

10.14.24 Inside J!

Sam: [00:00:00] From the

Alex Trebek Stage at Sony Picture Studios, this

is Inside Jeopardy!

Michael: Ah, yes, there he is, on the axe, the great, great Johnny. I mean, my word. Uh, hello, welcome back to Inside Jeopardy. What you missed, I was a little distracted there, because what you missed, it was Sam and Sarah dancing to, uh, Johnny on the X, which was just something new for me.

Uh, this is your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening, including salmon Sarah's dancing in the world of jeopardy. I'm Michael Davies joined today by producer Sarah Foss, uh, over in the inside jeopardy podcast studio and our man about town, Sam battery, Sam, where are we finding you this week?

Sam: Coming to you live from the Inside Jeopardy! remote studio, located at the world's tallest ferris wheel in Dubai.

Michael: So, uh, I am not coming to you from the Inside Jeopardy! remote studio. This is, this is my home studio. It is remote though, certainly. [00:01:00] Um, okay, what's going on in the world of Jeopardy! Sarah? I feel like we're about in, in, in JPT.

Yes. We're about to shoot. Celebrity Jeopardy. We're about to, uh, embark on the postseason. Uh, we're planning some surprises, some new things for the New Year's. Perhaps a new tour concept that we're working on. Um, but what do we have, Sarah?

Sarah: Well, I think the most exciting thing that fans can look forward to today is their first first look at our new set for Jeopardy!

That game board is being revealed today in the shows, because of course we taped the first five weeks before we wrapped last season. And also, if you enjoyed on Masters, where we highlighted the category before it was putting out the clue. You're going to see that now on every episode of regular Jeopardy!

and we're kind of calling it like an easter egg of sorts of the new set because it's going to continue to reveal itself in new ways as the season continues.

Sam: Well that's exciting as a long [00:02:00] time viewer of Jeopardy! I will say that I would watch Jeopardy! even if it was filmed in a big white box.

Sarah: Thanks, Sam.

Michael: And, uh, Sarah Pleyer's locked in. For second chance Champions Wildcard and Tournament of Champions. Confirmations are rolling in. Players have their Save the Dates. I'm sure this is disappointing news for some. Yes. But very happy news for others.

Sarah: Yes. All 18 of our Second Chancers, of course, are playing two weeks.

They confirmed quickly. The Champions Wildcard and TOC invitations went out late last week. And all of those confirmations are almost all received. So there could be a few alternates sneaking in. Uh, and we're going to be revealing those names. You know, in phases here on the podcast, starting off with we'll be letting you know who is coming back for Second Chance.

We're, of course, taping that in early November. So we've got, we've got lots going on between Celebrity Jeopardy. We've got another three weeks of Syndicated before we get into the postseason. And then we're just gonna roll into the new year with some postseason fun.

Sam: Jeopardy fans should know that [00:03:00] if you're a player who's hoping to get the call, you get the call, in some cases, from Sarah herself.

And she doesn't say, this is the date we need you down in the Los Angeles area. She says, hey, is there any way you could make it on the 12th? As if, if you were to say, no, no, but I'm good on the 14th. She'd say, oh, okay, we'll move everything over. She's just too polite.

Sarah: Sam, for you, I might have moved everything, Sam.

Michael: We'll never know, I guess.

Sarah: We'll never know. Is that

Michael: polite or is that passive aggressive? There are two ways, uh, two ways of looking at that, Sam. But look, less about Sarah, more about you. Yes. There is, I'm sure you're aware, an entire Reddit thread Subreddit, if you will. Yeah. Of fans showing their love for the one and only Sam Buty after your retirement as a player.

Mm-Hmm. as a, as, as, as a contestants on Jeopardy. ,

Sam: I, I did get a chance to see it, and I have to say it was a beautiful thing. Uh, the haters managed to stay away and I think people enjoy Jeopardy, and so they, uh, [00:04:00] offload some of that jeopardy Joy onto me. Oh, uh, I hope one of us gets to read one of the more hilarious comments on the thread, which goes like this.

I suppose this doesn't rule out my idea for a Jeopardy! sitcom starring Sam as the lovable but stressed out patriarch of a family consisting of James, Matt, Matea, and Amy, with Ken as the wacky neighbor. And I have to say, I would watch that show and I'm pretty sure hilarity would ensue.

