

9.23.24 Inside J!

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

Michael: Ah, there he is. Johnny on the Axe. Hello, welcome back to Inside Jeopardy, your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening in the world of Jeopardy. By the way, if you like Johnny on the Axe, let's face it, if you have a pulse, you like Johnny on the Axe.

You're gonna love the pop culture Jeopardy music. There's just a lot of Johnny on the axe. He's really upgraded his instruments, yeah. The new music, the new variation of the theme that we've developed for pop culture Jeopardy. Anyway, more about that later. I'm Michael Davies here today. with producer Sarah Foss and joining us on the other line on Zoom, not the old man in the middle here in the studio in Culver City as he's pointed out.

We are, we are bereft without you, but it's our great friend Sam Buttrey.

Sam: Coming to you live from the Inside Jeopardy remote studio in an abandoned government bunker hundreds of feet below the surface [00:01:00] of Pacific Grove, California.

Michael: Wonderful. Very good, Sam. Um, okay. A lot of stuff going on in the world of Jeopardy.

Sarah: There sure is. It's a busy week for us. Of course, we're taping shows today and tomorrow. And then we're going to do a little television show on the set, which we'll tell you a little bit more about later. And then we're heading to Chapman University. We're getting the headlines. I J team. We're hitting the road.

Michael: Oh, yeah. Proud parent. Class off. I have to add that up 20. I don't know what year my daughter JJ is in the film school at Dodge College down there. We have a great relationship with Chapman at Jeopardy. Not really because my daughter's there, but Sony in general. It's very close to us here in Culver City.

We have a lot of interns. from Dodge College, their film school right here on the Sony lot. And they have this amazing relationship also with Morehouse and with Howard University. And so we're doing an event. with Inside Jeopardy

with Chapman, but it's going to be live streamed, uh, straight over to Morehouse and Howard [00:02:00] as well.

Sarah: Yeah, three HBCUs in Atlanta, one in Washington, D. C., and of course, it's going to have all the bells and whistles of an Inside Jeopardy live on tour podcast. Ken Jennings will be there. We're Writer Marcus Brown will be there, and nine day champion Isaac Hirsch is going to join us. Plus, Ken will be playing that interactive game, and the cool thing about Interactive Jeopardy is these students can be playing along from Atlanta or D.

C., everyone's going to be competing, and we're going to see which college or university kind of comes up with the championship.

Michael: Wonderful. And this is the beginning. of our big push into colleges. We had a meeting about you this week, Sam.

Sarah: We did. We had

Michael: a big Sam meeting, uh, over at Sony all about how are we going to best utilize Sam.

And, uh, producer Lindsay Collip came up with a great, uh, name for you, which is that we should call you our Sam bassador. Which we like the Sam bassador. You can be our Sam bassador to the, uh, American colleges.

Sam: I will start printing the business cards right away.

Michael: Okay. Very good. Ambassador. Excellent. [00:03:00] Uh, my obsession this week has been, uh, you know, I'm trying to rescue a dog.

This is my, uh, big thing. And so I'm being, and I thought this would be me interviewing dogs. It's actually not, it's the other way around. I am being interviewed by dog rescues to see, to see, uh, to see where I tick the box. And of course you have to sort of write down what you do and like all those kinds of things.

And so I have, um, put down there that I'm a television producer. And one of the shows I do is jeopardy. There is a point so far. I've had five dog rescue meetings in every single one of the meetings. At some point, it has come up how much all of their dogs love watching Final Jeopardy. It's the Final Jeopardy music seems to really work.

There must be something

Sarah: resonates. There must be something

Michael: in the way that in the way that that music works that appeals particularly to the canine ear.

Sarah: And I want to know, does the Jeopardy! edge help you? Are you getting rejected? Are we feeling like, you know, this is helping you?

Michael: I have not heard back from anybody yet.

Sarah: Well, I love that you're bringing this up because actually today, September 23rd, is [00:04:00] our rescue pup Piper's sixth birthday. Wow, congratulations. We actually rescued Piper exactly five years ago from one of these incredible shelters. And just like you said, Michael, we all had to come in, they had to interview you.

