

Mike Richards to Become Permanent 'Jeopardy!' Host (Report)

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Mike Richards is in advanced negotiations with Sony Pictures Television to permanently host "Jeopardy!", according to a report in Variety.

He is currently the long-running game show's executive producer, but joined the operation just last year. Prior to that, he hosted "Divided" and "The Pyramid" for Sony Pictures' Game Show Network.

Richards is expected to take over the program that was helmed for 36 years by Alex Trebek, who died last November at the age of 80. The program has been rotating through a series guest hosts like "Jeopardy!" champion Ken Jennings and Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

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According to the Variety report, Richards impressed executives "with his command of the fast-paced game and easy on-air manner."

Still, a Sony rep told Variety that discussions are ongoing

with a number of possible candidates and another source said there's no certainty about who will ultimately take over for Trebek; Richards is just the front-runner in the race.

Beyond "Divided" and "The Pyramid," Richards has plenty of experience.

He hosted The WB's "High School Reunion" and "Beauty and the Geek," then co-executive produced "The Price Is Right" in 2008.

After that, he signed on to executive produce CBS' "Let's Make a Deal" and the celebrity edition of ABC's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

Overall, according to Variety, he'd produced 4,000 hours of game shows before joining the "Jeopardy!" team.

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