

Staying power

'Survivor' returns with its 38th season

By Kyla Brewer
TV Media

Staying power: In May 2000, a reality TV show about a group of strangers stranded on an island premiered to a little over 15 million viewers. When the finale aired in August of the same year, more than 51 million TV viewers tuned in. The show that sparked a decades-long TV craze has outlasted the competition and it's back with a new season and a new twist.

Eighteen castaways embark on the adventure of a lifetime as they compete in "Survivor: Edge of Extinction," premiering Wednesday, Feb. 20, on CBS. Jeff Probst returns once again to host the 38th season of the show, which pits competitors against each other in a grueling battle for a \$1 million prize.

The show's formula has been successful from the get-go as TV audiences have tuned in by the millions to see which player will outwit, outplay and outlast the others. At the beginning of each season, the competitors are stranded in an uninhabited area, usually on a beach, where they'll have to work together to acquire fire and build a shelter. Divided into tribes, the castaways then compete in challenges throughout the season to win rewards and immunity from elimination at Tribal Council. Those who do face Tribal Council could be voted out of the game by their tribemates. In the end, only one player earns the title of Sole Survivor.

This season's competition features 18 players in the running for the \$1-million prize, including four returning players from past seasons. While not much has been revealed about

season 38, the producers have promised a unique twist to the game. Host Probst has been tight-lipped about what's in store for "Survivor" fans, but in a December interview with ew.com, he did talk about the inspiration for the new season.

"The inspiration for next season came from our desire to see if we can take the show even deeper," explained Probst. "One thing that has become apparent over the last several years is that the yearning for adventure in our lives is a real thing. 'Survivor' already provides an amazing format for game play. So what would happen if we added another challenge to the experience? A question that simply asks ... How badly do you want this?"

The crew returned to the islands of Fiji for the seventh time in the show's history to produce season 38. Other editions have been set in Australia, Thailand, Kenya, Samoa and other exotic locales. The new season was filmed over the course of 39 days between May and July 2018. Details about the "Extinction Island" twist have been few and far between, but many "Survivor" aficionados speculate that the show's latest gimmick may provide eliminated players with an opportunity to re-enter the game at some later point. Such a concept would be a risky move considering that a similar plot twist in a previous season — "Survivor: Redemption Island," season 22 — turned out to be panned by many critics.

Luckily, none of this season's returning players hail from "Redemption Island." Of the returning castaways, Kelley Wentworth has the longest

history with the game. She first appeared in the 29th season of the show, "Survivor: San Juan del Sur," which premiered in 2014. She went on to vie for the \$1-million prize in "Survivor: Cambodia" in 2015 but only made it as far as fourth place.

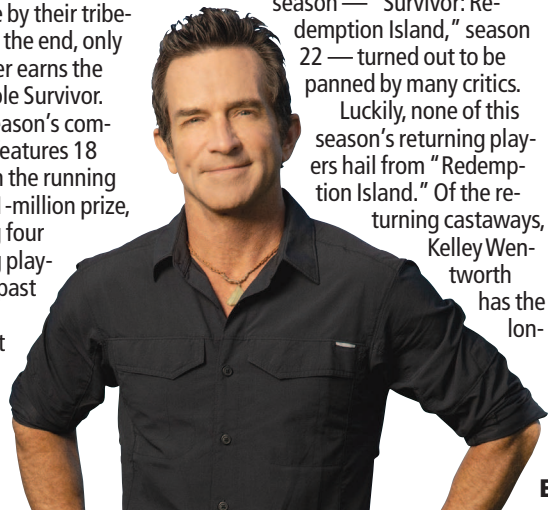
Joe Anglim earned the moniker "Joey Amazing" for his appearances in both "Survivor: Worlds Apart" in early 2015 and "Survivor: Cambodia," alongside Wentworth, later that same year. During his turn in "Cambodia" — the show's 31st season — he made it to Day 32 and enjoyed a 29-day run of immunity.

