



PRESS PACK 2010

Sweeping the nation off its feet

bbc.co.uk/strictly

CONTENTS

Introduction	p.3
Celebrities	p.4
Presenters	p.11
Bruce Forsyth Q&A	p.12
Tess Daly Q&A	p.13
It Takes Two	p.14
Claudia Winkleman Q&A	p.15
Judges.....	p.16
Len Goodman Q&A.....	p.18
Craig Revel Horwood Q&A	p.19
Alesha Dixon Q&A	p.20
Bruno Tonioli Q&A.....	p.21
Female Professional Dancers	p.22
Male Professional Dances	p.23
HD and Multiplatform	p.24
Fun Facts	p.25
Facts and Figures	p.26

STRICTLY RETURNS FOR EIGHTH SERIES

Multi-award winning *Strictly Come Dancing* returns to screens this autumn with a brand new one hour studio launch show on the 11th September.

This year, filming commences with a red carpet event at BBC's Television Centre as celebrities, judges and pro dancers arrive before commencing the live show.

Inside the studio, for the first time ever, viewers will get to see the celebrities being paired with their professional dance partner on the *Strictly* set in front of an audience. This year the identity of partners will be kept secret until they meet on the *Strictly* floor, giving audiences the chance to see each and every reaction.

As well as unveiling the new celebrities taking part, the launch show will also be a showcase of what's to come this series including larger, more spectacular group routines and a revamped set.

The pro dancers and celebs will also perform a group dance giving viewers a chance to pick out their favourites as well as the runners and riders and who needs a few more hours in the training room!

Bruce Forsyth & Tess Daly return to host the series as well as judges Len Goodman, Craig Revel Horwood, Alesha Dixon and Bruno Tonioli.

Mark Linsey, Controller of Entertainment Commissioning said "It's fantastic to be bringing *Strictly* back for it's 8th series with even more glamour and excitement than ever before. This year we have a fantastic line-up of celebrities and more spectacular dancing than ever before – a red carpet launch is the perfect way to start the show".

Strictly launch show is on 11th September with the live shows starting on the 1st and 2nd October. Subsequent shows will be live on Saturday nights with a pre-recorded Sunday night results show.

Press contacts

Stuart MacDonald 020 8576 6680 / 07760 284 174

Dan Maynard 020 8225 9356 / 07764 355 136

Charlotte Kingston 020 8576 8779 / 07912 583 975

Pictures pictures@bbc.co.uk

Follow us on:

Twitter - @bbcstrictly

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/bbcstrictly>



FELICITY KENDAL
*"The Nation's Most Loved
 Leading Lady"*

Why was Felicity chosen?

Felicity is theatrical royalty and one of the UK's most loved actresses. Timelessly charming she guarantees us warmth and humour. She is a 'real' star whose performances will be unmissable.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

There is no telling at the moment whether I will prefer Ballroom or Latin. It's the choreography and the speed of it that will be the problem, but I think I am rather keen on Latin, and it will be a dance I rather like.

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

I would say I am a slow learner but when I have got something then that's it. It's just whether my dance partner will have the patience!

What is giving you butterflies the most?

The only thing I am really worried about is going into the unknown. I just hope I do well on the first few dances, it would be such a shame if I fell over or got injured.



GOLDIE
"The Element of Surprise"

Why was Goldie chosen?

Bad boy Goldie has turned into TV's golden boy with a proven track record of rising to a challenge. This cool DJ is never hotter than when out of his comfort zone.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

The Salsa. It's so vibrant and Latin American, a perfect opportunity to release all my energy!

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Good guidance and leadership

What is giving you butterflies the most?

Being able to remember the dance routines. I have a vast mountain to climb!

In our words

In their words

In our words

In their words



**The Rt. Hon
ANN WIDDECOMBE**
"The Wild Card"



GAVIN HENSON
"The Rugby Fittie"

Why was Ann chosen?

It was only a matter of time before an eminent politician agreed to take to the dance floor and Ann was the perfect choice. Judges take cover - totally outspoken, you know you are guaranteed the shock factor.

Once Widdi has waltzed, Ballroom will never be the same again.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

A nice gentle Waltz.

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

The patience of Job.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

No butterflies to report - yet!

Why was Gavin chosen?

Rugby players have a proven track record on Strictly Come Dancing and this international fittie is at the peak of his career. He might be a bit of a lad, but he's no stranger to a Ballroom fan.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

Quickstep because I've got quick feet in rugby so it should be easy for me!

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Patience and a happy fun person.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

Getting aroused when I'm dancing close to my dance partner!



KARA TOINTON
"The Wholesome Hottie"

Why was Kara chosen?

Kara is a total babe. She oozes sex appeal and is bound to set the boys pulses racing.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

Tango – there's something very seductive and powerful about that dance, and it's always fun to feel seductive and powerful from time to time.

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

I think, for me, I'm looking for someone fun and I can have a giggle with but also slightly strict and keeps me in check, it might help me concentrate better.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

For me, I'm nervous about forgetting the steps or going blank, quite likely in fact.....that would be a nightmare on live TV!



PETER SHILTON
"The Sporting Legend"

Why was Peter chosen?

Renowned for one of the most famous footballing moments in history. He is still match fit and ready to give the young'uns a run for their money

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

The Latin looks from previous years exciting and a challenge.

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Style and personality.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

The first show - it's the unknown what my own capabilities will be.

In our words

In their words

In our words

In their words



PATSY KENSIT
"The Screen Siren"

Why was Patsy chosen?

Patsy has been a darling of the screen since her childhood. A life lived in the public eye, she is someone we never tire of finding out about and can't wait to see her on the dance floor.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

I'm looking forward to all of them, I've never done any of them before so I'm excited to be learning something that I've never had any experience in before. But if I had to choose... the Tango, its history is so interesting and it has such passion when you watch!

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Patience!

What is giving you butterflies the most?

The live shows and finishing Holby City around the same time! I'm going to be working so hard but I'm just so excited to be part of something so brilliant and head on a new personal journey.



JIMI MISTRY
"The Movie Star"

Why was Jimi chosen?

