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Survivor Winner Surprised Herself: 'I Became A Freaking Challenge Beast!'

Posted By: John Powell | December 19, 2024



Kyle Ostwald, Rachel LaMont and Sam Phalen. Photo: CBS.

By John Powell – GlobalTV.com





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She couldn't have mapped out or planned out a better path to victory. Rachel LaMont, the graphic designer from Michigan, is the latest Sole Survivor and millionaire, the difference being though that she played a very well-rounded game. She had a strong social game which came into play when she needed it to. She was an unexpected challenge beast who won four individual immunity challenges and made some of the biggest strategic moves of the season. She very well could be the most well-rounded winner in this the New Era of Survivor.

John Powell: Rachel, thanks so much for joining us today! Congratulations on winning Survivor 47! How do you feel?

Rachel LaMont: Oh, such a sense of relief! I can stop lying to my mom! (laughs) It has been so hard especially after last week. There were so many people being like: 'There's nothing you can tell me that will make me think you didn't win.' It's just so hard. It's been so hard. It's like playing Survivor for six months after you get done playing Survivor! So, to have it all out, to have it be real, it's crazy! It's amazing!

John Powell: I just spoke to Sam and he said his mindset going into the final tribal was that he told you: "I'm coming after you. There's nothing off limits.' You're like: 'Bring it on! Let's go!' How was YOUR mindset going into the final tribal? What were some of the things that were going through your mind?

Rachel LaMont: I knew that Sam would be a formidable opponent at final tribal. We have the dynamic of a big sister, little brother. I love him. I hate him. (laughs) We played the whole game together and we were never on the same page after Day Three, which is incredible. It is just the fact that we ended up at the end together when we refused to work with each other basically the entire game. I knew that we were going to have a lot of fun. I remembered in the moment being so scared because I felt like he was doing so well, and yet, being like: 'This is so fun!'. Just interrupting each other and being like: 'No! That's not true!' It was like we were bickering at final tribal. I just had the best time even though I might have just lost!



Sue Smey, Solomon "Sol" Yi, Rachel LaMont, Genevieve Mushaluk, and Sam Phalen. Photo: Chuck Snyder/CBS.

John Powell: What about the vote surprised you? Did you think there was more going to go his way or were you confident that you had those people on your side?

Rachel LaMont: Sierra, Gabe and Kyle were probably the votes I was the least sure about. I thought most of the other ones were pretty locked up. Sierra could have gone either way and I think she was very much torn between head and heart in the sense that she was such a close ally with Sam but I think my game spoke for itself. I think that she was really forced to choose between those two things.

For Kyle and Gabe, it was a matter of just not knowing exactly what they were looking for. We didn't have a lot of the conversations that I had with people like Andy where I had an idea of the kind of gameplay that they respected and that kind of thing. It was hard to tell what their votes would be based on and it makes sense in hindsight that I'm like Gabe. I played a game that Gabe probably saw himself potentially playing. It made sense that I got his vote. And for Kyle? He was about loyalty and him and Sam worked together a lot in the in the post merge so it made a lot of sense that he voted for Sam. I definitely came into tribal believing I was going to win.

John Powell: What I didn't really understand is you being compared to Ben Drievergen and Mike Holloway in the sense that you were a very well-balanced player. What did you think of those names being thrown out there like that by Andy?

Rachel LaMont: I think on paper the resemblance is uncanny. You know, Mike was immune from the final eight. I was immune from the final seven using one idol and a bunch of immunities. Same with him. So, I think it was just natural to compare me to someone like Mike. I think Ben's a little bit of a different case. He found multiple idols, which is not how I played, but I had said on the beach on Day 26 to Sam, I was like: 'It's crazy that Mike Holloway

made it to the end of this game based on the nuances of the social and strategic relationships.' Obviously, I played my idol in a much more flashy fashion than Mike did when everyone knew he had it. There were differences in our games but I don't think anybody would be surprised that the kind of comparison was being made.

John Powell: I got this impression throughout the season that you were surprising yourself at every turn and everything that was coming at you. Did you feel that way?

Rachel LaMont: It's a mixture of my gut knowing that I can do it and I could pull it off and then just actually having that happen. I think those are very two very different things. You know, believing in yourself and feeling like you have what it takes doesn't necessarily mean that you will still pull through. I think that having those two things actually get married and having it happen was incredible! It did, in a way, surprise me again! It's like I said I would never have gone out on Survivor if I didn't think I could have won but most people think they can win. I think that there is still just this disconnect and being able to prove it out for myself and show that stubborn bullheaded determination that I have it worked out and I did it!



