

Nike

'Rules'

INTRODUCTION

Football, for all its beauty as a sport, is defined by refined etiquette and strict rules developed over the course of more than a century. It's designed to be played within these defined parameters, on a specific pitch, with specific dimensions, for a specific duration, with a specific number of players on each side.

This film captures the game as its truly played by the stars of tomorrow, the kids in the streets, in barren lands, in the inner cities. Their relentless passion and love for the sport, and that spirit of playing football at all costs. When things aren't perfect, you try harder, you'll go to any lengths, and always find a way. This is the real game for many, and I want to celebrate it.

Forget following rules. It's about breaking them. That's where we're heading, where anything and everything goes.

APPROACH

We'll hear a voice dictating the acceptable rules of football, each line, a by-the-book do's and don'ts land on shots of homespun incarnations played by these kids in their neighborhoods all over the world, that don't comply.

We watch striking, graphic, passionate, and fun moments where these kids are clearly challenging this 'wisdom', making it up as they go along, doing things their own way. Juxtaposing each rule with a clear violation that captures the real spirit of the game, in a more lighthearted and entertaining way. But It's not necessarily the opposite of the word that we will see, sometimes it can just be a different interpretation of the sentiment.

This is not your typical street-ball footage. We've all seen that before. Let's elevate, and subvert. Lets challenge expectations. I will create moments that will grab people by their senses of wonder and won't let go. Lets flip the rules of filmmaking while creating amazing, heartfelt visuals. Let's create an electrifying patchwork of imagery, that stays embedded in you psyche long after – epic sweeping scenes, macro details, graphic action shots, gritty intimate moments all crafted and woven together to show the impact this game has on the lives of so many, and how it unites everyone, where for that one moment, regardless of who you are and where you're from, everyone is equal.

Every aspect of these scenes will feel real. We can't trick the youth. Casting, locations, camerawork, lighting and sound design will combine to create this feeling of authenticity. It's

what I do. Every moment with these kids will feel as though we just dropped into their world for that moment. Their sense of freedom and love of the game will at times feel spontaneous, at other times come with attitude and full awareness of the observer, and the cameras filming them, wanting the attention, and wanting to impress. Ultimately, it's this human touch I'll bring that will really make this film stand out.

CAST

Diversity is crucial to making it feel truly global. Whether we shoot in one country or city, we'll discover and find the right cast to give us the diverse ethnic makeup that we need.

It's about discovering these authentic kids who can really play. We'll cast the net wide. We'll search for real kids through traditional casting methods, but also find them through street casting, and even scouring YouTube and social media - leaving no stone unturned in finding talent from all over the world. I have a strong awareness of youth culture, so I'll work to find alternative soccer subcultures worldwide and celebrate those kids who love to play the game on their own terms, that have the attitude, passion and irreverence we need.

Beyond skills and attitude, I'll curate the cast always knowing that this is still a commercial, so no matter how much we want to keep it real we know that looks are important as well. These kids aren't models – but they look good, look cool, feel approachable, and have a uniqueness that elevates the film. They'll feel natural in front of the camera. They'll act themselves, rather than forcing them into a mold. I want to empower these kids, and encourage them to let go. I want to capture who they really are, and cut through the layers. I want to grab authentic interactions between these kids. I often cast groups of real friends who have a history together. The inside jokes, affection and camaraderie, and the chemistry is something you can never recreate.

I always work to build a rapport with these kids on set to make them feel as comfortable as possible. I create real situations, and moments where they actually forget that it's a shoot. Set up a real game perhaps to help the natural chemistry flow. Have a crowd off screen cheering a kid on his own, or blast sounds of a real stadium crowd at them for encouragement. I also love to stay open to moments of spontaneity, and look for that potential in people when casting. Who has that spark, and how do I get it to shine on the day.

LOOK & FEEL

To accurately capture these kids, we need to create a look that's authentic, and urgent, but also cinematic. Elegant, yet dynamic and real. The look and style of every shot is determined by the location, and action within it. There should be no single style here. I'm creating my own visual language, where various formats can be shot and pieced together.

The audience will feel exhilarated when thrown in the middle of the action, travelling hand-held with a player, or as a voyeur quietly witnessing an intimate kick about between two close friends, or the realism you feel when watching footage of an unbelievable moment captured by someone that's not a trained cameraman. I will capture the beauty and scale of these incredible locations we find, with striking aerial shots. And use abstract macro close-ups, graphic match cuts, and slow-motion moments to take in every detail of the environments and the players' skills.

I want to jump around time, shooting day and night and everything in between, as well as all types of weather conditions to reflect a true reality.

Capturing spontaneity is always important to me, so keeping the camera rolling in some instances, or deviating from the original frame in an instant is essential, allowing us to capture accidental and unexpected moments too. I carry a camera on set as much as possible. That way, I never miss a moment, always on the lookout for those random magical shots.