My husband and me and the kids. And so I left this for you and I hope that our dogs can one day meet and tell the stories of how they were rescued. Does

Sam: Piper love the Jeopardy! Think music? You know, I

Sarah: would love to tell you, Sam, that my family just can't wait to watch hours and hours of Jeopardy! at home.

But if I'm being honest, it doesn't get turned on too much. So Piper, not quite as familiar with that popular jingle. Yeah, I've

Michael: said this before, when I, uh, when I took the interim job, uh, running Jeopardy, and I was sort of leaving very quickly from New York to get on a plane, and I explained to my daughters that I was going to go and be the interim head of Jeopardy, uh, they said, what?

The show that's on in the back of taxicabs? They had no idea that it was even a television program. They just thought it was a, a taxicab feature in New York City.

Sarah: This is why we need our Sam Basseter to get out to those college campuses, Sam.

Michael: It's very, very [00:05:00] true. I can't believe it, but in Jeopardy production time, in J P T We are starting to prepare for the postseason.

Sarah: Yes, our favorite time of the year. I know many people are. We're less excited, but let's be honest. This year is going to be a much shorter postseason, just 10 to 11 weeks. And so we've really laid out exactly when it's going to happen. We think it's the optimum time. And our qualifying period this year will be 28 weeks of regular programming, obviously a little shorter than what we would ideally like based on some of the.

Modifications we had to make last year with the strike, but essentially October 2nd, that tape day will be the cutoff. So any of the contestants competing up until October 2nd at the end of day will be in the running for upcoming postseason and everyone after that will go into the pool for the next TLC next season.

Michael: Why would anybody not be excited for the postseason in this wonderful representative meritocracy that we have here at Jeopardy? It's representative [00:06:00] meritocracy, did you understand? That's like my new thing. I love this word. And so, in the representative meritocracy that is Jeopardy, what we ultimately want is to see the very, very best compete with each other at the end of the postseason.

That requires an incredibly strong regular season, a robust regular season. This year, what did you say? We have about 20, 28 weeks, 28 weeks of, of, of regular season leading the post season in the future. This will, we're going to catch up with ourselves and it will be 35 to 36 weeks of regular season play before we get into the post season.

But this is what we want. This 10 to 11 week. postseason at the end of a 35 week regular season this year. 28 weeks. I think it's going to be tremendous. I can't wait for it.

Sarah: Well, you know, I've been talking about the second chancers for so many weeks. I have so many second chancers and only two weeks to get just 18.

In, you know, we'll have two one week competitions of nine. So that's going to be very, very competitive. And Michael is thrilled to hear that for the champions wildcard this year, we're bringing back the [00:07:00] old 10 game, the one you won the professor's tournament with that structure, five quarter

finals, four top scorers among non winners all advance play nine people in the semis.

And then we have a two day. Total Point of Fair. Work for Sam Buttry. It's going to put one person, one of our champions, into the TOC this year.

Sam: Bring back the two day Total Point of Fair. I'm happy to hear it. I love that you guys are letting the Jeopardy fans know exactly what's happening because this is exciting.

Michael: Yeah, I was talked into. I am, Sam, you and I haven't discussed this before, but I'm not a big fan of wild cards. I think everyone knows that. I don't like the wild cards, but as sort of a tip to also the representative meritocracy that is, uh, that is jeopardy. This is not an autocracy, Sarah and other members of the team have taught me into, we are going to have wild cards in, uh, In Wildcard.

Sarah: In Champion's Wildcard. In Champion's Wildcard. Yes, it's in the name.

Michael: Not in the TOC. Not in the TOC, but it's gonna, it's gonna come back there. And we'll see. Maybe I'm completely and utterly wrong.

Sam: I

Michael: just think I'm going to spend

Sam: [00:08:00] all day saying Representative Meritocracy for no real reason. That's good. I know.

I know, it really rolls off

Sarah: the tongue once you hear Michael say it.

