

= Bart Star =

" Bart Star " is the sixth episode in the ninth season of the American animated television series The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 9 , 1997 . Written by Donick Cary and directed by Dominic Polcino , the episode guest starred Joe Namath , Roy Firestone , and Mike Judge . The episode sees Homer becoming the coach of a pee @-@ wee football team and expresses nepotism for Bart by making him the quarterback which receives backlash from the whole team , including Bart himself . The episode was critically well received .

= = Plot = =

Following a Health convention held in Springfield , the children of Springfield (including Bart) are deemed to be overweight . To help them stay in shape , the parents enroll their children in pee @-@ wee football . The coach , Ned Flanders , helps keep the team undefeated , but Homer heckles him relentlessly . Flanders finally snaps and turns the job over to Homer .

Homer initially acts tough towards Bart , but when he is reminded of how his father was hard on him as a child , he decides to be nicer to Bart. The next day , he decides to cut many players from the team , and replaces star quarterback Nelson with Bart , causing an uproar from the team . Bart is unable to play the position well and causes the team 's first loss . While training at night Bart meets Joe Namath , who promises to help him , but soon after Joe 's wife fixes the car , which had broken down due to vapor lock , Joe leaves without helping Bart.

Lisa suggests that Bart pretend he is injured to get out of quarterbacking , which he eagerly does , but Homer claims that without Bart the team must forfeit . This causes Bart to become angry and quit the team . The next game , Nelson is made quarterback again and the team wins , but Homer has nobody to celebrate with and becomes lonely . Afterwards , Homer finds Bart and persuades him to rejoin the team . The next day , during the championship game , the score is tied when Chief Wiggum comes to arrest Nelson . Bart decides to pretend he is Nelson and the team finally wins the championship .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Donick Cary , who obtained inspiration from an experience in high school he had with a football coach who had a son on the team . Similarly , show runner Mike Scully had been on a soccer team whose coach would give his son special treatment .

George Meyer obtained inspiration for the scene toward the beginning of the episode where Rainier Wolfcastle is taunting the children from an experience he had with Arnold Schwarzenegger . He was following Schwarzenegger during a hike , and overheard him taunting his children . Schwarzenegger 's influence was seen in the same scene , as he was appointed to be the chairman of the President 's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports , on which he served from 1990 to 1993 .

The final scene took a long time to write . The writing staff found it difficult to come up with a resolution that would end on positive terms for Bart and Homer , and was originally different when it was read at the writing table .

= = = Casting = = =

Joe Namath , Roy Firestone , and Mike Judge guest starred in the episode . Scully claims that Judge was paid \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 to appear in the episode , where he voiced the cameo of Hank Hill . The appearance was actually a cross @-@ promotion for Judge 's animated show King of the Hill which followed The Simpsons on Fox 's Sunday schedule in 1997 . Other King of the Hill characters (Hank 's niece Luanne , Hank 's wife Peggy , Hank 's son Bobby , and Hank 's friends , Dale Gribble , Bill Dauterive , and Boomhauer) were present in the scene , although none of them spoke . Marv Albert was originally going to play Firestone 's part as a sports radio host , but was dropped following sexual assault charges that were made against him around the time the episode

was in pre @-@ production . Albert would later appear , however , in the season 20 episode " The Burns and The Bees " .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Bart Star " finished 27th in ratings for the week of November 3 ? 9 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 8 , equivalent to approximately 10 @.@ 6 million viewing households . It was the third highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files and King of the Hill .

Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from 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 , thought well of the episode , saying , " A fun episode , where you root for Bart and , unusually , Nelson - all the way through . Homer is just too stupid for words , but that 's excusable because we finally see Ned Flanders lose it , big time ! " In 2011 , Keith Plocek of LA Weekly 's Squid Ink blog named the scene in which Homer tries to purchase " beer that has candy floating in it " (which Homer calls skittlebrau) at the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart as the fourth best food moment on the show .

The director of the episode , Dominic Polcino , greatly enjoyed the episode , and claims that it is his favorite episode that he directed .