



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

## **BLEAV Sports with Fred and the Fantastics** **THE RISE OF THE MACHINE IN MLB** 📻

Hey everybody, it's Fred in the Fantastics, on BLEAV and on PodClips across America and around the world. Anything and everything in sports, and a little bit more with Art Sorce, Laura Snoke, I am Fred. You can email us, [sportsfred@aol.com](mailto:sportsfred@aol.com), [sportsfred@aol.com](mailto:sportsfred@aol.com). I just had a brain freeze, Art. What can you take to alleviate a brain freeze now and then? What do you take at your 128 years of age?

I take the professional strength Prevagen. It's great stuff, you know? It's been working for me, and I also take Focus Factor. And to stay up late at night for some of these sports talk shows, I have something called Asian ginseng, which gives you the vitality and keeps you sharp. So between those three things, I'm looking forward to my 128th birthday.

All right, let's talk baseball and the new rule in baseball. They tried it in the Triple A, I think, the last two or three years, they think it's fine. So far in Spring Training, it seems to me, it happens very quickly, so it's not as bad as most of Manfred's moves. We're talking ABS, balls, and strikes; you put your hand to the head, and you get two checks on if it's a strike or a ball. Art. You know about Paul Skenes and what happened in spring training. So do you think it's a good idea, bad idea for baseball?

You know, I guess, if you want accuracy, but at a certain point in time, you know, the great thing about baseball was that there was no shot clock; now there's a pitch clock. You know, it was a pastime where, you know, I mean, you'd be out gardening in your yard, listening to Vince Scully or some of the great announcers over the years. I mean, the game was nuanced, and now they're bringing all these rules in: the pizza box bases; you can't put the shift on. I mean, if Willie McCovey was up, I'd have three guys on the right side of the infield. I mean, but this is, this is the new game. They want to fit it into a little time slot. Television being "the God," that's kind of where we're headed.

Laura. You put your hand on your head, and you say it was a strike or a ball, whatever the case might be. Do you think it's a good move for baseball or not a good move for baseball?

You know, I don't like it. I mean, I liked it in tennis because tennis is objective. Either it's on the line, or it's not on the line. So I can't, I really don't like players that whine about calls. I mean, I think that's really something that's a problem in the NBA especially. But baseball, like, like Art

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said, there's a lot of nuance in calling a strike. I don't even know that Cyclops can be accurate because every player is different, and so the strike zone is different with every player. It's not like, like in tennis, where the line is the line, and it's the same lines for every player. And I think it's taking away the charm of the game.

I agree that, you remember when Greg Maddox would pitch, you guys, and he would have that, that fastball that would start three or four inches outside the outside corner to a right-handed hitter, and it would dive back in really late? I mean, how can you tell if a pitch catches the front left corner of the plate? Or, this is why I mean that box, that box is linear, and the ball's moving. So, I mean, I, I just have a, I have a little bit of a problem with it.

You know, if you're, if you're a catcher who's been taught to frame a pitch, you're out of a job.

Exactly. You know, the great catchers, that's what made them great catchers.

Yeah, that's, I mean, that's part of the charm of,

That technique of being able to slide that, you know, while the ball's moving. That was pretty incredible.

Being able to yell, Kill the Ump, right? I mean, it's just part of the charm of the game, that, that, that you allow the individuals to kind of, you know, to stop the game.

You got a Zoom fan, you got a Zoom fan over your right shoulder, Laura. He's so cute; I love that little fella.

She wants out, so,

As we head into spring training, USA Today has the Dodgers winning 98 games; 98 games. They win 93 last year; they had more injuries than almost anything. Ninety-eight games for the Dodgers.

How many times do they play the Rockies?

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Good point, however, let me say this, and I hope they win three in a row. You could win 116 games, as Colorado once did. Doesn't mean you're going to win the World Series; in a short series, anything is possible, is it not?