Sam: Yeah. And

Sarah: again, not ever. Every champion this season will make it into champions wild card. It's really a numbers game. So that's going to be something that we're, we're crunching the numbers. Carlos, my statistician is already, uh, crunching many, many numbers.

So we'll be able to let you all know who is moving into the post season after the qualifying. Competition has ended that period on October 2nd. Alright,

anything else, Michael, before we get into the highlights? Or Sam, do you have anything to report?

Michael: From the bunker.

Sam: From the government, uh, abandoned government bunker.

No, I'm very excited about the post season details being released. I'm also excited about this past week's games.

Sarah: We kicked off the week with a new champion, Aiden Orzak, who, despite not finding any of the Daily Doubles, was able to take the lead into final and was correct to defeat one day champion Evan Sattel.

Well, I think my favorite thing about this game was Evan [00:09:00] sharing that he had an insanity. Encyclopedic memory of Spongebob Squarepants. And so during the game, of course, our writers and researchers, they're busy with the material in the game, but they were also coming up with some, some famous Spongebob lines so that we could then test Evan at the end.

And sure enough, in the post game, he had some great one liners to test Evan with. And he said, first go like this, spin around, stop. And Evan said, bring it around town. And then Ken said, hear me, Krabs, when I discover the formula for Krabby Patties, I'll run you out of business, I Evan says, went to college.

It was so good. If you didn't see it, check out our socials. I mean, he was not kidding. Really, he knows his SpongeBob.

Michael: Wow. I don't know SpongeBob at all. So that was all gobbledygook to me. Okay, on Tuesday, Aiden returned and secured an exciting come from behind win after a strong fight against challenger Will Yancey, who appeared to be running away with it.

Aiden entered final in second place and was [00:10:00] correct. And Will, unfortunately, was eliminated. Was not.

Sarah: Oh, but this, I don't think is going to be the last time we say Will. He's, he's on our second chance file. 21 correct responses, 12, 000 at the end of the Jeopardy round. Awesome purple suit. I think my favorite thing about Will was during the rehearsal game, he said, you know, it's hotter than two rats humping in a wool sock out here.

And Jimmy McGuire, our stage manager said, that's great. Can I steal that? And he's, Will said, you can have that brother. Sorry, I know I'm not supposed to say that on TV. Love will

Sam: quite a character. I'd look forward to seeing him again. If you're one of the choices for second chance.

Michael: Yeah, you'll start to understand, uh, Sam that Sarah will posit about 1500 players for second chance.

Almost every second and third place finisher on the regular show throughout. And so when we actually come to do the list, all the people she spoke about on inside jeopardy, uh, not necessarily possibly

Sarah: make it because we only have

Michael: 18

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

Ken: I guess it just occurred to me, you two [00:11:00] are both teachers, and that must have helped with a YA literature Final Jeopardy, right? Do your kids keep you young and, uh, help with your Percy Jackson knowledge? I read the books when they came out, like, when I was a

kid. I did not read it when I was a kid. I was

Ken: Well, this, yeah, this makes me feel very old.

I just realized, cause like, my kids read them and I was like, what is this? Well, we now have a second chance tournament, Will. I, I think you might know that. And somebody with like a five figure lead at the end of the first round is not a bad candidate. Do you feel like now you're going to get really into the Percy Jackson books?

Oh, I know what my weak areas are, yeah.

Ken: Study up on Chrissy

Jackson. Modern pop culture, yeah, bone up on that.

Sarah: Well, on Wednesday, we witnessed another come from behind win, where Chris Lindsey fought to stay in contention heading into final, where he was the only player to come up with the correct response.

Sam: Chris is from the town next door to mine, Pacific Grove and Carmel High Schools are big rivals, but I was delighted to see Chris do well, even though he struggled in [00:12:00] the early round. Came back to be within reach of Sam, who also had an excellent game.

Sarah: We did show a Ken bloop. It's hard to imagine that Ken ever makes any mistakes, Michael.

Michael: Never seen it.

Sarah: I know, but in this one completes the song titles 2000. He said, paint it black and back to blank. He was supposed to say, paint it blank. We put that bloop on social people love to see it. Of course, then we had to throw out the clue and replace it. A lot of people wanting to know about those extra clues, and usually our writers prepare one or two in each category for these rare occurrences when Ken might make a mistake.

