

11.11.24 Inside J!

[00:00:00] From the Alex Trebek stage at Sony Picture Studios, this is Inside Jeopardy.

Sarah: Hello and welcome back to Inside Jeopardy, your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening in the world of Jeopardy. I'm Sarah Foss. I'm joined by our resident bon vivant and man about town, but he's right here in town.

Sam Buttrey, welcome to the pod.

Sam: Coming to you from the Inside Jeopardy! remote studio, located in the Inside Jeopardy! regular studio, shown here with the foam.

Sarah: Yeah, we don't even have to talk to you via Zoom or your computer. You're right here.

Sam: Great to be here in Culver City, the finest of all the cities in the country named Culver City, as far as I know.

Sarah: And this is our first video podcast.

Sam: Here we are. We got dressed up for this. Sarah's always dressed up. But generally I do it with a dress shirt and pajamas when I'm in the remote jeopardy.

Sarah: Oh, see, we never know what's going on on the bottom.

Sam: And you never will, my friend. And we never

Sarah: will, but I can verify nice dress pants today, everyone.

No pajamas necessary. [00:01:00] Now, Sam, not only are you here for the podcast, but of course we are about to tape the podcast. Champion's Wild Card and you will have a front row seat.

Sam: A front row seat to one of the most exciting days on the Jeopardy! calendar, Champion's Wild Card. We'll tape it over two days but it will come to you shortly.

Sarah, when can our fans expect to see that?

Sarah: Well, they're gonna see it in January. And we're going to announce the field for Champions Wildcard next week. And in doing that, we will obviously then also announce the field for Tournament of Champions. Because we'll know where the cutoff happened, who made TOC, who made Champions Wildcard.

And you were here last week when we taped Second Chance in J P T. Do you remember what that stands for now?

Sam: Jeopardy production time.

Sarah: I mean, you're a natural. And so you got to see those two weeks of second chance shows.

Sam: I did.

Sarah: Except you only got to see one week.

Sam: I was on jury duty for one, but I got to see one week of shows.

And I have to repeat something I've said earlier. If you get a chance to come down and watch the show live, do it. The tickets are free. It's fun. You can do a morning or an afternoon. [00:02:00] And it's just so much, uh, there is just so much excitement in the studio when the games are live. Maybe it's because I was a player, but a lot more adrenaline, I think, watching it live.

Now, you've seen thousands of shows, Sarah. Does it, does it ever get old? Does it ever get boring? It doesn't.

Sarah: It really doesn't, because you can never

I want to know though, what did you do, or what did you say, because you were released from jury duty like in a hot second.

Sam: It was actually just a happenstance. There were a hundred of us in a room and they called 85 names and said the rest of us could go. So I'm now free from jury duty for three years.

Not that I object to doing my civic duty, because I don't. And I encourage you to do your jury duty. Makes the system better.

Sarah: Yeah, well, you obviously called me Friday afternoon. You said, I got some good news and I got some bad news. The good news is, I don't even know if there was good news, but the bad news was that you, in fact, had to report on Monday, so you couldn't fly down as scheduled.

So we mustered along without you in the podcast last week. And then you let me know Monday morning, hey, I'm free. So [00:03:00] we got you down in time to see one day of Second Chance. I'm happy, I don't know if you've seen the comments on Reddit, but I think overall, people feel like It is a good field and that we picked 18 players who were deserving, of course, many more.

I would love to see back on the stage, but we only had 18 spots.

Sam: You know, there are complaints every year about the NCAA basketball tournament, omitting teams that maybe should have been given a shot at the dance. And in the same way, there were a lot of good players who might've made second chance, but the ones that you picked, I thought were great Jeopardy players.

And there was also an obvious sense of camaraderie on the stage. Um, that I think will be obvious when people watch the games in January.

Sarah: Well, at the end of this week, you know, I keep giving these running stats, but at the end of this week, we will have shot 166 episodes of Jeopardy, whether it's celebrity or pop culture or regular season Jeopardy.

So we actually just recorded the final for Celebrity Jeopardy over the weekend. So good, Sam.

Sam: Saturday taping. It's hard on you guys. I know. But consider for a minute. My, [00:04:00] my thing, I have to do a half hour podcast most weeks.

Sarah: No.

Sam: So that's like doing 156 episodes of Jeopardy! But easier.

Sarah: Well, but you bring it.

So it's very I do my best. Not that easy. But we did get a premiere date for Celebrity Jeopardy! So it's going to be on Wednesdays, 9, 8 central, debuting January 8th.