It's an unorthodox way of shooting, but I've always tried to break rules (even my own) which is what this film is all about. That doesn't mean that it will be a chaotic jumble - we're just creating a new paradigm. My aesthetic comes from the music video world. Knowing how to pace things through editing and style, improvising on the fly when needed and turning it into magic. This film is the perfect culmination of all of these skills.

LOCATIONS

Authentic locations are just as important as our cast and cinematography. And to feel the most grounded and real, this film needs to have true global scope and feeling. We need a variety of locations that feel international, even if we are only really filming in one country or city. We need to find locations that we can transform and double up on, to look like different places depending on which way we're looking, for efficiency and speed.

Beautiful rural locales are juxtaposed with gritty, inner city decay. By combining these urban, suburban and rural landscapes, we will create a rich tapestry of culture, architecture and natural settings, embracing the diversity of the modern age.

To accentuate this, I'm looking for unusual setups and locations that will always be surprising. Unconventional spaces that aren't immediately thought of as a place to kick a ball around. Places that have always been there, and left abandoned, but are once again brought back to life, because these kids have found a way to use them. A drained outdoor swimming pool in Italy, a shuttered waterpark in Japan, an abandoned wasteland in Spain, an underground parking garage in China etc. Always something unique - but each has to feel authentic and make sense as a space these kids actually play in, that will also reflect their unique style of play.

We'll show how inventive and rebellious young people can be. They'll break rules at any cost to play the game they love and pursue their dream.

VOICEOVER

The power the voice over has in defining the tone is huge. I like the style of voice in your rip, but I want to explore other ideas as well. I really like the possibility of using a machine-like digital voice. Not at all Hawking-like, but more something human with an authoritative power that leaves no options for variation from the rules, it's been programmed. We're so familiar with using voice assistants like Siri or Alexa, or hearing automated voices that lack any humanity, it's now part of our culture. There's something profound and also a little unnerving hearing this type of voice against images that represent uninhibited joy, and freedom. I'll experiment, and play with the type of automated voice. Something not too cold, nor too warm. Neither friendly, nor hostile. It could be the voice of benign authority. There's time for this though, so let's explore this and other options together when needed.

SOUND & MUSIC

I'm imagining a big sound-bed that reflects the different types of environments and actions.

Muddy feet stomping on a rainy field, abruptly cut with a chalk line scraped along concrete, followed by extreme close up of a foot connecting hard with a ball, a group of friends roaring with cheer, a ball then smashing through a window, cut to the silence of anticipation and tension before a goal. Sounds that constantly draw you in and out of an action depending on the perspective you're seeing it from will keep you alert and on your toes.

It will never feel haphazard. It will have a real flow, and a real purpose to building our imagery and pushing things forward with our music. I really like the Tribe Called REDD track. Whether we use this track or not, we need to make sure that there's room for our voiceover and other aspects of the sound design to break through.

THE FILM

I love the examples you guys have described, along with the rip that's really powerful. We need to make something that's so much better, that blows everyone away even more. This has to be fucking brilliant, not just good.

We already have an amazing starting point, a strong template of what it could look like. Some ideas will change, some will improve and evolve, as so many possibilities and opportunities will

present themselves when we get going in our search for locations and talent. we'll find things that we weren't expecting, things we couldn't imagine, things that will surprise and excite us.

For now, I've added some additional ideas that are aligned with yours, as well as adding some humor, and personality, that combined really capture the spirit of this piece. If the script was all we went out to shoot, we would have gold, I'm aiming higher.

Rules: 60s

We open on a graphic panning shot of the Paris cityscape. The framing is stylized, angled down a little and slightly clocked, evoking a feeling that we're going to see things a little differently here. We see several French flags hanging outside the windows of homes, as the streets are filled with that solemn silence following the aftermath of an important event.

With intent, the camera zooms towards a balcony in a distance building. The closer we get, the louder we hear the voice of a football commentator recapping the World Cup final results on the TV inside.

We see a figure holding a soccer ball walking out on the balcony. A dramatic entrance into our film, It's Ronaldinho, who flicks the ball up, keeps it up for a while and finally kicks it down out of frame. The music starts. The adventure begins.

VO: A game of football must be played on natural or artificial turf.

The ball is trapped perfectly in a small concrete courtyard. Its dark and moody. Two ADBs start playing.

We start a montage of athletes playing in every type of space imaginable, every time of day, and all weather conditions: the streets, on train platforms, in school classrooms, in parking lots, desert expanses, beaches... every scene evokes the unique style of play of the nation where it's been shot.

VO: The color of the surface must be green.

Cut to a montage of aerial shots of ADBs playing in everything but green courts. A blue floating pitch in Japan. A graffiti'd court in Uruguay. A snow-covered concrete pitch in the korobka. A desert pitch in Algeria. A rainy street in Berlin. A an outdoor basketball court in the Bronx.