He's just that - a mystery. Man of many parts, Jimi has starred in movies like East is East, The Guru and Blood Diamond as well as regularly dj-ing across Europe. We wanted to find out a bit more about the man behind the A list roles.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

I think I'm most looking forward to the Latin inspired dances - the Samba, Salsa and maybe the Cha-cha-cha - dances that you can express yourself to... well, try to anyway!!

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

A good teacher, a friend and someone who can inspire me to do something that I never thought I'd be doing in a million years.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

Dancing live on TV in a sparkly, sequined shirt... what else?



TINA O'BRIEN
"The Soap Sweetheart"

Why was Tina chosen?

Tina brings her own unique brand of sexy and cute. One of Corrie's favourite faces since she was 16 years old, this hard working mum is somebody the nation loves and can relate to.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

Anything like Salsa. I love the music and the passion of the dance. It tells a story and it's great to watch.

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Someone with patience and understanding who is a natural teacher. As I'm a beginner it would be great to feel that I'm with someone who can guide me to learn the art of dance and help me pick up the steps quickly.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

The thought of the first live show!!



PAUL DANIELS
"The Blast from the Past"

Why was Paul chosen?

He's a 72 year old national treasure and the consummate performer. When it comes to Ballroom we hope he'll be more magic than tragic.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

As I don't dance at all and have no knowledge of any of the dances I can't really answer this question. I am looking forward to learning as many of them as I can.

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

I have always admired professionals in any walk of life. Should that be dance of life in this case? I do feel sorry for whoever gets lumbered with me because they are REALLY going to have their work cut out. I guess they shouldn't be very tall!

What is giving you butterflies the most?

Ah... this is one area in which I will reign supreme. I don't get nervous. I did, once, a long time ago, but I have developed a technique that removes nerves and makes my life into fun. This programme, I believe, above all else should be fun and I look forward to having a good time.

In our words

In their words

In our words

In their words



PAMELA STEPHENSON
"The Chameleon"

Why was Pamela chosen?

From 'Not the 9 O'clock News' funny girl to acclaimed Doctor of Psychology, Pamela is never one to be predictable. Stepping back into the spotlight, we'll always be wondering what she'll do next.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

I love the Cha-cha-cha - flirtatious, and cheeky in every sense of the word! Argentine Tango is my favorite slow dance because it's seething with passion, and I also like a scalding hot, dirty Salsa! Perhaps I was swapped at birth for someone Latin!

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Whenever I've seen the show I always think the pro dancers are the real stars, and I've never seen one of them who was less than brilliant. I'd like a hottie of course, but most importantly someone who is a terrific choreographer and teacher, and can be patient with me. Beyond that he may have to be brave enough to ward off Billy's dagger looks and threatened Glaswegian head-butting if we seem too hot and heavy together!

What is giving you butterflies the most?

I've never done anything like this before. It's not my usual style of programme at all. It's not like me to display myself physically - at least not for many years - but I know I'm going to have to shake my butt in public. I'm very hard on myself about everything I do - I'm a bit of a perfectionist - so don't want to make a terrible mistake and let down myself and my partner.



SCOTT MASLEN
"The Housewives' Favourite"

Why was Scott chosen?

Best known for his role as Jack Branning in *EastEnders*, Scott has a huge fanbase and has been voted soap's sexiest male. A heartthrob, we think he'll be a favourite with the ladies.

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

I don't have a particular dance that I am looking forward to but I am looking forward to cutting a rug across the dancefloor. I'm hoping I can incorporate some of my favourite routines like the worm dance as well as some crazy legs. I forgot to ask, will lino be supplied or will I have to bring my own?

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

I'm hoping they will have some coordination, enough for the both of us. Also someone that can supply me with some rhythm tablets would help.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

Everything about it is making me nervous. I'm trying not to think about it so answering these questions is not helping.



MICHELLE WILLIAMS
"The International Pop Diva"



MATT BAKER
"The Outdoorsy One"

In our words

In their words

Why was Michelle chosen?

Grammy Award-winning Michelle brings A-list glamour and raises the bar. An international pop star she has performed alongside Beyonce in one of the biggest girl groups in the world, but will the glitter ball be her destiny?

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

I'm actually looking forward to all the Latin dances, the sexy, sultry, seductive moves that I can add to my repertoire!

I am also looking forward to the gracefulness of the Waltz. I've never done the Waltz in my life so that will be cool too! Maybe I can dance with Prince William one day after I've perfected a move or two?

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

I'm looking for someone that I can have fun with and learn a lot from....hopefully they're ready to do the same. I am also looking to win and I want my partner to have the same spirit!

What is giving you butterflies the most?

What gives me butterflies is having to dance in front of so many people and stand in front of the judges' panel. No one likes to be judged but it's a competition, right?

Why was Matt chosen?

As an ex Blue Peter presenter, Matt is no stranger to a challenge. It's time for this action man to swap country walks for a Waltz - but not in his wellies we hope!

What dance are you looking forward to the most?

The Jive, it seems a bit freer and a bit more fun, but to be honest I haven't a clue which one I'll like best!

What are you looking for in a professional dancer?

Someone that's good fun! I guess we'll be spending an awful lot of time together so someone who doesn't mind a bit of mud as they'll be coming to all my Countryfile locations with me during filming.

What is giving you butterflies the most?

The fear of forgetting my routines and imagining Bruce doing his little intros before we go on thinking 'Oh man, this is really happening!'.

In our words

In their words



BRUCE FORSYTH

Entertainment legend, and host of the show since its launch in 2004, Bruce Forsyth is back to present the eighth series of Strictly Come Dancing.

Bruce is a much loved showman, comedian and entertainer who became a household name by presenting shows such as The Generation Game and The Price is Right.

Bruce is also a dancer, and has performed with an array of iconic figures such as Julie Andrews and Sammy Davis Jr.

A cornerstone of entertainment, Bruce has collected numerous awards during his career including a C.B.E, O.B.E and a Royal Television Society Lifetime Achievement Award.

