

'Less than Zero' lives up to title

Richard Smith
Cinema

It's film-of-the-book time again, folks, but this time we're really in trouble. Anyone who has read Bret Easton Ellis' bestseller "Less Than Zero" will know that it doesn't lend itself easily to a mass teen audience. Indeed, it is arguable whether there is a movie in it at all.

The book, which many say is controversial, is strong on stream-of-consciousness, drug abuse and child rape, but it is perhaps lacking a captivating story line and often cajoles the reader into the state of lethargy that Ellis purports that our friends in Beverly Hills experience on a large scale.

"Hey, no problem," one can almost hear the scriptwriters saying. "Stick in our own plot, bring in a bevy of Brat Packers, slap out the soundtrack, and we'll be laughing all the way to the bank." It would perhaps be too much to ask for the joke to be on them.

But guess who's in the cast? Go on, guess. We have Andrew McCarthy as Clay, the narrator of Ellis' book, who, on screen anyway, becomes a fierce anti-drugs advocate. Jami Gertz is his coke-snorting girlfriend Blair, who miraculously spurns drugs in the 79th minute ("Call the plumber," she exclaims to amazed onlookers as she pours cocaine down the sink). And there's Robert Downey Jr. as Julian Wells, the guy with such promise for whom everything goes wrong, and he consequently gets as heavily into debt as he does into drugs. James Spader plays — great name this is — Rip, who is Downey's evil reckoner.

So does this degenerate into "The Pick-Up Artist Meets Pretty In Pink"? Not quite, but it's close. Based on such a "controversial" novel, the film has to say something, and one can give it points for trying, though it is undeniably caught in the no man's land between mass teen appeal and a more serious adult approach. One could call it the Brat Pack Sound-track syndrome, but that would be unfair, and it would also be wrong to discard the performance of these teen idols. These kids, though certainly lacking good scripts, are not without talent, and they no doubt find the Brat Pack label somewhat limiting.

Downey, for instance, is emerging as a fine young actor of considerable charm. As Julian he lies well, his highs are believable,

and he cries quite effectively, too. McCarthy undoubtedly has the eyes to be a dispirited do-gooder who only wants true love and people to be happy, though his voice, a few octaves too high, is nothing short of annoying (short being the operative word. Or is it that Gertz is too tall?). And Spader is developing his bad guy very nicely. But they are all roles they've played before in one form or other, and if they play them again, an awful lot of screaming will be in order.

There are problems with this movie going for the teenage audience. The film, rather than concentrating on the book's vivid picture of almost total degeneracy among the post-high school youth of Beverly Hills, delivers more of a "for heaven's sake just say no" message and rejects the book's more disturbing images (the controversial child rape scene is, inevitably, nowhere to be seen). McCarthy and Gertz, most unlike their counterparts in the book, are knights in shining armor trying to rescue their old buddy Julian from an early death at the hands of cocaine, supplied with great glee by Rip and his bearded friend Bill. It is difficult to care whether or not our good guys are successful when it all seems so trivial.

"Less Than Zero" could have been a good film if a few risks had been taken. Not compromising the powerful, candid nature of the book would have been a start, and it would have been an ideal showcase for new talent. Instead, this is a dismally limp movie that, rather than furthering the careers of its stars, digs their rut even deeper. Its only redeeming feature is Edward Lachman's photography, with its unusual camera angles and splendid use of color, it is bordering on the adventurous, and it occasionally displays the surrealistic nature of Ellis' book.

If you have read and liked "Less Than Zero" and want to see this film, prepare to be disappointed. And if you don't care much for books and just have the hots for McCarthy, apart from a brief glimpse of his bare bottom (blink and you'll miss it), you could be disappointed, too.

By JAMES SUROWIECKI
Sports Editor

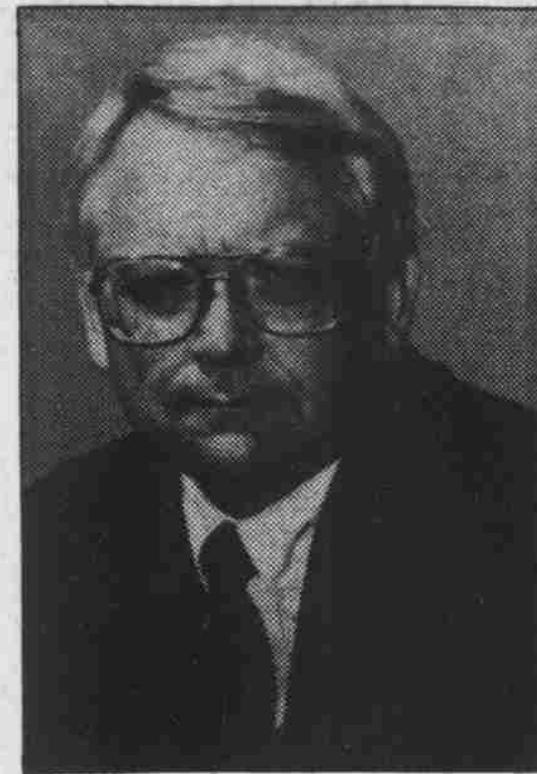
It was another in a long series of press conferences for UNC football coach Dick Crum Tuesday, and Crum apparently plans to be around for many more. The coach surprisingly responded to repeated criticism of him by both fans and by members of the media, and made clear that he wants to be exactly where he is.