But it was good news for the audience. Ken said, well, now we get to pause for some questions because I don't know how to say the word blank.

Michael: Okay. On Thursday, it was Jen Feldman who secured the win after steadily building her score throughout and taking a small lead into final where she was correct.

We're

Sam: going to talk a little bit more about Jen's final Jeopardy wagering strategy when we discuss Friday's game, but she had an unusually [00:13:00] small bet in this game as well. And had Chris bet it all, he got it right and would have won.

Sarah: Well, you know, I'm going to bring up Father Steve Jakabowski, perhaps a second chance candidate, 17 correct responses.

Ken said to Father Steve, you are by far the priest that looks the most like Paul Rudd. And Father Steve said, I will take that as a compliment. If you've seen online, a lot of attention to Father Steve about, you know, I don't want to say

this out of anything other than I'm respecting him, but a lot of people are saying he is a hot priest.

Hot

Michael: priest calendar. Yeah, hot priest calendar. Certainly a candidate.

Sarah: Well, after the game, Ken told Jen that he was particularly impressed by one of her responses. Let's take a listen.

Ken: Jen, I was impressed that you had ephemeral because I don't know if you remember in Jeopardy Masters, but no less than James Holzhauer missed a clue about ephemera, a daily double.

So in a way. You're kind of a better player than James Holzhauer. To quote that earlier [00:14:00] category, G

W O A T. There you go.

Ken: The quote right here. I guess we did spot you hemorrhha. We didn't give James, we didn't give James half the word. But still, that was a great gig.

Sarah: And now, a quick word from our sponsor.

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Sign up for your 1 per month trial period at [Shopify.com slash Jeopardy](https://www.shopify.com/slash/Jeopardy). All lowercase. Go to [Shopify.com slash Jeopardy](https://www.shopify.com/slash/Jeopardy) to upgrade your selling today. [Shopify.com slash Jeopardy](https://www.shopify.com/slash/Jeopardy). Now, back to Inside Jeopardy. Well, Jen returned on Friday, took an early lead in Double Jeopardy. She maintained that lead heading into final, but it was a triple stumper in final.

Jen, with [00:15:00] an unconventional wager, secured that victory heading into the weekend as a Jeopardy champion.

Sam: It was an unexpected wager by Jen, who looked like she was betting to cover Sarah's amount if Sarah were to double. Rather than, uh, taking care of what Santosh might do if he bet it all and got it right.

Michael: Yeah. If you're a fan of unconventional wagering, let me just take this opportunity to, uh, give an advanced promo for pop culture jeopardy, uh, coming to Amazon later in the year. That we really did see maybe. Sometimes we worried that if there were three people on a team, that they might collaborate and, and come up with, with ways to game the system.

Yes. They certainly came up with something. It wasn't necessary to game the system.

Sarah: Yes. I love that. That was a very accurate tease there.

Michael: Yeah.

Sarah: Prime video coming soon. Well, Ken spoke with Jen about her wager after the game. Let's listen.

Ken: I'm interested in the wager there, Jen, because you had a pretty sizable lead and you wagered small enough that if Santosh doubled up, am I right?

He would have won that game. I couldn't

name [00:16:00] any island chain. I had Aleutian written down and then I was like, so I just wanted enough to try to get second place.

Ken: I see. You were, you were not feeling confident about island chain. Not enough

Ken: and just

playing it

Ken: safe. And you would have been very close to locked, I think, if not for literary title.

That

was tough. That daily, I had it right at the end. I

Ken: mean, we're having you add through two, three digit numbers in your head. I like

how you said, not in time, but you got it right. Cause that makes me feel a little, I don't think my students judge me less. It's like, all right, it just took her too much time.

Ken: Oh, is there a lot of pressure as a teacher on Jeopardy? You think? Maybe a little, big audience. Sarah, did you have fun today? You seem very, uh, excited.

