SOFTWARE & TECH

# That 70s Show Season 4

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795584067082550

## A Pivotal Year in Point Place: An In-Depth Look at That 70s Show Season 4

For fans of classic sitcoms, few shows capture the nostalgic spirit of an era quite like **That 70s Show**. While every season has its memorable moments, **That 70s Show Season 4**stands as a particularly pivotal and beloved chapter in the series. Airing during the 2001-2002 television season, this year found the gang transitioning from carefree teenagers into young adults facing real-world choices, all while maintaining the signature humor, circle chats, and retro vibe that made the show a staple of early 2000s television. Season 4 is often hailed by enthusiasts as one of the strongest seasons, striking a perfect balance between laugh-out-loud comedy and genuine emotional stakes.

This season explores the aftermath of major relationships, introduces new dynamics within the group, and delves deeper into the lives of the adults in the Forman basement. Whether you are a first-time viewer binge-watching on streaming services or a long-time fan revisiting the halls of Point Place High School, this comprehensive guide will walk you through everything that makes **That 70s Show Season 4**a standout entry in the series.

### The Shifting Landscape of the Circle

The central tension of Season 4 revolves around the dissolution of Eric and Donna’s engagement at the end of Season 3. This breakup does not just vanish after a single episode; it reverberates throughout the entire season, forcing both characters—and their friends—to navigate the awkward waters of being exes in a tight-knit group. This emotional core provides a surprising amount of depth for a show that often relies on slapstick and catchphrases.

Meanwhile, the season also kicks off with Kelso attempting his "big move to California," a plan that predictably backfires and leads to some of the funniest moments of the year. The dynamic between Hyde and Jackie, which began to shift in the previous season, takes center stage as Jackie deals with Kelso’s absence and her growing feelings for the sarcastic but unexpectedly caring Steven Hyde. This "slow burn" romance became a defining element of **That 70s Show Season 4** and remains a fan-favorite storyline.

### Key Episodes That Define the Season

A season this rich is filled with classic installments. While every episode has its charm, several stand out as essential viewing that perfectly capture the spirit of the fourth year. These episodes showcase the writers’ ability to blend absurd humor with heartfelt moments.

- "Tornado Prom" (Episode 3): This episode is a masterclass in bottle-episode storytelling. A tornado forces the entire gang (and Red and Kitty) to take shelter in the basement. The confined space leads to confessions, arguments, and the iconic moment where everyone gets high in the basement during a crisis. It perfectly encapsulates the claustrophobic, intimate feel of the show.

• "Eric's Depression" (Episode 9): After Donna begins dating someone new—the aggressively nice and handsome Leo (not to be confused with the older Leo)—Eric spirals into a deep depression. Watching Topher Grace play a sad, pathetic Eric is hilarious and painfully relatable. It shows that the show could handle emotional fallout without losing its comedic edge.

• "Hyde's Birthday" (Episode 15): This episode is a turning point for the Hyde-Jackie relationship. When Jackie plans a surprise birthday party for Hyde that he clearly hates, it forces both characters to confront what they actually want from each other. The bittersweet ending is one of the most mature moments in That 70s Show Season 4.

• "Class Picture" (Episode 18): Fez's inability to be in the school yearbook due to his mysterious immigrant status leads to a hilarious subplot involving a fake ID. Meanwhile, Kitty attempts to relive her youth by dressing like the teens. It is a lighthearted episode that highlights the show's skill with character-driven comedy.

• "The Kids Are Alright" (Episode 25): The season finale is a double-length episode that sets the stage for the future. Eric and Donna finally have a conversation about their future, and the gang graduates from high school. This episode brings a sense of closure while opening new doors for Season 5. The final shot of the empty basement is surprisingly poignant, signaling the end of an era.

## Character Growth in Season 4

One of the reasons **That 70s Show Season 4**resonates so well is the tangible growth each character experiences. They are no longer the one-dimensional archetypes introduced in Season 1. This season tests them in ways that feel authentic to the late 1970s and early 1980s transition into adulthood.

Eric spends a significant portion of this season grappling with his identity outside of Donna. He is forced to grow up, whether he wants to or not. His arc involves learning that life does not always go according to plan. His passive-aggressive nature is on full display, but so is his underlying decency. The breakup humbles him, making him a more sympathetic character as the season progresses.

Donna takes a more assertive role in Season 4. She is no longer just "Eric's girlfriend." She dates other people, focuses on her future in journalism, and demands respect from the group. Her character development is a highlight, proving she is just as complex and funny as the male characters. Her friendship with Jackie also deepens this season, offering some of the best female-centric scenes in the series.

While still the resident cynic, Hyde's walls begin to crumble in Season 4. His relationship with Jackie is a slow-motion train wreck in the best possible way. He fights his feelings tooth and nail, but his actions speak louder than his words. He becomes more protective of his friends, especially Leo and Fez. This season solidified Hyde as the "cool" heart of the group.

