



PREMIUM PODCASTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BLEAV Sports with Fred and the Fantastics **A New Era Dawns on the Way to Opening Day**



Hey everybody, it's that time again, Fred and the Fantastics on BLEAV and on PodClips across America and around the world, with Art Sorce, with Laura Snoke, and with you. You can email us: sportsfred@aol.com, sportsfred@aol.com. We'll talk about this, that, and anything in the wonderful and wacky world of sports. All right, the world's baseball getting together across the world, around the world, the World Baseball Classic. Art, are you going to be watching it?

I am going to watch it. I gotta tell you, the emergence of Venezuela as a baseball powerhouse has been one of the things that I find really interesting. I was going through my Baseball America books, magazines, which are coming out less frequently as they, more than they used to. And I couldn't. I couldn't believe how many players are coming out of Venezuela now. And you know, I remember the Rockies had a couple guys like Andres Galarraga, but, but never to the prolific nature that they are now. And so you got the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Japan, Venezuela, the United States. It's going to be exciting, I think it's going to be a great thing. But, you know, what I'm wondering is, is it getting causing a little bit of an effect, you know, much like the, the, the Winter Olympics did for the NHL? Some guys could get hurt in this WBC, and, and I'm wondering, you know, are they going to be ready to start the season? Does it, does it change the way spring training is played?

Laura, I want to see Ohtani at the bat in the bottom of the ninth versus the USA, and we'll see what happens. He can't be a pitcher, but he certainly can be a hitter. Laura, talk about the World Baseball Classic.

Well, I've been waiting to see Japan on the schedule. So far, it's only been at two in the morning, so,

Even the Dodgers?

Yeah, but Shohei, I guess it was his first appearance. He got up in the first inning and hit a double; that was his, on the first pitch.

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Right.

Then in the second inning, he hit a grand slam and a single. So he had five RBIs in the second inning, and I think he had one in the first inning. Anyway, it was kind of fun to watch. He's only, I think they're only playing limited innings, so I think he's only playing three innings in a game. But maybe I'm wrong on that, but yeah, I agree with the injury risk. But, I mean, Shohei, I mean, what, I just, and he's such a nice guy too, with all this talent. I mean, it's pretty incredible to have him on the Dodgers.

You know, Rafael Acuna, of course, was playing, and he hit his, he took his hand, hit himself on the head because he thought the ABS was in the World Baseball Classic, as it is in Major League Baseball this year; it isn't, so the umpire didn't know what he was doing. And they were on the team,

He wanted to challenge.

He wanted to look at the Cyclops machine and say, OK, there you go. What do you guys think of that? I mean,

I don't like it.

I would, I don't mind it in playoff games, maybe after the seventh inning, if it's really meaningful. But to do it during the regular season, to me, again, Manfred, the Commissioner of baseball, with the pizza-sized boxes, the shift, I mean, the man at second base in extra innings. They're taking one of the great sports of all time, a natural pastime, and they're changing it right in front of my eyes, and I'm sounding like an old man here, which I probably am. But I just look at the tradition of baseball, and it really starts to bother me a little.

Laura.

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Well, we used to say, there's no time in baseball. It was like, timeless.

Right? And you had to get 27 outs, no matter how you got them.

And you know, now you can't really say that. I mean, there's the pitch clock, there's the batting clock. And I, you know, I do think that, like anything else, the players sort of took advantage of that when they left the batter's box after every pitch. You know, it was kind of tedious, so I'm not. I don't have a problem with that, getting them more in line,

You know, can I make a comment here? Can I make a quick comment on that?

I just want to finish. That doesn't impact strategy; that's just basically speeding up the game without affecting strategy. But those other rule changes, like the change in the bases, the limitation on when you can remove a pitcher, when that ridiculous ghost runner, and all of those things. The shift issue, I mean, if you can't beat the shift, then you're not a good hitter. You know?

I agree.

They leave you open, so practice hitting the opposite field or whatever. So I agree with you, it's just these rules are ridiculous. And they're taking the charm out of the game.

Have you guys been to a college baseball game or a high school baseball game?

I've gone to UCLA.

Can I tell you something? The kids sprint in and out of the dugouts between innings to their positions. In Major League Baseball, they lollygag out to the. They're talking about speeding the game up to fit, you know, to get it about two hours and 30 minutes, well, there's a way to do it. Run out to your position. OK, but you know what it is, they're going to still pump commercials

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in. It's the perfect game for television because you have 18 natural breaks, and those breaks could be three, three minutes, four minutes, five minutes. So, I mean, you know, I kind of, I wonder if they're really being genuine in wanting to speed the game up. And I mean, I remember watching Mike Hargrave play for the, for the, for the Cleveland Indians. And he was the human rain delay, he would get out, he'd adjust his, his, his batting gloves, and then Nomar Garciaparra, very similar. They had this routine they had to go through before every pitch. It drove me nuts. And I mean, if you did that to Bob Gibson or Don Drysdale, you'd be on your keister so fast, you wouldn't know what hit you.

