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Posted: February 18, 2010 04:37 AM

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American Idol Season 9: Top 24 Named, Part 2

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RATINGS UPDATE: Shaun White kicks *American Idol's* ass. Yep, for the first time in six years, *American Idol* has not won its time period. **According to the Hollywood Reporter**, it took the Olympics and a young adult-appealing snowboard halfpipe competition in which Shaun White snagged his second gold to do it, but it's finally happened. Given the unique nature of the programming that ended *Idol's* 222 week consecutive winning streak (yesterday was arguably the greatest day for US athletes in Winter Olympic history, with women snagging a gold in the

downhill for the first time in history and the US earning six medals overall), this is a testament to the remarkable stamina of *Idol* as much as anything else. But no doubt about it: Shaun White pulled away some *Idol* viewers. The Olympics snagged 29.4 million viewers while *Idol* plummeted to 18.4 million viewers, which the Hollywood Reporter pegged as its smallest audience since April of 2004. Hollywood Week is traditionally the lowest rated segment of *Idol*. Next week begins live performances and Ellen Degeneres's first chance to really shine, so look for ratings to bounce right back up.

SHOW COVERAGE: One storyline is clear in this season of *American Idol*: happy thoughts. In the midst of a recession, the producers clearly believe people want to hear good news. So during two nights of choosing the Top 24, we heard a lot more "You're going through" than "This is the end of the road."

On Wednesday, *Idol* went half an hour and gave smiles to eight people before we finally saw someone sent home with a tearful "no" followed by a montage of goodbyes. Then a slew of more "yes's." The best tweak is they ended the godawful practice of bringing in the last two contestants together. Both were guaranteed to be miserable since the winner could hardly rejoice without looking like a complete jerk.

Finally, everyone has a Twitter/Facebook/MySpace account this season so it'll be interesting to see who makes the smartest use of social media to garner fans. Most of the Idols have maybe a couple dozen

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followers on Twitter as of early Thursday morning. One or two have a hundred or so. But Garcia has more than 2500, about ten times as the next closest *Idol*. On Facebook, John Park more than doubles his closest competitor with 700+ fans. Does this mean anything? It certainly can't hurt when they get to the voting stage.

Here's a rundown of the people going through Wednesday (plus two rejections) and whether I agreed.

JANELL WHEELER -- She messed up two out of three times during Hollywood Week so it's hard to see why she's going through.

TYLER GRADY -- The lanky dude with the Seventies vibe, Tyler is right up *Idol's* alley. An obvious distinctive choice because at least he fits a type. I don't actually have a good sense for his talent.

LACEY BROWN -- Really didn't hear her enough to form an opinion. But they used her rendition of "What A Wonderful World" to montage more winners and frankly, I thought it went off the track a bit at the end.

ASHLEY RODRIGUEZ/ALEX LAMBERT/JOE MUNOZ - Fittingly, montaged together when told yes since they didn't get enough airtime.

CRYSTAL BOWERSOX -- Duh. A ringer.

KATIE STEVENS -- Seems quite young so this appears an iffy choice.

ANGELA MARTIN -- Sent home. We were set up to believe in Martin even though they knew she was going home. Strong backstory and some good performances made this one of their sneaky surprises. But here's a question. Why do Kara and Randy and the other judges urge her to keep going? This is her third season. She may be improved but if she really had star potential, wouldn't they have put her in the Top 24 by now? If they won't even do that, obviously they wouldn't give her a record deal. Either she's got it or she doesn't so unless they think she has some style that just doesn't suit the show (which isn't the case), they are sending her some seriously mixed signals.

LILLY SCOTT -- Sang a pretty good "Rich Girl" and a nice jazzy number. Makes sense but if she's really determined to make it she better lose her lucky earrings.

PAIGE MILES/SIOBHAN MAGNUS/MICHELLE DELAMOR/JERMAINE SELLERS/JOHN PARK -- Most of them didn't have enough airtime to make an impression but seem reasonable choices from the brief snippets we heard.

HAELEY VAUGHN -- Sweet kid but frankly she seemed too inconsistent to go through.

THADDEUS JOHNSON -- Sent home. He was another one we were set up to believe in. Seems the obvious choice to replace Michael Lynche if Lynche is indeed eliminated because family members leaked his getting into the Top 24 to the media. Johnson has a nice combination of confidence and vulnerability that could work in his favor.

ANDREW GARCIA -- Still hoping to see that his cool rendition of "Straight Up" wasn't a fluke, but an obvious choice.

Now unquestionably there will be surprises since a fair number of people in the Top 24 haven't had a chance to score any airtime. But taking that into account, the likely front-runners among the people we've heard are: Crystal Bowersox, Siobhan Magnus, Andrew Garcia, Todrick Hall and Casey James.

So what did you think of the picks? Who didn't deserve to go through and who got shafted?

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anonimost 01:14 PM on 2/21/2010

6 Fans

I liked this 2nd batch better although that group that hardly got any airtime I am not sure why we didn't get a chance to see. There was too much filler when as usually I would prefer to actually see the auditions. I loved Bowersox voice but all I heard at work were complaints about her teeth, so I am not so sure she is a shoe-in based on aesthetics (silly).

I also agree not sure why Janell got through.

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gavottes 04:17 PM on 2/18/2010

5 Fans

Here is my Angela Martin theory: She is too much of a liability with her high percentage of bad luck.

As good as her voice is, her life has too many distractions that could derail her career. This group of producers/investors just need to look at an actuarial table to see if they can afford to back her.

Somewhere it was reported that her now mother is missing?

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stratdude 10:51 AM on 2/19/2010

30 Fans

My take, too. Good analysis.

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