TESS DALY

Dubbed 'Miss Sunshine' by Bruce, co-presenter Tess Daly has brought elegance and warmth to the show since its launch in 2004.

Tess began her career travelling around the world as a model, before going on to present shows such as Children in Need and the Royal Variety Performance.

Encouraged by her family to learn Ballroom as a child, Tess knows a thing or two about dancing, and she even won a special Children In Need version of the show in 2008 against Terry Wogan, in which she was partnered with Anton du Beke.

What do you enjoy most about the show?

To quote Tony Blair's book, 'The Journey', I love to watch the celebrities' journey, whether it is a slight improvement from some or a great improvement from others.

You've cut back on your hours this year and are only doing the main

show, what made you decide to do that?

It's a long day. It is a 12 hour show and I don't know any other TV presenters who do a programme like Strictly, where it stops and then you have another two hour show for the results programme. We were trying to think of different ways to make it easier. It was the BBC who came forward with this idea and asked if it would make a difference if I didn't have the results programme. I thought immediately 'my goodness yes it will make a difference'. It means I will finish about 9pm, get home in time for Match of the Day and it turns my 12 hour day into a 10 hour day which is much more manageable.

Do you think this will be your last year?

Everyone has been saying 'this is my last year' from the first series. They keep asking if I am going to do another one. After negotiations this year, this idea from the BBC of not doing the results programme is the main reason that made me return to do Strictly. I am going to feel very different on a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and a Wednesday. I am sure it's going to make an enormous difference.

Do you get cross with the dancers when they flounce off the stage after being criticised by the judges?

I do. A couple of times I have nearly flounced off with them!

Do you think the judges ever over step the mark?

Now and again yes. I don't mind criticism as it can be very good for you. But when it gets personal, I don't like it.

Do you like the rivalry and romance on Strictly?

Oh yes I love all that, whether half of it is true or not! As long as they don't include my name, I don't care what they say!

Are you jealous of Bruno and Len who also work in America?

I am a little bit jealous of anyone now America has opened up to British performers. When I was trying to have a go, it was very much a closed shop. It's different now. If you are British now, they welcome you with open arms. Back then, they didn't.

Do you think the changes to this year's show will freshen Strictly and give it a new feel?

Definitely. I like the idea of the opening show. It will be very different and it will make it exciting. It's a wonderful idea.

What are you looking for from this year's celebrities?

We have got some lovely celebrities in the line-up this year. We have got some stars who can talk and have a go back at the judges and I am looking forward to all of that. I think the casting of the celebrities is far better than last year and it will make the show. Everything depends on the stars. We have got a mixed bag of people that I think will really add to the show. I am really looking forward to the new series.

What are you looking forward to most about this year's Strictly?

The line-up. The mix of cast and characters of celebrities we have on the show is going to be the highlight for me. It will be fascinating to see how our celebrities get on with each other and the dynamics between them this year. There is something for everyone and we have a really great mix.

Do you welcome the format changes?

Definitely. This year I am going to be front of stage in a glass booth, like the US version. I am all for new changes.

Which celebrity are you most looking forward to watching?

Patsy Kensit. She is a very beautiful woman and I think it will be good to see how she dances. I can't wait to see Ann Widdecombe too. She is going to be very outspoken when it comes to biting back!

Do you love the rivalry on the show?

Yes! I love it when the celebrities bite back and stand up for themselves with the judges.

Do you think the judges ever step out of line?

No. They are experts in their field. I don't think they are out of line as such. For me personally, I hang on their every word because they know what they are talking about.

Have you become good friends with the professional dancers?

Absolutely, of course. I text Anton (Du Beke) and Brendan (Cole) a lot. In fact I texted Brendan when he was on honeymoon and I keep telling him a baby is next for him! Strictly is a big family and we have been through babies, marriage, all sorts. It's great catching up with them all.

You are good friends with Bruce too. What is the best thing about working with him?

He loves to have a laugh. He takes life with a pinch of salt, and he is always looking for the joke and fun in a conversation. He is such a laugh and he really is fun to be around. He has got so much energy, and he can't keep still. Brucie lives for the laugh and that's great.

Are you looking forward to working alongside Claudia on the results programme?

I am over the moon. I love Claudia and I have told her before I am her number one fan. We are always talking about babies and frocks - and of course, the dancing. She lives and breathes it like I do. We are always texting each other during the series as to who is going to stay, go, win and our favourites. I am thrilled she is doing it as I love her to bits.

Will you be getting a brand new wardrobe?

Yes. I was thinking cocktail and modern glamour for this series - perhaps also a show of the knee! I am not allowed to get too attached though as the dresses have to go back at the end of the night! Getting dressed up is all part of the fun and it's a world away from being knee deep in nappies at home!

Do the nerves ever get the better of you?

You are not human if you don't get butterflies. Every presenter gets them. Strictly is live television, but it's exciting and anything can happen or go wrong. The adrenaline is a real thrill.

Have you ever tried to get any of your celebrity friends on the show?

I am constantly suggesting names to the producers and I have whispered in the odd friend's ear saying 'I can see you on the show'. I said that to Michael Caine as he told me he was a fan. Obviously I told him he would be quite welcome to join us!

Is he your ideal guest?

Yes definitely Sir Michael Caine would be a welcome addition. And Prince Charles. He has told me he is a fan of the show too. I told him if he wanted to learn the tango, he could definitely be our guest.

And finally, is this going to be the best ever Strictly?

Yes. I reckon with the cast of characters we have got, I think this year could be the best Strictly yet.

CLAUDIA & IT TAKES TWO



CLAUDIA WINKLEMAN

Hosting Strictly's sister show 'It Takes Two' as well as the Sunday night results show is popular television and radio presenter, Claudia Winkleman.

The Cambridge graduate is a renowned presenter and journalist, who, as well as being the new host of Film 2010, also hosts her weekly Radio 2 show 'The Arts Show with Claudia Winkleman' and contributes regularly to The Independent and London's Evening Standard.

With her numerous television appearances and presenting roles, including the Golden Globes and the Academy Awards, the viewers of Strictly will be in safe hands!