All right, in baseball, after ESPN had the Sunday night game for I don't know how many years, NBC has it this year. They did not hire a color commentator. What they're going to do is get a local guy, local commentator, to do that job.

Like the old NBC World Series, Games of the Week, and stuff like that.

So what do you think; that a positive or a negative?

I would have hired Bob Costas and forgot about it. I mean, they got him as the host of the, of the Pregame show. I still love listening to Bob Costas Baseball. I don't know about you guys.

Yeah,

It's a throwback, I mean, you know, I go back to the Curt Gowdy days, I go, I go back to, you know, Tony Kubek and Joe Garagiola. And you know, I kind of like the idea of bringing in a guy from the town or both towns that they work with. I mean, that's kind of how Uecker got his start, you know, when he worked with Keith Jackson and Howard Cosell back in the late '70s and early '80s. So I mean, it gives those guys the exposure they need. Now that you brought it up, I wasn't aware of it. I like that.

Laura. Do you like that, or would you like to have a regular color commentator on NBC?

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I kind of like it too, I mean, but we'll have to see. It'll be uneven, I think. You know, there'll be some great ones, and probably be some commentators that aren't that good. But I think, yeah, I think it's a good idea, although,

Who's going to be doing the play-by-play, Fred?

Uh, I don't know who they hired.

I don't either. That's the other thing. They made this great call, but I mean, you know, they have one of the best play-by-play guys ever sitting right there, who loves doing baseball.

Who does the Detroit Tigers? That's who it is.

Oh, Benetti.

Benetti, yeah.

Yeah, he's good, he's really hot, too.

That's the guy. Okay. Another question about Sunday night baseball. I can't stand them interviewing players,

While the game's,

When they're out in the field. Give me a break, Laura. Is that a positive or a negative?

Horrible, it's horrible, I mean, it's ridiculous, and I think it's, I think, I don't think the players like it. I can't imagine that the players would like it. And it's I remember they were interviewing Mookie. I mean, Mookie, but playing shortstop, how do you even do that? You know? When I mean, I could see if,

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Yeah, if a guy's playing at right field, maybe it's,

Yeah, yeah, but it's stupid. I agree with you,

It'd be like interviewing the catcher while he's catching the game.

It's really annoying anyway.

All right, we're going to come back and take a break.

I don't like when they interview the coaches during the game either. I mean, we're there, we're watching the game. I can't stand it when they or they half-screen it, you know, it's like, give me the game, I don't want to listen to this guy right now.

All right, so you mentioned, you mentioned Mookie. Let me just say this, okay? So he's concentrating on the pitch, and he's concentrating on talking to the fans out there. I don't care if it's one-tenth of one second, he's not the same, ready-to-play,

Especially a shortstop. Gotta look at the second baseman, there's a guy on first base who's covering. He's got a lot of things to deal with. Runners at first and second, what player are we going to do? Am I going to third? Yeah, let the guys play baseball. We'll talk to him before the game and after the game, the pre- and post-game show.

We're going to come back and talk some football straight away on Fred and the Fantastics, straight away.

All right, folks, we're back on Fred and the Fantastics with Laura, with Art, and Fred's got some allergy problems and some head problems. I think I should take some Prevacen, Art. Why should I take Prevacen, Art?

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I'll send you some. I mean, you know, it's expensive, but it's great stuff. Well, it does help; it helps fire the synapses in the brain. I was thinking of sending Donald Trump some. But it's great stuff, the professional formula, right? It's good, you'll love it, Fred. I'll get you some.

There's not enough in the bottle for Trump, I don't think.

We'd have to get the super professional formula.

Let's talk some football. Your Rams art picked up all-pro defensive back Trent McDuffie from right here in southern California, from the Kansas City Chiefs, and I guess the Kansas City Chiefs were trying to save bucks, and I think the Rams made a positive move. They gave up a number one draft pick, but they also have the 13th pick in the first round, so they still have that pick. And they gave up a third round and a fifth round. I think, so, you know, it wasn't for free, but McDuffie's got to help that defense. Art. What do you think?

Yeah, but now I'm hearing that he has a little bit of a bum knee.

Oh boy.

Which, yeah, you know, and you know, he's coming from playing on a natural grass surface in Kansas City. And to be honest with you, I was thinking to myself, you know, why would Kansas City really let this guy go? I mean, he's 31, 32 years old, he's been around a long time. I mean, I hope it helps the Rams because I'm a Rams fan. But can he return kicks, too?

You know, Mahomes was, Damn.

I know, he wasn't really excited about it.

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Yeah, but they asked Mahomes. Mahomes changed his contract. Didn't take less, but he took it over more years. So Kansas City has to have some financial problems at this point. So they wanted to get under the cap, and I think that's the reason,

But, Fred, the cap is up to \$300 million. OK, I mean, everybody's clearing cap money. I mean, look at what Gino just got jettisoned out of in Las Vegas. And they still have \$18.5 million in dead cap money that saves them \$8 million. Well, the Raiders had \$100 million going into this. I mean, I'm just trying to figure out, how do you look at a Kyler Murray? A \$50 million quarterback? Is Kyler Murray a \$50 million quarterback? I don't think so.

