

= Hellcats =

Hellcats is an American cheerleading comedy @-@ drama television series that originally aired on The CW in the United States from September 8 , 2010 , to May 17 , 2011 . Based on the book *Cheer : Inside the Secret World of College Cheerleaders* by journalist Kate Torgovnick , the series focuses in the lives of college cheerleaders , mainly Marti Perkins ( Aly Michalka ) , a pre @-@ law college student who has to join the cheerleading team , the Hellcats , in order to get the athletic scholarship she needs . The main cast also includes Ashley Tisdale , Robbie Jones , Heather Hemmens , Matt Barr , Gail O 'Grady , and Sharon Leal .

In May 2010 , Hellcats had been picked by The CW for the fall 2010 ? 11 season . Initially with a 13 @-@ episode order , The CW aired the series after America 's Next Top Model on Wednesday nights . The pilot episode aired on September 8 , 2010 , and became the first premiere to ever match or build on an America 's Next Top Model lead @-@ in since The CW began in 2006 . The CW later gave a full season order for the series , with executives saying they were " thrilled that [ it ] paid off for us " . On May 17 , 2011 , The CW announced that Hellcats would not be renewed for the 2011 fall schedule .

Hellcats has been described as " Election meets Bring It On " by critics . It received generally mixed reviews during its first season , obtaining a Metacritic weighted average of 51 percent , based on the impression of 22 critics . The series also earned a nomination in the 2011 People 's Choice Awards .

= = Series overview = =

Hellcats follows Marti Perkins , a pre @-@ law college student at Lancer University , who lost her scholarship and has no other choice but to join the college 's cheer squad , the Hellcats , in order to obtain a new one . There she meets her new roommate and team captain Savannah Monroe , the injured flyer Alice Verdura , her new partner Lewis Flynn and the Hellcats coach Vanessa Lodge who hopes to win nationals , otherwise the cheer leading program will be cut . All the while , Marti also has to deal with her financially unstable and sometimes irresponsible mother , Wanda Perkins , whom she often has to bail out of difficult situations , and her best friend Dan Patch .

= = Cast and characters = =

Marti Perkins ( Aly Michalka ) is the protagonist of the series and a townie from Memphis , Tennessee . Described as " wicked smart " , she is a pre @-@ law student at Lancer University . Her mother , Wanda Perkins ( Gail O 'Grady ) , works at the university pub and is a party girl who never grew up . Her mother 's behavior is , for the most part , an embarrassment to Marti . When Lancer 's administrative department cuts scholarships for Lancer employees and families , Marti learns she can get a new one by choosing one of Lancer 's programs . She then auditions for a position on Lancer 's cheerleading team , the Hellcats .

Savannah Monroe ( Ashley Tisdale ) , the captain of the Hellcats , is described as " peppy and petite " with a " fierce intensity " . She initially clashes with Marti , but realizes she is the godsend that the Hellcats need to win the championship . She votes for Marti when the team has auditions for a new flyer . Savannah is from a very religious , upper @-@ middle class southern family . After a fight with her family , she left the university she was attending , Memphis Christian , and transferred to secular Lancer . Her sister Charlotte , a recurring role played by Emma Lahana , is the captain of the Cyclones , the cheerleading team at Savannah 's old school and a Hellcats ' rival .

Alice ( Heather Hemmens ) is dangerously narcissistic and after she injures her wrist , she dislikes the idea of Marti replacing her on the squad , or the attention Marti receives from Alice 's ex @-@ boyfriend , Lewis Flynn . Lewis ( Robbie Jones ) is one of the Hellcats ' bases and is an easy @-@ going guy who has a love for action . He was once a star on the Lancer football team but quit when he discovered a scandal of players being paid by the college . He tried out for the Hellcats team when his then @-@ girlfriend Alice encouraged him to do so in order to gain scholarship money

after the football scandal , and instantly became hooked . He has an instant attraction to Marti . They later start dating . Dan Patch ( Matt Barr ) is a townie who is Marti 's friend . He had an unspoken crush on her but now is dating Savannah , Marti 's new friend on the team . Sharon Leal plays Vanessa Lodge , a former Hellcat cheerleader who is now the team 's coach . Her job is threatened if the Hellcats do not place at the national competition .

Supporting cast includes Red Raymond ( Jeff Hephner ) , the Lancer 's football coach who shares a romantic past with Vanessa , and Derrick Altman ( D. B. Woodside ) , a doctor who works at Lancer University and is now Vanessa 's boyfriend . Bill Marsh ( Aaron Douglas ) is the college 's athletic director who is still involved in a " pay for play " scandal with players that could get the school 's programs ( including the Hellcats ) suspended . Morgan Pepper ( Craig Anderson ) is a pre @-@ law student and Marti 's classmate . He later befriends Marti and joins her to solve a legal case introduced by their teacher Julian ( Gale Harold ) . Other Hellcats members include Darwin ( Jeremy Wong ) a gay cheerleader , and Frankie ( Alana Randall ) . Kathy ( Magda Apanowicz ) is a member of the Cyclones , usually called " Nasty Kathy " .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Hellcats is based on the book *Cheer : Inside the Secret World of College Cheerleaders* by journalist Kate Torgovnick and the series has been described as " Election meets Bring It On " . Actor Tom Welling teamed with Kevin Murphy to executive produce the series , which was initially given the name *Cheer* . The pilot episode was written by Murphy and directed by Allan Arkush . On May 18 , 2010 , The Hollywood Reporter , Variety and Entertainment Weekly reported that The CW had picked up the series for the 2010 ? 2011 television season and confirmed that Paul Becker would be the head choreographer for the series . Tisdale 's character was originally named Sierra Sloan but was renamed Savannah Monroe in the press release .

