



PREMIUM PODCASTS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## **BLEAV Sports with Fred and the Fantastics Drama Dominates NFL Playoffs**



Hey hello everybody and welcome to Fred and the Fantastics with Laura, with Art, with Mark, and we're on BLEAV and PodClips and heard around the world. We'll talk anything and everything in sports, but of course, this weekend, the National Football League in action, totally in the playoffs. And we're taping this folks at around noontime on Friday. And let's talk about the Rams moving to Arizona against the Vikings instead of at SoFi here in Southern California. Laura, you like the Vikings? Tell us why?

First of all, I think they're gonna be really motivated after the way they played last week. And I just, I think they're a better team, I think they're a better team than the Rams. I don't, I wouldn't. I thought the Vikings were gonna win even when they were in, when they were playing at SoFi. I think that Arizona will be a more neutral territory, which I think will favor the Vikings. I think Sam Darnold is gonna want to make up for the way he played last week. I think their defense is really good. The Rams, I don't know, I just I just think the Vikings are gonna win.

All right, Laura likes the Vikings. And now we go to the world's worst sports handicapper in Mark. Mark, who do you like? On Monday night? Vikings about a four-point favorite at in Arizona.

Well, the Rams have got everybody pretty much back, first of all, then second of all, they beat the Vikings once this year. And third of all, they got a better coach, Sean McVay. Look at all the guys he's put around the NFL. I just like McVay. I like the way he handled it when he was at quarterbacks coach with the Redskins, with Kirk Cousins, and he's

Didn't O'Connell come from the Rams?

Yeah,

Yeah, he was well, yeah, but. But McVay is just. He reminds me. He's a tactician man, he knows how to beat you and he'll go up against the bench.

Music to my ears, Mark music to my ears, because it makes me want to load up on the Vikings.

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You don't think McVay is a better coach than McCollum? Well, I look at their records. Okay, you don't think Stamford has more experience than Darnell, Darnold?

I'm gonna go, yes, yes with both of your questions. But it comes down to the 45 guys they put on the field. Okay, and 11 at a time get to play. And the best 11 players on both offense and defense on both those teams are Vikings.

So how much pressure? How much more pressure is the Vikings? When everybody's betting high on him? And they got a better record and the Rams are playing on hotel money?

Well, who do the Rams have to cover but one of the best wide receivers in the game and one of the best tight ends?

But he was completely shut down against the Lions.

Yeah, well, they're talking about the Lions' defense with the safety, who has nine interceptions.

Okay, Lions' defense is not the Vikings' defense.

Thank you, thank you.

Okay,

I think it's gonna be an over game.

Let's move on to a Saturday game. And I'm most intrigued with Mark's thoughts on his Pittsburgh Steelers at the Baltimore Ravens. How much of a chance do you give your Steelers? Mark? Folks, listen to this closely, go ahead.

Well. If there's ever a city that owns another city, whether it's in baseball or hockey or football, Pittsburgh owns Baltimore, Washington. And you throw out all the records in this game. This is probably one of the best rivalries I've ever seen in football growing up in six decades. And they

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probably have to go back to the Cowboys, Redskins, Chargers, Raiders, whatever. But you throw out every record out. Because I will tell you, the Steelers have been playing bad and they're limping into the playoffs. They've lost four in a row and not many people are giving them a chance. But I will tell you something Tomlin, Tomlin's a hell of a coach, he can go in there. They can beat Baltimore and can beat a city.

Well, you know. If you look at their last ten meetings, Steelers have won eight of the last ten. But, three weeks ago they got absolutely destroyed,

Right? But everybody's throwing the dirt on the grave now and they're stomping on it and putting a playground on top. So I'm figuring the Steelers can knock that out,

Well, I think I don't think they're gonna cover. I think I think Baltimore will win by seven.

Laura has done this to me. Because all they had to do was have the Raiders beat the Chargers and I would have been going to Houston. But thank you, Laura.

Well, I think you're picking with your heart, not your mouth.

All right. What happens if the final score for Pittsburgh and Baltimore is 33 for the Ravens and 17 for the Steelers? What happens to Russell Wilson, Mark? What happens to Russell Wilson?

Well, he might move on. I mean, that's, that's gonna be the thing. And I would agree.

I mean, if you're gonna keep one of those two quarterbacks, you'd keep the younger one.

Yeah, Justin Fields, Yep, and he's in high demand right now. They're both on one-year contracts, but maybe the Steelers have started something with one-year contracts with some of these quarterbacks.

Maybe. And did you see how much money was on the line last week, Fred, with bonuses at the end of the season?

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Yeah,

Different teams, I mean, like Evans, the wide receiver for Tampa.

Geno Smith.

