

Inside Jeopardy! 6.5.25

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

Ah, I'm alive. Johnny Gilbert has brought me back to life. Hello. Welcome back to Inside Jeopardy, your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening in the world of Jeopardy. I'm Michael Davies and I'm joined today by.

Producer, Sarah Foss.

Sarah: Here we are on YouTube. If you're watching.

Michael: Yeah.

Sarah: On all the places. If you're listening and you know, we're doing this monthly pod now. Yeah. And you know, a little different cadence, but a lot to talk about because

Michael: for now we're doing it monthly for now. This may change at some point in the future.

Sarah: Yes. I like change. Yeah. I'm good with change.

Michael: Yeah.

Sarah: But people have been talking about the fact that, you know, just this past week, June 2nd. It was the time that Ken first became a Jeopardy champion 21 years ago, back in 2004. Hard to believe. It's still the story I love so much, the, the real American dream.

Who could have known [00:01:00] that a 10-year-old watching on the Air Force Armed Forces Network would end up being our host.

Michael: Yeah. Japanese changed so many lives and, uh, perhaps none more than Ken Jennings. Yourself, Sarah force me certainly my life. Yes. Yeah, a lot of people.

Sarah: Well, Ken Jennings, I don't know if anyone has caught the new Happy Gilmore two trailer.

Michael: Oh, wow.

Sarah: We made the trailer, Michael.

Michael: I haven't seen it yet.

Sarah: Well, it just was released last weekend at Tuda. Uhhuh. Netflix is Big Tum.

Michael: Yeah, tum.

Yeah.

Sarah: Yeah, they're big event. Yeah. They released the, the live, the new trailer. It's quick. You see Ken, very quickly. But the point is there's so many cameos in this film and we are happy to officially announce.

The Jeopardy will be a part of Happy Gil War II coming out July 25th on Netflix, and we'll have a special category leading up to that as well.

Michael: Okay, so in JAT. Mm-hmm. Tell me where we are because in JPT we finished producing for the season.

Yes.

As, uh. I said to, uh, jeopardy alum Roger Craig today, who I checked in with.

I said, this is the most terrifying time of year for my [00:02:00] staff. 'cause this is when I sit around without jeopardy to produce it's dangerous and just new ideas.

Sarah: Yeah.

Michael: Uh, to dangerous,

Sarah: dangerous time. Okay. So enact upon the world in JAT Yeah. We've had two recent three game champions, Uhhuh. So what we don't know is, does that mean they're in the TOC.

Does that mean they're in Champion's Wild card? We have to have more weeks of shows before that can be determined. But we had Jeff Barnes. Yep. Great contestant from Washington DC and also Brendan. Ow.

Yeah,

he got quite a lot of a stir because for the first time ever. Johnny Gilbert introduced him as a stay at home son so much that even the Wall Street Journal picked up on this.

Yeah. You know, they were doing a story of how there are a lot of recent graduates who are not employed. In fact, just last week we saw one on Jeopardy and you know, when he was asked, when Brenda was asked by the Wall Street Journal, what do you hope the other stay at Home Sons take away from your success on Jeopardy?

He said, it can get a little dark at times when you're just. Like, what am I doing? I'm just at home. But I would tell people to [00:03:00] keep the faith, hang in there and hey, maybe study for Jeopardy.

Michael: Yeah. Uh, actress Carrie Preston shared a photo of her framed Jeopardy clue, uh, that we send out to people when they're mentioned, uh, on Jeopardy.

And it sparked a Reddit thread. Does Jeopardy make souvenirs for people referenced in clues? Someone joke, this is officially the only reason I'd ever want to be famous. And we do. We have a whole. Process we do, uh, administered by you, Sarah Foss.

Sarah: But it's not one of those like, send us an email and you get a clue.

No, we actually go through each of the games. You get a clue,

Michael: you get a clue. You get a clue. Yes, you get a clue. We're not

Sarah: Oprah. Uh, but we do go through all of the games ahead of time and we just kind of pick out people who maybe we haven't featured in a clue before or someone that we haven't reached out to previously.

And we do send them a clue like this. Oftentimes when we go and shoot with our celebrities. We will go into the database and find out how many times they have been mentioned in a clue, we'll oftentimes find their very first clue. Wow.

And frame that and present it to them. And time and time again, the biggest celebrities will say, you know, it [00:04:00] wasn't until my parents saw me on Jeopardy that I really felt like I made it.

So it's a great moment.

Michael: Uh, two things. Yes. One, uh, I got a text this week from Karine, Jean Pire. Okay. Who was mentioned in a absolutely. So excited. It, it, you know, former, uh, with a beautiful

Sarah: picture.