Like Anglim and Wentworth, returning player Aubry Bracco has also played the game twice before. She made her "Survivor" debut in the 32nd season, "Survivor: Kaoh Rong," in 2016. After 39 days of fierce competition, runner-up Bracco lost to that season's winner, Michele Fitzgerald. Not one to give up, she made a comeback in 2017's "Survivor: Game Changers," making it to fifth place.

David Wright is the only returning castaway who's only played the game once before. He made it to fourth place in "Survivor: Millennials vs. Gen X," the show's 33rd season, which premiered in September 2016. He made his mark in "Survivor" history by crafting the most authentic-looking fake immunity idol ever created on the show.

In "Survivor: Edge of Extinction," these four veterans will face off against 14 new players, including morning news anchor Rick Devens from Macon, Georgia, and 25-year-old swap-meet vendor Wendy Diaz from Los Angeles. Experience in the game means the returning players will likely have an edge over their rookie counterparts, but they'll also have targets on their backs as eager new players vie for their chance to become a part of "Survivor" history.

Jeff Probst hosts "Survivor: Edge of Extinction"



Late laughs

Conan

We are back with a 30-minute show. I don't want you to worry about that — it may be only 30 minutes, but I assure you, it's going to FEEL like two hours.

The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon

Well you guys, it was just five degrees in New York City today. It was so cold, hot dog vendors were complaining about shrinkage.



Temperatures are below freezing all over the country. Up in

Boston, two Patriots fans high-fived and their hands just shattered.

Throughout the country, people are dealing with freezing temperatures. All day long, New Yorkers struggled with how to give each other the finger while wearing mittens.

Nominations for the Academy Awards were announced early this morning by Tracee Ellis Ross and Kumail Nanjiani. So if you're keeping track, they found two people to wake up at 5 a.m. to read the nominations, but still no one to host the show.

I saw that Christian Bale was nominated for his role in "Vice," while Bradley Cooper and Sam Elliott were nominated for "A Star Is Born." They were actually

all nominated in the same category: "Best Achievement in Growling."

It's Day 32 of the government shutdown, and I read that a record 10 percent of TSA workers are now skipping work. So if you've ever wanted to sneak a bottle of water onto a plane, now's your chance!

Flights in and out of Newark Airport were delayed yesterday when a small drone was spotted flying near the airport. Then United Airlines said, "Actually that's our new 'Basic Economy' plane."

The Late Late Show With James Corden

Personally, I'm very excited about "The Favourite" getting all this recognition, because it means the United States might finally admit that the word "favorite" is supposed to have a "u" in it.

A lot of people were complaining on Twitter this morning about Bradley



Cooper being snubbed for Best Director, which is an outrage, it really is. It means he's just going to have to settle for being Bradley Cooper.

More than 68,000 pounds of gluten-free chicken nuggets were recalled after customers found pieces of wood in them. Good news

for anyone who's looking to get a little more fiber in their diet.

Jimmy Kimmel Live

Ticket prices for seats at the Super Bowl are reportedly down they say, in part, because Rams fans don't want to go all the way to Atlanta to see the game. That makes sense. In L.A., it's hard to get anyone to drive 20 minutes to meet you for dinner.

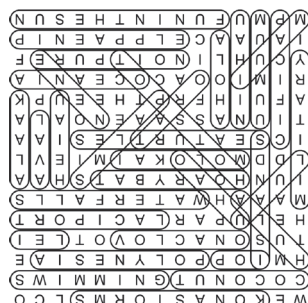


Today was a very big day here in Hollywood. It was Oscar nomination day. If you got a screaming call from your publicist before 6 a.m. this morning, you were either nominated for an Oscar, or you're Kevin Spacey.

Late Night With Seth Meyers

A recall was issued last week for a brand of ready-to-eat chicken nuggets, following complaints that the packages had pieces of wood in them. And if there's one thing chicken nugget consumers don't want, it's a natural ingredient.

Pro-skateboarder Tony Hawk is launching his own fashion line that will include hoodies, T-shirts, flannels and carpenter pants. It's great if you love hearing your wife say, "No. Change."



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