Well, the quarterbacks make the most, there's no question about that. Laura. Is Mendoza the answer for your Raiders, or might they shock the world? Give up that first pick and look for a veteran quarterback? Laura? What's the best idea in your mind?

I hope they draft Mendoza. And I hope they keep their coaching staff for more than one season, and I hope they rebuild the team and give the fans, the long-suffering Raider fans, what they deserve. But I also wanted to talk about the trade that the Bills made. You know, the Bills' fans are really upset that, first of all, Sean McDermott got fired and not the GM, because the Bills' fans hate the GM. And now, the GM, they just got D.J. Moore,

Great,

Who's a little bit of a malcontent. He's talented, but not supremely talented.

Maybe they can pair him with Philadelphia, yeah, Pickens, or A.J. Brown. Then they'd really have problems.

Yeah, I don't know. I mean, I don't know that that's the answer, you know, for Josh McDaniel and Josh Allen.

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Didn't they just say they're going to get rid of Stefon Diggs, and?

Yeah, they did,

Yeah.

The Patriots, Patriots.

Yeah, they did get rid of Stefon.

Yeah, I guess, like, wow, you get to be 30 years old as a wide receiver in the NFL, and you're persona non grata anymore.

Look what the Rams did to Cooper Kupp.

Yeah, he comes back and wins the Super Bowl.

Yeah, Cooper Kupp got his revenge, didn't he?

He sure did, didn't he?

Yeah.

By the way, you guys, how good is Puka Nacua?

Pretty good.

Pretty good.

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I gotta tell you, this guy's something special, and nobody saw this coming. I mean, maybe Les Snead did, maybe that's what makes him such a great general manager. But I will tell you one thing: that kid's got it all, and I mean, now we're reading about Derek Carr and Josh McDaniels in Las Vegas and the disconnect. And, you know, a lot of people don't realize this, but you can be a great defensive coordinator, you can be a great offensive coordinator, but a lot of guys aren't made to be head coaches. You know, I think Josh, Josh McDaniels, a guy like Norv Turner, you go down the list of great coaches over the years; there's a lot of guys that were really good at what they did, and now Buffalo has a great offensive coordinator becoming a head coach, Joe Brady. And it's going to be very interesting to see if a 37-year-old kid, I mean, these kids are so young now that are coaching in the NFL, even Clint Kubiak. To me, I just, I wonder if the immensity of the job starts to get a little dominant for some of these guys.

No, I totally agree with you, because McDaniels is one of the worst coaches I've ever seen. I mean, it was impossible; he made every wrong decision you could possibly make, I mean, but as an assistant, he's obviously done well.

Yeah.

So, folks, you can email us at sportsfred@aol.com, sportsfred@aol.com.

Okay, Fred, I gotta ask you a question. Are you ready?

Yeah.

All the broadcast teams came out for March Madness, right around the corner, both women's and college men's basketball. Are you a Bill Raftery fan?

Yeah, he knows the game, I mean, that's all I ask for.
A kiss off the glass?

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Well, no, it's interesting. And you know what else is interesting? The women, a lot of times, like the Big Ten tournament is going on now, okay for the women. I think, in some cases, it's on BTN plus, so you have to spend \$5.99 extra, and the men's, of course, on BTN. I mean, so things are still not fair in the wonderful and wacky world of sports. But what about the future of Tua? Obviously, I think he's done in Miami. What's going to happen with him? Is he done?

Got to be honest with you, four concussions later, you know? And I'm pretty close with Lee Steinberg, and Lee thinks that he still has a chance to, you know, to compete with, you know, certain teams. I mean, there is a dearth of really great quarterbacks, not saying that either Kyler Murray or Tua Tagovailoa are great quarterbacks. But I think he's going to get a chance. I don't know where, I don't know when. You know they're talking about Murray possibly going to the Vikings. I'm hearing some clamor that Tua might get an opportunity in Arizona, they're talking about, so we'll see. I mean, you know, you've got LaFleur, who's an offensive coach who took over in Arizona. He likes Malik Willis because his brother, who coaches Green Bay, told him that Malik Willis is for real. I think that's a real key guy, too. I mean, where he goes in free agency, he showed a lot of potential, backing up Jordan Love in Green Bay when he got in the Games this year. So, I mean, there's a lot of things happening in the NFL. And, you know, I looked at a lot of the projected draft, which is going to be held in Pittsburgh this year, in about a month and a half. And there's a lot of great players. I could not believe how many great edge rushers were in this year's draft. And on the other end of the coin, how much of a lack of quarterback depth there is in this draft as well.

Laura, 30 seconds. Wind up the week, tell us what you think.

Well, I'm really looking forward to the beginning of baseball season, like I said, looking forward to being able to watch the Japan in the World Baseball Classic, if it's ever on at a decent hour. For those of us out west, you know, basketball playoffs; March Madness is always great.

All right. For Laura, for Art, for Mario, I'm Fred. Stay tuned for more Fred and the Fantastics around the corner. Bye everybody.

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