

# KCFF

## KINGSTON CANADIAN FILM FESTIVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### In Hockey's Birthplace, *Youngblood* Opens the 26<sup>th</sup> Kingston Canadian Film Festival

– Full lineup for the world's largest all-Canadian filmfest to be announced Jan. 28 –

**KINGSTON, ON (January 21, 2026)** – In a city long recognized for its [foundational role](#) in the history of hockey, a reimagined hockey story takes centre ice at the 2026 Kingston Canadian Film Festival (KCFF). [Youngblood](#) has been selected as the Gala Opening Night presentation at Canada's premier festival devoted exclusively to Canadian film and culture, it was announced today. Screening **Wednesday, February 25** at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, *Youngblood* kicks off the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival, running through Sunday, March 1. [KCFF's](#) full festival lineup will be announced on January 28.

Directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker [Hubert Davis](#) and starring Ashton James and Blair Underwood, *Youngblood* is a spirited reframing of the classic 1980s hockey drama that featured Patrick Swayze, Rob Lowe and Keanu Reeves. James plays Dean Youngblood, a young, Black Canadian hockey prodigy navigating elite competition on the road to the NHL, alongside the racial and cultural pressures existing within the sport. In an era when conversations around inclusion, representation, and access in hockey are increasingly prominent, *Youngblood* feels both timely and necessary—re-examining a familiar Canadian tale through a new lens.



Ashton James stars in Hubert Davis's *Youngblood*, opening the 26<sup>th</sup> Kingston Canadian Film Festival

“To premiere *Youngblood* in Kingston, a city so deeply connected to the origins of the game, is incredibly meaningful,” said Davis. “It’s about hockey, but also about identity, pressure, and finding your own path. Ultimately, it honours hockey’s legacy while questioning it at the same time.”

“*Youngblood* is much more than a remake – it’s a powerful reinvention,” said Marc Garniss, Executive Director, KCFF. “Under Davis’s direction, the film blends high-stakes on-ice action with quieter, emotionally resonant moments that explore ambition, masculinity, and what it truly means to succeed. It also stands as a meaningful tribute to the late [Charles Officer](#), whose screenwriting adds depth and purpose to the story.”

*Youngblood* resonates profoundly in Kingston, a city with deep ties to hockey. As one of the earliest communities where organized hockey took shape in the 19th century, Kingston helped forge the rules and culture of the game long before the creation of the NHL. The city’s long-standing relationship with the sport—from early games on Lake Ontario to the creation of what became the Hockey Hall of Fame—makes it a fitting stage to present a film that re-examines hockey’s significance in Canadian life and identity. As Kingston prepares to welcome this new chapter of a classic hockey story, *Youngblood* arrives not just as a nostalgic revival, but as a meaningful reflection on where the game has been—and where it still needs to go.

The 2026 Kingston Canadian Film Festival is presented by TD Bank Group. Premier partners are the Slight Family Foundation, Amherst Island Radio, and Cogeco. Major supporters are ACFOMI, Delta Hotels Kingston Waterfront, Downtown Kingston BIA, Kingston Community Credit Union, Homestead, Marriott Kingston, Pattison Outdoor Advertising, Shaftesbury, and Tourism Kingston. KCFF benefits from the patronage of Diane Blake & Stephen Smith, the Norman & Margaret Jewison Charitable Foundation, the McLean Smits Family Foundation, and the Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation. Join the KCFF Circle of Supporters [here](#) or learn about sponsorship opportunities [here](#).

### **About the Kingston Canadian Film Festival**

The Kingston Canadian Film Festival (KCFF) is Canada’s premier all-Canadian film festival and the largest of its kind in the world. For more than a quarter century, KCFF has celebrated the diversity, creativity, and vitality of Canadian screen-based storytelling, presenting feature films, documentaries, shorts, and music videos that bring filmmakers, artists, and audiences together each year in a dynamic festival setting. More than a film festival, KCFF is a multi-disciplinary, intersectional cultural event that transforms traditional and unconventional venues across historic downtown Kingston into a vibrant, walkable festival hub, featuring live comedy and music, exhibitions, industry conversations, workshops, networking events, and community gatherings.

With nearly 100% of films screening at KCFF accompanied by live post-screening Q&As with visiting talent, the festival has welcomed leading Canadian filmmakers and performers including Atom Egoyan, Deepa Mehta, Alanis Obomsawin, Don McKellar, Mina Shum, Matt Johnson, Jay Baruchel, Brigitte Berman, Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor, Jeff Barnaby, Gerry Dee, Cathy Jones, Jeremy Hotz, Bif Naked, Donovan Woods, Gordon Pinsent, and casts from *The Kids in the Hall*, *Letterkenny*, *Trailer Park Boys*, *Baroness von Sketch Show*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, among others.

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