Rachel LaMont. Photo: CBS.

I thought I could win Survivor and be like this strategic, social player and it's the fact that I became a freaking challenge beast! I was scared that I would get voted out pre-merge for looking small and weak, like it just blew my mind a little bit.

John Powell: Now, one of the most interesting aspects of this season was your rivalry with Genevieve. You were enemies but you had that kind of frenemies thing going on. I assume that you have a lot of respect for her because she had a lot of respect for you.

Rachel LaMont: The utmost respect for Genevieve. I feel like some people discounted her game...It was like she made this giant move and by all New Era metrics she should have immediately had her head lopped off but she made it another five votes before she went home! She was one ball away from winning the game!

I don't think anybody should be discounting her but it was just so clear the second I hit the merge that we were never going to work together. We would have these conversations where we were both so cagey and guarded. I was like: I got nothing out of that and I knew she felt the same way. Her relationship with Sam when I was refused to work with Sam any longer, it was just we were so clearly on opposite sides of the field, going to war with each other. It was just we just saw the game in a really similar way. We're both video gamers. We're board gamers. We have a Mario Party league that we play! It's the best rivalry I could have ever asked for!

I'm a person that has a ton of guy friends. I thought that I would be the person that was like: 'Yeah, I can go with the boys. I can fit in here. They'll underestimate me and I'll kick their butt at the end.' I was like: 'I want to work with all these bad ass women!' It was wild how strong the women were on our season and I was just so excited to get to play with someone like Genevieve and to have this like Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort, more adversarial battle where we would go and be the two people in contention for all these immunities at the end. Then, we we would come back to camp and she'd braid my hair. I couldn't have dreamt of a more wonderful rivalry. We are great friends outside of the game.

John Powell: Sol gifting you that power again was another big turning point in the game for you. The only thing is he really didn't understand why you revealed that someone gave it to you because he had to put on act. Tell us your strategy behind that move.



Rachel LaMont. Photo: CBS.

Rachel LaMont: Well, no good deed goes unpunished. (laughs) In my head, I'm like: I'm about to screw over Tuku and they're going to hate me. I need to remove myself from the responsibility of this. I also didn't want anybody being like: 'You made a big move before we do the first vote of the merge.' I didn't want that so I was definitely trying to shirk the responsibility of this advantage that I received with no effort of my own. I mean, the social obviously, he sent it to me because we had a social connection, but I all of a sudden have this scroll in my bag and I'm like: "Oh my god! I have the power to leave and make Tuku eat itself and I didn't want to bear the brunt of that from Tuku the next day. So, I definitely wanted to make it clear that this was something that someone else gave to me and I did not want the credit for the "move".

John Powell: What would you have liked them to have shown when it comes to your journey on the show?

Rachel LaMont: Caroline and I. Caroline was my Number One from the moment Sierra went home until she was booted. I could not believe that there isn't a single conversation with Caroline and I alone on the show. She was my ally for a long time, a good chunk of the game where we were in sync, we were strategizing.

John Powell: Do you have any plans for the money and what is the future hold for Rachel?

Rachel LaMont: I am a millennial in my thirties, so student loans, projects, but my husband and I do pottery. We are definitely looking to have a little bit of a pottery studio at home. I'm sure we're going to go on a couple vacations next year. So, very fun stuff, very practical stuff, and then probably the bulk of it straight into the bank.

John Powell: If you were asked to play again and what would you say was the weakest part of your game?

Rachel LaMont: Look, Survivor calls, I will answer the call! You know it! Who can say no to this insane adventure, everything I dreamed about and if I could do it again I 100 per cent would!

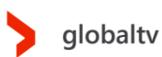
I definitely need to work on knowing when people are lying to me. I'm excited to play games like *Blood on the Clock Tower* and games that will help me. The people in my life don't lie to me on a daily basis. So, I learned by watching and by experiencing that I'm a pretty good liar but not a good person sussing out lie. That is the weakness that I would love to correct.

Season 48 of Survivor debuts on February 26th, 2025, on Global TV.



Survivor's Sam: 'I played the game like I was on top'

By John Powell – GlobalTV.com He was the underdog fighting from the underground for more than half the season. Sam Phalen, the journalist and sports reporter from Nashville, scratched and clawed his way to an impressive second place on Survivor's 47th season. John Powell: Sam, how you doing this morning? Congratulations on making the Survivor ... Continue reading

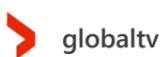


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