IT TAKES TWO

Claudia Winkleman returns with Strictly Come Dancing - It Takes Two on BBC Two weeknights, bringing viewers, eager to get their Strictly fix, a half hour show, jam-packed with exclusive interviews, backstage gossip and footage from training sessions.

Len is back with his dance master class and celebrity superfans will be invited to give their take on the dances and the costumes so far.

If this isn't already enough, ex Strictly pro dancers will appear regularly on the show, sharing their expert opinions with the viewers on everything from choreography to costumes, and guests will be coming in to chat to Claudia about this year's runners and riders.

Are you looking forward to the new series?

I am properly excited. By August time, I start getting twitchy and I phone up my boss and say 'you know I was never going to talk about dancing again, (which I do vow to do by Christmas), well I would like to do it all again'!

Bruce is such a legend. Do you feel it's an honour to be stepping into his Strictly shoes hosting the results show?

Oh gosh I can't even view it like that. I am literally helping out. It's a bit like if a girl-friend phones up and says 'I am moving house, can you help?'. That is what I happen to be doing - nothing else.

What are you looking forward to the most?

The line-up. When the producers told me who was taking part, I punched the air. It is a brilliant line-up this year. They have got some great names and I know the celebrities taking part will make great dancers. I literally cannot wait.

Will it be nice working with Tess on Sunday nights?

She is adorable. All we talk about is babies - that is it!

Will you be getting a new wardrobe for Strictly?

My new obsession and the person I have always dreamed about looking like is Steve Tyler from Aerosmith! He is insane! This year I want to look like Karl Lagerfeld though. The high neck and maybe a ponytail even... I do love dressing up.

Don't you wish you could be on Strictly?

No way. I don't believe in exercise and I would be very bad at dancing. You have seen me try and do the master class with Len Goodman...awful!

Do you take your hat off to the celebrities who do take part?

Gosh yes, mainly because it is such hard work. The people who enter it really are committed. You can't enter Strictly and do it for a few weeks and say 'right I am off to do my Christmas shopping now'. They work so hard and hopefully we do put that message across.

Do you feel the judges over step the mark?

I think they are brilliant. I would move in with Craig, but I would have to bring my kids with me, and I am not sure how happy he would be!

You are also hosting the new Film show for the BBC. Are you pleased with the way your career is going?

I would have been quite happy to have remained low profile but being asked to do the film show has floored me. I am sure I will be very bad and get fired! I am joking of course and I do feel very lucky. I really love the work so much.

And finally, do you have any superstitions before you host a show?

No but I eat lots of Haribo sweets!



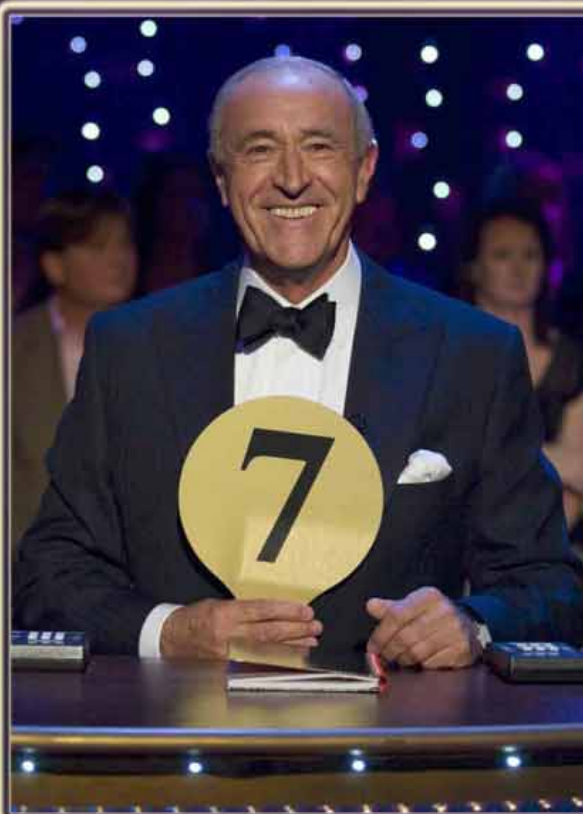
**CRAIG REVEL
HORWOOD**

Craig Revel Horwood doesn't pull any punches when it comes to giving his opinion. He is a notoriously hard judge to please, but you wouldn't expect any less from a top theatre choreographer.

Craig's career has taken him worldwide, and he has even won a prestigious Olivier award for his work on the West End musical 'Spend, Spend, Spend'.

He is also an experienced performer, and has featured in such shows as 'Cats', 'Miss Saigon' and 'Crazy for You'.

The ever busy Craig is constantly on the go choreographing and directing new stage projects, as well as judging a New Zealand version of Strictly Come Dancing.



LEN GOODMAN
Head Judge

As a professional judge both on and off screen, Len Goodman is an established figure in the world of dance. Despite being a late beginner, Len's dancing career soon flourished and he wasted no time setting up a dance school in Dartford, Kent, which he still runs today.

Before making the jump to professional judge, Len competed as a dancer, specialising in Exhibition, a type of Ballroom dancing which is all about the lifts. He quickly became British champion, winning the title a total of four times.

Len now splits his time between London and LA, filming both 'Strictly Come Dancing' and its American equivalent, 'Dancing with the Stars'.

As an experienced judge, Len knows what he's looking for and doesn't want to see any nerves from the celebrities.



ALESHA DIXON

Returning to the judges' panel for a second year is much loved pop-star and former Strictly champion, Alesha Dixon.

Alesha began her career in the music business with pop band Mis-Teeq, securing a MOBO award and BRIT nomination with the group before embarking on a solo career.

Alesha became a firm favourite with viewers on series five of Strictly, winning the show with her partner, Matthew Cutler. As a former champion, Alesha knows what it takes to win the competition and will surely keep the boys on their toes!



BRUNO TONIOLI

Talented choreographer Bruno Tonioli is, without a doubt, Strictly's most flamboyant judge.

Bruno lives and breathes dance and has worked with some of the biggest names in the industry, such as Elton John, Michael Jackson, Freddy Mercury and Tina Turner just to name a few!