Sarah: Yeah,

Michael: that's an interesting sitcom.

Sarah: Well, in J. A. T. We witnessed our first five game champion of season 41 last week. That was Mark Fitzpatrick. And let's get right into the week of games, starting with Monday, where Mark, after defeating four game champion, Ryan Manton returned to put on a dominant performance with the help of a 5, 000 daily double and 26 correct responses.

He secured a runaway win.

Sam: Unstoppable performance by the champ. Very much a one sided game this time.

Sarah: I think the triple stumper in final, I liked this clue. I'm curious, Sam, if you would have come up [00:05:00] with the correct response. Brand names. You too, Michael. In 1886, this brand's bookkeeper came up with its name and flowing script logo, saying the two C's would look well in advertising.

Both Amanda and Mark wrote Coco Chanel. Of course, if you really thought about the script, we were, of course, going for Coco Chanel. Coca Cola. Did you have that one, Sam?

Sam: I did. I loved this clue, and I got it from Flowing Script. And also, of course, it's also the case that the Chanel company doesn't really involve Coco's first name.

We know it, but that brand is really just Chanel. But I think it might have helped to be a little bit older in, for this one, because I'm not sure Coca Cola is still using the Flowing Script logo all the time.

Michael: Yeah, no, you're absolutely right. They use that straight Coke logo a lot of the time. Okay, on Tuesday, Mark returned and had to pull out all the stops against challenger Gino Montoya.

Gino led early in double jeopardy, but Mark scored on both daily doubles to take the lead back heading into final. There, no one could come up with the correct response, but Mark managed to secure the [00:06:00] win after a questionable wager from Gino in second place.

Sarah: Yeah, there's a lot of conversation from fans about Gino wondering Whether or not he should be considered for second chance due to his wager.

I will say Mark Fitzpatrick was the first to chime in and say Jeopardy is a game about having knowledgeable contestants first, gameplay second. Gino had a 17,400 Koryat in his opening game. Of course he should be considered. What are we doing here? Let's remind you of Geno's stats. 20 correct responses, 40 attempts.

He ran one category, he didn't find a single daily double, and still had that really, really impressive score. So, thoughts on this? Gents?

Sam: I can't fault Geno for betting at all. I felt, uh, I've been in a similar situation where I thought, you know what, if they're gonna beat me, they gotta beat me with everything I've got.

But as I've gotten older and slower, I've decided that you need to be a little bit smarter in Final Jeopardy, and I do think I would have advised Geno to bet somewhat less.

Michael: Yeah, I'm just sitting here still reflecting on what are the qualities we really measure in [00:07:00] contestants. Um, and certainly knowledge is number one.

And I'm trying to like figure out, should it be disqualifying that you make absolutely, uh, I mean, this I, I think was questionable. I don't think it was insane. Um, but, but would someone who makes, um, Who repeatedly makes insane wages, would that disqualify them? I don't think so. But I do think, you know, when, when we analyze contestants, we should say we analyze them, you know, definitely test score is number one and knowledge and their ability to play the game when we watch them in a gameplay audition, you know, personality also not binding but persuasive.

I would say going back to my, my Scottish legal education. Um, but a number of, uh, a number of elements we have to like, think of people who we think are going to do well on the jeopardy stage, I think there's and do well with the jeopardy audience.

Sam: And it's not enough to be knowledgeable because the buzzer is such an important part of the game.

So there are several components we have to think about.

Michael: Yeah. And I think that's one of the things is that to be competitive, right. And so that's a little bit [00:08:00] to be. To, to be able to like, want to get in there. I actually often think that the, the very best Jeopardy! contestants are the people, you, you watch how they bounce back from adversity in a game.

I think Amy is one of the best ever at that. Amy's ability to sort of like, take a knock and lane, just bounce back immediately, I think it's, it's almost legendary.

Sarah: Yeah, well, and you talk about in those gameplay auditions, not only how many responses are people getting correct, how often are they using their imaginary pen to ring in, but that comfort level, because that's such a big part of it.

It's getting on the stage and being comfortable enough to not only bounce back, but just be in the rhythm. Play the game you love to play from your couch, but be able to do it on the Alex Trebek stage, knowing that millions of people are going to see you. Ken Jennings is now your host. There's lights, there's cameras.

