“Coach Jake” Documentary Tells Story of Addiction, Hepatitis C and Recovery [VIDEO]

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Coach Jake, a new documentary about the passionate and imperfect coach of New York City’s Martin Luther King High School soccer team is currently making its way across the U.S. festival circuit. The film follows Martin “Coach Jake” Jacobson, a former heroin addict now living with hepatitis C virus (HCV), who shares his story of redemption, recovery and championship, Empire of Soccer reports.

Directed by Ian Phillips, the film premiered last week in New York City as part of the Urban World Film Festival. A project about triumphs, the movie follows the lives of both Jacobson, a guidance counselor at MLK High School, and those of the diverse members of the soccer team he coaches, many of whom journeyed to the United States as immigrants from West Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

Jacobson’s own journey began in 1994, when he took over the school’s down-and-out soccer team and ultimately helped to weave 16 citywide championship teams as its leader. The film also tells of Jacobson’s redemption and fulfillment through his team, and how he overcame drug addiction and became an unstoppable soccer coach. The star coach with a long legacy of victories now faces down cirrhosis of the liver.

Jacobson is not only known for being a soccer coach, though –– he is also admired in his community for his commitment to social justice and serving underprivileged youth. According to a 2007 New York Times feature, Jacobson has helped several players get housing in city group home, green cards, college scholarships and professional league positions, all despite the fact that MLK has no soccer field.

Coach Jake will be screened at the Heartland Film Festival in Indianapolis on October 13 and 15; the Bushwick Film Festival in Brooklyn, New York, on October 15; and the Yonkers Film Festival in Yonkers, New York, on November 4 and 5.

Watch the full trailer below:

COACH JAKE: A Film by Ian Phillips - Full Length Trailer from Ian Phillips on Vimeo.

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