Along with fellow Strictly judge Len Goodman, Bruno also appeared on the Eurovision Dance Contest as a judge to critique the dancing and currently makes frequent visits across the Atlantic to film Strictly's American equivalent, 'Dancing with the Stars'.

LEN GOODMAN

Q&A

Another Strictly! Excited?

I am really looking forward to it and I am raring to go. The time flies by and I can't wait for the new series to start. Hopefully it's going to be the best ever.

What do you think about the format changes?

It's a good thing. The new producers have got fresh ideas to jazz the show up a bit and I am really looking forward to it. I think it is right they aren't having as many celebrities on this year too.

Which celebrities are you looking forward to watching?

Felicity Kendal should be good as well as Patsy Kensit.

Expectations for the show get higher each year. Is it harder for the celebrities taking part?

Definitely as the standards do get higher.

There is always someone who comes along who is totally unexpected. Look at last year with Ricky Whittle and Chris Hollins. Both were fantastic and you would never have dreamed this beforehand. The intrigue of who is going to do well and who is not going to do well is one of the reasons why I love doing Strictly so much.

As judges, do you ever step the mark?

I don't think we do. We never get personal about the people. I actually feel sorry for the celebrities as they invest so much time and energy in the show. But we are there to give a critique of the dancing. I can't be over nasty. I think Craig is sometimes a bit cruel with some of his remarks and I will tell him so, but it is all part of the fun and there is never any animosity afterwards between us both.

What kind of judge are you going to be this year?

I want to be fair, entertain a bit and enlighten, educate and encourage.

What advice would you give this year's celebrities?

Enjoy themselves, relax, try not to worry and savour the moment.

You work on the US version, Dancing with the Stars, are you dreading the commute this year?

I don't dread it because nobody forces me. I enjoy doing them both so much and hopefully I won't have to give either of them up!

Is the rivalry and romance we see on Strictly every year a reflection of what really happens on the dance floor?

When you are pushed together for a long period of time, lots of the professionals end up marrying their partner, as I did. You have very little life outside of it and so with regards to celebrities such as Ali and Brian getting together last year, yes it is nice. Lots of people form relationships in the workplace, so why not?

You have often said you are the luckiest man alive landing a job on Strictly. Do you still feel like that?

Yes I am a very lucky person indeed. It's like someone being keen on football and ending up turning professional. I love it.

And finally, are Bruno and Craig more vain when it comes to slapping on the hair gel than you?!

I will tell you a little secret. They bring their own make up in! They will only use certain foundations and eye liner or whatever it is they put on their faces. They are both from the theatre and they are more used to slapping on the make-up than I am.

Are you looking forward to the new series?
Very much so. I love watching all the professional dancers and I am really pleased that this year they will be able to blow people away and wow the audience with their dance routines. They will have a week to rehearse, rather than a couple of hours at the end, so that is going to be great.

What do you think about Claudia hosting the Sunday night results programme?
I love Claudia and I think it is very apt that she has been asked to present it. She filled in last year and she did really well. She was very funny and witty and it is definitely time she came on the BBC1 show.

What kind of judge are you going to be this year?
An honest one! It is important to tell the celebrities what is wrong with their dancing and how they can improve.

What do you think of your 'Mr Nasty' tag?
I don't think I am being nasty. I have to protect the dance side and I am not going to tell someone they are wonderful when clearly they are not.

People have accused you of being too critical...
I don't think I am and I actually think Len Goodman is very traditional. We don't see eye to eye on the programme sometimes, but it would be a dull world if we had the same opinion. We are always very professional afterwards.

Which celebrity are you most looking forward to watching?
Ann Widdecombe. Politicians do tend to have the gift of the gab and I think people will get to see the soft and glamorous side to her when she comes on Strictly too. She will certainly give us all a run for our money in the talkbacks!

Talking of which, do you enjoy the banter between yourself and the dancers?
Yes, it's all part of the fun and you have to remember it is an entertainment show. I like it when people say what they think. I am up for the challenge, as much as they are.

Have you ever been tempted to storm off the stage in a strop?!
No. Everyone is entitled to their opinion and it is all water off a duck's back to me!

What advice would you give this year's contestants?
Listen to your professional dancer, take everything in your stride, take to the floor with grace and style and don't get upset if you are criticised.

Which of the judges is the vainest?
Bruno is more desperate than me to look young and fabulous. But I have been guilty of over fake tanning definitely!

And finally are you secretly jealous of Len and Bruno working as judges on the US version?
No. When would I get time to do that?! I am a choreographer and that is my career. Strictly is a bit of fun on a Saturday night. I would never give it up as I love doing the show too much. I am really looking forward to the new series.

You are returning for a second series as a judge. How are you feeling?

Excited. I am really looking forward to the new set, pro dancers and sitting in the judges' chairs with the boys. I have the best seat in the house. I am also looking forward to seeing how the contestants get on and who will shine.

What kind of judge are you going to be?

I want to be myself and as honest as I can. I respect the show and what it is all about and I want to see the same from the contestants. It's important to be helpful and give people advice so they can work on things.

You were criticised last year for the role you played as a judge. One year on, what have you learned?

It was hard last year because there was a lot of negativity before I had even started. But I am a fighter and I was determined not to let any of the negative opinions get to me. I hope people can move on now as the focus should definitely not be on me - but the contestants. They are, after all, the ones doing *Strictly*.

Are you also feeling more confident this year?

I am just very relaxed. I was quite relaxed last year, but to everyone else it probably appeared quite stressful. The truth is I really enjoyed myself last year and I am raring to go this year.

What advice would you give to the contestants?

Embrace the moment, listen to the judges and just enjoy it. Try not to let the nerves get to you. Going on *Strictly* is such an amazing opportunity.

Do you enjoy working with the other judges?

Yes all of them are so lovely and Bruno is such a laugh. He is so full of energy. I feel it is such an honour to be asked to judge the show and it's a joy to be part of it.

Who are you looking forward to watching?