Crum dismissed the idea that he needs to win a certain number of games in order to keep his job as a creation of the press. He also, if not in so many words, expressed similar sentiments about the description of contests like last Saturday's UNC-Clemson matchup as games he had to win in order to keep his job.

Crum seemed comfortable with his stance, and accepted the seemingly endless criticism of him as simply a part of the position.

"That's what the head coach is supposed to do is take the heat," he said. "Listen, when the team's going good, it's because of the players, and I really believe that. But when things go badly, the press is going to get after you, and there's nothing I can do about it."

Except for the momentary flash of



Dick Crum

emotion, though, Tuesday's press conference was again characterized by a desultory mood, with too many reporters who were either too wary or too uninterested to ask questions.

But Crum did have some thoughts on UNC's heartbreaking 13-10 loss to Clemson. "You play that hard and invest that much and you come up

short, it's very disappointing," Crum said while warning of the possibility of a letdown this Saturday against Virginia. "When you play well and you lose, it's frustrating. But you got to keep in mind that we played a very good football team."

The bespectacled coach, clad in his usual blue blazer, expressed discontent with the officiating in the Clemson game, particularly during the Tigers' final drive, when an official stopped play three times because of an allegedly loud crowd, and finally warned Crum that a timeout would be taken from the Tar Heels if the noise continued.

"The referee took it upon himself to stop the clock because of the noise," Crum said. "That's a little more influence over the game than we'd like to see. And you know that crowd noise wasn't even close to what it is at Clemson."

Crum emphasized that the fan support was much appreciated, and threw in one of his familiar plugs for Carolina Fever.

"I hope we set a standard that it will be like that every week," he said of the Pacific Kenan Stadium crowd. "I don't want to see that go because one official decided to take (quieting

the fans) into his own hands."

Clemson was a major topic of discussion, and Crum had some interesting reflections on the tactical manipulations of Tiger coach Danny Ford during the final drive, which consumed seven minutes and set up David Treadwell's winning 30-yard field goal.

"It was a very intelligent drive," Crum said, and then spoke of the drive's key play, a fourth-and-two that became a first down thanks to an option pitch from Clemson quarterback Rodney Williams to tailback Terry Allen.

"They brought in two tight ends and a wingback and we called our defense based on that," Crum said. "They took a timeout and took the tight ends and the wingback out and brought three wide receivers in. But it's tough to know who's in until they come out of the huddle. They caught us in a defense we didn't want to be in."

Crum also spoke of the upcoming Virginia game, but the conference was dominated by the Tar Heels' past, which seems rather ironic. Crum, after all, very much plans to be part of UNC's future.

Swimmers crush Nittany Lions in home dual meet

From staff reports

North Carolina's 12th-ranked women's swim team hosted unranked Penn State Saturday in Koury Natatorium and came away with a 165-103 victory.

In the individual events, three Tar Heels were two-time winners. Freshmen Hannah Turlish (200-yard freestyle, 5:00 free) and Heather Nottingham (100 breaststroke, 2:00 breaststroke) were double victors, as was UNC junior swimmer Kim Beattie, who captured the 50- and 100-yard freestyle events.

Beattie also anchored two victorious North Carolina relay teams in the 400 medley and the 400 freestyle.

In the first race, Beattie was joined by senior Susan O'Brien, junior Wendy Powers and freshman Devon Hynde. In the meet finale, Beattie's teammates were junior Wendy Powers, freshman Jill Benda and Turlish.

Other UNC event winners were freshman Staci Sawyer (1,000 freestyle), freshman Karin Andren (200 back) and O'Brien (100 back).

The Tar Heel women's diving team didn't fare quite as well Saturday as the swimmers. Senior Erika Schmidt placed second in both the 1-meter and 3-meter events. Senior Jeannie Crabbe came in fifth and sixth in the 1- and 3-meter dives, respectively.

Koll, Welch and Catullo pin down wrestling titles

From staff reports

NORFOLK, Va. — The UNC wrestling team appears to be well on its way to another fine season. The squad, which challenged nationally last year, won three individual championships at the Eastern Regionals Saturday, and while team scores weren't recorded, the Tar Heels probably would have won the team title as well.

Three-time All-American Rob Koll led the way for the Tar Heels as he swept to his fourth straight title at the event. Koll racked up two pins, two technical falls and a superior decision for a 5-0 mark on the day

at the 167-pound class. The senior has now won an individual title at the Eastern Nationals each of his four years at UNC.

John Welch took the 134 weight class with one pin and a major decision on the way to a 5-0 record. Enzo Catullo had a pin and two major decisions en route to winning the 142 weight class. Senior All-American Lenny Bernstein took third in the 150-pound event.

The Tar Heels will host an all-day clinic Saturday at Reynolds High School in Winston-Salem prior to their annual Blue/White match there at 7:30 p.m.