It's a lot, this Jeopardy experience. It's

Michael: Yeah, without a doubt.

Sarah: Well, moving on to Wednesday, Mark had another dominant runaway on the strength of 26 correct responses. Two big daily doubles. This was a good game. [00:09:00]

Sam: Another big win for the champ. 26 correct is always a lot and he made it look easy against two strong players.

Sarah: Yeah, I think one of my favorite things in this show was our little five second bumper shot. Russell Norman, our director, is always looking for new things to show that you may not have seen before, and he thought, let's show the control room. Uh, you got to see a lot of people. You got to see technical director Lucinda Owens, who also serves as our director.

When Russell is out, you got to see associate director Chloe Corwin. And then my favorite comment from Lily, one eclectic mom who stepped away from fashion to step into analyzing this picture was, looks like there's a guy drawing something, maybe a graphics producer. This is actually James Bonds, who is our post associate producer and our booth production associate.

And everyone's very busy in there.

Michael: Yeah, I wonder what he is drawing there, James. It does look like he's drawing. He's probably just making a note on something. Just

Sarah: doodling.

Michael: Yeah.

Sarah: And the reason we took this shot in particular was because of someone [00:10:00] who you can see in the back row. That is co executive producer Lisa Brofman, who's been working who has been with Jeopardy since the fifth season, worked for Merv Griffin for years, an icon of Jeopardy, now working as a consultant, but this was the last show that she would serve as co EP on.

Michael: Yeah. Uh, we didn't take it for Laura Muller sitting in the background. We should, we should make that friend. Who we also love. Um, and nor did we take it because this is one of the last times. that we would be producing the show out of this control room because after this, this control room was ripped out and we've been producing out of a, out of a mobile truck and we'll be going back into the, uh, the new control room shortly.

But yeah, Lisa Brofman and it's, uh, it's still very tough for me to talk about. She's still very much around. I'm working with her on a, on a lot of other things and she's still a consulting co EP to our show. Uh, but you know, rather like me, Lisa started her career at Merv Griffin Enterprises and worked with Merv and was with Merv when he, you know, brought [00:11:00] these shows Wheel and Jeopardy back into syndication, has been with, uh, Jeopardy since, you know, around Jeopardy since day one back in syndication, but, you know, back on the show, I think, as you said, season five.

Um, when I came in to Jeopardy, I cannot tell you how much Lisa's support, uh, you know, Meant to me and has meant to me. She is a, the filing system of our entire history sits inside her brain. Um, and it is just, it was such a joy. It has been such a joy sitting next to her, uh, making this program. This is, this is The last time she was in the control room, but she's still very much part of our family and very much a part of our show.

Sarah: And Lisa was very much a part of the initial idea to have a clue crew. I remember meeting her when I first came out to audition. She's been a mentor and a great friend ever since and certainly will still be a huge part of my life and love that she's still here as a consultant as well.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. Mark went for his fifth and TOC [00:12:00] qualifying win on Thursday after finding and scoring on all three Daily Doubles, he took a strong lead into final where he was correct to secure the win and a spot in the next forthcoming TOC.

Sarah: I love this Final Jeopardy. It was a fun one. Movies, that's my kind of category. More than 25 cast members from this 1990 film drama would later appear on an HBO series with a similar theme. Correct response. What is Goodfellas? I like this one.

Sam: That was the first, uh, Final Jeopardy! of the week that anybody got correct.

I thought that was an excellent clue as well.

Sarah: Well, Ken caught up with the players after the game. Let's take a listen.

Ken: That was a great game from both of you. You both came up with Goodfellas. And I didn't know if that was going to happen. What gave you that, uh, that response, Mike?

Oh, I have no idea. I know nothing about movies.

Is that true? I figured it might've been actually Boardwalk Empire is what was in my head. And I had the New Jersey mob scene going on and Goodfellas seemed about the right time.

Ken: I guess if [00:13:00] you can only think of one movie, Fire and Jeopardy is maybe even easier. And also

not one I've seen. So you haven't seen Goodfellas or the Godfather, or you could name a hundred movies.

