



PREMIUM PODCASTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BLEAV Sports with Fred and the Fantastics **HAS INTEGRITY BECOME A THING OF THE PAST?**

Hey folks, it's that time again. Fred and the Fantastics, that's right, BLEAV and on PodClips, anything and everything in sports, and sometimes a little bit more, along with Art, along with Laura, along with Mark Mancini, I'm Fred. You can email us at sportsfred@aol.com, sportsfred@aol.com. We're taping this at 1 o'clock Friday afternoon. Of course, over the weekend we've got the final, final eight as far as the NFL playoffs are concerned. Art, do you have any comments about this weekend? Is there one game in your mind, Art, that stands out?

Yeah, I think, I think the Texans are gonna take care of New England.

Oh my God,

I really do. I think that defense is for real. I think Drake, Drake Maye's had his great year, and I don't know how Mike Vrabel did it to win 14 games, but I just don't think they're gonna, they're ready to be prime time right now. The other pick I have is, I think, one of the two teams that got the bye, and this is going to be Denver, I think, Buffalo. Without Mahomes, without Burrows, without Lamar Jackson, I think this is the route, if they play a halfway decent defense, I think this is the time for, for Josh to get his chance in a Super Bowl.

Laura, what do you think this weekend? You have any, a big favorite or underdog or something?

Yeah, I mean, the Bills are my, soon to be my number one team, and I agree with Art. I think the Bills are gonna win that game. I think experience is going to take over. I mean, the Bills have, they're just like, I don't know, I think the Bills are gonna win. I, I know, I think New England's gonna beat Texas, but I don't know, I think, I'm really, I don't know about the Rams, and Rams are playing Seattle, right?

They're laying four-and-a-half points as road favorites.

Rams are playing the Bears.

Oh, the Rams are playing the Bears, right.

The cardiac comeback kids.

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I like the Bears in that game, I really do. I mean, I do, I like the Bears in that game. I think the Super Bowl's gonna end up between the Bills, and I think probably Seattle.

Art played in the National Football League, so I'm gonna throw this to him. I think there's a major differential between the two coaches with the Bills and the Broncos. Art, you agree or disagree?

Well, I mean, you know, Payton is a hell of a coach, there's nobody can deny that. I really don't like his style; he reminds me a little bit of UCLA basketball coach Mick Cronin in terms of that, that style. But they do have a great defense, Fred, there's no doubt about that. They got the kids on the outside. But, you know, it seems to me like that's a game that's really gonna be nip and tuck, but I don't know, man. I, I think I just think Buffalo, after what they did last week, and nobody really gave him a chance against the Jags. They hung in there, and we'll see what happens. It's gonna be a great weekend of football, though. I think defense might be the, the weekend scream, though.

Two weeks ago, I thought the 49ers would beat Seattle; they didn't, but you know, people don't remember a lot about that game. As badly offensively as the 49ers were playing, the score was 13 to 3, with like six or seven minutes to go. They threw a pass to McCaffrey on the three-yard line.

Yeah.

He never fumbles a pass. This time, he popped it in the air, they intercepted. They score there, and it's 13 to 10. I don't bet against the 49ers coming back in that game. So, I mean, I don't think people remember that, Art.

And, Fred, Sam Darnold also has an oblique muscle. Now people say, well, it's on his left side. Well, when you set up throw, you turn your shoulders to throw. That is where the oblique muscle causes the most problems. Here's the other thing. Every big game that Sammy Darnold's played in, whether it be for,



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He hasn't won.

He hasn't won. So, he still is that; it's the wild card in this whole deal. Now I know San Francisco has tons of injuries, but you got Kyle Shanahan, two weeks now to figure out how to break down that Mike McDonald defense in Seattle. It's a, I give him a puncher's chance, Fred. You had a great call on him last week.

I think we can all agree that the games last weekend were absolutely fabulous. Every game was so,

I mean, the ratings are up 20%, Laura. I mean, the NFL's got to be head over heels. The highest-rated wild-card games in like 15 years.

And they deserve the ratings.

Here's the thing,

Forty-five million viewers.

Let's, let's figure something out right now. I'm now gonna go to Mark Mancini, the world's worst sports handicapper. Mark, who's gonna win the Super Bowl? Now, folks,

Well, here's the thing.

Hang on. Hang on, I've got to tell the folks who haven't heard this show in a long time. Now, whichever team Mark said will win the Super Bowl, immediately they lose this weekend. Mark, who wins the Super Bowl?

Well, I think the Buffalo Bills do, but let me tell you something,

Oh, he's gonna throw us in a, see how he did that? He did that just to get us, Laura.

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No, wait a minute, let me break it down. I went 2 and 0 Saturday. I had the Rams, and I had the Bears, and then I took the Rams.

You went 2 and 0, and then you took the Rams; they won by three points.

Right, right, right. But I didn't take a bath with the Jaguars, Eagles, Chargers, and Steelers, but what people don't realize is that, hey Artie, you played, you played for the Rams, they don't rebuild, they retool. Sean McVay,

Sean McVay is a great coach.

Sean McVay is the bar; he's the Pat Riley.

