

These Cats Are Game for Anything

CatChannel Managing Editor Nikki Batalis blogs about the new 'Meow Mix Think Like a Cat Game Show.'

By Nikki Batalis

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"Contestants" Quinn, left, with owner Ian Stich, and Abbey, with owner Alma Coronado, showed their skills. I have a confession to make: I love game shows. I watch "Jeopardy!" nightly, usually as I'm cleaning up after dinner and making the kids' lunches for the next day. I enjoy testing my trivia knowledge along with the contestants, and I feel a special sense of pride if I can beat one of those smarty-pants on TV to an answer.

I'm also a veteran of two game shows – neither of which is on the air anymore, though I'm sure that's not my fault. I know the pressure that contestants are under: The wait is long to get onstage, the studio lights are hot, you need to behave in an abnormally perky manner (there is plenty of candy backstage to help in that regard), and even if you know the answer to a question, you have to time the clicking of your buzzer just right; buzz in too soon and you are locked out.

So it was with special interest that I watched "Meow Mix Think Like a Cat Game Show," which first aired over the weekend on the Game Show Network. (It will be repeated at 9 p.m. EST on Friday, Nov. 21; 1 a.m. EST on Saturday Nov. 22; and 4:30 p.m. EST on Sunday, Nov. 23.)

The show, hosted by game-show veteran Chuck Woolery, begins with eight teams of cats and owners; that group is winnowed down after the "contestants" compete in a sort of kitty speedway called "The Fast and the Furriest."

The top three finishers and their owners then play a "Jeopardy" style cat-knowledge game, answering questions in categories like Hiss-tory, Let's Get Fuzz-ical and Famous Felines. (OK, so do you know the name of Dr. Evil's cat in the Austin Powers movies?)

The top two finishers in that game then play Think Like a Cat, in which owners have to correctly answer a question such as "Which Toy Will Your Cat Go to First?" Videotape of the cat in action selecting one of the toys showed how well the owner could predict their cat's behavior.

I imagine the show wouldn't be the cat's meow for everyone. (A New York Times reviewer panned it, but he also disclosed that he is the founder of a support group called Why Did I Ever Agree to Acquire These Two Wretched Cats and Why Won't They Run Away? I'm pretty sure he was joking.)

But I think cat lovers will, well, love the show. The "contestants" were adorable and very well-behaved: A Snowshoe cat from Portland, Ore., and a Maine Coon from Tampa, Fla., were particularly photogenic. The questions weren't particularly difficult, so it might be an educational opportunity for children, and the prize money was pretty impressive, with a portion going to an animal charity of the winners' choice.

There is already talk that it could become more than a single show and might possibly morph into a series. I'm sure that would suit cat lovers just purr-fectly.