Oh yeah, well, we've talked about that, that, that one game play-in, or that three-game playoff. I mean, that's a, that's a tough situation to play 162 games and then have it come down to just that. And it's affected the Dodgers over the last 10, 12 years as well. I mean, they've had probably pretty much the best teams and they, and they had a little bit of trouble in the playoffs. But I will say this, I kind of like, if I look at the National League, you got the Braves, the Mets, the Dodgers, the Phillies. You know, you look at the Cubs; Cincinnati's starting to move, I mean, with, with Juarez at third base, that'll help them. I love Francona as a manager. I think it's going to be a great year, but I just can't see anybody toppling that Dodger lineup. Their everyday lineup has six of the top 30 major league players every day in the lineup.

Laura, USA Today has the Dodgers winning 98. Over or under 98 wins in 2026 for the Dodgers?

I think they're going to win more than 98 wins.

One hundred and four for me.

You know, like Art said, they have a formidable lineup, and they have an incredible pitching staff. And, you know, we'll see. I mean, you never know with injuries. You know, things happen, but,

Especially the last two years with their pitching staff, right? I mean, how many people have really pitched for the Dodgers? I think it's been in the mid-twenties over the last two years?

The Dodgers and the Braves had more injuries than any teams in baseball. We had, we discussed this with Dan Schlossberg and with Jane Levy, and yeah, yeah, yeah, I think it's a point very well taken.

Hey, has anybody heard what's going on with the big right-hander for the Yankees, Garrett Cole?

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Yeah, they said June.

Oh, OK.

They said June. Of course, you know, the interesting thing about Garrett Cole, of course, UCLA's Brandon Crawford is the shortstop; his sister is married to Garrett Cole. And, I don't know what that means, but they had a close relationship and,

I got to watch, I got to watch the UCLA in person the other night,

He's fantastic, huh?

Oh my God. This kid, this kid is for real. He reminded me; who was the shortstop, Tulowitzki, for the Rockies?

Yeah.

Powerful; I mean, I eventually see him more as a third baseman than a shortstop because he's a big kid. I mean, old Cal Ripken seemed to do OK at shortstop for a long time. But, yeah, this guy's got all the tools. Amazing.

You know, I think I said this to you guys, I go do rehab twice a week for the broken hip, and one of my rehab wonderful ladies, her boyfriend's the second-string catcher for UCLA. So, she sees the shortstop all the time. I'm not going to try to pronounce his name.

Cholowsky.

But she said that he's the nicest guy, one of the nicest guys she's ever met. So, you've got a nice guy, you've got tremendous range at shortstop, he's probably gonna hit .400 on the collegiate,

And he's gonna be the number one draft pick, and he's gonna command probably \$10-12 million right off the bat.

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Yeah, right away. Folks, so you gotta teach yourself to be a shortstop. But, you know, as I tell another rehab lady, she's got two kids. One hit two home runs last week over the fence, but he's right-handed. So, I'm telling her, he's gonna be 16, he's a sophomore now. I said to her, teach him to be a switch hitter. Hire somebody to teach him to be a switch-hitter.

That's when I started doing it; I started doing it at 16. And, I mean, the whole thing is, you know, having that ball moving in toward you is huge. How many times over the years have we seen good left-handed hitters, and you've got somebody like Randy Johnson out there coming, you know, from three-quarter position, like John Cruck said, you get that jelly-leg, that front leg starts wanting to pull out of there a little bit.

Laura. If you're a switch hitter or a left-handed hitter, you're three feet closer to first base. How much of an advantage is that?

I think it's a big advantage. I mean, I don't know what the statistics are.

Ichiro, Ichiro proved it many times by that little Reiki swing of his, and he'd be halfway down the first base line.

Yeah.

All right, we'll take a break right here on Fred and the Fantastics with Art and Laura. I am Fred. You can email us at [sportsfred@aol.com](mailto:sportsfred@aol.com), [sportsfred@aol.com](mailto:sportsfred@aol.com). Back with more right after this.

Hey, we're back on Fred and the Fantastics, with Art and with Laura on BLEAV and PodClips. Art. You were going to talk about the advantage of switch-hitting. Go ahead.

