

= Lisa on Ice =

" Lisa on Ice " is the eighth television episode of The Simpsons ' sixth season . It was first broadcast on Fox in the United States on November 13 , 1994 . In the episode , Principal Skinner hands out academic alerts to the Springfield Elementary students , and Lisa discovers that she is in peril of failing a class for the first time in her life . When trying to salvage her gym grade , Lisa finds she possesses a skill for ice hockey . Rivalry between Lisa and Bart in the rink escalates into their home life and beyond , fueled considerably by Homer and coaches .

The episode was written by Mike Scully and directed by Bob Anderson , whose passion for hockey inspired the plot . It features cultural references to films such as Rollerball and The Pope of Greenwich Village . The episode was well received by critics , and acquired a Nielsen rating of 11 @ . @ 6 .

= = Plot = =

Principal Skinner calls all the Springfield Elementary School students down for an assembly to tell them which subjects they are failing . Lisa is surprisingly called up , and discovers to her horror that she is failing gym class . When she appeals to her teacher , they reach a compromise : Lisa can get a passing grade if she joins a sports program outside of school . She immediately attempts to join several , but fails , and her self @-@ esteem is devastated . Later , the family goes to see Bart play hockey for his team , the Mighty Pigs , coached by Chief Wiggum . After the game , Bart , while ridiculing his sister for being poor at sports , begins shooting pieces of litter at Lisa with his hockey stick , and Apu , the coach of the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart Gougers , notices that she is a natural at hockey goal @-@ tending and makes her goalie for his team . Although Lisa has no interest in hockey , she accepts , seeing this as the only way to maintain her academic credentials . As it turns out , she is remarkably talented , and leads her team to their best season ever .

Due to Homer 's increasing pressure , a sibling rivalry develops between Bart and Lisa , and it peaks when the town learns that the Gougers will face the Mighty Pigs in their next match . The game proves to be a vicious one , but very close , with both Bart and Lisa playing their best . With four seconds left , Bart is tripped by Jimbo , giving him a penalty shot against Lisa that will decide the game . However , as they face each other , Bart and Lisa remember the good times they have had together as children before they began fighting . They each throw aside their equipment and hug , and the match ends in a tie . Marge admits she is proud of them , while a sobbing Homer declares them both losers and turns his attention to Maggie . Unsatisfied with the outcome ( although Snake is visibly moved ) , the residents of Springfield begin rioting and tear the stadium to pieces while Bart and Lisa blissfully skate together across the rink .

= = Production = =

The idea for the episode came from The Simpsons writer Mike Scully , who wanted to do an episode involving hockey because of his passion for the sport . Bob Anderson , who also had an interest for hockey , directed the episode .

The episode starts out with Lisa tricking Bart into believing it is a snow day by throwing a snowball at him which she made out of the ice in the fridge . The scene was inspired by Scully , who as a child loved to sit and listen by the radio waiting to see if there was going to be school snow day . Scully thought , because of his experience as a child , that there was nothing more disappointing than to wake up expecting a snow day , only to find out there was no snow . The academic alerts the Springfield Elementary School students receive were based on those Scully received in junior high .

= = Cultural references = =

When Moe visits Bart and Lisa at the Simpson house to see if they have any injuries that may affect

the odds of the upcoming game , Marge sends him away and he pleads : " They 're gonna take my thumbs " . This is a reference to Eric Roberts ' line , " Charlie , they took my thumb " , from the 1984 film The Pope of Greenwich Village . The episode features several references to the 1975 film Rollerball . At the academic alerts assembly , bully Kearney has Dolph take a memo on an Apple Newton , a personal digital assistant . When Dolph writes " Beat up Martin " on the screen , the handwriting recognition turns it into " Eat up Martha " , and Kearney throws the Newton at Martin instead , referencing the MessagePad 's poor handwriting recognition . The name of Bart 's team , " Mighty Pigs " , is a parody of the film series The Mighty Ducks .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Lisa on Ice " finished 34th in the ratings for the week of November 7 to November 13 , 1994 , with a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 6 . It was the second highest rated show on the Fox network that week . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , called it " a fabulous episode for Lisa and Bart , although with a special mention for a few seconds of tremendous Edna Krabappel wickedness . " DVD Verdict 's Ryan Keefer said the episode " is one of the few episodes centered on Lisa that I enjoy watching " , and gave it a B. DVD Talk 's Aaron Beierle said " there are definitely some funny moments in this episode , the sweet @-@ natured way that the episode ends never sat right with me . " ESPN.com named this episode the fifth best sports moment in the history of the show . The Orlando Sentinel 's Gregory Hardy listed it as the seventh best episode of the show with a sports theme .

TV Squad 's Adam Finley gave the episode a positive review , commenting that it is " a skewering of parents who become too involved in their children 's sports and turn what should be a lesson in teamwork , trying your hardest , and losing gracefully into a kind of Roman Coliseum where grown adults live out violent fantasies and their own failed ambitions through their children . " He added that " Homer is an absolute jerk in this episode , taunting his children when they lose and praising them when they win and humiliate their sibling " and that " it 's not just Homer . Marge , characteristically so , tries to remain diplomatic , but even she starts screaming for blood when Bart is tripped by an opposing player . "