Except here's the problem with the Rams. Stafford hurt his finger. It's gonna be really cold. Everybody says, Oh, we played in Detroit. Yeah, he played inside the, the Ford Dome in Detroit. I mean, it's gonna be cold. The one thing I will tell you about the Bears, they have had so much great fortune. They ought to just come out and play like it's the fourth quarter, every, every play. I mean, they're, they've scored so many points at the end of games, it's crazy.

I love the Bears. I think the Bears are gonna do it.

Da Bears.

The thing is, Caleb Williams is inconsistent at times. They haven't had a 4,000-yard passer in their history there, and you're telling me Caleb Williams is gonna outshine Stafford?

No, I, I think what's gonna happen is they're gonna run the ball, okay, they're gonna play good defense. And I think, I think the Rams are a little more beat up than people say they are. And I mean, Davante Adams is not a hundred percent. Puka Nacua, who I love, what a ballplayer, what a wide receiver. I don't, I don't think he's a hundred percent. Plus, his brother just got arrested for picking somebody's car up that looked just like his buddy's car.

You're telling me the Texans are gonna go into New England and beat the Patriots?

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They're gonna kick their ass, yeah, I'm telling you.

Come on.

All right, we'll take a break.

Vrabel, Vrabel won a lot of games this year, but they, they were, their schedule was the easiest schedule of all time. I think they played the Jets four times.

We're gonna come back on Fred and the Fantastics, with a little bit more, all straight away.

We're back on Fred and the Fantastics, with Art, with Laura, with Mark. And we'll discuss this, that, anything in sports. You can email us at sportsfred@aol.com. And again, a couple months ago, we talked about this, we talked, I'm gonna talk about it right now on Fred the Fantastics, gambling and collegiate basketball, and throwing games and things like this. And the allegations are 17 different schools, 20 different players actually, either threw games or didn't score enough to cover the spread, or the props, or whatever. Art, you've been known to bet a shekel or two; your comments.

It just really hurt me. I mean, you know, I read the whole story, and you know that the guy's a big gambler. And you know, first of all, how the casinos can, you know, when somebody comes in with three hundred thousand dollars to bet on a game that, you know, nobody really cares about in college basketball, and they, I guess they tried the theory out in the Chinese Basketball League. But I mean, it's just, it's so bad, Fred. And we've talked about this over and over and over on both shows. At a certain point in time, you know these smaller schools, the kids don't get the money that they're getting at the big schools. You know, they're prime for somebody to come in and do this, and now they're saying that, it all, it's working in unison with what happened in the NBA. It's not a good look for anybody, and, you know, the NCAA president is just, he's dropping the ball in this whole situation.

Charlie, Charlie Baker. Laura, your thoughts about the future of sports in general. Are people going to believe in sports?

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I mean, obviously, gambling and throwing games is gonna, is the death knell for sports. But you know, hypocrisy appears to be the rule of the day now.

Yeah,

And that, how can you worry about gambling in sports when every commercial is about a gambling site,

FanDuel, DraftKings?

Signs are on every stadium promoting gambling. So it's, it's inevitable, it's just it's inevitable that,

Hey, Fred, we go back. When you remember when you walked in as you, you covered sports like I did. Big signs in the locker room.

Yeah.

All right, no gambling, nothing, not in other sports, not in anything. And now they're bedfellows, and they're strange bedfellows. And I mean, I watch the NFL all year, you guys, and I'm telling you I saw some calls that really make me question. Now, lately, in the playoff games, I noticed the referees had their hands in their pockets and weren't throwing flags as much. But boy, when you look at the tussles going down the field between the receivers and the corners, I mean, this is physical, and they were reminding me of the '85 Bears. I mean, these guys are grabbing arms or grabbing anything they can.

So, Mark you're, you're the religious one among the four of us. Make some comments about sports gambling.

Well, I think accountability is definitely lost, communication's gone, and they've basically sold their soul to the devil. And what I mean by that is, if we're, almost, invited to a party, and these partially clad ladies are in there, and you're either, you're being told, well, you can't talk to him

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and you can't date him. Somebody's gonna actually go up to him and say, Well, here's my number, I'd like to go out with you. Well, you brought this FanDuel and all these things in the sports, and now everybody's getting busted and point-shaving. And we've seen it all over the place. And we're holding the players responsible for something that the owners started or the corporation started, so why are we slapping the wrists of these players that are getting caught? But we're doing nothing but bringing these people in to sell tickets and money and everything. So it's, I think it's a double-edged sword here, and the players are getting busted because they're dabbling into it. You know, it's kind of like Adam and Eve: Hey, don't bite the apple.

I mean, you've got LeBron James doing commercials for DraftKings.

Yeah,

Yeah,

I mean, somebody who needs more money for, to shill for gambling?

And Wayne Gretzky as well.

Right?

Let me, let me throw this out, I love your guys' and gals' opinion. You know, we talked about, in this case, basically small colleges, smaller colleges. I don't believe it's just smaller colleges. I don't care if a quarterback's making three or four million. If somebody comes up to some of these guys and they say, we'll give you a half a million more to throw a couple of interceptions, somebody's gonna do it. Art, agree or disagree?