Michael: Yeah. Press Secretary, uh, under Joe Biden. And, uh, she was very excited to be featured in Clue. And you mentioned that the biggest celebrities, just a word out there, if, if Emma Stone, if you are listening to the Inside Jeopardy podcast or anybody connected to Emma Stone mm-hmm.

We have put together the most beautiful piece of art. You know, when Emma went on, I think it was Stephen Colbert. On his show and said that, you know what she really wanted more than anything else Yes. Was to be on Jeopardy, not test that she's taking the test, not Jeopardy, she wants to be on Jeopardy.

She's taking the test. And we went back and we actually looked. Mm-hmm. And she had taken the test. Yes. And we put together this beautiful like game board of all of the clues that we've asked on Jeopardy about. Emma Stone, the movies that Emma Stone has been in. Um, and it, it's [00:05:00] sitting there just outside my office.

Yes. I've got a beautiful art piece in my office, which is the April Fools game from Jeopardy. Um, and so anybody, uh, Emma, we'd love to get it to you.

Sarah: Yeah, it's, it's, we've tried

Michael: so many different ways to get it to you. Yeah. But, uh,

Sarah: now I will say Emma it is large. We're going on inside as well. We did tell Michael maybe smaller, he said, no, bigger is better.

So it's a large piece of art, Emma, if you have a full one of your homes, giant wall, that it work, that just needs a little something.

It. You've got the perfect, it's beautiful,

the perfect piece. Well, in prime time, believe it or not, Michael Masters came to an end last evening, a big block. You know, we had those final two semi-finals and then the two game.

Total point of fair final. Hard to believe that it is over, but we will be discussing those games from last night. I also had a chance to have a great interview with Yos. Yes. You know he won right after he did win, and we're gonna be putting that up today as well. So, bonus, you get inside Jeopardy, you get an exclusive interview.

You get it all right [00:06:00] here.

Michael: And, uh, just mentioning that it comes to an end, I'm already getting anxiety 'cause now I've got to write my Substack, post Uhhuh, uh, which goes out every single week from the control room in which I'm writing about Jeopardy. I'm writing about other shows I produce, I'm writing about the TV business.

And, uh, we just put out one, uh, I I wrote about the life cycle of a clue. I love that. I was so interested in how, um. Every single person, how many people, how many processes touch a single clue that appears on our show in each episode of Masters 122 clues in this two hour special, that would be, uh, 244 clues.

Mm-hmm. This is a lot of material and every single one of these clues takes so much attention.

Sarah: Well, and even I learned things about the journey because, you know, we each touch these clues at different parts of their journey. And so it was really, I really enjoyed it, Michael. Good.

Michael: Thank you. Can

Sarah: check

Michael: that out.

It's a good read on my substack. Good read at Embassy Babies Stack or, uh, from the Control Room. I've also got a little sports quiz there for the, the

International [00:07:00] Sports Quizzes out there, uh, at Sports Quiz International. Okay, let's get into it.

Sarah: Well, we're gonna recap those final two semi-final games and the finals, but.

You know, the quarterfinals ended last week. We kicked off the semifinals and we had to say goodbye to Madam Modio and Roger Craig. We're so lucky that on Jeopardy we do really get the best of our super champions, and so they leave us. You know, Roger's taken home 50,000. Madam Modio, taking home 75,000. So I would say it wasn't even about the money for them, Michael, it was about.

Jeopardy journey and I'm sure we will be seeing them again

Michael: without a doubt. And I actually wrote that every time I say goodbye to Matt on the stage, it's bittersweet. 'cause I hate to see him go, but at the same time I always know he is gonna be back. Um, Roger, you know, I felt, and you and I spoke about this yesterday, I feel like Roger is really close to being back at his best.

But it's been, you know, he came back on JI and did really well for somebody who hadn't played a lot of Jeopardy. Yeah. Over the last few years. Um. [00:08:00] And felt at times, I think a little bit out buzzed, um, uh, during Masters. But that's easy. I mean, these people are superb, uh, on the buzzer, superb at the game.

But I feel like he's close. I think Roger is close. I think we're gonna be seeing not only more of Roger on the stage. I think we are gonna, uh, see him winning a lot more games.

Sarah: And will he be playing his wife Julia Collins? Oh, we hope so. You know, that would be fun too. That would

Michael: be fun.

Sarah: And now a quick word from our sponsor.