I am very excited to be here. I mean, I, the lovely people who were kind enough to come with me also know that being in this close of proximity to you is probably a lifetime dream of mine, so that's just been really nice to get to

Ken: fulfill that.

I'm either touched or creeped out. You can pick that first one, that's fine. I am very touched. Thank you so much. Are you a Jeopardy fan from way back?

I am. I remember watching your original run [00:17:00] and I remain in awe of it. Having been here today makes me even more impressed by it.

Sarah: I love to think that for any of our contestants, even coming in third, the chance to play with the GOAT, Ken Jennings, means you are winning.

All right, it is now time for this week's But wait, with two Ts, there's more! Sam, you took a look at the clues from last week. Which one stood out to you the most?

Sam: This week's coolest clue, I think, told a story I had never heard before. It came in Wednesday's game in the category The Historical Husgau. You gotta like that already.

Ken: After being arrested, this OG player used a Bible and a bowl of pasta in his 1756 escape from the Leds, a Venetian husgau. Sam. Who's Casanova? You got it!

Sam: Well, Sam had no problem with that. I love this clue, which befuddled with pasta. I had never heard that before. But it did clue you in a bit with OG Player and Venice.

The name Casanova now refers to any man with, uh, let's say [00:18:00] romantic liaisons. But the real Casanova was at various times a violinist, a soldier, an alchemist, a financier, a professional gambler, a preacher, a lottery director. A librarian and even a spy in his life of adventure and travel. His multi volume autobiography is considered to be a mostly accurate depiction of the Europe of his day.

But before he wrote that, he wrote a whole book about his escape from the Leds. This prison, which is on the top floor of the Doge's palace in Venice, got its name from the lead tiles that made the prisoners freeze in winter. And bake in summer. This was not the only time Casanova found himself in prison.

And many of his activities, I have to say, would be unacceptable today. But in addition to everything else, Casanova translated the Iliad into Italian. He met Voltaire. And he even wrote a proto science fiction novel about a race of small people living in the center of the Earth. So, one way or another, Casanova had a remarkable life.

Michael: Yeah. Giacomo Casanova. Uh, whatever. I have a young friend, Giacomo. I always refer to him as [00:19:00] Giacomo Casanova. Um, a great life. Uh, sounds like a sort of a, a telegraph, uh, obituary. I always love, love the obituaries in the, in the Daily Telegraph. Unfortunately, I wasn't around in 1795 or 1798, whenever it was that, that Casanova passed.

But yeah, interesting. I love that.

Sam: Are you making an age joke there, Michael? No, I'm not. That's all I get from Jennings is age jokes.

Michael: Yeah, no, I don't think we're that far away from, I don't think, I don't think I'd be on very solid ground making age jokes because I'm not sure how far away we are from each other, Sam.

So, um, I regard myself as an old along with the rest.

Sarah: Ah, all right. Well, speaking of Ken and his comments towards Sam, it's time for this week's host chat. An audience member asked him, who controls the time's up button?

Ken: Oh yeah, so I didn't know this till I started hosting, but over the years when you heard the boop, boop, boop, boop.

When, uh, like, a contestant would time out. That was just Alex hitting a button. Like, like, he would be like, Boop, boop, boop, boop. Oh, I'm sorry. Looks like you're out of time. Or [00:20:00] if it looked like they might have it, he would be like, Uh, uh, uh. Uh, I bumped it accidentally last week and I got in trouble. I had to re read a clue.

Really, they should take away my button. It happens in the booth now.

Sarah: We give no power to Ken.

Michael: Yeah, like so many things at Jeopardy! is I, I struggled when I joined the show to sort of figure out Well, what is the precedent? How have we judged decisions like this in the past? And it became very obvious that it was usually Alex who judged the decision and whatever Alex said went and was not always entirely consistent with each other, but it was entirely consistent with how Alex felt, uh, that day.

Okay. That wraps up today's show. We're going to be back next week with more game highlights. And be sure to tune in today to see if Jen Feldman can become our first three day champion of season 41. See you all next week. Bye Sam. Bye Sam. See [00:21:00] [00:22:00] [00:23:00] ya.