

The Bachelor recap: The sweet smell of success

By Debra
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From first impression rose to worst impression in just one week: look out Bachelor Nation, here comes the real villain of Ben Higgins' season.

It became clear Monday that Lace, while annoying, isn't conniving enough to be a true villain. Insecure, yes; needy, oh yeah; desperate, in spades; but conniving? Not so much. If she was conniving she wouldn't have kept using the word "crazy" about herself in front of Bachelor Ben Higgins.

Now Olivia, Ben's first impression rose recipient, there's a plotter. She hasn't pulled a fake panic attack yet à la Kelsey Poe, but you can picture her doing it.

For the time being, she's walking around declaring herself Ben's "wife" and blithely broke one of the rules of Bachelor sisterhood: thou shalt not steal the Bachelor for alone time before the rose ceremony when thou already has a rose.

So yes, it looks like Olivia is the one to hate this season. Lace came off Monday more like one to pity. She made increasingly inept attempts to convince Ben that drunk, jealous Lace wasn't the real Lace (and yes, she did talk about herself in the third person) and that she wasn't crazy. Despite that, she ended up with a rose.

Maybe Ben finds women who try too hard sexy. More likely, Lace is on the production team's "must keep for at least a couple more weeks" list.

After a movie promo disguised as a one-on-one date and two group dates, Ben gave roses to 17 women and four went home, one of them voluntarily.

Here's how the episode played out:

Date No. 1, with Jackie, LB, Lauren H., Becca, Amber, Mandi, JoJo, Jubilee, Jennifer and Lace: What better setup for a show that trades in stereotypes of catty women competing for the same man than to put the group date in a high school and have the participants compete to be named homecoming queen?

The ladies had to do things like conduct a science experiment to "make Ben's volcano explode" (double entendre alert!) and bob for apples then pass the apples to their partners using just their mouths (heterosexual male fantasy alert!). The two left standing jumped hurdles in a race to wear the sash and crown, an honour that went to overconfident dentist Mandi over whiny returning contestant Amber. Big whoop: Mandi's prize of alone time with Ben meant driving around and round the track in a convertible in full view of the other women while wearing his varsity jacket.

The real interest came at the party afterward. Mr. No Kissing on the First Night planted fairly juicy lip locks on three women, all with first names that start with J: Jennifer, Jubilee and JoJo.

And then there was Lace, who figured the way to snag the date rose was to apologize to Ben for her [first-night](#) misbehaviour: you'll recall she got snookered and berated Ben for not making eye contact during the first rose ceremony.

"It kind of concerns me that Ben didn't get the first impression of who's Lace, what's she really about and he kind of got a different Lace that I didn't want him to see," said Lace, who slurs her words even when she's not loaded. "I want him to know that I'm a really good girl and you want to know me."

But just how well did Ben want to know her? Despite Lace's contention that they were so hot for each other they were practically "eye-f---ing," there was no kiss for Lace. And there was no date rose either; that went to JoJo, apparently for her "bubbly" personality although all the smooching she and Ben did on the hotel roof might have had something to do with it.

Lace wasn't the only one looking daggers at JoJo; Jubilee was super annoyed that her tale about being an orphan in Haiti wasn't deemed rose-worthy.

Date No. 2, with Caila: So Ice Cube and Kevin Hart have a movie to promote, *Ride Along 2*, and showed up at the mansion in a vintage convertible to take Ben and Caila on a ride-along, get it?

The gags included Ice Cube trying to get Ben to buy condoms at a liquor store and Hart climbing into a hot tub with Ben and Caila in a spa showroom, and climbing out in a state of undress that required not just a black bar but a black square.

At dinner later, Caila dodged Ben's question about what she looks for in a man and asked him if he still feels unlovable (short answer: maybe). He gave her the date rose but held out on a kiss until Amos Lee got him in the mood singing "Learned a Lot" at a private concert.

Date No. 3, with Emily, Shushanna, Sam, Olivia, Haley and Amanda: The women were taken to something called "Love Lab Technologies" where Dr. Love, a.k.a. Paul Zak, and his team allegedly used science to measure Ben's compatibility with his dates.

It seemed more like an exercise in embarrassing the women and stirring up their jealousy, particularly when they had to work up a sweat on a treadmill and then let Ben smell them with a blindfold on. Poor Samantha's scent was declared "sour."

Then a shirtless Ben and each of the women, dressed in sport bras and shorts, had to get snuggly wearing thermal sensors while the others watched from another room. So yes, they got jealous, all except Olivia, who declared herself "incredibly confident in our relationship." One could point out that knowing someone for a week hardly makes a relationship, but why nitpick?

Olivia got the highest score in the experiments while Sam got the lowest. "Winning!" Olivia crowed. She also opened her mouth really wide, sort of like a hippo during a mating ritual, and showed all her extremely white teeth, which apparently is how she conveys excitement.

What Olivia really wanted was a kiss and Ben delivered at the after-party, held at his rented bachelor pad. In fact, he delivered so well the other women were checking their watches and wondering where Ben and Olivia had got to. Olivia said the smooching gave her butterflies and "heat in my stomach area," although she seemed to be pointing lower. And then she opened her mouth wide. Again.

Ben isn't exactly a Chris Soules when it comes to kissing multiple women on dates, but single mom Amanda also got some lip action after she nervously told Ben about her two daughters. "Kids don't scare me," he reassured her.

But you must remember this: A kiss is just a kiss if it doesn't come with a rose. That went to Olivia, so Amanda cried.

The Rose Ceremony: The cocktail party was the usual swirl of nerves as the women worried about spending enough time with Ben to get roses. And then there was Olivia, who figured already having a rose wasn't enough to cement Ben's status as her man.

"I want to take him to a secret spot and kiss him till his lips fall off," she declared.

After their smooching session, Olivia arrogantly told the other women, "So now I'm done. Everybody have at it and I hope you can respect that."

Fat chance.

Lace was so rattled she started talking about herself in the third person again. When she finally got alone time with Ben, she expressed her fear of “coming off a little crazy” then interrupted Ben every time he started to reassure her.

“I have a bold personality . . . I’m a lot to handle,” said Lace, and then launched straight into the world’s most boring anecdote about how she was “dorky looking” as a kid and her brothers used to pretend they didn’t know her on the school bus.

“I just have a part of me that I’m working on,” said Lace as boredom and panic mingled in Ben’s eyes.

Luckily, Lauren B. interrupted.

Then we got to see Nice Guy Ben in action. He gave Lauren B. a photo of them together on the first night to make her feel special. He gave kindergarten teacher Lauren H. a first-place ribbon for having the largest explosion in “science class” on the first group date. He made flower barrettes for Amanda’s daughters. Awwwww.

And finally, he gave out roses. Everything went as expected until it was LB’s turn. She told Ben she couldn’t take the pressure and left with a minimum of drama.

Roses were accepted by Amanda, Jubilee, Lauren B., Leah, Becca, Rachel, Lace, Jennifer, Emily, Jami, Lauren H., Shushanna, Haley and Amber. “Sour” Sam, Mandi and Jackie were sent home.

Next week, look for Lace to go further off the rails, Olivia to get more private smooching time with Ben and rub the other women’s faces in it, and Jubilee to start acting like a “queen bee.”

It airs Monday at 8 p.m. on [OMNI](#).