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# **Anna-lyzing the Bachelor: Matt James the Bachelor We All Needed**

## Anna Popp, News Editor

After several weeks of Monday night rituals, which included designating two hours to binge the latest episodes of “The Bachelor”, it’s safe to say that this season is way better than what we suffered through in the fall with a lackluster and generally boring Bachelorette experience. The season got a lot better after Tayshia Adams took over for Clare Crawley—the oldest Bachelorette, in case you forgot—when she left to pursue her predictably failed relationship with Dale Moss. Now Matt James is at the helm of the Bachelor franchise, and he might be the best bachelor of all time.

Not only is James a fan-favorite already, he is the first Black bachelor in the history of the show’s 19 years of production.

The Bachelor franchise was—rightfully so—under fire in the summer of last year in the wake of George Floyd’s murder for lacking representation and diversity within the franchise’s leads. The issue lies within the franchise as a whole, as they generally cast white, able-bodied, cisgender people while pushing a heterosexual love story with a dramatic agenda. Casting Adams and James in the same year was a necessary addition to the franchise, but it is crucial that Bachelor Nation holds the franchise accountable to continue breaking down barriers the show has upheld for almost two decades in its cast and production crew.

James, close friend of Bachelor Nation’s beloved Tyler Cameron, was originally cast on Crawley’s season of “The Bachelorette.” James is new to bachelor nation, but may be recognizable from the infamous summer TikTok Quarantine Crew, made of friends of Cameron and James, including former bachelorette Hannah Brown. So far, James’ season has already proved itself to be an unforgettable one.

Filming took place at the luxurious Nemaocolin Resort in Farmington, Penn., where contestants and James have started their love stories with dates significantly better than those of Adams’ season filmed at a La Quinta Resort in Palm Springs, Calif.. Dates for James and his lucky ladies have so far included airplane rides, horseback riding and picnics.

James’ season broke a record with the most contestants to start off the season, with a total of 32 anxious women hoping to win over James’ heart. The past few weeks of this season have been chalked full of vicious drama with apparent season villain Victoria Larson behind most incidents. Larson has deemed herself the “queen” of this season, constantly putting other women down by referring to them as jesters and princesses.

With a record number of women, James has certainly had to break some hearts already, all while deepening connections with several front-runners. Receiver of the first impression rose on the first night of filming, Abigail Heringer has also made history as the first hearing-impaired contestant. She opened up to James in her first conversation with him out of the limousine—sharing her transparency and heart with him—making her an automatic fan-favorite from the start.

James also made a quick connection with Sarah Trott during the center of a drama-filled episode that ended with her decision to go home to take care of her father, who is currently battling Lou Gehrig’s Disease (ALS). In Bachelor style fashion, the drama begins as Larsen claims her spot as this season’s villain. Larsen, along with other women, ganged up on Trott for struggling being away from her dad and seeing James date other women. “The Bachelor” may not have been the best place for Trott—who struggles with jealousy in relationships—to look for love. However, Larsen made the situation significantly worse by getting other women involved and essentially bullying Trott out of the show.

With seven weeks to go, James has his work cut out for him as he searches for his forever partner. The rest of the episodes are surely going to be filled with drama and heartbreak as James continues his journey as the bachelor. Hopefully Cameron, Brown or other infamous bachelor nation members make an appearance and offer wisdom to the newest member of the nation. Until then, most of us are just hoping—no, praying—James comes to his senses and sends Larsen home after keeping her on his journey for way too long already.

