

'American Idol' Contestant Sam Woolf: "A Sense of Humor is the Main Thing" in a Relationship



By Liz Kim

This week's *American Idol* elimination was not only disappointing for Sam Woolf but also for the legions of teen girls across America who've been screaming for him since his audition. The 17-year-old was coined this generation's Ricky Nelson by Harry Connick Jr., but the Bradenton, Florida teen is more than just a pretty face. He's been singing and performing ever since he can remember and was known to give concerts on his high school's courtyard. The singer also writes his own music and even got to perform one of his original pieces on the *Idol* stage.

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Before *Idol*, he was just another student at Braden River High, but he probably won't be able to quietly walk through the halls anymore. His hometown cheered for him loudly and held weekly viewing parties. "The support means so much," he shares. "I don't think I would've made it this far without it." Although he was far from home, Woolf didn't forget about his schooling. He continued his studies in Los Angeles with the help of a tutor. Unfortunately, he won't be able to make it to prom but hopes to still walk with his classmates during graduation.

Despite criticism about his stage presence, he was given generally positive reviews and managed to stay out of the bottom for most of the competition. However, after landing there twice, he received the least amount of votes during week six. For the first time since Jessica Sanchez in season 11, the judges decided to use the save and keep Woolf in the competition. That moment is still a blur, he says. "I had no idea they would save me. I just remember my name being called and being so nervous."

The close call was just the motivation he needed. "It definitely pumped me up, and I realized I had to give it my all," he explains. "I was a little scared that I'd be saved and then go home the next week, but luckily, I made it a few more weeks."

This week, the show surprised the singers with a shocking twist: They could either vote for one person to go home as usual or for nobody to go home this week but two singers to leave next week. The catch was that the votes had to be unanimous. "We huddled up as a group and initially decided to do the save, but as it came down to it, we realized that two people had to go home," he says. "So in the end, we decided to just vote however we wanted to."

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Woolf takes his elimination in stride. "I wasn't really surprised that the votes weren't unanimous. I think we should've just stuck with the original format of one person leaving every week." He even tweeted to his fans to not get angry at the contestants who voted yes to somebody going home this week.

With all that talent and an ever-growing fan base, you'd think that the heartthrob has a line of ladies waiting for him. But the ever-humble singer is still a little shy when it comes to dating. When asked if he thinks *Idol* will improve his dating life, he answered with uncertainty: "I think so... I don't know! I guess? We'll see." Woolf, who loved to prank his fellow contestants, is ultimately looking for somebody who loves to laugh. "I think a sense of humor is the main thing for me."

The label of teen hunk is completely foreign to Woolf. "I wouldn't place myself under that category if I had the choice. I wasn't uncomfortable with the title; it's just not who I ever thought I was." Although he might have had the boyish charm, Woolf struggled being more fluid in front of the audience. "I'm definitely lacking life experience."

But he knows that practice makes perfect. "I've been trying to connect with the audience more and get better on stage. Each time I sing, I get more comfortable."

You can still catch Sam Woolf on the American Idol summer tour! Until then, keep up with him on Twitter @samwoolfmusic.