Goldie. He is going to surprise loads of people. He is a lot of fun and he will bring great entertainment to the show. I am also looking forward to watching Ann Widdecombe because she is so strongly opinionated.

Your dream contestant?

Lily Allen. She is a nice girl and she is a fan of the show, so she would be great to watch.

Which is more nerve wracking - being a judge on *Strictly* or performing as a pop star on stage?

Performing on stage, without a doubt. Performing to a crowded audience is always nerve wracking.

Will you be dressing up and which male judge is the most flamboyant?

I can't wait to put on some sparkly dresses! Craig is the most flamboyant in his style. He will come in and wear really wacky things which I love.

As a judge, do you ever step the mark?

No we are completely in our rights to say what we think. I think when Brucie and Brendan had a pop at Craig last year, he was perfectly in his rights to say what he said. I enjoyed watching Brendan's reaction though. *Strictly* is an entertainment programme and people should not take it too seriously. When the show's over it's all forgotten and we have a laugh and a drink in the bar. We all get on so well, just like a big family.

Will you be doing anything else whilst *Strictly* is on?

Yes I have got my single out now and my album is out in November, so I am very busy. I love it though and I feel so lucky to be doing what I am doing right now.

What are you looking forward to most about this year's Strictly?

I think this year is going to be an exciting one. We have got a new set, new dancers and the line up is fantastic. This year's changes will spice up the proceedings.

One thing about Strictly is it is unpredictable. You never know how it is going to play out and that is really exciting. I always approach Strictly as if I have never done it before and that works for me as I just react to what I see.

You always come out with lots of funny one-liners. Will you be planning to do the same this year?!

I don't plan it. They just get me going. On stage I become like a devil! I am always fair and I am definitely honest. I never have any plans in my mind beforehand as to what I am going to say.

What are you looking for this year?

I want everything sexed up more and I think it will be. Expectations do get higher, but that is like the Olympics. You watch them and you want a better Olympics the next time with more records broken. Strictly is the same thing.

Do you think you over step the mark as judges?

Sometimes things come out and I realise what I have said. I try not to be offensive, but if I have something to say, I say it. We are not scripted and you can get carried away with the moment.

Do you get on?

I adore all the judges. We are all really good friends. I get on with Len and Craig, as well as Alesha. I felt sorry for her last year over the comments made about her. It was unfair and heavy handed.

Who is the vainest judge?

Craig has more make-up than Alesha! My goodness me. I am so tired flying in from LA the day before, I am like 'fix me up'. You want to look good for the public.

Alongside Len, you are a judge on the American version. Do you notice any differences in the two shows?

The format is the same but the American one is more showbiz. But that is because the British show is traditional. I love working on both of them and if it had not been for the UK one, I would not be working in America. I don't want to give either up.

Is it better to be a young contestant?

Up until now the younger people have won, but you never know and this year could be different. It's great to have a good balance of characters.

What advice do you have for this year's celebrities?

Enjoy yourself, have a good time, put the work in and learn a new skill. Strictly is a fun show. I don't mind if they answer back either. They are under pressure and sometimes they react. The contestants should never take themselves seriously though.

And finally, do you have a dream guest celebrity?

David Beckham! He looks great and he would be brilliant but sadly he is too busy to do it. Posh and Becks - that would be the ultimate signing for sure!

FEMALE PROFESSIONAL DANCERS

Aliona Vilani

Aliona began ballroom dancing in Russia at the age of eleven. An all rounder, Aliona specialises in Ten Dance (Ballroom and Latin) as well as Salsa, Hip Hop and Jazz. In 2001, Aliona was selected by the National Dance Congress to compete against the World Teams for the U.S, and in 2008 became part of the 'Dancing with the Stars' tour in the United States.

Aliona is a born teacher, and has been instructing for many years: "There is nothing more satisfying and rewarding than taking an untrained artist and watching them blossom under my wing."

Erin Boag

Kiwi Erin is a strong competitor and specialises in Ballroom. Erin's professional partner is fellow Strictly dancer, Anton du Beke. The pair have been dancing together since 1997, turning professional in 2002.

Erin's experience on Strictly is extremely valuable to her, "The show has opened new doors for me and given me opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise. It's great to be respected as a dancer outside of the dance industry."

Flavia Cacace

Italian born Flavia took to dancing quickly, finding her first dancing partner at the age of 12.

She and her current professional partner and Strictly dancer Vincent Simone have been dancing together for the past thirteen years and since turning professional in 2001, the pair have accumulated an impressive list of titles.

As a previous finalist, Flavia is a true competitor and fan of the show.

Katya Virshilas

Born in Lithuania, Katya discovered ballroom dancing when she moved to Vancouver with her family. She competed in and won numerous championships, and became the youngest ever British Columbian Latin Dance Champion at the age of 16.

It was in Russia that she first discovered her love of teaching, when she began instructing dance to children and teens. Katya has since trained film stars Richard Gere and Jennifer Lopez.

Kristina Rihanoff

A dedicated and vivacious dancer, Kristina Rihanoff is passionate about Latin and Ballroom. Siberian born Kristina took part in her first competition aged seven and went on to become a renowned dance champion in Russia's far Eastern region.

This series, Kristina is hoping for a partner who is not afraid to have fun with dance, "Above all I'd like a great character with an open mind – someone who wants to win, but will have fun on the journey".

Natalie Lowe

Australian born Natalie was encouraged by her neighbours to start ballroom dancing at three years old and was representing her country just five years later.

Natalie has swept every prestigious award available to her, maintaining her title of the Australian Professional New Vogue Champion 2005-2009. Natalie has an impressive track record on the show, winning the first series and coming second in three others.

Ola Jordan

Winner of last year's Strictly Come Dancing with partner Chris Hollins, Polish born Ola Jordan began dancing aged 12.

Ola then went on to win the Open Polish Championship in 1999, aged 17 and to compete in the World Championships, in which she was placed in the Top 12.

Ola's professional partner, and husband, is Strictly professional, James Jordan.

Anton Du Beke

A part of *Strictly Come Dancing* since the beginning, Anton Du Beke has become one of the show's most popular faces.