I haven't seen 95. I bet some of them are pretty good. Godfather, they say it's

Ken: pretty good.

Sarah: Well I had the chance to speak with Mark, still not 100 percent with my health at this point, don't mind my voice, about how he was feeling knowing he had secured a spot in the Tournament of Champions. Mark Fitzpatrick, you are a five game Jeopardy!

champion, how does that sound?

Sounds unreal. Sounds unexpected. It was a crazy five games. Love the experience.

Sarah: Yeah, you had all types of games in your run starting out with, you know, you went up against a four game champion in your first game. What was it like coming into that game? Knowing that someone was already kind of on a streak and you were gonna have to do something big in that game to have a win.

Yeah, I knew I would have to play really well because Ryan was so good. So I took some chances. [00:14:00] Made a lot of mistakes, and then I just got lucky at the end, I think.

Sarah: Did you always think coming in that you would be willing to make those big daily double wagers, or did that just come to you once you got here on the Alex Trebek stage?

I told myself I was going to do it, but I didn't know if I would do it when I was on the stage. Thankfully, I stuck to it. worked out.

Sarah: Yeah, it worked out very well. What's been the best part of this experience so far, would you say?

I would say the best part of the experience is the adrenaline rush you get at the end of that first win.

I was, like, wired for hours after that.

Sarah: Well, the Tournament of Champions is now guaranteed for you. Is that something that you ever dreamed of or thought about? Is it something that you've watched over the years and marveled at these great champions and now you are one of them?

I've watched it. I never thought I could get on it.

I thought I could win a game. That was the goal.

Sarah: Is there anything that surprised you about competing on Jeopardy?

How fast the game moves. It's nothing like playing on your couch. You make all these plans for [00:15:00] how you would play, but you don't really have time to think about it.

Sarah: And how about your Jeopardy journey?

What kind of led you? Have you been trying for a while to get on this show? Was this one of your first times trying out?

It's the first time I got to an audition, so I got very lucky in that respect, and I'm probably trying to get on for four years or so. Did my audition two years ago, it was always in the back of my head, maybe I could get called up, maybe not.

You know, try to get a little better at trivia over that time.

Sarah: So if someone's watching this right now, they've heard about that anytime test, but they haven't taken it, you're now a five game winner, what would you say to them?

Yeah, go take it, doesn't take very long. I don't think people know it only takes ten or fifteen minutes.

Thanks. And why not give it a shot?

Sarah: You could be here! Congratulations, Mark, on a great five day total, a great five day run. We will see you in the Tournament of Champions.

Sam: Thank you. Good to have Sarah back in her weirdly scratchy voice. But yes, I can't encourage people enough to take the Anytime Test. As he says, it takes just minutes, and it could lead [00:16:00] to a lifetime of fun.

Michael: Yeah, and also a good opportunity to tell people to get your flu shot.

Sarah: What's it?

Sam: That's good advice.

Sarah: Oh, well, on Friday, Mark got off to an unusually slow start for him, starting the game 2600 in the negative. He was unable to recover from there, allowing Eamon Campbell to take a lead into final. where he was the only player who was correct and secure to win against a strong five game champion.

Michael: Yeah, I must say I had a little bit of a freak out, uh, uh, watching this show. I was up in my office when you were recording this program and, uh, watching the feed and watching them come up. I know at least 15 guys who look exactly like Eamon Campbell, but I suddenly had a freak out that this was maybe somebody I knew playing, and I sort of started attempting, you know, gathering up my things to rush down to the studio, then I saw the name and heard him start to speak and realized, no, this is not one of the Eamon Campbells I know.

Sarah: Ah, well, after the game, [00:17:00] you know, Ken asked Mark after his strong five game run, if he You know, starting maybe it was that he was getting a little fatigued, and that could account for why he didn't do as well, and he said no. I just got my ass beat.

Sam: I didn't even know we could say that on the podcast.

Sarah: Oh, we can, Sam.

Say it as many times as you'd like.

Sam: Well, he did suffer a loss at the hands of, uh, not one but two good players. Dot also had a strong game, over 10, 000 after, uh, the double Jeopardy round. I will say there was some unorthodox wagering in Final Jeopardy. Dot bet more or less just enough to stay ahead of Mark, that is, to ensure that she would come second.