Let me say something about that. I think that was ridiculous. It's 27-19. You know, eight points is not impossible on an interception and two-point conversion, or a fumble and a run back. I know Mike Evans is liked by his teammates and I know he's liked by people in the organization. But you can't do that. I'm sorry, a million dollars or ten million dollars. You've got to win the game. You've just got to take a knee. I'm sorry. I mean, am I the only one that believes that? Art? What do you think?

You know, I gotta tell you, I've always thought that a lot of the contracts in pro sports should be based on performance, as opposed to three years. You know, guaranteed money and all that. Now, you know, I don't mind a small base where they, you know, they get it. But when you're throwing \$50 million around and then you got \$5 million bonuses at the end of the season, I just don't understand it because it does kind of mess things up. And, you know, a lot of guys in the NFL, it's a fraternity. And I noticed that they really, they didn't really want to not let Evans get the record. Nobody really covered him on that pass that Baker Mayfield threw to him. And you know, it's like Michael Strahan when he got the all-time sack and Brett Favre kind of laid down. I mean, that kind of doesn't do much for the game of football in a lot of ways, but that's just my opinion.

You want to hear something sort of shocking to me, when I found out a few years ago, Mike Evans' mother is Russian and Jewish.

Wow,

Now in the Jewish religion, it's what your mother is that makes you Jewish or not. I don't think he's followed it,

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He's the greatest Jewish wide receiver of all time.

But he's not, but he's not. I don't think he's Jewish because of the fact that he's not. I think he's probably a Christian, because his dad is probably a Christian. But what I'm saying is that in a million years, I mean, you just don't see it, I'm sorry, I mean, I just don't see Mike Evans,

You know, what's amazing to me is, you know, we talk about all these great quarterbacks like Mahomes, and you look at them. And a lot of these are multi-racial marriages. I mean, like Freeman, his mom was Korean, and the coach at Notre Dame and his mom, you know, was black, or the dad was Black, and then coach Franklin. His mom was white and his dad was black. So, I mean, it shows you that we are starting to understand that greatness doesn't really have anything to do with race, it really doesn't, it has to do with your abilities.

Well, talking about, you know, Mike Evans and what he did. There's other players that hold teams hostage as far as the fact that they can't even better themselves, and one of them's in our backyard guys, the Lakers. The Lakers can't do anything because it's like an albatross with Davis and James. They can't get rid of these guys to better their team. And years ago, the Lakers reminded me of teams that would do whatever it took. Getting rid of Byron Scott, or somebody to bring in, or young Byron Scott, Norm Nixon. It's just it's amazing what's happening with the Lakers and they put out this product that just....

Maybe they should hire Mick, Maybe they should hire Mick Cronin.

Hey, you know what? We're going to take a break and come back and talk about exactly that straight away on Fred and the Fantastics.

Hey folks, we're back on Fred and the Fantastics, Laura, Mark, and Art. I am Fred. You can email us at [sportsfred@aol.com](mailto:sportsfred@aol.com), [sportsfred@aol.com](mailto:sportsfred@aol.com). Before the break, we had some fun with Mick Cronin perhaps taking over the Lakers, or whatever the case might be. But it's also interesting that LeBron James' other son, second son, is now going to Arizona. So do you think there's a

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chance that this kid plays one year at Arizona and then the Lakers draft him? What do you think, Mark?

I do because I think Rob Palenka and LeBron James are joined at the hip, like Steve McCarver or Steve Carlton and Tim McCarver. 6 feet six inches. So I think LeBron James is pulling the strings in Lakers land, so I think he's going to play for the Lakers, you called it.

Laura, maybe LeBron will play to 50?

I don't know what is it with the father-son leverage? I heard that Deion Sanders now is saying he will only coach in the NFL, not only if Shadur goes with him, but with his other son, who I think is a safety, who isn't even that good of a player. And he says, Well, that's the only way I'll go coach an NFL team if I get to bring my two sons,

So that takes care of that.

Bart, Have you watched one NBA game from start to finish in 2024, 2025?

Actually, it's been five full years since I sat down from the very beginning and watched a full NBA game. I do like to watch four or five minutes of a good game. At the end, I will say this, Fred. Compared to what I've seen four or five years ago, they're starting to play a little harder. You know, maybe they, maybe they, they're all listening to the Mick Cronin, that could be the new thing. I mean, you know, he's calling out his players, telling them, you know, they have no, no integrity, no heart. I mean, who says that to young athletes?

Well, people talk about baseball being long.

Have you ever timed the last three minutes of an NBA game? How long?

20 minutes?

Yeah, exactly.