Sam: January 8th. Be sure to check local listings for times in your area. Do we still say that?

Sarah: I think you can.

Sam: I'm excited. I'm looking forward to Pop Culture Jeopardy, I'm looking forward to Celebrity Jeopardy, and I'm definitely looking forward to Second Chance and Champions Wildcard.

Sarah: Well, and we're less than a month away from Pop Culture, so that is coming. Of course, that's going to be streaming on Wednesday nights, starting December 4th, and each week we will drop three episodes, so you have a chance to watch three of those quarterfinal matches. They're so good. I just, I'm so excited for people to see pop culture Jeopardy.

Sam: I just, I'm very much looking forward to seeing the format. It's a way in which Jeopardy changes and yet stays up to date.

Sarah: That's how [00:05:00] we do it. Well, as we mentioned, we will be announcing the TOC field and the Champions Wild Card field. Next week on the pod, but let's get into last week's games because one person did notch his ticket to the T.

O. C. That is Greg Jolin, with a fifth victory. On Monday, Greg returned, going up against Lindsey and Brian. And after another strong performance secured his third win, this one in a runaway.

Sam: Very strong player in Greg. It's going to be hard to stop him. We've already revealed that he makes the tournament of champions and it was, uh, not much of a contest against two strong players who just couldn't get the buzzer going.

Greg had more correct answers than the other two put together. I think Brian or brain as he wrote on. He almost wrote on his podium.

Sarah: Yes, great artwork have to be thinking that maybe Brian could be considered for her. Best signature, but also best fashion. I mean, take a look at that outfit, the pink tie, the glasses, the pocket square.[00:06:00]

And on his first daily double, he said pretty pleased with sugar on top. Will you make me a true daily double Ken? Didn't work out for him. It

Sam: was incorrect. He was incorrect.

Sarah: Also, on this episode, we saw Maria Menounos, who is an ambassador for Stand Up to Cancer, and November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month.

Maria is actually a pancreatic cancer survivor as well, and whenever we have a chance to support them, obviously there is the Alex Trebek Fund to support pancreatic cancer that Gene Trebek has spearheaded. And just anytime we can bring awareness, we want to do that. November 8th was, of course, the anniversary of the passing of Alex.

It's been four years. Ken did a really great message. I don't know if you saw it on social. I

Sam: did see Ken's tribute and it's worth looking

Sarah: at. About one of his last memories with Alex. And, you know, I think we all cherish those moments that were some of our last memories that we didn't necessarily know.

Um, would be. But if you haven't had a chance to see it, check it out. And Ken, of course, caught up with our players after this game. [00:07:00] Let's hear what they had to say.

Ken: Congratulations Greg. That was a big win for you. But Brian, you put on the pressure. You found all three daily doubles and you you knew you had to wage your big

I would have liked to

Ken: put

a little more pressure

Ken: on.

It

was not your preferred amount of pressure. No. Now I would have liked to ratchet up a little bit. I'm sure Greg felt the pressure. Oh yeah, he was. I felt like

he was crushing me on the buzzer, and he got all the daily doubles, so that feels like, ooh, the game's out of my hands, kind of. I think, uh, this is actually one

Ken: dollar off your average, Greg.

To what do you attribute your decline?

Uh, I wasn't aggressive enough. I had the room to bet a little more, and I decided to just go for the nice, even number of 25, 000.

Ken: It's true. One more dollar, you would've had that. 75, 003, but it seems to be going well for you. The weekend didn't cool you off at

all. I was, I was concerned about that cause I was just like, Oh, I want to get back out and play again.

It's so fun. And clearly I'm doing well. So we

Ken: do see it sometimes. Often the Monday game is the one that the returning chap has the. The hardest time with

Sarah: in Tuesday's game, Greg [00:08:00] faced Priscilla and Chuck and thanks to a huge 10, 000 daily double, was able to secure another runaway win.

Sam: It shows you how well Greg was playing that he was ahead by more than 10, 000 when he bet 10, 000 on that daily double.

It made me wonder a little bit about his final jeopardy wager because he was so far ahead that he could have bet, say 15, 000 if he'd wanted and still guaranteed to win. But instead, he bet enough so that if he had lost, he would have dropped down to his preferred level, apparently, of about 25,

Sarah: 000. So good for Greg.

Yeah, and this game, unfortunately, A lot of people didn't see it. It was, of course, on election day. And a lot of people had preempted, uh, news and coverage of the election. So we're sorry if you didn't get to see this one. But Greg actually spoke on Reddit about this. And he said, you know, going into this whole experience, my wife warned me against guessing.