Had she bet more and gotten it right. She would have ended up winning because Eamon also bet a weirdly small number in his final Jeopardy. I loved this clue, which I hereby nominate for the non-existent Clue of the Week award. And if it isn't in, uh, existence now, it should be so.

Michael: Oh, Jeopardy! Honours Clue of the Year, maybe.

I think we've got to have

Sam: a Clue of the Year. So in the category world political history, the clue was [00:18:00] William Whitelaw and John Payton were also Rands in a 1975 leadership vote with this victor. And first I would like to say I really delivered that clue well, if for any reason Ken is unable to.

Continue as host, but I love this clue because Required some deduction you realize as you read the clue You don't know if you're maybe Michael does I didn't know who William Whitelaw and John Payton were But I knew that they had Anglo style names. So I figure if it's a political thing, this must be UK or possibly Australia, New Zealand, Canada, then you zoom in on the 1975 and realistically Jeopardy is not going to ask you about New Zealand political leaders of the 70s, so that narrows it down to the UK or conceivably Canada, uh, but I went with the UK and 1975 was perfect timing for the correct answer, Margaret Thatcher.

And that was the answer that Eamon came up with. He actually spelled it without that middle T, Thatcher, but, uh, that was acceptable. And I think that's the right decision. [00:19:00]

Michael: Yeah. I wouldn't have remembered Peyton, but William Whitelaw, very, I think he was the home secretary at some point, um, under maybe in Thatcher's government, uh, that, that, that she formed later after leaving opposition and, and.

And gaining power. Um, I have to say right now, and Sam, I think you would enjoy this too, but a shout out to all of our, uh, a podcast recommendation for all

of our inside jeopardy listeners, for those of you interested in mid seventies, British politics, the rest is history, which is very much my number one podcast.

Listen, it's the first in my queue, every single, well, the two or three times a week that new episodes come out. They did a series a few months back. On 1974, the most miserable. Yeah, in the history of a very wet island. That is, uh, that is, that is, that is Britain. And the political upheavals that then led to that in 1975, Margaret Thatcher becoming, uh, the leader of the opposition, the leader of the Conservative Party, is, uh, is just a terrific lesson.

The rest is history.

Sam: I cannot imagine that there are Inside Jeopardy! listeners who [00:20:00] are not interested in mid 1970s British history. Good.

Sarah: Good. Well, let's hear how Eamon was feeling after defeating a five game champion with that brilliant Final Jeopardy! response.

Ken: Eamon! You're coming back on Monday.

Congratulations. Ooh, thank you. What did you think coming into this game against a five time winner? Did you think you had a chance?

Michael: I'm still waiting to exhale right now, but it's definitely nerve wracking.

Ken: Twisted the knife, Eamon. No, that was a well played game. I mean, it's gonna be four months in our timeline before you're on again.

You have the opportunity to do something very funny. Yeah. You could grow a super long beard by Monday. Yeah, I might, I might grow

out the hair.

Ken: I think there's lots of options, Eamon. Like, you surprised us on Monday. I can't wait to see what it will be. Great game from you as well, Dot. I was reminded during the break that I also am a former Guinness Book of World Records Recovering record holder.

Yeah, I was I think biggest game show winnings or something like that. So not as cool as clog [00:21:00] dancing But I think we both got kicked out at about

the same time. So yeah, that sounds right We should find out a way to get back in. Yeah, congrats on playing so well in your Jeopardy appearance 3, 000 for you and Eamon.

We'll see you on Monday,

right?

Sarah: That brings us to one of my favorite parts of the podcast It's time for Butt Weight. There's more. What did you find for us this week, Sam?

Sam: Just to remind the folks at home that Butt surely has two Ts. Today's clue comes from Monday's game. The 400 clue in the opera category.

Let's give it a listen.

Ken: Opera 400. Bizet feared he'd written a huge stinker with this opera, but Tchaikovsky said in 10 years it will be the most popular. Mark. What is? Carmen. It is Carmen.

Sam: Ah, Carmen indeed, Bizet's most famous work is apparently, uh, considered to be the world's second most frequently performed opera, after only La Traviata.