Bedrosian squeaks past Sutcliffe for Cy Young

From Associated Press reports
NEW YORK — Philadelphia

reliever Steve Bedrosian, who led the major leagues with 40 saves, won the National League Cy Young Award Tuesday by the slimmest margin in the award's history.

Bedrosian, who set a major-league record with saves in 13 consecutive appearances, edged Rick Sutcliffe of Chicago 57-55 in voting by the Baseball Writers Association of America. Rick Reuschel, who played for Pittsburgh and San Francisco, finished one point behind Sutcliffe in third place.

The closest election prior to this year was in 1981, when Fernando Valenzuela of Los Angeles, then a rookie, beat Tom Seaver of Cincinnati by three points.

Bedrosian is the third reliever to win the NL Cy Young Award since the leagues started giving out separate honors in 1967. Bruce Sutter of Chicago won in 1979, while Mike Marshall of Los Angeles was honored in 1974.

Women's Swimming

1. Texas	390
(tie) Stanford	390
3. Florida	350
4. California	328
5. Arizona State	325
6. Clemson	296
7. Georgia	258
8. Southern California	241
9. UCLA	235
10. LSU	222
11. Michigan	213
12. North Carolina	168
(tie) Tennessee	168
14. South Carolina	149
15. Ohio State	100
16. Alabama	69
17. Nebraska	57
(tie) Arizona	57
19. Virginia	50
20. Minnesota	41

Men's Swimming

1. Texas	390
2. Stanford	386
3. Southern California	350
4. Florida	330
(tie) California	330
6. Michigan	300
7. UCLA	250
8. Arizona State	241
9. Iowa	220
10. Alabama	209
11. LSU	207
12. Tennessee	174
13. Arizona	168
14. South Carolina	155
15. Arkansas	105
16. Southern Illinois	89
17. Auburn	81
18. Nebraska	73
19. Princeton	50
20. Wisconsin	38

ISAA Men's Top 20

1. Indiana (23)	18-2	358
2. South Carolina (1)	15-1-3	330
3. Virginia	16-2-2	290
4. Harvard	12-0-2	282
5. Southern Methodist	13-3-1	270
6. Rutgers	17-3-2	232
7. Duke	13-4-1	221
8. North Carolina	17-4	193
9. UCLA	13-6-1	175
10. Seton Hall	14-3-1	134
11. Adelphi	13-3-2	119
12. UNLV	13-5	92
13. George Mason	13-4-3	51
14. Evansville	16-7	40
15. San Francisco	14-4-3	34
16. Connecticut	13-6-3	30
17. St. Louis	12-6-4	28
18. N.C. State	13-5-2	17

ISAA Women's Top 20

1. North Carolina (14)	20-0-1	224
2. Massachusetts	18-1	206
3. Cal-Berkeley (1)	15-0	196
4. N.C. State	17-3-1	176
5. Colorado College	15-2-1	168
6. Connecticut	14-4-3	142
7. Central Florida	10-4	133
8. William & Mary	9-6-3	103
9. Barry	13-2-1	101
10. Cal-Santa Barbara	10-3-1	98
11. Virginia	13-6-1	69
12. Rutgers	12-5	68
13. Wisconsin-Madison	13-3-1	53
14. Cornell	11-2-2	30
15. George Mason	10-8-1	21
16. Cal-Santa Clara	8-4-2	6
17. Cal State-Dominique Hills	13-4-1	3
(tie) Brown	7-7-2	3

Fighting Irish ready for fearsome end of season

From Associated Press reports

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame finds itself staring down the barrel of a season-ending schedule that could dampen the good feeling stemming from the Irish's continued climb in the Associated Press college football poll.

Notre Dame vaulted from ninth to seventh in the rankings announced Tuesday after rallying to beat Boston College 32-25 Saturday.

UCLA, Syracuse and Georgia joined the Irish in moving up two places while Oklahoma, Nebraska, Miami and Florida State again held on to the first four positions.

The Irish, 7-1, face a final three games that will test the talents of coach Lou Holtz and top players such as All-American flanker Tim Brown.

"We've talked all season about the difficulty of these last three games against Alabama, Penn State and Miami," Holtz said. "But if you're a good football team, you should be prepared at

this point in the season for teams of that caliber. It's an old cliché, but people remember what you do in November."

AP Top 20

1. Oklahoma (36)	9-0	1,164
2. Nebraska (15)	9-0	1,137
3. Miami, Fla. (9)	7-0	1,111
4. Florida State	8-1	1,021
5. UCLA	8-1	943
6. Syracuse	9-0	902
7. Notre Dame	7-1	856
8. Georgia	7-2	694
9. Clemson	8-1	646
10. LSU	7-1-1	632
11. Alabama	7-2	617
12. Auburn	7-1-1	567
13. Michigan State	6-2-1	460
14. South Carolina	6-2	450
15. Penn State	7-2	328
16. Indiana	7-2	301
17. Oklahoma State	7-2	258
18. Tennessee	6-2-1	166
19. Texas A&M	6-2	114
20. Arkansas	6-2	58

Others receiving votes: Iowa 37, Florida 31, Southern Cal 24, Wyoming 23, Arizona State 16, Eastern Michigan 15.

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