I agree. I agree a hundred percent. I mean, the guy's name is Sugar Shane Hennon. He's like one of the fixers, the, they're talking ten grand to thirty grand a game. His quote is, Nothing is guaranteed, death, taxes, and Chinese basketball. Who is this guy, and who's running the super books in Vegas to allow somebody to come in there and put a \$300,000 bet on a game between Valparaiso and, you know, Morgan State or something like that? I mean, really, that's ridiculous, Fred.

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I mean, what we've done is we've created gray areas, you know, we can go out,

The whole world is a gray area.

You know what? My dad always used to, you know, my dad always used to tell me, he said, Son, nobody really cares what you know till they know how much you care. We get all the degrees we want, but maybe the best degree we can use is how to treat good people, right?

And let me throw something out a couple of nights ago. UCLA's playing at Penn State, and Penn State has not won a game in the Big Ten, and they end up losing 71 to 60. But if you look at the stats, I find this very interesting. Donovan Dent of, the, USC, of UCLA didn't score a point. Zero. Zero, no rebounds, no points, and five assists.

And this was after he had 31 points the game before?

And 31, 30-something points the game before. And Trent Perry, who is averaging like seven or eight points a game, scored 28. Now, if the gambling thing had come out a day before, and I'm watching it, I'm saying to myself, Who's on the take? And I'm a UCLA fan, but I've got to say, Donovan Dent was the Most Valuable Player in his conference with New Mexico last year, and now he doesn't score a point, doesn't get one rebound, he gets five assists. This is the game they win by, against a very bad team, Penn State.

This is the problem. This is illustrative of the problem right there, because once you interject gambling into it, then everything becomes suspect.

That's exactly right.

And nobody really can trust the integrity of the game, and that's what will kill sports.

And that is the keyword right there, integrity.

That's right, and it's gonna kill sports.

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Well, like heavyweight boxing.

When was the last time you saw a heavyweight fight? What's the last time you saw a fight anywhere other than UFC?

Well, you know, but you know what, in boxing, it's one against one, right? In basketball, you know, you don't see it, you don't think it can happen because there are five players on each team, or 12 players. We're talking the bench guys on a team, so you don't see it that way. But when something like this comes out, it has to hit your head. It has to hit your mind. It's possible when something so crazy, again, one more time, Donovan Dent, the most valuable player in the whole conference at New Mexico last year, doesn't score one point against a very bad Penn State team. And UCLA still wins by 11. So what if somebody had 10 points, the over and under,

What was the spread for that game, just out of curiosity? What was the spread in that game?

What?

Was UCLA favored by, were they prohibitively favored in that game?

UCLA was favored by, I think, I think four-and-a-half or five-and-a-half; they're not very good.

What a great bet that was.

But what if somebody, you know, Donovan Dent's averaging 12 or 13 a game, and scores zero? He even, they didn't even shoot at the end.

Fred, go back to my argument with modern-day athletes. The consistency of their performances is truly lacking. You can look really good in one game, come out the next game, miss your first couple shots, and you're done. It blows my mind.

Not only that, I'm reading a book, and you guys are probably familiar with it; it's *Madden and Summerall*. What a book. And you know, it talks about, like, coaching and all this other stuff. I

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mean, look at the coaches today, and you have a problem with a quarterback. The coach is gone, the quarterback still sticks around.

All right. Laura, give me 30 seconds. Final thoughts on the weekend and sports?

Well, it's gonna be a great weekend for football. I can't wait, they were. I can't wait to watch the games, I'm just waiting for Saturday. Last Saturday, I missed the Ram game because I went to the anti-ICE demonstration in L.A., but I did watch the whole game on the, I watched the fourth quarter at the Biltmore.

Can I ask you a question, Laura? What did you think of the performance by McVay? Did you like some of the calls he made in the second half? Because they had that game under control, and he made a couple, I thought, some real bad faux pas.

Yeah, I thought I was, I was. I didn't think they were gonna win that game. I did watch a whole fourth quarter, and I didn't think they were gonna win that game, but they pulled it out. So that's why I don't think they're gonna, I don't think they're gonna beat the Chicago Bears, my hometown Chicago Bears. So that's my prediction.

Art, final thought here. I have to ask you this question. In 2029, the National Football League is moving the club to Venezuela.

Caracas, the Caracas,

You gonna attend any games around the world?

If I'm still alive in 2029, I wouldn't mind going to Caracas. Maybe we'll have it all organized by then. But I'm gonna say this, Fred. Divisionally, this is a great weekend of football. You got four wonderful games, and you got the National Championship game on Monday night, you got basketball all weekend long. You got the Sony Open from Hawaii, which I love the music, I watch it, it puts me right to sleep. What a beautiful place to be right now. I remember the last time I was in Hawaii was for the divisional playoff weekend. And I gotta tell you, waking up at 7 am to



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watch the NFL was just the most great thing I've ever done. Football was over at like 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was great.

All right, for Art, for Mark, for Laura, for Mario. Thank you guys and gals for listening to Fred and the Fantastics, and be back later. Bye, everybody.

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