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Go to shopify.com/jeopardy and now back to Inside Jeopardy. Alright, we're gonna get to last night's show's. First up, we had our third semifinal game with Victoria, Isaac, and Veria. Victoria put on a dominant performance, 31 correct responses, including all three daily doubles. Ended double jeopardy with 32,400 points, an impressive runaway win, securing three more match points, something she's been [00:10:00] doing a lot of in masters, and of course a spot in the finals.

Aria finishes in second place with one match point, and Isaac then in third. If you look back at the stats, Michael Victoria undefeated in the semi-finals and the quarterfinals. At this point, she's only lost one game, and that was that knockout game against Yogesh 31. Correct responses. Second most we've seen in a single game of masters history, second only to James holds sour, who once had 35 correct responses.

And Michael, you know, in Masters when you're going up against a competition like this to see that. Amount of correct responses. That's incredible gameplay.

Michael: Yeah, and to put it even more in context, a COR score of 30,600 points. That's the highest we've ever seen in master's history. Beating, uh, James Holts, now's record of 30,000, uh, in season one of masters.

Sarah: Another thing I loved about this game was our black history and genealogy category. We got to shoot this with Henry Lewis Gates Jr. This is a category we actually wrote [00:11:00] back for masters season one. Wow. That we wrote this. Henry was supposed to shoot with us. His schedule didn't work out and so we've been wanting him for all these years.

We finally got to shoot with him. Great category, great human, uh, really enjoyed it and a great clue reader. Well, Ken did catch up with Victoria after that impressive win, and she revealed a little unique pre-game ritual.

Ken: The record in Jeopardy Masters this year was 29 Correct responses in a game. You broke your own record in that game with 31 correct responses.

Oh my God. On 51 attempts. It's fantastic game. Wow. You seem to be getting better and better.

Victoria: The games that I have played the best, it's probably no coincidence that they were, um. Like I already secured moving on.

Ken: I see.

Victoria: So there's a, a looseness. And then also I remember to eat a banana right before I play, which means to like the little ready carbs seems to help.

Ken: Is that the secret little? I think

Victoria: so, yeah. A little potassium. The ions in

Ken: your brain needed the potassium, a little

Victoria: potassium, a little sugar. And whatever reason I play better if I eat a banana.

Ken: How many bananas did you two eat [00:12:00] before? I, I hate bananas. Oh, no. Yes, Isaac. I think, I

Isaac: think I've secured fourth place I banana more.

Bananas.

Juveria: Bananas for me. Javari you. Provi you pro banana. Antiana. I cannot eat when I am in this building. Oh, oh. So if I, if I were to eat, I would throw up on Isaac, which would be a great way to secure. Third,

Ken: well, he's wearing light colors. I mean, that might help.

Isaac: Are you saying I have a puke colored suit?

Ken: It kind of, I thought it was nice. It kind of depends on what she had in this hypothetical lunch. We don't know. It's a great suit. It's a great suit.

Michael: Well, not many people are antiana. Um, but, uh, hand it to Isaac for having a unique take.

Sarah: Yeah. You pro banana?

Michael: Uh, I mean, I'm, I'm not antiana. All

Sarah: right. I

Michael: can tell you that

Sarah: Ken and I love a good banana with a little peanut butter.

Okay. That's kind of our, uh, pre-show. We have our own little pre-show ritual.

Michael: Okay. Come by

Sarah: anytime.

Michael: So, uh, then we head into our last semi-final game. That was Yo Jia and Isaac with the last two spots in the final. On the line, Yogesh responded correctly to the first Lou [00:13:00] of the game and never lost his lead.

He had his eyes set on a runaway, but j. It was able to stay in contention entering final. At this point, Yogesh and Jve had already effectively locked up their spots in finals with a guaranteed first or second place finish. All three players were correct in final, and Yogesh and Jve are heading to the finals.

We say goodbye to Isaac.

Sarah: We do, but he leaves us with a hundred thousand dollars. He said, uh, sweet message as his final jeopardy response. What a great time. I had. Congrats to the final three. Also, St. Lucia. I love it. He gave a message, but he also wanted us to know that he knew the correct response. And we just have heard that he might be in the market for a ring he shared.

So yeah. Congratulations to he and his fiance. They've been together for six years. So I think, you know, I hope that we all invited to the wedding because those are gonna be some happy, happy nuptials.

Michael: Yeah, Javari had a good game here. That was, I think, important. Yes. Uh, for her heading into the finals. Um, and this was a good game.

This was a good second place win. And [00:14:00] you know, she was emotional at every single point through this tournament, and this was another. You know, second place. But this was an emotional second place finish for her.