I think you need to do, you know, some level of educated guessing to win. So I certainly didn't expect to have a game with no incorrect responses. Actually, in his previous game, he did have zero. But in this one, he [00:09:00] did. He had three. So that's how Jeopardy goes.

Sam: Still three incorrect responses balanced by 27.

Correct. So he's obviously been playing very strongly and in all of the games we've seen him in so far.

Sarah: Well, heading into Wednesday, Greg showed no signs of slowing down facing Derek and Adrian. And despite not finding any of the daily doubles, he managed to secure another runaway win on the very last clue of the game.

And he is headed to the T. O. C.

Sam: Very exciting. It was interesting to see both of the other players get over 10,000 in a runaway, and it also reflected in Greg's Final Jeopardy wager. He could wager almost nothing and still guarantee his win. So just a reminder, the score after Final Jeopardy is not always indicative of how well a player has done.

If another player had been close to him, he would have had to bet a lot. So, another big win for Greg, sealing his ticket to the Tournament of Champions. We look forward to seeing him compete against the other players we've, uh, uh, seen get into that competition.

Sarah: Yeah, and he's 5 for 5 in Final Jeopardy, so that really, you know, has to be, I [00:10:00] would say that would give him confidence heading into the TOC, although when asked about, oh my goodness, how do you feel you're going to see Adriana and Isaac and Drew and champions like that in the TOC?

And he was like, I don't feel good because, uh, they're probably all going to beat me.

Sam: It is very intimidating to watch other people play Jeopardy! at a high level, even if you're pretty good at Jeopardy! yourself. Because there are always clues they get that you wouldn't have, and even if there are some you get that they didn't get, that, uh, just was never enough for me to get that confidence builder that I, that I was always hoping for.

Sarah: Well, on Thursday, Sam, we witnessed an exciting and a very close game between Greg and Sam. And Susan and Sammy, Greg and Sammy were battling it out. And then Susan's stummy, with the help of a 3, 000 Daily Double, manages to close the gap, but entered final in third place. There she was the only player to come up with the correct response and seals an exciting come from behind win.

Sam: That was a very exciting [00:11:00] game. Susan had almost been an afterthought as Sammy and Greg battled it out. She had only 10 correct responses, but she pulled within range. The Daily Double definitely helped. And she had a big hit on Final Jeopardy to take home the prize.

Sarah: Well, and Greg may have been leaving us now as a champion, but he's already told us he's getting that catio.

It's

Sam: critical to get a catio. And he's

Sarah: not the first champion to talk about this. Our

Sam: listeners will know that a catio is an outdoor enclosed space for your cats. And by golly, I have a catio. Don't you really? Or rather, my wife constructed it. And our cats are grateful every day. They go out there and watch the world.

I also have a hummingbird feeder, which we call a catio. You know, every

Sarah: time we pot, I learned things about you. I was just going to talk about Veronica, who was in the T. O. C. A finalist a few years ago. She talked about the catio, but no, right here in the pot, Sam Butchery has one.

Sam: We have a catio and we have cats.

It'd be weird if we didn't.

Sarah: Well, Greg did talk about now. He really understands when you're a five game champion and how many of those games have fallen on the same day. Just [00:12:00] what? Stamina that takes. But let's take a look at Greg stats. He's got five wins, 135, 002, three of them being runaways, 155 correct responses.

He's five for six in Final Jeopardy after missing this last one and five for five in daily doubles. So I think that will allow him to feel pretty confident going into the T. O. C. I also want to mention Sammy Sanchez's tattoo.

Sam: Sammy Sanchez? We didn't get to see this on air, but he has, uh, Let's take

Sarah: a look.

Sam: We can see it on video. Yes. This is a video podcast. This is. For those of you that didn't know. There it is. It's the outline of California with the all important Jeopardy! J! Exclamation point. I love it. Smack in there. Now, I looked up where Sammy is from. It turns out it's Kansas City, Missouri. At least for the moment.

Sarah: Mm

Sam: hmm. So, uh, there must be some California story there that I do not know. Well, he played

Sarah: Jeopardy in California. Maybe it's just his favorite memory of his trip to California.

Sam: It's certainly my favorite memory of my trip to California, Sarah.

Sarah: All right. [00:13:00] Well, uh, someone did ask that Sammy had a good performance.

They were wondering, will Sammy be? eligible for the next second chance. And we do kind of want to clarify this because although we did release the names last week, the eligibility period was still open. It just so happened that the 18 names we selected had all played before we were actually going to tape second chance.