VO: The field of play must be rectangular and marked with lines.

...aerial shot of an old dilapidated pitch covered entirely in lines, years of repainting, and switched sports, all faded, never removed. Another aerial shot of a triangular pitch wedged

between three diagonal high-rises in China. Another of a small, 4x4 octagonal outdoor cage pitch in an inner city.

Then we cut to a group of ADBs playing in a moving train car. The kids are in school uniform on their way to school. A passenger reading a WC article titled '*WHO WILL COME NEXT?*' lowers his newspaper to check out all the noise. The camera pulls out of the car and drifts underneath the bridge...

VO: The goalposts and crossbar must be made of wood, metal or other approved material.

...revealing an ADB spray painting a goal on a wall beneath the bridge. As he finishes the right "post" we match cut to someone putting a cone down to mark another "post" and begin a montage of hyper-local post alternatives: fruit crates, bricks, sweaters, trash cans, snowdrift, chairs, tires, a stack of wood on fire at night...

Cut to a kid practicing against a wall in an alley, the narrow goal a plastic milk crate... he's trying to reenact NJR elastico from the WC semi-final (or any other iconic moves from the WC)...

VO: A game is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players nor fewer than seven.

Cut to Marcus Rashford in Manchester playing alone against a group of kids...

Cut to a hectic game of 4 on 4 in the outdoor cage we glimpsed earlier....

Cut to two kids playing keepaway from a dog, perfecting their handling skills at the risk of losing their ball...

VO: Each game is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the rules of the game.

Cut to a group of kids playing on a rocky patch in a favela, a kid plays ref from a neighboring rooftop whistling and shouting – he plucks a piece of red clothing from a drying line, holds it up as a 'red card' - kicking out one of his friends who goes nuts in anger.

Cut to the same two athletes who had been playing keepaway with the dog. They're now trying to retrieve the ball from the dog... who guards it fiercely.

VO: A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line.

A kid punts the ball hard, sending it high over a fence far away, his friends react knowing they've lost the ball, then a quick series of shots: a ball smashes into a chair used as a post,

smashes into the stack of burning wood, a ball dents the drywall inside a house, a ball bangs on the window of a moving car causing the driver to slam on the brakes, a ball bounces off a guy's head on the sideline with his eyes off the game for a second.

Two ADBs in front of a rugged, empty goal. One shoots with precision, intentionally hitting the crossbar, then as the structure collapses, he celebrates...

VO: While it is permissible for a player to demonstrate joy, the celebration must not be excessive.

Cut to montage of ADBs re-enacting the most savage World Cup celebrations, against the sound of stadium cheer. **LETS LIST A FEW FAMOUS ONES.** End with Aubameyang in his room choosing amongst his secret collection of celebration masks...

VO: The team scoring the greater number of goals is the winner.

Cut back to that kid pretending to be Neymar in the alley - a rapid series of shots showing time passing as he keeps missing the narrow plastic milk crate goal... frustrating, but determined, he's getting closer...

An ADB and his friends try trick shots that land their balls in a distant trashcan, one after the other.

Cut to an ADB as he brutally nutmegs his mate as they walk off the pitch, his friends watching this go mental...

VO: The match lasts two equal periods, unless otherwise agreed between the referee and the teams.

A man taking the Brazil (or nation that wins the WC) flag off his balcony at night in the rain.

Below in the alley, we see the same ADB we've been watching throughout, still trying to reenact NJR elastico from the WC semi-final - attempting to land the ball in the milk crate. Only now, still not giving up, its dark and he's using his scooter lights to illuminate the space around him in the falling rain. He fails his attempt. The camera drifts towards him. He tries and fails again as the rain soaks him.

The camera is now even closer on him as he tries the trick again and finally nails it! The ball perfectly connects to his new Phantom boot and lands in the milk crate 'goal'. He stares in mute disbelief as we -

Cut to a wide aerial of the city, and match cut various other cities from the same height, and same frame, where we see kids playing soccer all over in the middle of the night.

SUPER: On to the next ones

JUST DO IT

SWOOSH

THANK YOU

This film is going to be an amazing exhibition of the free-spirited joy that kids all over the world get from playing this beautiful game, at all odds.

Everything expected and typical in sports films will be thrown out the window as we show how the new school is rising to displace the old. The juxtaposition between the two couldn't be more clear... or more exhilarating to watch.

Breaking rules is what life is about. The personal journeys we go on because of them. Our relationship with them, and the power of expression. Rules aren't always broken from a need to be different, anarchic, or to stand out. Sometimes it's out of necessity. A struggle, a hardship, or a lack of simple things. Sometimes it's from feeling held back, and needing to release. Breaking the mold, bending the rules, and stepping out of the strict lines boxing us in, is when creativity, imagination, and magic can all happen. These kids will remind us of that again.

Let's make this epic together.