

## = Dead Putting Society =

" Dead Putting Society " is the sixth episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 15 , 1990 . In the episode , Homer 's son , Bart , and Ned Flanders ' son , Todd , decide to enter a miniature golf tournament . Homer becomes confident that Bart will win and makes a bet with Ned that the father of the boy that does not win will have to mow their neighbors lawn in their wife 's Sunday dress . On the day of the tournament , Bart and Todd make the finals but decide to call it a draw , forcing both Homer and Ned to fulfill the requirements of their bet .

The episode , which was the first to prominently feature Ned and the rest of his family , was written by Jeff Martin and directed by Rich Moore . While animating " Dead Putting Society " , the animators went on a field trip to a local miniature golf course to study the mechanics of a golf club swing . Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 14 @. @ 3 and was the highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

## = = Plot = =

When Homer is mowing his lawn with obvious frustration , his next @- @ door neighbor Ned Flanders invites him into his basement rumpus room for a beer . Upon seeing Ned 's house and observing his exaggeratedly perfect relationships with his wife and son , Homer erupts at Ned , accusing him of showing off . Ned angrily asks Homer to leave in response . Later , however , he feels guilty and writes a letter to Homer saying that he is really sorry and that he loves him as a brother . Homer is amused by Ned 's sentimentality and reads the letter to the family at the breakfast table . Marge is not happy with the family 's reaction , despite being unable to control her laughter , and chastises Homer for making light of Ned 's sincere apology . Afterwards , Homer takes Bart and Maggie to Sir Putt @- @ A @- @ Lot 's Merrie Olde Fun Centre for a round of miniature golf . They unexpectedly run into Ned and his son Todd , and end up going golfing together .

The game does not go well for Homer , who is obviously still jealous of Ned . Meanwhile , Bart and Todd find out about an upcoming children 's miniature golf tournament , with a first prize of \$ 50 . They enter it , and although Todd is very good at miniature golf , Homer becomes confident that Bart will win . He tells Bart that it is not okay to lose and forces him to stare angrily at a picture of Todd for 15 minutes every day . Later , when Bart looks at his meager collection of trophies in his room , Lisa offers to help him practice . Utilizing spiritual books that calm Bart 's mind , they meditate . Meanwhile , Homer makes a bet with Ned on whose boy is a better golfer : the father of the boy who does not win the tournament will mow the other father 's lawn in his wife 's Sunday dress .

On the day of the tournament , Homer threatens Bart to win no matter what . In an extremely close match , Bart and Todd each do well , and tie by the time they reach the eighteenth hole . Bart and Todd agree that the competition is not worth the stress , that they are equally good and that they should call it a draw , splitting the award evenly . As a result , Ned and Homer are forced to wear their respective wives ' Sunday dresses and mow each other 's lawn . People around the neighborhood laugh at them and Ned actually enjoys it ( commenting that it reminds him of his fraternity days in college ) , much to Homer 's dismay .

## = = Production = =

" Dead Putting Society " was written by Jeff Martin and directed by Rich Moore . Martin was an experienced miniature golfer and based much of the golf @- @ related scenes in the script on his own experiences . Parts of this episode are also based on the 1984 film The Karate Kid , including the way Bart practices for the miniature golf tournament by balancing on a trash can in a " crane position " . For " Dead Putting Society " , the animators went on a field trip to a local miniature golf course to study the mechanics of a golf club swing . Moore commented that the reason for this was that much of the humor on The Simpsons comes from making the scenery look lifelike ; " The realism of the background serves as the straight man for the absurd situations . "

This episode was the first to prominently feature Ned Flanders and the rest of the Flanders family , and contained the first appearances of Maude and Rod Flanders . Maggie Roswell was given the role of Maude , Ned 's loving wife , and became a regular cast member with this episode . She had previously played supporting parts in the show 's first season . Nancy Cartwright , the voice of Bart , commented on Roswell 's acting : " Maggie has been blessed with a skill in creating one of the hardest things to create : the ' normal sound , ' whatever that is . So she can easily slip into the gal next door [ ... ] . "

= = Reception = =

" Dead Putting Society " originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 15 , 1990 . In its original American broadcast , the episode finished 35th in the ratings for the week of November 12 ? 18 , 1990 , with a Nielsen rating of 14 @. @ 3 , equivalent to approximately 13 @. @ 3 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week .

Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from television critics . The Orlando Sentinel 's Gregory Hardy named it the ninth best episode of the show with a sports theme . Doug Pratt , a DVD reviewer and Rolling Stone contributor , praised the episode as one of the best from season two . He commented that the miniature golf challenges " are delightful , the denouncement is highly amusing [ ... ] , and the beauty of the whole episode is that it could just as easily be an episode in a live action TV sitcom , though the slight touches of fancy enabled by the animation enhance its comic impact . " Dusty Sanders of the Rocky Mountain News commented that the title of the episode is " funnier than the content of most TV sitcoms . " The reference to The Karate Kid was named the 21st greatest film reference in the history of the show by Total Film 's Nathan Ditum .

DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson commented that " considering what a prominent character Flanders became , it 's strange to realize that " Dead Putting Society " was the first show to feature him heavily . He 'd made some token appearances in the past ? most notably in season one 's ' Call of the Simpsons ' ? but ' Dead Putting Society ' much more clearly defined the Ned we 'd come to know and love . It also featured scads of good little bits and gags and seemed like a solid program . " The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , commented that apart from " the memorable lawn mowing sequence at the end , this episode is notable for our first viewing of the gaudy , gadget @-@ filled , God @-@ fearing splendour that is the Flanderses ' home . "