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Producers calling upon high schools to fill stands for film

Toting truckloads of microphones, cameras and lights, a group of moviemakers have descended upon John O'Donnell Stadium in a swarm. While coordinating fans, actors and extras, they collect the sounds and pictures that soon will appear on the silver screen.

This week, they're calling out to Quad-Cities area high schools for help.

Over the weekend about 300 fans speckled the stadium seats to cheer on the movie version of the Swing of the Quad Cities as they battled a myriad of fictitious foes with familiar team names ranging from the Bettendorf Bulldogs to the Clinton LumberKings.

However, more fans are needed to fill the seats this week, and Single A Films is offering prize money to the area high schools that bring the most students, faculty and alumni to the ballpark for shooting Tuesday at 4:30 p.m., Thursday at 6 p.m. and Friday at 8 p.m.

The most-heavily represented school will be given \$500 toward its student activities fund. The second-most represented school will receive \$250 and the third-most, \$100. In addition, each fan that is in attendance for the entire shooting on all three days will receive \$100 at the end of the day Friday.

Prizes also will be raffled off, and T-shirts will be given away to a certain number of fans each day. Extras were treated to a fireworks display both Saturday and Sunday, and it's possible another display will be put on during the week.

This yet-untitled baseball movie centers on a fictional Dominican baseball player named Miguel "Sugar" Santos who, after watching Field of Dreams, is inspired to make his way into minor league baseball. He lands in Iowa to play for the Swing of the Quad Cities.

During production this weekend, the Swing mixed it up with the Bulldogs, LumberKings and the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers. All teams are made up of extras who hail from as far away as Chicago and as close to home as Davenport.

Shooting already is complete in the Dominican Republic and Burlington, Iowa. When shooting concludes in Davenport on Friday, the crew will pack up and fly to Arizona to continue production.

One of the film's producers, Jeremy Kipp Walker, who was a co-producer for "Half Nelson," said the hopeful name of the movie is "Sugar," but it officially remains yet untitled, because the name still needs to be researched for previous copyrights.

"It's a really arduous task," he said.

Kipp Walker also worked on the film "Maria Full of Grace." Both "Half Nelson" and "Maria Full of Grace" earned Academy Award nominations for acting.