While presenting its 2010 ? 11 season schedule on May 21 , 2010 , The CW officially confirmed the pick up of the series and announced its intention to air Hellcats after America 's Next Top Model on Wednesday nights . TV Guide reported that Ashley Tisdale is the best paid of the cast , earning \$ 30 @ , @ 000 per episode during the first season of the series .

During the 2010 Television Critics Association press tour in Los Angeles on July 29 , 2010 , producer Murphy said the series " was inspired by aspirational sports movies of the 1980s like *Breaking Away* , *Vision Quest* , and *Pittsburgh @-@ set Flashdance* " , and also added that " Hellcats is a show either for optimists or for people who are interested in learning the trade " . Producer Welling said he was attracted to the series mainly because of the script , and he also felt the cheerleaders ' world had not yet been tapped into on television . When asked why it picked up Hellcats , The CW replied saying the series is " one of the underdogs " and it liked the big production numbers .

The filming of the pilot episode took place in Vancouver , Canada between April 13 ? 21 , 2010 . The filming of the next episodes of the first season began on July 14 in Vancouver . The cast had two weeks of rehearsal for the pilot episode but after the series ' fall season pick up , they will only have a week to rehearse the dance numbers for each episode . Former Fame actress and choreographer Debbie Allen directed the episode " Pledging My Love " .

The CW Network attempted to break the Guinness World Records mark for the " Largest Cheerleading Dance " at a single venue by inviting cheerleading squads to participate in a five @-@ minute choreographed Hellcats dance in September 2010 . However , the mark was not broken as there were not enough cheerleaders present .

= = = Casting = = =

On March 8 , 2010 , The Hollywood Reporter announced that Aly Michalka and Gail O 'Grady were

the first actresses to be cast in the series . Michalka would play the lead role of Marti Perkins , a college girl who decided to join the Hellcats , and O 'Grady was to portray Wanda Perkins , Marti 's mother . The site later announced that actress Ashley Tisdale was cast as Savannah Monroe ( then known as Sierra Sloane ) , the fiercely intense captain of the Hellcats .

Matt Barr was cast as Dan Patch , a womanizer who quietly pines for Marti . On April 5 , 2010 , The Hollywood Reporter and Variety reported that actors Robbie Jones and Heather Hemmens were cast . Jones would portray the male lead , a cheerleading " base " who falls for Marti , and Hemmens was reported to play a cheerleader sidelined with a wrist injury . On April 8 , 2010 , The Hollywood Reporter reported that actress Sharon Leal was cast as Vanessa Lodge , a former Hellcat star who now serves as the squad 's coach . Elena Esquivel was cast as Patty " The Wedge " Wedgerman , a lesbian cheerleader and a base for the squad .

On April 14 , 2010 , it was announced that Ben Browder was cast as Red Raymond , Lancer University 's football coach . On May 21 , 2010 , however , it was announced that Browder was no longer portraying Raymond , although he had already shot scenes for the pilot episode . His role was being recast and possibly retooled as well . Raymond 's role was later given to Jeff Hephner . On July 13 , one day before the beginning of filming , D. B. Woodside was cast as Derrick Altman , a " handsome young physician who takes care of the Hellcats cheerleaders " .

Producer Kevin Murphy confirmed that Gale Harold would guest star in the series as one of Marti 's law professors . Michalka added that Harold would appear in the third episode of the first season and had a multiple @-@ episode arc . In late November 2010 , AJ Michalka was cast in a recurring role as a girl who works at a record store near Lancer University and befriends Marti . Camille Sullivan was added to the supporting cast in February 2011 to portray Red Raymond 's ex @-@ wife .

On January 18 , 2011 , it was announced that Esquivel would not be returning to the show . Michalka has said that it was difficult for the writers to incorporate her storylines with the others .

= = = Music = = =

During the 2010 Television Critics Association press tour held in Los Angeles on July 29 , 2010 , lead actresses Michalka and Tisdale were asked about the idea of singing on the show . They stated that they plan to keep their music careers separate from the series , although Michalka advised that she would sing in the fourth episode . In addition to that , Michalka 's band 78violet recorded " Belong Here " , which served as the theme song for Hellcats . It was later released into digital stores .

