



PRODUCTION BRIEF

Pixar Animation Studios' original series "Win or Lose" follows the intertwined stories of eight different characters as they each prepare for their big championship softball game. The series reveals what it actually feels like to be in the shoes of each character—the insecure kids, their helicopter parents, even a lovesick umpire—with incredibly funny, very emotional and uniquely animated perspectives.

"I played softball growing up," says Carrie Hobson, who wrote, directed and executive produced the series with Michael Yates. "Inspired by that experience, we felt fast-pitch softball was the perfect backdrop for the show. There are so many facets to playing sports that I love—it can bring out the best and worst of a person, the calmest person can lose their temper. And when it comes to winning and losing—the consequences are nothing, and yet, they're everything. We really felt like it was the best arena for the themes we loved."

According to Yates, the idea of spotlighting different perspectives was born of everyday life at Pixar. "Carrie and I were officemates on 'Toy Story 4,'" he says. "We were both story artists on the film, and we would talk about a lot of things going on in the film, as well as things going on in the world—current events, news. We would always have different reactions or different interpretations of the same meeting. One of us would say, 'That went great!' and the other would say, 'No! It was terrible, what are you talking about?' We realized that our own experiences that we bring to the table change our perception of an event. We wanted to tell a story that illustrated all of that."

Producer David Lally says the story is told in a way that lent itself perfectly to the animation medium. "Each episode follows a different character through the same week, and we get to see life as they uniquely experience it," he says. "Animation allows us to visualize their feelings in a compelling way, employing fantasy elements and metaphors to bring to life how they're dealing with everything."

The series, launching on Disney+ Feb. 19, 2025, marks Pixar's first original series developed for the platform. One of the advantages of Disney+, says executive producer Lindsey Collins, is the approach story in a wholly different way. Several story artists were assembled and challenged with brainstorming concepts for streaming series and pitching the resulting ideas. "Of all the concepts we heard, Carrie and Michael's was such a unique story that really lent itself to being episodic. It was so intriguing; we couldn't deny that there was something there—something we've never done before."

But the new format presented filmmakers with new challenges. Says VFX supervisor Bob Moyer, "To create eight 20-minute episodes for streaming, we had to reconsider how we do everything—from the size of the crew to the look of the show—the entire structure had to be reimaged."

Moyer adds that since Hobson and Yates came out of the gate with a desire to push the character expressions in a whole new way, his team developed a couple of approaches. "The first was something we call 'detached facial features,' DFF," he says. "The mouth, nose and ears are not attached to the rest of the face, so they can slide around and do really fun poses."

"The second thing involved creating really fantastical moments," Moyer continues. "And because a lot of that is in 2D, we decided to build a 2D pipeline that could integrate with the 3D that is also in that world."

THE RIGHT LOOK

The story takes place in Everytown, U.S.A., says production designer Noah Klocek. "We looked at softball fields from Kentucky to Oregon," he says. "We'd focus on the similarities—those things that anybody who's seen or played a softball game or in Little League would recognize. I went up to Sacramento, where I grew up, and visited all the softball fields there. Carrie [Hobson] did the same thing in Arizona. We also included a lot of Bay Area flavor in the Pickles' softball field."

According to Klocek, the overall look of the series had to be inviting. "Our default world is caricatured, fun and warm—almost squishy and cute," he says. "That's consistent across all episodes, while the characters' perspective views switch in and out. We wanted that to feel very different for each episode," he says. "Most of our early conversations revolved around how to visually tell what it's like to feel something. Each character has what we call perspective views that show the way they see the world around them—it's unique to them."

Patrick Lin, director of photography, says his team was able to amplify the unique approach to storytelling with layout and camera. "When we looked at the characters and what they're going through, we felt their challenges were super relatable with a serious undercurrent," says Lin. "We wanted the cinematography to be sophisticated and realistic to draw the audience in."

Two camera styles were chosen for each episode to illustrate the differences between the real world and the perspective views. "For the real world, we wanted it to feel

natural, so almost all of it uses handheld cameras. There's an easiness to it—it's imperfect. We would miss the focus on purpose, so everything felt a little rougher. In the perspective worlds, everything is smoother. The camera's either locked off or, if it is moving, it's on a crane or dolly."