Yeah, well, you know. And the funny thing happens is you can become two different hitters, like when I switch hit in high school, I was a dead fastball power hitter right-handed, but I was more of a Tony Gwynn kind of hitter left-handed, kind of slashing the ball to the left center. They came in on me. I just pulled it into the hole, and my lead arm was my strongest arm. And I found myself being able to really just lay the bat on the ball and put it in play. And right-handed, I struck out more, but if you left it on the inner half, I was going to hit it a long way to left field.

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But I also had gaps in my swing, so it's a very interesting thing how you're not the same hitter from both sides of the plate.

I taught myself to bunt left-handed, because the one thing I could do in baseball better than anybody, I could, I could bunt. And in my one, I think I told the story a million times here, but it was a pony league game, and I went three for five, and two of the three hits were bunts. On the way home, my dad said, Why don't you swing? I said, Well, I got on base. What do you want me to do? Folks, you can email us at,

You gotta love dads, Fred.

Sportsfred@aol.com, sportsfred@aol.com. Army versus Navy. Laura, the Army wants to move it back to Thanksgiving weekend, and Navy says, Over my dead body, Laura, is it a positive or a negative to move it back two weeks? Right now, it stands alone in early December. I've always liked it there, but maybe the Army's got a point. Laura, what do you think?

What, what, what is? Why is Army saying they want to move it back?

Because of the fact that they're going to add teams to the playoff system and they don't want to be part of the regular system of the regular schedule.

Both teams are in conferences now, and they might have to play in a, in a conference championship game. Which could be, you know, right up against it. You know, that's a tough situation, Fred. I love the Army-Navy game because it's really pure college football, the way it once was played. And you know, these kids are playing for the love of the game. I like them being able to have a standalone game because it does draw incredible ratings every year; it's wonderful. And, you know, I see both sides of that argument. I do like the fact that they move it around a little bit from Philadelphia here. You know, maybe they'll have it down in Baltimore. They had it out at the Rose Bowl one year; that was kind of cool when they did that. I think it's a, it's one of those games that they could go to different parts of the country.

You know, next to the Dodgers, college basketball has always been my favorite thing. It's not the same now, but I do follow UCLA basketball. Two games in a row now, Laura, Donovan Dent has

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gone without a turnover; twenty nine points in the last game against USC without a turnover. The game before,

The game against Illinois. That was unbelievable, Fred.

Fourteen, 14 points, 15 assists, and he did it coast to coast in the last 4.9 seconds. Laura. Donovan Dent - what do you think?

I think he's great, he's a really good player, I think he'll, I think he's got a future in the NBA. But you know, we, we talk about college basketball, and we talk about UCLA leaving the Pac-12, and that it was all about money. So the statistics came out that since UCLA moved to the Big Ten, it went from, they got, I think they went from, I think they met, I think they made a twenty million dollar profit.

Wow, that's the real reason, that's the real reason. OK, well, there you go. Money and greed, you know, that's, that's how you, that's how it works.

Except take a look at what happened when UCLA is playing at Michigan or at Michigan State. Lose by 30, lose by 20.

Well, it doesn't, it's not. It doesn't have anything to do with the quality of the basketball or what the, what the team is doing. It has to do with money that goes to the school.

No, I know, I agree with that.

Yeah, yeah,

From the point of view, it hurt their, it hurt their,

Fred. You made a call, you made a call about six weeks ago. If there's every year that Gonzaga has a chance to win a world championship, this is the year. I looked through it, and I got to tell you they, they're right there. I think they're ranked ninth, 10th, 11th in the, in the nation. But I also looked at four teams that are in the Big, the Big Eight with their 18 teams or the Big 12,

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right? You got Arizona, which is a good team, you've got Iowa State, which I think is underrated, a very, very good team. You've got Houston, which is another good team. That freshman is like, incredible. I've watched him, and I think you still have to look out for Kansas. If they hit their threes from the perimeter, they can beat anybody on a given night. You got Duke. You got some great teams in the, I think it's a wide-open NCAA Championship. I think March Madness is going to be fun this year.