Sarah: Well, and I think it's just remarkable, and you and I talked about this, we talk about the postseason and she is the first person who has ever now played in all of these competitions.

Every tournament. Yeah. Every single one. From Second Chance to Champions Wild Card, to Tournament of Champions, to the Invitational Tournament, and now to Masters. What an incredible story. And. Not every game, you know, was she in her zone? But she was in a game like this? And I think really just prove that she's, uh, she's done everything she can and she deserves to be a master.

Michael: Yeah. The poster doctor for the uh, yes, for the Japanese postseason.

Sarah: Well, let's hear how our players were feeling after this game.

Ken: Well played Yogish. Congratulations. Thank you. You had a great game there. 24 correct responses on 38 attempts, including the Welland Canal. That's a tough clue. I feel like Jve, you might've had a little too much

Juveria: canal knowledge.

My, my husband's dad used to take them to the Wellen Canal all the [00:15:00] time. Like he was obsessed with the Wellen Canal and I'm, I hope he's not like rolling over in his grave now.

Ken: Well, we looked it up. Yeah, you were only one year off with the Oswego Canal. Okay, so you just had an abundance. Of Canal knowledge.

Canal. Canal knowledge. Exactly. You're almost too big a canal fan. Many, many people are saying this about you. What about Mrs. Gaskell Yos? I thought that was not gonna come to you. And then suddenly you had her.

Yogesh: I've written, I think about her on my blog before, or at least I have a note too at some point.

Right. But I was, I knew she did north and south. I was trying to remember if she did Cranford also,

Ken: Isaac, you leave us with another a hundred thousand dollars. I hope you had a good time at Jeopardy Masters. I did. I did.

Isaac: Again, my goal coming into this was to not get ninth place, so, you know, getting out of the quarterfinals and then into the semis and everything, that's just been like gravy for me.

So I've, I've been thrilled. I have no, I mean, I lost, so I have a few regrets, but I have very few regrets about the whole experience and I, it's been fun.

Sarah: Great sport. Gotta love Isaac. Alright, on to game one of the finals with Victoria Yogesh and Juve. It was a close jeopardy round between all [00:16:00] three of our players, but Yogesh took a narrow lead over Victoria heading into double jeopardy after missing the first daily double in the round.

Victoria went all in on the last daily double to take back the lead from Yos, which she did maintain entering final. Unfortunately, JVE spent much of the round in the red. She was unable to get outta the hole in time for final, and so Victoria and Yos did play in that round. They were incorrect. Yos dropped to zero after going all in.

Victoria. Ended with 14,400 points and a big lead heading into game two. But interestingly enough, you know, JVE ends up at zero as well. So we head into game two with two of our players tied at zero. Victoria with a big lead, but we've learned a lot from these two game Total point affairs and that is, as we will see, anything can happen.

Michael: Yeah, very tough. Final Jeopardy ruling for Yogesh.

Sarah: Yeah. Another great category, Paul Taswell, who, if you see him, you know him obviously did the incredible costumes for Wicked [00:17:00] and also for so many other Broadway shows. We had a chance to go to his apartment and actually shoot with him there. And even our writers, you know, although they were familiar with him at some level, didn't realize that it was actually Paul Taswell and not Paul Taswell.

Yeah. 'cause it's spelled differently. So we're all learning in the process and they really did come up with a beautiful category, ways to incorporate the things that he's worked on, but also just costuming in history through movies and uh, it was a beautiful category.

Michael: Yeah. And hats off to our clearance department who do such an amazing job clearing all the.

Video, all the stills, all the pictures that we put on the program. Yes. It's a big difference.

Sarah: And I can really be on location and take a picture of something in the background and Katie and team in minutes can say, you're good or no, no, take it down, switch it out. So I mean, there is, as you mentioned, so many people that go into all of this.

Michael: So, uh, counting the first half of this final as an individual jeopardy game. Yes. The fascinating thing is in head to head. Mm-hmm. In this series of Masters, Victoria is now [00:18:00] six. Won against Yogesh head to head during this tournament, but this is the amazing thing about Jeopardy. The amazing thing about Jeopardy Masters.

Yogesh won the very first game

mm-hmm.

Of Jeopardy Masters. Now we find out what happened in Runaway in the very last game of Jeopardy masters, we closed it out. An incredible game between all three players, we should say. Kicked off, yeah, with a near perfect jeopardy round with only one incorrect response Combined in double jeopardy.

Aria found the first daily, double said, pray for me. Went all in, doubling up for the lead Yos then found the last daily double also went. All in to retake the lead from Garia. He ended the round with 36,000 points, and despite his zero points from game one, he was in the driver's seat entering final. All three players were correct and Yogesh.

