessa Shaw, Wayne Knight, Jake Austin Walker, Jacob Lofland, Levi Dylan, Robert Duvall and Martin Sheen. The film was released in the United States on June 11, 2021 by Sony Pictures Classics. It received mixed reviews from critics.

## Plot

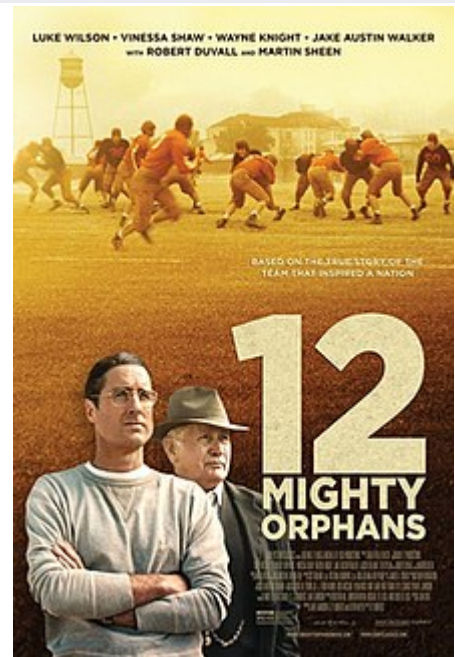
The true story of the Mighty Mites, the football team of a Fort Worth orphanage who, during the Great Depression, went from playing without shoes, or even a football, to playing for the Texas state championships. Over the course of their winning season, these underdogs and their resilient spirit became an inspiration to their city, state, and an entire nation in need of a rebound, even catching the attention of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The architect of their success was Rusty Russell, a legendary high school coach who shocked his colleagues by giving up a privileged position so he could teach and coach at an orphanage. Few knew Rusty's secret: that he himself was an orphan. Recognizing that his scrawny players could not beat the other teams with brawn, Rusty developed innovative strategies that would come to define modern football.

## Cast

- Luke Wilson as Rusty Russell
- Martin Sheen as Doc E.P. Hall
- Robert Duvall as Mason Hawk
- Vinessa Shaw as Juanita Russell
- Wayne Knight as Frank Wynn
- Jake Austin Walker as Hardy Brown
- Treat Williams as Amon Carter
- Carlson Young as Annie
- Natasha Bassett as Opal
- Jacob Lofland as Snoggs

### 12 mighty orphans



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	Ty Roberts
<b>Screenplay by</b>	Ty Roberts <p><u>Lane Garrison</u></p> <p><u>Kevin Meyer</u></p>
<b>Based on</b>	<i>Twelve Mighty Orphans: The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football</i> by <u>Jim Dent</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	Houston Hill <p>Angelique De Luca</p> <p><u>Michael De Luca</u></p> <p>Brinton Bryan</p>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Luke Wilson</u> <p><u>Vinessa Shaw</u></p> <p><u>Wayne Knight</u></p>

- [Lane Garrison](#) as Luther
- [Scott Haze](#) as Rodney Kidd
- [Kelly Frye](#) as Mary Jane
- [Sampley Barinaga](#) as Chicken
- [Levi Dylan](#) as Fairbanks
- [Slade Monroe](#) as Wheatie
- [Heath Freeman](#) as Coach Cox
- [Lucy Faust](#) as Wanda

## Production

[Principal photography](#) initially took place for seven weeks from October 7 to November 25, 2019 in [Weatherford](#),<sup>[3]</sup> [Cleburne](#),<sup>[4]</sup> and [Fort Worth, Texas](#).<sup>[5][6][7][8][9][10]</sup> It is based on the non fiction book of the same name by [Jim Dent](#).<sup>[11][12][13]</sup> [Alice Eve](#) was initially attached to the project early in the development, but dropped out for unknown reasons shortly afterwards.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Release

[Sony Pictures Classics](#) acquired worldwide distribution rights to the film in January 2021, five months pending the official release.<sup>[15]</sup> It was released in a [limited release](#) on June 11, 2021 which was followed by a [wide expansion](#) one week later on June 18, 2021.<sup>[16][17]</sup> The film was released theatrically in the [United Kingdom](#) three months later on September 17, 2021.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Reception

### Box office

In its opening weekend the film made \$251,569 from 132 theatres. It expanded to 1,047 theatres the following weekend, making an estimated \$870,000 and finishing in eighth place at the box office.<sup>[19]</sup>

### Critical response

On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film holds an approval rating of 63% based on 89 reviews with an average rating of 6/10. The site's critics consensus reads: "*12 Mighty Orphans* will rouse faithful fans of old fashioned inspirational sports dramas, but the target audience has seen this sort of thing done more effectively before."<sup>[20]</sup> On [Metacritic](#), the film has a weighted average score of 44 out of 100 based reviews from 14 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".<sup>[21]</sup> Audiences surveyed by [PostTrak](#) gave the film an 80% positive score, with 75% saying they would definitely recommend it.<sup>[19]</sup>

	<div><a href="#">Jake Austin Walker</a></div> <div><a href="#">Jacob Lofland</a></div> <div><a href="#">Levi Dylan</a></div> <div><a href="#">Robert Duvall</a></div> <div><a href="#">Martin Sheen</a></div>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<div>David McFarland</div>
<b>Edited by</b>	<div>James K. Crouch</div>
<b>Music by</b>	<div>Mark Orton</div>
<b>Production companies</b>	<div>Greenbelt Films</div> <div><a href="#">Michael De Luca Productions</a></div> <div>Santa Rita Film Co.</div> <div>12 Productions</div>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<div><a href="#">Sony Pictures Classics</a></div>
<b>Release date</b>	<div>June 11, 2021</div>
<b>Running time</b>	<div>118 minutes</div>
<b>Country</b>	<div>United States</div>
<b>Language</b>	<div>English</div>
<b>Box office</b>	<div>\$3.7 million<sup>[1]</sup></div>

Peter Debruge of *Variety* called it "Square but satisfying" and said "sometimes they do make 'em like they used to."<sup>[22]</sup>

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## External links

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- *12 Mighty Orphans* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8482584/>) at IMDb
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