When it came to lighting, the series' cartoony look called for a creative approach. "We weren't beholden to realism," says Brian Boyd, director of photography. "It allowed us a lot of freedom. I didn't have to worry about every light in the scene coming from something realistic. We could just use color to show the characters' state of emotion for that moment, do a theatrical setup that emphasized it, and then move on. It was really liberating being able to play and try things out."

According to Boyd, the lighting provided contrast to the character style of the series. "Using filmic motifs in juxtaposition with how simple the characters were, along with how theatrical we went with the lighting resulted in a unique overall look."

"Win or Lose" features the voices of Will Forte, Rosie Foss, Josh Thomson, Milan Elizabeth Ray, Rosa Salazar, Dorien Watson, Izaac Wang, Chanel Stewart, Lil Rel Howery, Melissa Villaseñor, Jo Firestone, Flula Borg, Kyleigh Curran, Jaylin Fletcher, Erin Keif, Tom Law, Beck Nolan, Orion Tran and Rhea Seehorn.

The series features music by Ramin Djawadi and original songs by CAMPFIRE and Djawadi. "We had big goals for the music," says Lally. "Tone is so important—and this series has a whole new vibe. Ramin, who's worked on shows like 'Game of Thrones' and 'Westworld,' was really excited about working with the characters' different points of view. He reserved certain types of instrumentation—different flavors—for certain characters. Yuwen's episode features heavy metal guitar to reflect his overly confident personality, for example, while good-girl Laurie's episode has more of a choir sound to it. Then in our big finale episode when all the characters come together, he creates a cool tapestry that weaves all these themes together. Beyond this, when CAMPFIRE brings together these themes and augments them into their original songs with lyrics and great performances, the soundtrack feels like a new direction for Pixar. It feels like a really special moment for us musically."

According to Yates, the team created a playlist for each character while writing and boarding the episodes. "We shared those playlists with Ramin and CAMPFIRE," he says, adding that each episode came with a unique tone. "I think of Ira's 'What It All Means'—we really wanted to create this sense of yearning. Ira ends his episode with the opportunity to get everything he wanted but at a huge cost. The song tells the story of how this relationship he made with the Bleacher Creatures and how they felt like the perfect dream until the truth was revealed."

"Win or Lose" is directed and written by Carrie Hobson and Michael Yates, and produced by David Lally. Executive producers are Lindsey Collins, Andrew Stanton, Pete Docter, Michael Yates, Carrie Hobson and David Lally.

EIGHT EPISODES, EIGHT POINTS OF VIEW

Series Set During Week Leading Up to Big Game

Pixar Animation Studios' "Win or Lose" showcases unique points of view during the week leading up to a softball team's big championship game. Exploring how each character feels and what they're going through individually provided a fresh landscape for series creators Carrie Hobson and Michael Yates. "The show has eight main characters," says Hobson. "Each episode follows a different main character through the same week of time. The series puts you into the shoes of these individuals to experience their triumphs and losses. There's a lot more going on than just a game. The show is built around perception."

The series spotlights players, parents, the coach—even the umpire. "We wanted to make sure this wasn't a story just about a group of kids," says Yates. "We have parents, teachers—everyone is associated with the team in some way, but it branched out farther as the series took hold."

EPISODE 1: Laurie ("Coaches Kid")

Laurie (voice of Rosie Foss) may not be the most skilled player on her softball team, but she makes up for it in spirit—most of the time. The 12-year-old struggles with insecurity that manifests into an amorphous, sentient creature called Sweaty (voice of Jo Firestone) that only she can see. Laurie's anxiety mounts as the championship draws nearer—she literally carries an ever-growing Sweaty on her back, struggling under its weight. All she wants is to score a hit and make her dad aka Coach (voice of Will Forte) proud.

"Laurie is worried that everyone is unhappy with her and judging her—especially her own dad," says Hobson. "She's a little bit delusional, getting mini bursts of confidence—she's definitely a mixed bag of dorky as she tries to figure herself out."

