Watching Returning Player Seasons with Minimal Spoilers

This guide is for Survivor fans who want to watch seasons with returning players before seeing all of those players' previous appearances. It provides background information and suggestions to help make sense of returnee seasons, spoiling details of prior seasons only when absolutely necessary.

Season 26 – Caramoan: Fans vs Favourites

This season features 10 returning 'favourites' who have only played once before, competing against 10 new 'fans'. The returnees are taken from **seasons 16, 17, 21, 22, 23 and 25** (Micronesia – Fans vs Favourites, Gabon, Nicaragua, Redemption Island, South Pacific and Philippines).

Among the Favourites, it is important to note when they originally played. As a general rule, Survivor contestants interact with each other outside of the game, especially with players who competed on seasons immediately before or after their own. On the other hand, contestants who played years earlier are generally more removed from or less active within the show's community.

- Season 16: Micronesia – Fans vs Favourites
    - **Erik** was a fan in the first Fans vs Favourites season; he now returns as a favourite. Although a strong competitor in challenges, he was disadvantaged compared to the returnees and is remembered for getting outplayed by a powerful women's alliance.
- Season 17: Gabon
    - **Corinne** entered S17 as a self-described bitch and more than lived up to this label. She insulted players to their face but also behind their back, using her dark sense of humour to exclude outsiders but bond with her allies.
- Season 21: Nicaragua
    - **Brenda** plated for the first time in S21 and used her beauty and charm to win over most of her younger tribemates. Eventually they caught on to her manipulation and she was targeted for being a strategic threat.
- Season 22: Redemption Island
    - **Andrea** played for the first time in S22. She found herself at the bottom of her alliance and finished the season resenting that she had not realised it until it was too late to change. Her most memorable storyline involved being distracted by a potential romance.
    - **Francesca** was the first person voted out of S22, partly for being too honest and for speaking out openly against players in the majority alliance, most notably Phillip. The show took a risk in recasting her; she enters S26 with a lot to prove.
    - **Phillip** was the most controversial contestant on S22. His tribemates (and many viewers) questioned his claim to be a former federal agent because he was loud, brash, confrontational and uncomfortable to be around. Much of his antics and butchered quotations came across as though he was acting up for the cameras.
    - All three returnees from S22 began on the same tribe. Francesca and Phillip had a dramatic confrontation early in the season, which he won by sending her home, but Andrea also opposed Phillip later on in the game.

- Season 23: South Pacific
    - **Brandon** appeared on S23, cast as the young nephew of a notorious villain from earlier seasons - Russell Hantz. Brandon struggled to overcome his family's evil legacy by attempting to play honestly but came across as somewhat troubled and sometimes delusional. After S23, Russell distanced the family from Brandon.
    - **John Cochran** also played for the first time on S23. The Survivor superfan was a fish out of water on the island and in the social game. Extremely paranoid, he flipped on his alliance in a controversial move that most viewers judged to be premature.
    - **Dawn** was one of Cochran's closes allies in S23. The mother of six adopted children, she became the mother figure for her tribe but her popularity and generosity were not enough to win Survivor, especially after Cochran's flip.
- Season 25: Philippines
    - **Malcolm** played for the first time in S25 and was that season's most popular player, playing from the bottom as a perennial underdog. The easy-going bartender lacked the killer instinct to turn against his allies but was an obvious pick to return.
    - S26 was filmed before S25 even aired. Malcolm only had a few weeks to recover from S25, and none of the other contestants on S26 know anything about him.