The opera was originally received poorly because [00:22:00] opera goers of the time didn't expect to see portrayals of everyday people like Carmen, a Spanish Romani who works in a tobacco factory and smoked cigarettes and got into fights and, and things like that. But Tchaikovsky apparently definitely loved it.

Now did he and Bizet collaborate on

Michael: this, uh, on this work?

Sam: Yeah, no, I, I don't know that they ever met. And, and in fact, sadly Bizet did not survive to hear Tchaikovsky's prediction, let alone to see it come true because Bizet died at age 36, only three months after the premiere of his master work, but it lives on and not just in opera houses.

Cause at least two of the tunes from the opera are well known to even the most casual classical music fan. The March of the Toreadors has been featured on Sesame Street. So we all saw it as a song all about the letter L Yeah. And the

habanera. Which of course refers to Cuba has been on the Muppets show and in the movie up and themes from the score appeared all the way back in the 1976 version of the bad news bears.

I like the Cuba [00:23:00] reference because it's a Spanish Romani woman, uh, doing a Cuban song. In French. So, international opera all over the place.

Michael: Wonderful.

Sarah: Are we allowed to have you sing, Sam? Because I feel like you're just done. No, we can't. We can't afford it. Okay, okay, we can't afford it.

Michael: And that's nothing to do with the, uh, with the, with the music rights.

That's all to do with, uh, the writers in Sam's contract.

Sarah: Ah, yes. That's what it is. That's what it is. Sam.

Michael: Oh,

Sam: Conveniently forgotten about those writers.

Sarah: Well, Sam, in your research, you told me you found a little cool piece of trivia about Carmen.

Sam: I have indeed. Uh, and, and this was brought up to me because we happened to spot this movie on TV the other day.

The story of Carmen was made into a Broadway musical in the forties called Carmen Jones. Modern setting, an African American cast and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein using the music of Bizet. That musical was made into a 1954 movie with Harry Belafonte, Uh, Pearl Bailey, these are people I remember from my youth, and Dorothy Dandridge in the title role.

Here's a fun fact that wasn't the [00:24:00] trivia I was going for. Dorothy Dandridge was the first African American woman to be nominated for a Best Actress Oscar, and it was for this role. But the delicious bit of trivia is this. Dorothy Dandridge's singing parts were dubbed by none other than Marilyn Horne.

This was apparently Marilyn Horne's first big professional gig. But of course she went on to become one of America's great opera singers, so famous that she's been a Jeopardy response, you gotta love that. And coming full circle, Marilyn Horne herself ended up performing the role of Carmen years later at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

So what we have here is the only thing better than a cool story about a Jeopardy clue, which is a cool story about a Jeopardy clue that includes some neat

Michael: trivia. So the dreaded opera category has now become a dreaded category. Uh, but wait, there's more. Thank you for all of that, Sam. As the brother of an opera singer, my sister is an opera singer, a mezzo soprano.

Um, I actually really enjoy the opera material and may it forever find its way onto [00:25:00] the Jeopardy game board. And, uh, certainly in two, but wait, there's more.

Sarah: Not dreaded here among us hosting this podcast.

Michael: The much beloved opera

Sam: category.

Sarah: Well, it is now time for this week's host chat. An audience member asked, Ken, do you ever get nervous before the show?

Ken: I used to be, you know, even though I've been doing this for almost 20 years, I got extremely nervous having to do that job. Um, because, for one thing, it's harder, I'm not a broadcaster, and also Alex made it look very easy all that time, they were very big shoes. It's just, like, everything gets less nerve wracking with time, I guess, even, even this.

And the fact that we do, like, two hundred and something of these a year, you can't get stressed about every single one of these, you want it to be great, but There'll be another game coming up in half an hour.

Michael: Yeah, it's the conveyor belt nature of, uh, of Jeopardy. But I think that the, the important thing, and it's something that I really sort of, you know, try to instill is we've got to make every show [00:26:00] Feel like the first show for everyone.

So it, it, it never feels like a routine. So I need to work on getting Ken more nervous before every single show. I'm gonna have to, I'm gonna have to surprise him in his dressing room. I

Sarah: like that plan. Well, that brings us to the end of today's show. Be sure to tune in today as Eamon goes for a second win and join us back here next week for more game highlights.

We'll see you [00:27:00] [00:28:00] then.