The director was inspired by her own experiences on the softball field. "Later in life I asked my Dad, 'How good was I?' His response was, 'You weren't a natural talent, but you worked hard!' That's true for Laurie, too. Her breathing's a little labored and she's a bit clumsy, but she's convinced herself that if she works hard enough good things will happen."

EPISODE 2: Frank ("Blue")

Frank (voice of Josh Thomson), a middle-school teacher and the umpire for the local softball league, lives his life from the sidelines. On the field, he never waivers: a strike is a strike and an out is an out, period. In his personal life, however, he's guarded when it comes to social situations, donning metaphorical protective gear—just like an umpire behind the plate. When Frank reluctantly tries a dating app, he surprises himself with newfound confidence. He even begins to entertain ideas of winning his ex, Monica (voice of Vyvan Pham), back. But then again, being vulnerable might be the wrong call.

Says producer David Lally, "This show is not all about sports. In Frank's episode, we follow him home and realize that he's just a lonely guy, looking for love—he has a tricky

past with an ex-girlfriend. A janitor [voice of Flula Borg] at the school where Frank teaches pushes him back into the dating game. It's hilarious how Carrie, Michael and the crew visualized this—you've gotta see it!"

Frank's apartment is a good example of how thoughtful Pixar's production design team is when building sets. "We played with a lot of juxtaposition," says production designer Noah Klocek. "For his apartment, we created an entire backstory: Josh Thomson is from New Zealand, and we imagined Frank's mom might be English and his dad Māori. There are plate collections, frilly doilies and curtains that would come from his mom's influence. There are also beautiful Māori pieces on the shelf and on the wall from his dad's influence. The design reflects Frank himself—seemingly big and strong on the outside and sweet and caring on the inside."

EPISODE 3: Rochelle ("Raspberry")

Rochelle (voice of Milan Elizabeth Ray) looks like she has it all together: star catcher of her softball team, good grades, a part-time job at the Snack Shack—she's an impressive 13-year-old. The eldest child of a single mom, Rochelle has had to grow up fast. Money is tight, so she's been working hard to pay her softball dues for next year. When she sees an opportunity to earn some cash by helping her classmates with their assignments—is that cheating?—she reluctantly goes all in, becoming something of a professional hustler.

"Rochelle feels like she has to be the parent," says Yates. "Every morning, she feeds her brother and tries to get out of the house on time, while her mom, Vanessa [voice of Rosa Salazar], is dancing in the background. She's the grownup, she thinks. In her mind, she becomes a badass corporate CEO at school. She wears a power suit and gets stuff done. What starts as a way to pay her softball dues snowballs into something bigger and bigger."

According to supervising animator Gini Santos, Rochelle moves in a way that's unlike some of the other characters. "Rochelle is confident, mature and very protective of her friends. Her design conveys strength in her character poses of standing with her chest out and her head held high. Her assertiveness comes out when she needs to overcome her own challenges."

EPISODE 4: Vanessa ("Pickle")

Vanessa (voice of Rosa Salazar) is a hard-working single mom who faces the challenges of life with positivity and laughter—her bubbly personality has won a community of online followers. Vanessa adores her children, Rochelle (voice of Milan Elizabeth Ray) and baby Zane (voice of Harlow Hodges), but she's a little obsessed with the love she gets for her social media posts: seeing those pink hearts popping up brings her unchecked joy. When life throws her a curve ball or three, Vanessa is at the top of her game. She can handle anything, it seems, until one of her kids goes missing.

"In Rochelle's episode, we meet her mom, Vanessa," says Hobson. "As an audience, we might've found her a little immature—we might be annoyed with her. But in this episode, we see the flip side. Parents often don't tell their kids everything. We realize

that Van is doing a lot to take care of her family, all while trying not to burden her kid. She's a busy mom who's trying her best."

BLEACHER CREATURES

Appearing in several episodes of "Win or Lose" is a group of older teens known as the Bleacher Creatures who hang out at the softball field. "They're bad news, but really funny," says producer David Lally. "They think they're a lot cooler than they are. They're bumbling villains more than anything terribly threatening. One of them, Chicken-Kev, is this odd and mysterious chicken mascot. I don't even think any of us on the crew know what this chicken is up to!"

