

TV Review: Save This Show! 'Parks and Recreation' Seeks a Second Chance

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 20, 2011 - 1:26pm

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CHICAGO – The midseason premiere of season three of “Parks & Recreation” starts by catching us up on what we’ve missed. It details the arrivals of auditors, the “black hats,” played by the non-descript Adam Scott and a goofily-exuberant Rob Lowe, and features a tongue-and-cheek detailing of the budget crisis facing the parks department.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

For those who don't know, art is meant to imitate life here: last spring, rumors flew that NBC was going to cancel “Parks & Rec.” They didn't but they did postpone it to midseason, a Hail Mary of a network move that often resuscitates ailing shows. And throughout this episode, “Parks” makes self-aware reference to the situation with lines about a hiatus, budget cuts and being happy to get back to work.



Parks and Recreation

Photo credit: NBC

History is repeating itself here. “Parks” star Amy Poehler’s husband’s (Will Arnett) former show “Arrested Development” made this same kind of self-referential cry for audience support years ago when it was on the chopping block. Though that series has a cult following even to this day, its pleas for mercy didn’t save it from cancellation. “Parks & Rec” is not as well-crafted as “Arrested Development,” but it also isn’t as quirky or nichey.

In fact, tonight’s season three premiere has some some of it’s quintessentially goofy-funny moments in it, so there may be hope for “Parks” yet. Rob Lowe is overly eager but still funny as a dorky, enthusiastic auditor and suitor to Anne (Rashida Jones). And the scene in which Ron Swanson (Nick Offerman) and Andy (Chris Pratt) coach dual pee wee basketball teams is great. As Ron tries to coach the boys on how to grow “*from boys to men to Swansons*,” complete with visual aids, Andy earnestly tells the camera, “*When they look into my eyes and call me Coach that’s when I know... I agreed to do this.*” And when Leslie (Poehler) puts Anne up to going on a date with Lowe’s character Chris Traeger, her coaching is predictably but amusingly clueless.

Obviously, “Parks & Recreation” is making their second chance count for everything it’s worth. But with some very good moments of goofy humor, maybe it really deserves it.

The third season of “Parks and Recreations” premieres on Thursday, Janaury 20th, 2011 at 8:30 CST on NBC. It stars Amy Poehler, Rashida Jones, Aziz Ansari, Nick Offerman, Chris Pratt, Adam Scott and Rob Lowe.



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