

# Health of ‘Scrubs’ Improves With Transition to ABC

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 5, 2009 - 3:15pm

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CHICAGO – The medical staff at Sacred Heart have picked up their surgical tools and switched networks from NBC to ABC with the eighth season premiere of “Scrubs” as two episodes of the Zach Braff comedy air back-to-back on Tuesday, January 6th, 2009 at 8pm CST.

The cast of “Scrubs,” including Zach Braff, Donald Faison, Sarah Chalke, Neil Flynn, John C. McGinley, Judy Reyes, Ken Jenkins, and Christa Miller, have made the move for what is reportedly the final season of the show on ABC and they brought TV superstar Courtney Cox along for the first few episodes, the first two of which are two of the best that the show has ever produced.



Sarah Chalke and Courtney Cox star in the season premiere of Scrubs on ABC on January 6th, 2009.  
*Photo credit: Scott Garfield*

What separated the early years of “Scrubs” was creator Bill Lawrence’s deft juggling of varying tones, from the zany inner monologue of J.D.(Zach Braff) to the more serious themes that naturally arose in a hospital setting. “Scrubs” remained quality television for at least a few years with a very delicate balance of unpredictability and believability from scene to scene. The writing was still above-par and Chalke, Reyes, and Faison have never gotten the credit they deserve as supporting actors but the show lost a bit of its consistency in the last few seasons, too often choosing the zany over the human.



Zach Braff stars in the season premiere of Scrubs on ABC on January 6th, 2009.  
*Photo credit: Scott Garfield.*

"Scrubs" was still quality television (and it's shocking to think that anyone at NBC thought the abysmal "Kath and Kim" was a worthwhile replacement) but, with only a few exceptional episodes, it didn't generally live up to the standard set by its early years.

The first two episodes of the eighth season of "Scrubs" feels like the problems of the last few years never happened. They are well-balanced, character-driven, laugh-out-loud funny, and genuinely moving without hitting the moral message too bluntly on the head, as the writers had been prone to do recently.

One has to assume that ABC has not only given Bill Lawrence and his writing staff more creative freedom but that the idea of being on a network that actually promotes and supports the show appears to have fired everyone up. The only concern would be that the new energy at ABC might wear off by mid-season and that they can't keep up this creatively rewarding tone through out the final season.

The first episode of the eighth season of "Scrubs" - "My Jerks" - brings the show full circle as J.D. now has his own group of interns to drive him as crazy as he once made Dr. Cox (John C. McGinley). The new supporting cast is fun but the main addition to the first episode is Dr. Maddox (Courtney Cox), the replacement for the now-retired (but unwilling to leave the hospital) Dr. Kelso (Ken Jenkins) as chief of Sacred Heart.

Almost immediately, the show feels different. Maddox is introduced with a fantasy, slo-mo sequence that, like a lot of recent "Scrubs" bits, goes on too long, but the show comments on the zany device, almost as if Lawrence and his team are telling the audience that things are going to be a little bit different in this last season on a new network.



Zach Braff and Courtney Cox star in the season premiere of Scrubs on ABC on January 6th, 2009.  
*Photo credit: Scott Garfield.*

Everyone loves the sexy and clever new boss, but Dr. Cox suspects something sinister underneath the surface. Of course, as he would be prone to tell you, Cox is never wrong.

Without going into any detail to avoid spoilers, the second episode of the new season features some of the strongest emotional writing and acting that "Scrubs" has seen in years as J.D. and Turk comfort a dying patient. It's an incredible half-hour of television that brings a lump to the throat more than this show has in years.

It feels like the transition from NBC to ABC has brought "Scrubs" back down to Earth and grounded its characters in a reality that has been missing for the last few seasons. Lawrence and Braff have made it clear that they are definitely leaving Sacred Heart after this season with the show only getting a one-season order from ABC.

Of course, it's too early to say for sure that the quality level will stay at this height for the entirety of what will likely be the show's final season, but it's incredibly satisfying to think that "Scrubs" could go out at the top of its game on a network that is supporting its end run instead of just counting the days until it leaves.

Honestly, if it keeps up at this rate creatively, don't be surprised if ABC does their best to bring it back for another year - a possibility that Lawrence hinted at in a recent interview with Entertainment Weekly - even without Mr. Braff and the show's creator. It would be TV justice for "Scrubs" to become the massive hit on ABC that it never was supported enough to blossom into on its original network.

*'Scrubs,' which airs on ABC, stars Zach Braff, Donald Faison, Sarah Chalke, Neil Flynn, John C. McGinley, Judy Reyes, Ken Jenkins, and Christa Miller from creator Bill Lawrence. The first two episodes of season eight air on January 6th, 2009 at 8PM CST.*



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [18]**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 23 2024 - 6:37am):**<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/6314/health-of-scrubs-improves-with-transition-to-abc>**Links:**

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