So Sammy was certainly in there. I can tell you he was in the conversation, but at the end of the day, he didn't make our top 18. But, uh, he You see, we're forget Sammy, especially with that tattoo.

Sam: No, nothing to be ashamed of. He had a strong game. I hope he enjoyed his time. I would like to point out there was a Steve Martin reference in that game.

Oh, how did I forget that? They described him as an actor, playwright, banjoist, and much more. And I am none of those things. I'm not an actor, playwright, banjoist, or much more than you see here.

Sarah: Well, I had a chance to talk with Greg after his, his loss, but of course the victory of sealing [00:14:00] that spot in the TOC.

Let's take a listen to his interview in the winner's circle. Greg Dolan, congratulations. You are a five day Jeopardy champion. How are you feeling right now?

It's just still kind of surreal. I came in with no expectations whatsoever. I literally told my family, I want to not embarrass myself. I don't want to be the person who just keeps guessing and goes negative 5, 000.

I'm not in final Jeopardy. So it's kind of wild that it came this far.

Sarah: Now with five wins, we know we're going to see you in the tournament of champions. What does that mean to you?

The tournament of champions. That's what you want to get to. That's where all the big names come from. And the fact that I'm going to be there, even if I lose in the first round, is like a dream come true.

Sarah: Well, it was pretty funny when Ken first asked you, you know, what do you think about meeting all these champions in the TLC season? Well, I don't really want to. They're all gonna beat me.

I honestly feel that way. It's different when you're on the stage. Like, you know, you play along at home and I watched, you know, Adriana drew Isaac, all these people.

I'm like, Oh, wow, I [00:15:00] don't feel like I'm at this level. Like, but I get up, I got up on the stage and I don't know where the answers were coming from, but they came over 100, 000 six figures. What are you going to do with all that cash? You know, I gave the fun answer on the show, and it is true. We do have a lot of home improvement projects.

But honestly, just like so many other people, it will be a huge relief off my shoulders. The student loans will be gone.

Sarah: Well, that will be a lovely feeling. And of course, more to come. Congratulations. Thank you very

Sam: much. It is amazing that you look at the field of Tournament of Champions and realize that quite a lot of those really good Jeopardy players are going to be knocked out in the first round.

That's just the way tournaments go.

Sarah: Yeah, unless those players, some of them are seated. So I'm going

Sam: to go ahead and do that. Oh, well, do tell Sarah. Can you review it for next week? Let's save it for next

Sarah: week. But you think about Greg? I have

Sam: to say is that he's one of the very few players whose hair is far superior to that of Jeopardy producer Sarah Whitcomb falls.

Sarah: I agree. Greg is bringing it and I like a little competition in the hair department. [00:16:00] Well, we closed out the week with our champion Susan facing Ross and Rachel, who would become our new champion in a game similar to Thursday. Only player Correct. And final comes from behind third to first place.

Sam: Yes, this game was a bit of a surprise to me because Susan, who had only 10 correct responses in Thursday's game, had 27 in this game, led the way statistically in attempts and buzzes, but nonetheless was only in a tie at the end of double jeopardy.

Sarah: Well, and I just have to point out, it's Susan, it's Ross, it's Rachel, it's a classic love triangle from Friends, Ken pointed it out, people on social pointed it out, so I think that's why all three of these players had such great scores heading into final, but then, let's talk about the wagering.

Sam: Let's talk about the wagering.

So Ross, who hadn't, I think, Realistically played as well as Susan was able to fight back with the big daily double and end up in an exact tie with Susan at [00:17:00] the end of Double Jeopardy. So going into Final Jeopardy, you have to ask, what is the right wagering strategy? First of all, look at Rachel, who's only a little bit behind.

Right. So she has to figure that those two are going to bet everything. At least, at least that feels like the right move. So I think her bet ought to be just to get above their mutual total of five. 600 maybe just by a dollar or two. That means that if she's wrong, she'll drop down into the 10, 000 range.

So I think Ross is in the position of having to bet it all. He almost knows that Susan is going to bet it all. So the only way to stick with her is for him to bet it all. And if they both get it right, he'll have to worry about the tiebreaker. Now, Susan had a strong game, good buzzing, but I just was a little befuddled by Ross's bet of not betting at all.

He left 10 on the table. Um, a bit of a surprise, but it didn't matter because neither Susan nor Ross got the right answer. Rachel emerges as the champion.

Sarah: Yeah, she wagered more than maybe necessary, but it didn't matter. It worked out and she's headed into next week as a champion. But let's hear how she [00:18:00] was feeling right after that exciting win.