While she's surely struggling to juggle the demands of her life, "Vanessa draws from her 'mommy magic,' where she snaps her fingers and she's able to overcome a challenge in front of her," says Santos. "There's a specific, performance-based animation that conveys her as a superhero mom, whether its flying to where she is needed, or holding a strong pose while keeping the motion contained to a specific body part. Animators had a lot of fun pushing that anime sensibility."

EPISODE 5: Ira ("Steal")

Ira (voice of Dorian Watson) is an extremely imaginative 10-year-old who creates vivid fantasy worlds to entertain himself. He doesn't have a lot of friends, but he likes to spend time with his older sister, Taylor (voice of Kyliegh Curran)—except when he's forced to go to her boring softball games. When Taylor starts dating one of her teammates, Ira feels left in the dust. He befriends a group of older teens—fellow outsiders who hang out at the softball field. Ira's new buddies, who seem to have a penchant for getting into trouble, invite him to join in on their shenanigans. In over his head, Ira isn't sure how to stand up to these kids, but his imagination has a few ideas.

Says Yates, "Ira is a little brother who's lost his big sister to her team and now, a new boyfriend. It's a big change for him. As the kid who gets left alone a lot, he has no one to talk to. He creates games in his mind using an empty toilet-paper roll as a kaleidoscope to visualize whatever he's imagining. It's a blankie, a protector and a tool for him to escape into his own world."

Filmmakers expressed that world in a creative way. "Ira's episode was a fun opportunity to animate in 2D," says Santos. "The directors wanted the 2D style to look like Ira's drawings, and the animation captures the look of a child's scribbles with its loose lines and varying thicknesses. The episode really immerses you in Ira's imaginary world."

EPISODE 6: Yuwen ("Mixed Signals")

Yuwen (voice of Izaac Wang) is the pitcher and resident jokester of the softball team. On the surface, he seems cool and confident—he loves to be the center of attention. Yuwen's also a bit of a bully—a cover for his very real insecurities. He's constantly in conflict with Little Yuwen—his childlike, vulnerable self who shows up in Yuwen's mind at the worst possible times. His relationship with girlfriend Taylor and the entire championship game are at stake—resolving the conflict within may be Yuwen's toughest play yet.

According to Hobson, Yuwen’s introduction isn’t exactly flattering. “He’s a total show-off,” she says. “He’s a little annoying—loud and obnoxious. What you realize when you pull back the curtain to his heart is that he’s just this little boy who has a big crush on a girl and he’s overcompensating for his lack of confidence. He hasn’t quite figured out how to be emotionally raw, so everything is a joke.”

When it came to Yuwen’s perspective view, filmmakers landed on the idea of a diorama that a child might make for a classroom assignment. “It worked really well because it was a paper display—it was fragile,” says Yates. “It feels vulnerable. But the best part is we find out that maybe he’s not alone in those feelings.”

FLYING COLORS

Brian Boyd, director of photography—lighting, and production designer Noah Klocek developed color motifs that helped shape the stories. “Many of the characters have a color that represents who they are,” says Boyd, “and a second color that represents maybe their goal or something they want but can’t have. We incorporated those colors into scenes—but not too literally—it was a guiding principle.”

For example, in episode 1, Laurie’s main color is yellow. “That was her hopeful color,” says Boyd, who adds that her antagonistic color—the color of Sweaty—is purple. “As it gets bigger, it becomes more and more purple.”

Coach Dan’s colors are the opposite. “Purple represents his happy place,” says Boyd, “and we use a greenish yellow to contrast that.”

In episode 2, Frank’s main color is blue. “He wears a lot of blue,” says Klocek. “But when he goes into a vision that has to do with his relationship breaking up, it’s all orange. It’s a place where he doesn’t want to go, but he needs to go there to become a complete person.”

In episode 3, “Green is Rochelle’s protagonist color,” says Klocek. “It’s the color of money—minty green. Pink is her antagonistic color. The opposite is true for her mom.”

In episode 4, Vanessa’s happy color—the color of her social media hearts—is pink. “We used a mustard green when she’s confronting her daughter,” says Boyd.