Like many of our dancers, English gentlemen Anton had to work hard to finance his dancing. Working as a baker, getting up at 3am every day with dance practice in the evening, Anton is a hardened and well-experienced performer and has won numerous titles with his professional partner and fellow *Strictly* dancer, Erin Boag.

Artem Chigvintsev

Artem Chigvintsev is a Latin Champion and a season one finalist of 'So You Think You Can Dance' in the US. He is a diverse dancer, and has unique experience of very different dancing genres in addition to his ballroom champion-level skill.

This is Artem's first series on *Strictly Come Dancing*. "Being asked to take part in *Strictly* came as a massive surprise – I can't wait to get to London and start training... even though I'll miss the LA weather!"

Brendan Cole

Brendan has featured on *Strictly* since the first series, which he won with partner Natasha Kaplinsky.

An ambitious and passionate dancer, Brendan has this year appeared in his own dancing tour, 'Live and Un-judged', in which he performed in front of a twenty piece band. Brendan is also a judge on the New Zealand version of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

James Jordan

Straight-talking James is a Latin American specialist who tells it like it is. After a slow start to the dancing scene, James soon took on some major Championships and along with his professional partner, wife and fellow *Strictly* professional dancer Ola Jordan, he became professional in 2003 continuing his dancing career, teaching Latin American dancing with Ola in Hong Kong.

The couple returned to competitive dancing in 2005 and have since become Latin American Closed British finalists.

Jared Murillof

Jared Murillo is just 21 and has been awarded the title of US open Swing Youth champion. Training in America, Jared was a principal dancer in the popular movie 'High School Musical' and, having choreographed co-stars Zac Efron and Monique Coleman, Jared has no lack of experience when it comes to teaching celebrities.

He is looking forward to "working with the whole cast and creating exciting new memories".

Robin Windsor

Robin Windsor began dancing at the age of three, and had a successful youth career. Robin completed five world tours of the worldwide ballroom dancing phenomena 'Burn the Floor', in which he has starred and choreographed routines, and has performed on Broadway and the West End.

Robin is excited about his debut appearance on the show, "I'm looking forward to shaking things up and bringing some hot and sexy moves to the dancefloor".

Vincent Simone

With both his parents being professional Ballroom and Latin teachers, Italian Vincent Simone has strong dancing roots.

Joining the dancing scene aged seven, Vincent showed real talent and has since performed in countries such as Singapore, Canada and Japan along with professional partner and *Strictly* dancer, Flavia Cacace. The pair are Professional Ten Dance Champions, UK Professional Show-dance Champions, and World Argentine Tango Show Champions.

HIGH DEFINITION AND MULTI PLATFORM

Like last year, this series of *Strictly Come Dancing* and the results show will be filmed in stunning High Definition and simulcast on BBC One and the BBC HD channel.

The newly refreshed *Strictly Come Dancing* website is back and will have up to the minute information on the show alongside lots of behind the scenes videos and photos and new for 2010, a brand new *Strictly* Blog. You can see it live here at www.bbc.co.uk/strictly.

The *Strictly Come Dancing* Twitter feed is back - www.twitter.com/bbcstrictly - to keep you up to date with all the back stage goings on and you can also become a fan on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/bbcstrictly.

Episode highlights will also be available on the [BBC YouTube channel](#).

The screenshot shows the BBC Strictly Come Dancing website homepage. At the top is the BBC logo and navigation links for News, Sport, Weather, iPlayer, TV, Radio, and More. A search bar is on the right. The main banner features the 'Strictly Come Dancing' logo and a photo of judges Len Goodman and Shirley Ballas. Text on the banner says 'Strictly's back! An hour long launch show kicks off the new series. BBC One, Sat 11 September'. Below the banner is a navigation menu with links: Home, The Team, News Blog, About, and Quiz.

Latest from the News Blog

Celebs revealed on Sept 8
Read the latest from the Strictly Press team and keep your ears to the ground on 8th September.

Fun Boys Three!
Three brand new male pro dancers join the team for 2010. Find out more about Artem, Jared and Robin.

Strictly Tweets

All 14 celeb names for Strictly will be officially revealed on 8 September - that's a WEEK TOMORROW! (runs round office excited) #scd

Official Celebrity Reveal CONFIRMED for Wed 8 Sept Read more here: <http://bbc.in/aSiEac> #scd

Lots of good guesses, but NO - it's not the judges' desk and it's not a camera track either!

Watch our favourite dance clips
Full details of the Pro Dance Troupe

Hour-long Launch show on Sept 11
Changes to our website

Newsletter
Sign up for the FREE Strictly Come Dancing newsletter.

Try our quiz
Test your knowledge of Strictly's first

Catch Up

Next on TV
BBC one

Last year's winners Chris and Ola trained for a total of 340 hours – that's over two weeks worth of solid training!

In previous series, the dancers in the final averaged 15.3 hours of dance-practice a week, burning around 255 calories per hour. That's 3,900 calories a week, which equates to...

- almost 18 servings of spaghetti for Vincent or Flavia.
- 42 glasses of champagne, or 98 spoonfuls of caviar for Craig or Bruno.
- 14 Snickers bars, or 177 squares of chocolate for Alesha!

The dance floor for the new series is 9m x 14m – that's 126 square metres of space, so our celebrities won't need to hold back!

The set for the new series uses three glitter-balls and six brand new spherical chandeliers.

The set also uses 300m of red velvet drapes, and 1250m of LED lighting. That enough LED lighting to run the length of more than 11 football pitches!

Twelve sets of perfect scores have been awarded throughout the show's history, three of which were earned by Rachel Stevens with dance partner Vincent Simone in Series 6.

The lowest score ever given on Strictly was just 8 points, which went to Quentin Wilson and Hazel Newbury for their Cha-cha-cha in Series 2.

Len Goodman was the most generous judge in the last series, giving an average score of 7.4. Alesha gave an average of 7.2, whilst Bruno gave 7.0. Unsurprisingly Craig was the harshest judge – giving an average of just 6.3.

Craig is also the only judge ever to have awarded a score of 1.

