

Blu-Ray Review: Girl Power Drives Entertaining ‘Whip It’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 2, 2010 - 11:58am

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CHICAGO – Drew Barrymore’s directorial debut “Whip It” is the kind of fun, girl-power driven comedy that I honestly expected would find a huge word-of-mouth audience in theaters. Its absolutely dismal box office (\$13 million) was one of the biggest financial surprises of 2009. People are likely to catch up with the Ellen Page comedy on Blu-ray and DVD.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

“Whip It” is one of those films with a heart clearly in the right place and the kind of wildly enjoyable ensemble that makes storytelling flaws like predictability easier to overlook, especially in HD. “Whip It” is an easy to film to rip apart but it’s an ugly duckling comedy, an underdog that’s easy to root for and ignore critical analysis. Cynical movie goers should look away, but many, many people will find something to love in the story of Bliss Cavendar (Ellen Page) and her unusual coming-of-age adventure on wheels.



Whip It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 26th, 2010.

Photo credit: Fox Home Video

Bliss is a young woman who is considered “alternative” by the popular girls and has failed to meet the pageant-esque expectations of her demanding mother (Marcia Gay Harden). Her dad (Daniel Stern) and best friend (Alia Shawkat) are the supportive voices in her life but Bliss is a small town girl who can’t find her way to a bigger pond mostly because she’s still unsure what she wants to do. That changes when she

finds a flyer for the local roller derby.



Whip It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 26th, 2010.

Photo credit: Fox Home Video

After telling Maggie Mayhem (Kristen Wiig) that the strong women of roller derby are her heroes, Maggie tells her to be her own hero and join the team, one that includes Smashley Simpson (Drew Barrymore), Rosa Sparks (Eve), and Bloody Holly (Zoe Bell). Bliss changes her name to Babe Ruthless and turns the worst roller derby team in the Austin league around, making them the target of the top team led by Iron Maven (Juliette Lewis) and Eva Destruction (Ari Graynor). Meanwhile, Bliss meets a local musician (Landon Pigg) and learns a few lessons about love and self-confidence along the way.

There's literally nothing to the plot of "Whip It" that isn't as predictable as someone skating in a circle around a derby rink. It's a classic girl power underdog story and I wish there had been one more plot twist or subtle moment in Shauna Cross' generic screenplay. It's almost brazen in its predictability in a way that was more common in the comedies of the '80s. I also flat-out hated Pigg's performance, one of the dullest by a romantic lead in years although perhaps that was intentional considering the female-centric focus of the film.

What works about "Whip It" is the infectious glee the cast clearly had in making it. It's like a trip to the roller derby in that it generates enough joy and goodwill that people are unlikely to notice that there's not a whole lot to it.

The Blu-ray release of "Whip It" includes nine deleted scenes, including an alternate opening, "Fox Movie Channel Presents Writer's Draft: Shauna Cross of Whip It," and a digital copy. It's a lackluster collection of special features for such a vibrant film but the film's disappointing box office is probably to blame.

'Whip It' is released by Fox Home Video and stars Ellen Page, Alia Shawkat, Marcia Gay Harden, Daniel Stern, Kristen Wiig, Drew Barrymore, Juliette Lewis, Jimmy Fallon, Eve, Zoe Bell, and Ari Graynor. It was written by Shauna Cross and directed by Drew Barrymore. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 26th, 2010. It is rated PG-13.



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