EPISODE 7: Kai (“I Got It”)

Kai (voice of Chanel Stewart) has recently moved to Peaks Valley with her father, James (voice of Lil Rel Howery), and hopes to use the move as a fresh start. Finding a new circle of friends on the local softball team, Kai loves the camaraderie on and off the field. For the first time in a long time, she feels right at home—her joy is decidedly uplifting. She’s already a star player, but her father pressures her to practice harder and fight for perfection in the sport. In the week leading up to the championship game, an injury nearly sidelines Kai, who feels she must push through the pain to usher in a win for her team.

“Kai’s episode is our penultimate episode,” says Hobson. “Everything is building before our finale with a big cliffhanger. In a lot of ways, the episode is a mirror to Laurie’s in that they’re both trying to please their dads. But unlike Coach Dan and Laurie, James is really pushing Kai to be perfect. It’s a lot for a kid to live up to and she just sinks under the pressure.

“What’s really special is that the Pickles mean a lot to Kai,” Hobson continues. “That’s visualized in her perspective view as floating—she literally feels lighter than air. She’s feeling total happiness. It washes over her and lifts her up.”

EPISODE 8: Coach (“Home”)

Coach Dan (voice of Will Forte) takes his position seriously and strives to teach the Pickles life lessons and respect for the game. His steadfast support for the players is admirable, but he finds himself carrying their burdens as if they were his own. Add to that the challenges of dealing with well-meaning parents and his own struggles off the field and Coach Dan feels overwhelmed to put it mildly. He knows that his leadership is crucial as the team races, stumbles and swings their way toward their championship game.

“For Coach,” says Yates, “the Pickles represent his solace. He’s going through a divorce and living in a hotel—coaching this team keeps him going. He gets to connect with his daughter, too, which means a lot to him.

“But the parents decide they want to replace him as coach,” continues Yates. “That’s probably the worst possible thing that could happen right now. He’s not the kind of guy who talks about his feelings—he keeps them inside, literally expanding with all of the built-up stress. He also has a set of tiny lips that allow him to speak his mind under his breath. He’s like a big balloon letting a little bit of air—his true feelings—escape.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

CARRIE HOBSON (Directed by/Written by/Executive Produced by) began at Pixar Animation Studios as an art intern in 2012. She was hired full time in the story department in 2016 and worked as a story artist on the Academy Award®-winning feature “Toy Story 4,” and was also the associate executive producer of “Luca.”

In her most recent role on “Win or Lose,” Hobson was actively writing and directing episodes through this unique, multi-protagonist series. Following the perspectives of eight different main characters across the show, Hobson and Yates partnered to deliver a series that’s jam-packed with bold stories and animation styles throughout the ambitious project.

Prior to Pixar, Hobson interned at Disney Consumer Products and was also an art trainee with Walt Disney Animation Studios. She then worked as an illustrator at Jib Jab Media, as well as a background designer at Cartoon Network.

Hobson grew up in Mesa, Ariz., and attended Red Mountain High School before moving to California to attend California Institute of the Arts. She resides in Oakland, California.

MICHAEL YATES (Directed by/Written by/Executive Produced by) joined Pixar Animation Studios in 2015 as a story artist. He worked on “Cars 3,” as well as Academy Award®-winning films “Toy Story 4” and “Soul.”

In his role on “Win or Lose,” Yates wrote and directed episodes throughout this unique, multi-protagonist series. Following the perspectives of eight different main characters across the show, Yates and Hobson partnered to deliver a series that’s jam-packed with bold stories and animation styles throughout the ambitious project.

Yates was also the co-author and illustrator of the acclaimed comic book “Urban Legendz.” Prior to Pixar, he interned at Walt Disney Animation Studios before working at Cartoon Network and DreamWorks Animation.

Yates grew up outside of Chicago in Northwest Indiana and attended Ringling College of Art and Design. He resides in Oakland, Calif.

DAVID LALLY (Produced by) began at Pixar Animation Studios in June 2010 as a technical director on Pixar’s Academy Award®-winning feature “Brave.” He went on to work in numerous technical positions on some of Pixar’s most beloved films, including “Monsters University,” “The Good Dinosaur,” “Finding Dory” and Academy Award®-winning films “Inside Out” and “Coco.” Lally also served as the lead simulation technical director on Pixar’s Academy Award-winning short “Bao.”