Became our third Masters champion.

Sarah: Yes, different champion every season that we have done this. Interestingly enough, our [00:19:00] champions from the previous season, they've all finished in third place, so I don't know how that bodes for Yogesh,

but he takes home \$500,000 in addition to the a hundred thousand dollars charity donation that Jeopardy will be making, and he's now sixth on the leaderboard of Legends.

For money earns. So I mean to think that just a few years ago he hadn't even yet competed on the stage. He comes, he competes, he's a three game champion and because of the way the numbers ran that year, he comes back and he's in the TOC and he wins the TOC and then he is in Masters and now he comes back and wins Masters.

So it's really just an incredible story and uh, congratulations to Yogesh Raut our third masters champion.

Michael: Yeah. And. What I really felt about Yogesh, um, both on the stage and rewatching all of these episodes as I've been writing about 'em on a weekly basis, is that Yogesh had sort of a zen-like quality about him in this tournament.

He came [00:20:00] in very calm. He's been on the stage. Before he knows what it's like to compete against Victoria, and I do feel like he was pacing himself. He wasn't getting too up on a win. He wasn't getting too down when it wasn't going his way. And even with, you know, the ruling against him in final jeopardy in the first half, he just, he, he bounced back.

Ability, I say, is such an important element in all sports, especially in raising children as you know, Sarah and. I think that what Yogesh was able to do to bounce back, to maintain his calm, maintain his focus, and bring it, you know, and in a two game total point of affair, he just had to nail that second game, I feel for Victoria, she had such an amazing tournament.

Mm-hmm. She played one. Weaker game in this entire tournament. Maybe the first game she played against Yogish, but this was like a tough game for her. She had 15 [00:21:00] corrects, which against elite competition, uh, isn't easy, but it was not her best game. And you know, that's what it takes in a final if you don't bring it like in the final of any major.

Final round of a major golf tournament, you know, the final of a tennis tournament, the final of the Champions League, the Super Bowl, whatever it is in, uh, she just wasn't quite able to bring it. And Yogesh, you know, a very, very worthy winner of Jeopardy Masters.

Sarah: Well, I think too, what Yogesh knows, what Victoria knows, what, what all of these masters know is that there are so many variances that happen within a game of Jeopardy and Yogesh would be the first person to tell you that.

You know, he won the Tournament of Champions a couple years ago against Troy and Ben. Yeah. And they are phenomenal Jeopardy players. Yeah. So he didn't walk away from that saying. I'm the best Jeopardy player. He knew that a lot of things had to work out. Yeah. And he's a great Jeopardy player, but he played against other greats and I think just as we were talking about a masters, it could have gone anyway.

But this time, you know, Yogesh fought till the end. He came back from [00:22:00] zero, like you said. Came stayed calm.

Yeah.

And pulled off a big win. We do have an interview with him. Um, feel free to watch that later today on YouTube as well if you can't get your Masters fill. All right, it's time for our host chat and an audience member asked Ken.

During your run, what was it like for the competitors to, to walk into the green room and see that you were still there?

Ken: Yeah, so my first, I wanna say 48 games, if I'm remembering right, all taped before my run started to air, we were, they were trying to bank shows for the hiatus at that point. So we taped a ton of shows before any of them aired.

And so those people like had an unhappy surprise when it's like, oh, and here's our attorney champion. He's been here 48 days. Nobody was happy. But then there was an even worse thing after that where people would come back having seen me because the second I walked in from the parking garage, they'd be like, ah, this guy.

And to be fair, I'm used to that when I walk into a room, but like. [00:23:00] It was even worse then.

Michael: So funny

Sarah: Little Sam Buttrey sighting there. Sam Butcher front and center. I love to see a little Sam Butcher sighting.

Michael: I love that. The self-deprecating wit of, uh, Ken Jennings.

Sarah: I know. Okay. He's so good. Well, well

Michael: that's it.

Um, for today's show, we're gonna be back in July. For a special season, 41 wrap up pod. Wow. Yes. Gotta do it.

Sarah: Wrap up the highlights, the low lights. All of the things. All of the lights. The season will wrap up on July 25th. We'll then go into six weeks of reruns where we're gonna feature the TOC. You're gonna see the JI again, and you know, we'll just curate the best stuff to get you ready for season 42.

Okay.

Michael: See you then.

Ken: See

Sarah: you then.

Ken: Hey, thanks for watching. Click on the subscribe button and don't miss a [00:24:00] moment.