

## TV Review: One of the Best Reality Shows Returns With ‘Survivor: Tocantins’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 12, 2009 - 11:53am

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Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The 18th installment of the show that really started it all with reality television, “[Survivor](#) [6],” debuts Thursday, February 12th, 2009 with the promise of another season of backstabbing, infighting, and immunity challenges.

With 16 new contestants, a physically demanding setting, and the best host in reality TV, “Survivor: Tocantins - The Brazilian Highlands” delivers exactly what fans expect and sets the stage for what should be another exciting installment of arguably the best reality show on television.



The sixteen contestants set to compete in Survivor: Tocantins - The Brazilian Highlands, when the eighteenth installment of the Emmy Award-winning reality series premieres Thursday, February 12 (8:00 - 9:00 PM ET/PT) on the CBS Television Network.

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Reviewing the 18th installment of anything that’s essentially the same can be a little frustrating. There’s no one coming to “Survivor: Tocantins - The Brazilian Highlands” saying “What’s this whole Survivor thing all about?” After 17 installments of tribal councils, immunity challenges, and the wisdom of Jeff Probst, audiences probably just want to know what’s different about this season?

First and foremost, the premiere makes it clear that life is going to be brutal in Brazil. The location is one of the most rugged and physically challenging in the history of the show. The 16 contestants this season are left stranded in the interior of Brazil, an area of the world with

hundreds of square miles with no civilization and unbelievable heat.

After brief introductions to a few of the contestants this season including the competitive "Coach," the ill Sierra, the over-the-top Sandy, and Spencer, the youngest player in the history of "Survivor," the predetermined tribes are sent on a four-hour hike in temperatures well over a hundred degrees and rising. From the opening hike to an immunity challenge that would kill a lot of people in such hot conditions, it's clear that the setting is going to play a major role this year.

Of course, the success or failure of any installment of "Survivor" almost always comes down to the same thing - casting. It's hard to pick out the winners, losers, and popular personalities from just one episodes, but I've seen season premieres of "Survivor" more promising than "Tocantin - Brazilian Highlands".

The best seasons of "Survivor" provide a variety of personalities, but the premiere focuses far too much of its time on one particularly annoying contestant, a woman who doesn't know what "ten paces" means and admits that she generally annoys people. With sixteen players, it's going to take some time to get to know everyone, but when one tribe member dominates screen time like this it makes one wonder if it's because the others are not that interesting.



Jeff Probst, host of Survivor: Tocantins - The Brazilian Highlands, the eighteenth installment of the Emmy Award-winning reality series premieres Thursday, February 12(8:00 - 9:00 PM ET/PT) on the CBS Television Network.

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If one looks past one of the most annoying and unusual "Survivor" contestants in history, there are a few personalities stranded in the "Tocantin - The Brazilian Highlands" that may become future reality all-stars. Tyson, the comic relief who realizes that clothing in 120 degree heat is just another problem, Jerry, a 1st Sergeant and specialist in Nuclear Operations who has just returned from Afghanistan, and Carolina, an admittedly whiny bartender, make an instant impression.

Personally, I've always been a fan of the seasons of "Survivor" that were more physically challenging than the others. With very little water, no signs of civilization, dangerous wildlife, and deadly heat, "Tocantin - The Brazilian Highlands" looks like it could be one of the most mentally and physically challenging installments to date.

In the long history of "Survivor," the premiere of "Tocantin - The Brazilian Highlands" falls right in the middle with enough promise in the setting to keep audiences intrigued but a few question marks as to whether or not the casting department might have missed the mark with a few of their contestants.

If a few more personalities in the cast move to the forefront and prove to be as interesting as the players in recent seasons, "Survivor: Tocantins - The Brazilian Highlands" will continue the dominance of one of the best reality shows in the history of television.

‘Survivor: Tocantin - The Brazilian Highlands’ airs on CBS. The 18th season premieres on Thursday, February 12th, 2009 at 7PM CST.



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