In 2019, Lally transitioned into a producer role where he helped pioneer the Pixar SparkShorts program, created to discover new storytellers, explore new storytelling techniques, and experiment with new production workflows. He served as the overall program production supervisor and eventually executive producer on all of the SparkShorts, including “Smash and Grab,” “Purl,” “Kitbull,” “Out” and “Burrow,” to name a few.

“Win or Lose” is Pixar’s first ever original long form animated series, and Lally has been working on bringing the show to life with Hobson and Yates since 2019. As the producer, Lally has had to navigate the challenges of creating this ambitious show from storyboards all the way through final frames alongside his incredible production team. The show is longer than any of Pixar’s feature films, and is a new and exciting direction for Pixar as the studio steps into episodic storytelling.

Lally grew up in Philadelphia, and received his BS/MS from Drexel University. He resides in San Francisco.

Two-time Emmy® Award-winning and three-time Grammy nominated composer **RAMIN DJAWADI (Music by)** has composed perhaps some of the most memorable themes in media. With celebrated scores for “Game of Thrones,” “Westworld,” “House of the Dragon,” “Fallout,” “3 Body Problem,” “Uncharted,” “Eternals,” “Iron Man,” “Jack Ryan,” “A Wrinkle in Time,” “Pacific Rim,” “Clash of the Titans” and “Prison Break,” versatility has defined his career. Djawadi has also composed scores for blockbuster video games including “New World,” “Gears 5,” “Gears of War 4” and “Medal of Honor.”

Djawadi grew up in Duisburg, Germany, and moved to Boston to attend Berklee College of Music. After graduating summa cum laude, he moved to Los Angeles where he was introduced to Hans Zimmer. Shortly thereafter, he collaborated with Zimmer on projects such as “Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl” and “Batman Begins.” He scored his first feature, film “Blade: Trinity,” in 2004, a project that allowed him to team up with legendary Wu-Tang Clan mastermind RZA and begin a string of dynamic and genre-bending collaborations. Djawadi went on to write the music for Sony’s first animation feature, “Open Season,” alongside The Replacements’ Paul Westerberg, and tapping the talents of guitar-god Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine, Audioslave, Prophets of Rage) for key cues in “Iron Man” and “Pacific Rim.” Moreover, Djawadi became a frequent collaborator for notable directors and producers such as David Benioff and D.B.Weiss (“Game of Thrones,” “3 Body Problem”), Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy (“Fallout,” “Westworld,” “Person of Interest”), and JJ Abrams (“Person of Interest”). In collaboration with HBO and Live Nation, Djawadi transported the music from “Game of Thrones” into sold-out arenas and venues around the world for the “Game of Thrones Live Concert Experience,” culminating in multiple sold-out performances at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles and Madison Square Garden in New York.

Shane Eli and Jonny Pakfar, known professionally as **CAMPFIRE (Original Songs by)**, are multi-platinum, award-winning composers, writers and producers based in Los Angeles. Renowned for their innovative approach to blending traditional film scoring with modern production techniques, they have emerged as sought-after creators in the entertainment industry.

Most recently, the duo collaborated with composer Ramin Djawadi on Pixar’s first original animated series, “Win or Lose,” co-creating all the original songs. Eli and Pakfar also developed music for the Pixar series “Dream Productions.”

Drawing inspiration from hip-hop, soul, funk, pop and R&B, Eli and Pakfar craft vibrant, dynamic songs and scores that elevate every project they touch. They have created scores and composed original songs on mediums across all genres including films such as “Deadpool” (2016), “Deadpool 2” (2018), “Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw” (2019), “Lyle, Lyle Crocodile” (2022), “The Redeem Team” (2022) and “Elemental,” (2023) plus video games like “Fortnite,” “Call of Duty,” “FIFA” and “Madden.” They have collaborated with artists like Aloe Blacc, Lil Jon, Tech N9ne, Benny the Butcher, Beto Cuevas and Lime Cordiale.

With an impressive portfolio spanning film, television and beyond, CAMPFIRE continues to set new standards in the industry.