A word of advice to this year's stars: don't peak too soon! None of the series winners were the judges' favourites in the first week. Last year's winners Chris and Ola scored 23 with their Quickstep in their first week – but pulled themselves up to full marks by the time they danced their Charleston in the final.

FACTS AND FIGURES - PREVIOUS SERIES

Series 1 - 15 May to 3 July 2004

Celebrity	Professional	Voted out
Jason Wood	Kylie Jones	Week 2
David Dickinson	Camilla Dallerup	Week 3
Verona Joseph	Paul Killick	Week 4
Claire Sweeney	John Byrnes	Week 5
Martin Offiah	Erin Boag	Week 6
Lesley Garrett	Anton du Beke	Week 7
Christopher Parker	Hanna Karttunen	Final Week (2nd)
Natasha Kaplinsky	Brendan Cole	Series winners

Series 2 - 23 October to 11 December 2004

Celebrity	Professional	Voted out
Quentin Willson	Hazel Newberry	Week 1
Carol Vorderman	Paul Killick	Week 2
Esther Rantzen	Anton du Beke	Week 3
Diarmuid Gavin	Nicole Cutler	Week 4
Sarah Manners	Brendan Cole	Week 5
Roger Black	Camilla Dallerup	Week 6
Aled Jones	Lilia Kopylova	Week 7
Julian Clary	Erin Boag	Final Week (3rd)
Denise Lewis	Ian Waite	Final Week (2nd)
Jill Halfpenny	Darren Bennett	Series winners

Series 3 - 15 October to 17 December 2005

Celebrity	Professional	Voted out
Siobhan Hayes	Matthew Cutler	Week 1
Jaye Jacobs	Andrew Cuerden	Week 2
Gloria Hunniford	Darren Bennett	Week 3
Fiona Phillips	Brendan Cole	Week 4
Dennis Taylor	Izabela Hannah	Week 5
Will Thorp	Hanna Haarakala	Week 6
Bill Turnbull	Karen Hardy	Week 7
Patsy Palmer	Anton du Beke	Week 8
James Martin	Camilla Dallerup	Week 9
Zoe Ball	Ian Waite	Final Week (3rd)
Colin Jackson	Erin Boag	Final Week (2nd)
Darren Gough	Lilia Kopylova	Series winners

Series 4 - 7 October to 23 December 2006

Celebrity	Professional	Voted out
Nicholas Owen	Nicole Cutler	Week 1
Mica Paris	Ian Waite	Week 2
Jimmy Tarbuck	Flavia Cacace	Withdrawn
DJ Spooky	Ola Jordan	Week 3
Georgina Bouzova	James Jordan	Week 4
Jan Ravens	Anton du Beke	Week 5
Ray Fearon	Camilla Dallerup	Week 6
Peter Schmeichel	Erin Boag	Week 7
Claire King	Brendan Cole	Week 8
Carol Smillie	Matthew Cutler	Week 9
Louisa Lytton	Vincent Simone	Week 10
Emma Bunton	Darren Bennett	Week 11 (3rd)
Matt Dawson	Lilia Kopylova	Final Week (2nd)
Mark Ramorakash	Karen Hardy	Series winners

Series 5 - 6 October to 22 December 2007

Celebrity	Professional	Voted out
Brian Capron	Karen Hardy	Week 1
Stephanie Beacham	Vincent Simone	Week 2
Willie Thorne	Erin Boag	Week 3
Gabby Logan	James Jordan	Week 4
Dominic Littlewood	Lilia Kopylova	Week 5
Penny Lancaster	Ian Waite	Week 6
Stewart	Anton du Beke	Week 7
Kate Garraway	Nicole Cutler	Week 8
John Barnes	Brendan Cole	Withdrawn
Kelly Brook	Ola Jordan	Week 9
Kenny Logan	Darren Bennett	Week 10
Letitia Dean	Camilla Dallerup	Week 11
Gethin Jones	Flavia Cacace	Final Week (2nd)
Matt Di'Angelo	Matthew Cutler	Series winners
Alesha Dixon		

Series 6 - 20 September to 20 December 2008

Celebrity	Professional	Voted out
Phil Daniels	Flavia Cacace	Week 1
Gillian Telford	Anton du Beke	Week 2
Gary Rhodes	Karen Hardy	Week 3
Jessie Wallace	Darren Bennett	Week 4
Don Warrington	Lilia Kopylova	Week 5
Mark Foster	Hayley Holt	Week 6
Andrew Castle	Ola Jordan	Week 7
Heather Small	Brian Fortuna	Week 8
Cherie Lunghi	James Jordan	Week 9
John Sergeant	Kristina Rihanoff	Withdrawn
Jodie Kidd	Ian Waite	Week 10
Christine Bleakley	Matthew Cutler	Week 11
Austin Healey	Erin Boag	Week 12
Lisa Snowden	Brendan Cole	Final (3rd)
Rachel Stevens	Vincent Simone	Final (2nd)
Tom Chambers	Camilla Dallerup	Series winners

Series 7 - 18 September until 19 December 2009

Celebrity	Professional	Voted Out
Martina Hingis	Matthew Cutler	Week 1
Richard Dunwoody	Lilia Kopylova	Week 2
Rav Wilding	Aliona Vilani	Week 3
Lynda Bellingham	Darren Bennett	Week 4
Joe Calzaghe	Kristina Rihanoff	Week 5
Jo Wood	Brendan Cole	Week 6
Zoe Lucker	James Jordan	Week 7
Craig Kelly	Flavia Cacace	Week 8
Phil Tufnell	Katya Virshilas	Week 9
Jade Johnson	Ian Waite	Withdrawn due to injury
Ricky Groves	Erin Boag	Week 10
Natalie Cassidy	Vincent Simone	Week 11
Laila Rouass	Anton du Beke	Week 12
Ali Bastian	Brian Fortuna	Third place
Ricky Whittle	Natalie Lowe	Runners up
Chris Hollins	Ola Jordan	Series winners

Sweeping the nation off its feet

camerast



Sweeping the nation off its feet

bbc.co.uk/strictly