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# Eddie the Eagle was worried film would turn him into 'object of ridicule'

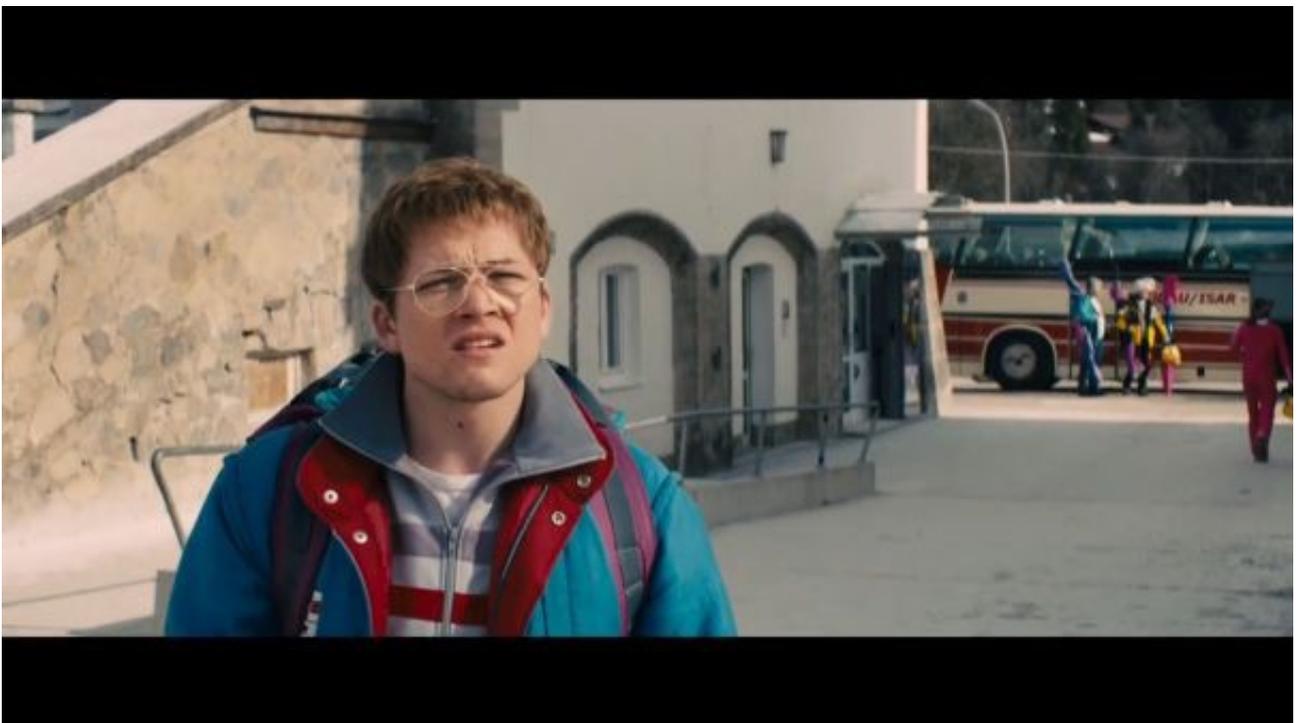
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*Eddie the Eagle soared to fame when he finished last at the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988*

The real Eddie the Eagle was initially worried that the film based on his 1988 Olympic bid could turn him into an "object of ridicule"

Unlikely British Olympic ski jumper Michael "Eddie" Edwards is played by Taron Egerton in *Eddie the Eagle*, while Hugh Jackman stars as his reluctant, heavy-drinking fictional coach Bronson Peary.



**Video: Fly, Eddie, fly! Hugh Jackman helps 'Eddie the Eagle' soar in first trailer**

**source: LionsgateFilmsUK**

Edwards soared to fame when he finished last at the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988. He attracted huge public support for his unorthodox approach and determination to succeed against all odds.

Appearing on the red carpet in London's Leicester Square, Edwards pulled Egerton and Jackman in for a hug.

He told the Press Association: "I was worried that they would either turn me into some sort of superhero, or worse - an object of ridicule, a clown, a joke, but they've done a fantastic job.

"And they kept the heart, the essence and the spirit of the story just right. And I'm so proud of what they've done. I cry every time I see the film, it's just brilliant."

He added: " I never thought, 28 years ago, that 28 years later they would be making a feature film about my life."

Edwards, 52, also heaped praise on Egerton, 26 - even offering him skiing lessons.

"Taron plays me so well, he's got my mannerisms, my accent, he looked just like me - with the moustache, the jaw, the glasses, the hair," he said.

"I met him at Pinewood Studios about a month before filming and we sat down and had a chat about my life, and he wanted to get my accent and mannerisms. And I didn't know whether he could ski or not. But he can ski a little bit, enough to make the film genuine.

"He did a great job - I'll have to teach him to ski a bit better though."

However, Egerton is not planning on taking up ski jumping any time soon, as the winter sport is famously dangerous.

"Not a chance. You've got to be crazy," he said.

Jackman, 47, joked that he had already pursued a career as a ski jumper:

"I've retired. I used to do a lot of it. It's really dangerous, I've broken a lot of bones, I don't like to talk about it."

On playing the role of often-taciturn coach Bronson, he said: " I loved the friendship in the middle of this, these two opposites who bring out the best in each other.

"But it's a really good feelgood movie. I've got kids, I'm really thrilled to do a movie that I can take my kids to and that they love, and it's got a great message that you don't have to win to be a winner in life."

Jackman has two children, Oscar and Ava.

Explaining the film's appeal, he said: " We've all felt like underdogs at some point, or are feeling like underdogs, in some area of our life at some point.

"Because if you take on anything challenging, there's always a little bit of self-doubt: can I pull this off?

"And I think that's why we love seeing these stories, to watch someone who did it, and also who did it with such fun and charisma and positivity."

The film's director, Dexter Fletcher, said Edwards' story was inspirational because "he always kept on believing in himself".

"I think that Eddie is inspirational in that he's someone who just never gave up on his dream," he explained.

"He always kept on believing in himself. And that's sometimes very hard - we tried to communicate in the film just how difficult that was for him, but he never did give up ...

"He keeps on trying. He falls over, he hurts himself, but he keeps going."

A pivotal scene in the film involves Jackman's character being punched by Rune Temte, who plays Norwegian ski jumping coach Bjorn.

On filming the punch, Temte said: " You have to make sure you don't hit his nose. Because it costs too much money if you hurt a movie star.

"But he's very gentle, he makes me relax. It was good. We did it a couple of times."

The Norwegian actor continued: " In Norway, we love Eddie Edwards from the 80s, so for me it was like - 'Oh wow, I'll be in a movie based on his life!'

"They loved him then, they love him now. As someone who, against all odds, can actually succeed. I think it's an important story to tell today. Done in a very nice, feelgood British way."

Tim McInnerny, who plays sports commentator Dustin Target, highlighted Edwards' struggle against those who tried to stop his Olympic attempt.

He said: "Obviously the sporting element was very important, but I think it's as much about the little man against the figures of authority, who want to keep him down - it's a very British kind of obsession we have, especially with class. And I'm glad we do."

The film sees McInnerny don a wig to recreate an 80s-style hairdo - which was actually a tribute to one of the world's most famous commentators.

" I loved my wig," he said. "My wig was a tribute to Terry Wogan, and now it has actually turned into a tribute to Terry Wogan, because he's sadly no longer with us."

:: Eddie The Eagle will be released in cinemas on April 1.