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Well, you know, again, we talked about this. Perhaps make the three-point shot limit the three-point shot to so many per quarter, just like timeouts, and see what, what happens. Does the game get better? But art just brought up Mick Cronin and listen again, I followed UCLA since the age of five. They've had what eight or nine coaches since John Wooden. The last time they win the championship is '95 under Jim Eric, and he gets canned the next year. But I've never known a coach quite as I don't know. Mean, as, as Mick Cronin, I think the word would be mean would be fair. He goes on a diatribe. After a 92-73 loss to Michigan, Well, Michigan might be better than UCLA, but I will tell you this, you get full-court press the entire way. Maybe they wouldn't have won by 19. What happened?

Who recruited those guys, Fred?

What?

Who recruited those kids, who recruited those guys?

Yeah, who recruited those guys? And then the other guys left early because they don't want to play for him. Folks, I guess the question out there in email is sports, spread it out. If you're a basketball player, or if your son or daughter basketball player, would you play for somebody like Mick Cronin? And I don't know a lot of people that would. I'm sorry, it's just not, let me tell you a story. In high school, I was a pretty good basketball player and but there are things I could not do. One was which you had to make the team, you had to run the cross-country in under I don't know how many minutes. I couldn't run the cross country in a car. I mean,

That leaves me out too.

Sounds like the Presidential Award.

So, so it was really smoggy in southern California. And, so I actually started tearing up, not crying, but tearing up, because of course, I was in last place. And the coach came up to me was Coach Loretta. And he puts his hand around me and he says, Fred, don't worry, you're starting.

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My point is that's the kind of coach you need, not the kind of coach that says we're soft. We don't care, we took a bad shot, we didn't stop the three-point shooters.

Laura, I mean, I don't want to call positive reinforcement for a reason, yeah. It works, too. That's the other problem. I mean, despite the fact that the guy is just nasty, counterproductive to the team. I mean, I thought, after I watched that press conference, I said, they're not going to win another game this year, I mean, why? How could they be? Have any motivation to play?

You know who I felt bad for, you know, he won the he won the, the, the Golden Globe for that Jewish movie last week. Brody, and then he lost his house,

Adrien Brody, yeah.

Adrien Brody – I love him as an actor. And then he loses his house in the Palisades fire. But a week before that, he won the... What a, what a movie I hear. I haven't seen that movie, but they said it was one heck of a movie. Did you guys see it?

My, one of my favorite actors and comedians, Billy Crystal, lost his house also.

Yeah,

Just horrible.

And by the way, there's that one great guy, you know, that great guy from Australia, who speaks so highly of everybody. He lost his home in Malibu as well. I guess,

We're talking Mel Gibson?

That's, that's the sweetheart.

That's the wonderful human being. Mel Gibson, yes. By the way, if you want to see a good movie, and it's not a kind of movie that made a lot of money, but Crystal directed it and I think

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paid for it. It's called Here Today and the story, and Art, you go to listen closely now. It's a story of a writer, a comic writer for all his life, named Burns, his last name was Burns, and he was losing his mind, slowly but surely. So. Art, you got to think about that very, very closely since you got your head hit so many times playing football.

But you know, the good thing is, when I lose it, I seem to find it.

I'll tell you the other one, the other one that's really reinvented herself. And I like her and her movies coming out, too. It's called Babygirl. Nicole Kidman.

Yeah, yeah,

Is she still a Scientologist, or is she just,

On Netflix,

She was never a Scientologist, she was married to Tom Cruise, yeah.

Yeah, oh, Laura, Laura, Laura. She wasn't a Scientologist?

No, no, no, and that's why she doesn't have any contact with her kids.

Ah, yeah, but she's, she's made a lot of great new series on Netflix. If you watch,

She's great.

Yeah, she really is.

I can't, I can't afford Netflix. All right in 30 seconds. Laura, give me your final thoughts.

My final thoughts are it's going to be a great weekend for football, starting well, starting tonight, so that's what my plans are to just hang out and watch football.

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Mark, what are your thoughts in 30 seconds? Steelers, Redskins and trying to find out where that Bo Derek playboy is from. My buddy, what trash can, did he throw it in?

Art, what are your 30 seconds?

I just have a lot of empathy for what everybody's going through in Southern California. And I pray that, and I pray that, you know, it comes to an end, and that everybody's going to be OK. And we don't find any more people who have perished in this, this Armageddon-like fire. And it sure pales for the weekend when you think of people's lives and their memories and everything they live for. Losing all that because it gets you, it gets you a little closer to the reality of the fact that we're all here, temporal. And we all got to be good to each other.

My thoughts are, do we unpack or not unpack? As soon as I unpack, I know I'm going to get the word that you have to pack again.

Pack that way, that way, it'll be the other way around.

Yeah, so I don't know what to do. All right for Laura, for Mark, for art, for Mario Fred. And stay tuned for more all the time of Fred and the Fantastics. Bye everybody.

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