Jackie undergoes a significant transformation. Stripped of her "perfect" relationship with Kelso and forced to deal with her father's legal troubles, she becomes more vulnerable and, surprisingly, more likable. Her pursuit of Hyde is both hilarious and endearing. Mila Kunis masterfully transitions Jackie from a shallow antagonist to a genuine member of the circle.

Kelso remains the dumbest member of the gang, but Season 4 gives him a few moments of clarity. Watching him struggle with losing Jackie to Hyde is a rare instance of Kelso showing emotional depth. His attempts to win her back are pathetic but funny, and his friendship with Fez remains a comedic highlight.

Fez continues to be the enigma of the group. His sexual frustration and foreign misunderstandings are taken to new heights. However, Season 4 also gives him more to do, including a brief romance with a deaf girl (played by Shannon Elizabeth) that is handled with surprising sweetness and humor.

## The Adults of Point Place

No discussion of **That 70s Show Season 4**is complete without acknowledging the phenomenal adult cast. Red and Kitty Forman, along with Bob and Midge Pinciotti, provide the perfect counterpoint to the teen chaos.

Kurtwood Smith as Red Forman delivers some of his best one-liners this season. His frustration with Eric's

"lazy" attitude is at an all-time high, but we also see a softer side of him—especially when dealing with his own aging and his friendship with Bob. Kitty (Debra Jo Rupp) is the emotional glue of the show. Her anxiety and love for her "dumbass" son are portrayed with both comedic and genuine warmth. The scene where she realizes Eric is growing up is a tearjerker amidst the laughter.

Bob and Midge's marriage hits a rough patch in Season 4, leading to some of the funniest and most awkward moments between the four adults. Their dynamic provides a satirical look at suburban marriage in the late 70s.

### The Music and Aesthetic of the Season

The soundtrack in **That 70s Show Season 4**is arguably the best in the series. The show leans heavily into the late 70s rock and disco transition. Episodes feature deep cuts from bands like Cheap Trick, The Who, and Queen. The iconic theme song, "In the Street" by Big Star (performed by Cheap Trick for the show), remains a timeless opener. The wardrobe also evolves, with the characters moving from strictly 70s polyester into the early 80s punk and rock influences, reflecting the changing times of the actual decade.

### Guest Stars and Recurring Characters

Season 4 features a fantastic array of guest stars that add flavor to the main cast. The return of Leo (Tommy Chong) as a full-time resident of the basement is a highlight. His free-spirited, drug-addled wisdom provides some of the most quotable lines of the year.

- Tommy Chong as Leo: His role is expanded significantly. He becomes a surrogate father figure to Hyde, providing guidance in the most unconventional ways.
- Shannon Elizabeth as Brooke: She played a deaf girl who dates Fez, leading to a charming and unique storyline.
- Tim Reid as William Barnett: He appears as a potential business partner for Red, adding tension to the Forman household.
- Don Stark as Bob Pinciotti: Bob's role is expanded as he deals with his failing marriage and his friendship with Red. His buffoonery reaches new heights.

### The Legacy of That 70s Show Season 4

Looking back, **That 70s Show Season 4**is often considered the peak of the series. It came before the show began to run out of steam in the later years (though it remained good) and after the shaky early episodes. It represents a perfect balance of character-driven storylines, physical comedy, and genuine emotion. It is the season where the actors fully inhabit their roles, and the chemistry between them is palpable.

This season also set the template for the remaining years. It proved that the show could survive major relationship shake-ups and transition from high school comedy to "post-graduation" drama. The way the writers handled the Hyde-Jackie relationship, in particular, became a blueprint for "will-they-won't-they" romances in other sitcoms.

### Final Thoughts on the Fourth Season

Revisiting **That 70s Show Season 4**feels like hanging out with old friends. It is comforting, funny, and surprisingly wise. The season captures that specific moment in young adulthood where everything is changing, friendships are tested, and the future is uncertain. Whether it is Red threatening to put a foot in someone's ass, Kitty's panicked laughter, or the sound of a car engine starting in the driveway, this season is packed with iconic moments that have aged beautifully.

For those looking to experience the show at its absolute best, Season 4 is the gold standard. It demonstrates how a sitcom can evolve while staying true to its core premise. The laughs are big, the feelings are real, and the circle remains unbroken.

## Conclusion

That 70s Show Season 4 remains a high-water mark for the series, skillfully blending the classic humor of the Forman basement with meaningful character evolution. From the fallout of Eric and Donna's broken engagement to the slow-burn romance of Hyde and Jackie, this season delivered compelling storylines that resonated with audiences. It successfully navigated the transition from teenage antics to the brink of adulthood, all while keeping the laughter consistent and the 70s nostalgia vibrant. For anyone looking to understand why this show remains a beloved classic, Season 4 is the essential chapter that proves the series was more than just a collection of catchphrases and

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