Ken: Rachel, how does that feel? Awesome.

Really excited.

Ken: Congratulations. You seem pretty relaxed in the game. What's your secret of feeling at ease on the Alex Trebek stage? Oh, I don't know, because

it's not how

Ken: I'm feeling inside. I see. Very nervous. Let's talk about final. Uh, why did you go with Americo Vespucci?

Because I knew that that was the answer. Ah! Wow.

I feel like that's a Leibowitzian answer. That's what she would say if she were here.

That's why she's my, she's my idol.

Sarah: When you know it, you know it. Right, Sam?

Sam: And she knew it. Good call by Rachel.

Sarah: Well, we've come to, I think, my new favorite part of the podcast.

Sam: Wait, what time is it, Sarah?

Sarah: It's time for, but wait, two T's.

There's more. What do you have for us this week?

Sam: This week's clue comes from Thursday's game in the category South American Geography. South American Geography 800. [00:19:00]

Ken: The man made floating islands of the Uros people can be found on this big lake between Peru and Bolivia. Greg? What is Lake Titicaca? Right.

Sam: Ah yes, Lake Titicaca. The name Titicaca was made up by a fourth grade class in Topeka. That makes sense. No, that's not true. Apparently the origin of the name is uncertain, but one thing that is certain is that this is a very cool lake. It's the largest lake in South America. It's the highest navigable lake in the world at about 12, 500 feet.

It's in the top 20 worldwide in area and not just Incan but pre Incan ruins have been found on the shore and even at the bottom of the lake. So how cool is that?

Sarah: Very cool. But what about the floating islands?

Sam: Yeah, yeah. So like other large lakes, Lake Titicaca has regular islands. But there are also, as Ken says, artificial islands constructed out of a local reed called Totora, which is used by the natives, the Uros people, for houses, boats, food, also even traditional medicine.

Now these islands are of different sizes, but might typically be, say, 50 by 50 feet, and 6 to [00:20:00] 12 feet thick. And there are more than 60 of these that support a community, some of whom live on the mainland, but a community of about 1, 300 people.

Sarah: And why live on the island, Sam?

Sam: Why live on the islands? Well, hundreds of years ago, the Uros were under pressure from the Incans.

The Incans were expanding their empire and the Uros formed these islands so that they could launch them into the lake for safety. And they were often many miles offshore. But in the late 1980s, a big storm persuaded them to move the islands close to shore. And that's where they remain today. And slowly the community is evolving from the traditional life of fish and reeds to a tourism and more modern life.

The main island even has a radio transmitter. They have an FM radio and you can apparently find lodgings on the islands. On Airbnb, that's where we've come. And they have solar panels. So someday maybe the Inside Jeopardy Remote Studio may be coming to you from Lake Titicaca.

Sarah: I love it. I can see you there now.

Sam: Practically. I'm still on Airbnb making the arrangements.

Sarah: All [00:21:00] right, perfect. Well, from butt weight there's more to our host chat. This week an audience member asked, Ken, What is it like to be a part of the Jeopardy! community and all of the super fans?

Ken: I think a lot about Jeopardy! fans because that was my relationship with the show for many years just as a kid growing up watching and even when I was a contestant I kind of felt like I was just a fan whose, whose dream had come true.

And honestly, I kind of feel that now as host. So I'm really like, I'm constantly amazed as a contestant, as a host, just by the devotion our fans have for this show. And it doesn't surprise me because that's how I feel about Jeopardy, but it's always gratifying that there's millions of other people who feel just as strongly, you know, to the degree that they will plan their evening around it.

Don't call, don't call dad during Jeopardy. You know, it's. It's appointment TV for a lot of people. It means a lot to them, and we care a lot when we make the show.

Sarah: Well, Sam, that brings us to the end of our first video podcast on YouTube. What do you think? How did it go?

Sam: I think it's great. [00:22:00] The video looks great.

The studio looks great. You and I look great. That's the important thing. I will say, uh, somebody on Reddit complained that we had called for people to send questions. Commented. Maybe they

Sarah: just commented.

Sam: Commented, maybe. Yes. Send your questions, we said, to InsideJeopardyPodcast at gmail. com, and then, they said, we didn't do anything with the questions.

Well, honestly, we didn't get very many. So here's your chance, if you're watching or listening, send your questions to InsideJeopardyPodcast at gmail. com. And if they're charming and witty like us, we will answer them on the air. We

Sarah: sure will, and we will be back next week. We're going to reveal the Champions wildcard field along with the TOC field.

You won't want to miss it. We'll see you next week.