# Strictly Come Dancing returns with a splash amidst laughter and cheating accusations



**Strictly Come Dancing Returns with a Splash Amidst Laughter and Cheating Accusations**

The 20th series of the beloved BBC One show, Strictly Come Dancing, premiered on Saturday, 14 September, bringing with it an evening filled with glitter, glamour, and good-natured jesting. Hosts Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman led the charge as the latest batch of celebrities and professional dancers hit the floor for the inaugural, pre-recorded episode.

The evening was not short on entertainment or drama. Among the contenders this year is Jamie Borthwick, known for his role on EastEnders. However, he quickly found himself at the centre of a humorous controversy. During a conversation about his win in last year's Strictly Christmas special alongside professional dancer Nancy Xu, fellow cast member Wynne Evans playfully interrupted, calling Jamie a "cheat!" The studio erupted with laughter, while an embarrassed Jamie looked on and Tess hastily diverted the discussion.

Evans' remark even sparked amusement on social media, with one viewer writing, "Me and my mum are dying of laughter when Wynne saying 'cheat' when Jamie was talking." Another highlighted how Jamie seemed to be in good company with quips of "Jamie getting the 'cheat' card [along with Shayne and JB surely?]".

Pete Wicks, another contestant known from The Only Way Is Essex, couldn't resist joining in the teasing. Commenting about how he probably wouldn’t return to the show unless he were Jamie, who earlier claimed the Christmas special title, left even Claudia Winkleman in stitches.

New to the celebrity roster are stars like JB Gill, Tasha Ghouri, and Nick Knowles, all aiming for their moment in the spotlight and vying for the coveted Glitterball trophy. The panel of judges, composed of Shirley Ballas, Craig Revel Horwood, Motsi Mabuse, and Anton Du Beke, provided their early evaluations, setting the stage for a thrilling series ahead.

The evening also marked a poignant return for Amy Dowden, the professional dancer who bravely battled breast cancer last year. Dowden, who joined Strictly in 2017, was absent from the previous series due to undergoing treatment. Fortunately, recent developments in her health have shown no evidence of cancer, allowing her to rejoin her Strictly family with renewed vigour. During the launch show, Dowden led a special group dance, captivating audiences and earning admiration for her heartfelt dedication to her 'pink sisters' and all those currently battling cancer.

Viewers were visibly moved by Dowden’s return and new short hairstyle inspired numerous admirers. Comments flooded social media, with one fan, Beth Foden, saying, "So happy Amy is back, love her hair like that #strictly." Another fan, Tom Dix, celebrated the emotional moment, stating, "Seeing Amy Dowden back doing what she loves might be one of my favourite TV moments of the year. So so happy for her. #Strictly.”

However, not all aspects of the opening episode were met with glowing reviews. The pre-recorded introduction, featuring professional dancers and hosts on a party bus, received mixed reactions. Some viewers found the acting cringe-worthy, sharing their sentiments online with comments like "All this is so cringe," and "#Strictly The dreadful acting is making me cringe big time!" Nevertheless, a segment of the audience enjoyed the campy fun, expressing their excitement for the series' return.

Despite the critiques, the show's debut episode set the stage for a season filled with intense competition, emotional moments, and infectious laughter. The launch of the 2024 series is a testament to the enduring charm and appeal of Strictly Come Dancing, capturing the hearts of viewers once again. The series continues next Saturday, 21 September, on BBC One.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)