Executive producer Kevin Murphy confirmed in an interview that a soundtrack would be released for the series , which would include the theme song and other songs recorded for the series . He later added " So we are building a library of material . Once we have enough , we 're gonna put it on iTunes and definitely do a soundtrack album . " Songs covered for the series include " The Letter " originally by The Box Tops , Sting 's " Brand New Day " , Squeeze 's " Tempted " and The Go @-@ Go 's hit " We Got the Beat " . Canadian singer Fefe Dobson recorded " Rockstar " , an exclusive song for the series that was played during the " A World Full of Strangers " episode . However , " Rockstar " was ultimately released on the iTunes Deluxe Edition of Dobson 's album Joy . As previously promised by Murphy , a digital EP featuring five of the songs recorded for the series was released on November 30 , 2010 , via Warner Bros. Records .

The first season of Hellcats also included live performances by guest musicians , including Hey Monday , Faber Drive , Fefe Dobson , 3OH ! 3 featuring Ashley Tisdale , Elise Estrada and Ciara .

= = Episodes = =

The first and only season of Hellcats consisted of 22 episodes . The pilot episode was broadcast on September 8 , 2010 . The initial order for the series was thirteen episodes . On September 23 , 2010 , due to successful ratings , The CW ordered six more scripts for the first season , although its production order was still at thirteen . On October 22 , 2010 , Variety announced that The CW had

given a full season order for the series . The network said they took risks this year but they were " thrilled that they 've paid off for us " .

Hellcats aired on Wednesdays at 9 ? 10 pm until December 1 , 2010 , when the eleventh episode aired . Starting January 25 , 2011 , The CW moved Hellcats to Tuesday nights at 9 ? 10 pm , following One Tree Hill .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

The show has received mixed reviews , with a Metacritic score of 51 percent , based on 22 critic reviews . It was praised and criticized by critics in several round @-@ up reviews of 2010 in television . Los Angeles Times had a good first impression of the pilot episode , saying Hellcats has a predictable story but , on the other hand , Michalka and Tisdale seem perfect for their roles . The newspaper also wrote the cheerleading world portrayed in the series is a " fun and deep world to explore " . The journal later gave a complete review of the series , comparing it to 1983 's film Flashdance aimed squarely at audiences too young for Gossip Girl but too old for Hannah Montana .

Verne Gay of Newsday praised Michalka 's performance in the series , while The Hollywood Reporter praised the series itself and said it has " multilayered characters that defy expectations " .

Curt Wagner of ChicagoNow said the series is predictable and has unrealistic situations , and criticized the lack of fun in the jokes . The journal also praised Tisdale 's performance , claiming she was the one who made him laugh the most . Hellcats also received positive reviews from Entertainment Weekly and People .

Mara Reinstein of Us Weekly gave an early review of the first episode of the series , saying Hellcats has " plenty of winning elements " but added that the series lacks spirit . She also praised the performance and Marti 's relationship with her mother . ABC News listed Hellcats as one of the ten best new shows of 2010 's fall season and described the series as " almost laughably formulaic " and added it " works like a charm " . Brian Lowry of Variety praised the series ' promise , and said that the series has a Glee @-@ like element in the script , while also criticizing Michalka and acclaiming O 'Grady 's performance . Lowry also added Hellcats 's premiere " isn 't quite unabashedly trashy enough to completely qualify as a guilty pleasure " .

Alessandra Stanley of The New York Times criticized Michalka 's performance and called the series a " soft @-@ porn music video for teenagers " . Washington Post 's Hank Stuever was critical about the pilot episode , describing it as " mean @-@ spirited , painfully dumb and badly acted " . He also wrote Hellcats is the opposite to Fox 's Glee .

= = = Ratings = = =

The pilot episode " A World Full of Strangers " averaged a total of 3 @.@ 0 million viewers and scored a 2 @.@ 0 rating in the network 's target audience of women 18 ? 34 , which marks the first premiere to ever match or build on an America 's Next Top Model lead @-@ in since The CW began . Hellcats also delivered the largest non @-@ Top Model performance in The CW 's Wednesday 9 ? 10 pm time period in 3 years since the Gossip Girl series premiere . On September 10 , the network aired an encore of the pilot episode which averaged a total of 2 @.@ 42 million viewers and won the hour with adults 18 ? 49 .

Hellcats delivered The CW 's most watched Tuesday of the season with 2 @.@ 2 million viewers watching " Papa , Oh Papa " , its 12th episode and the first in its new Tuesday 9 ? 10 pm timeslot . Ratings fell rapidly as the series progressed , with the nineteenth episode , " Before I Was Caught " , hitting a series low , with less than a million viewers watching it on April 27 , 2011 . The finale was watched by 1 @.@ 16 million viewers .

The series averaged 2 @.@ 11 million viewers with live + 7 day DVR viewing .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

= = Broadcast = =

While presenting its 2010 ? 11 season schedule on May 21 , 2010 , The CW announced its intention to air Hellcats in the United States after America 's Next Top Model on Wednesday nights starting September 8 , 2010 , at 9 pm . The series moved to Tuesday nights in the 9 ? 10 pm timeslot , starting with the twelfth episode . Hellcats has been syndicated for broadcast in several countries worldwide , including Australia , Canada , Greece , Ireland , Israel , United Kingdom , Brazil , Spain , the Arab World , Latin @-@ America , New Zealand , and Denmark .