I love March Madness; I think it's great.

And Laura, who do you like? Who do you like, Laura?

At the end of the, at the end of the day, I think I agree with Art. I think it's pretty wide open. I mean, I like Duke. I mean, I always liked Duke since I was a kid.

Boozer's kid; he's strong. He really is a good player.

Hey, you want, you want to hear something interesting?

Yeah,

What are the odds of this? Last year, of course, Cooper Flagg was at Duke in the number one draft pick, and he's playing well, but he's hurt now. OK, at Duke, he had a twin brother who's playing at Maine, like his mom did. He wasn't quite as good as Cooper. OK, on Duke, you've got Boozer and Boozer - twins.

Twins. Isn't that amazing?

What are the odds of having a twin in the first place?

Yeah.

What are the odds of two twins in a row playing basketball for Duke? Art, do you have any thoughts of, mathematically, of the odds, at the same place?

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Tom Van Arsdale and Dick Van Arsdale, I go back to. Do you remember that?

Sure.

Well, the Lopez brothers, they play for Stanford.

Yeah, it's very rare, though. I mean that, that's incredible. I mean, wow.

No, I'm saying it's even more because at Duke, John Sheyer, consecutive years he's got twins, one of them a star.

Yeah,

Well, he didn't have, he didn't have both Duke players, but he didn't have both the twins, as far as Flagg is concerned. But still, the odds to me are just I found that out. I said to myself, The whole world's crazy. OK. So here, here's my pick, Gonzaga or Duke to win it all, and Mark Few's, what, at 30 years almost, at Gonzaga. He's never won it; he's had chances. I've watched him a few times on ESPN. Plus, Portland beat them and then they played a couple of, a couple of days ago.

And State beat them?

No, Portland beat them about a month ago. They came back at Gonzaga a couple of days ago, and Gonzaga won by about 35 or 40. I watched the end of it on ESPN Plus. By the way, Laura, you have, you following ESPN Plus? So they had the bubblegum chewing contest a couple of weeks ago. They have to fill the space.

Did Pete Carroll win that?

I missed that? Oh, I'm so disappointed I missed that.

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And the special teams coach, Jones, for the, for the Steelers. He's got that wad of gum in his mouth; I crack up every time I see him. He's like,

All right, Art. Fred and the Fantastics final comments.

I'm just looking forward to another great weekend. We got, we got, the Masters is just five and a half weeks away. Golf season, Brooks Koepka got off the side, had a great round today down at the Cognizant Classic. It's fantastic. Anthony Kim won on the LIV Tour, a fabulous comeback. If you get a chance, folks, read his story of the comeback he made; 16 years basically away from the game, came back, nobody gave him a chance. And he, and he played one of the great rounds of golf and beat DeChambeau and Rahm head-to-head down in Adelaide, Australia.

Laura, give us your final thoughts on this Friday afternoon.

I love comeback stories, that's great. Yeah, I'm just looking forward to, like I said, looking forward to the, to March Madness, to the NBA playoffs, to the opening of baseball season. And you know, it's going to be, it's going to be a great season.

And a lot of excitement coming out of the Raiders camp. I'm hearing nothing but positive things coming out of there.

They want, they want to two, they want apparently two number ones in a player to trade, they trade Crosby.

I would like to see them go get a Kirk Cousins and go ahead and draft Mendoza, that way he can learn, you know? Because I tell you, it's tough to come right out of college, get thrust into, you know, the you're the Messiah, the savior of the franchise. That's a tough position to be in, especially if you don't have the offensive line to support you.

Hey, before we go,

I don't think they're going to trade Max Crosby, that's my prediction. I think he's going to stay there.

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You do?

I do.

Well, what if they offered you two number ones and a pretty good player? What would you do?

See ya, Max.

I don't know. Hey, he's a big part of that defense.

Aren't they negotiating right now with the Jets? So I heard they're doing something with the GM Mougey, Darren Mougey of the Jets; they're trying to, to package a deal together to get one of their big defensive linemen and a couple of draft picks, because I guess the Jets have 11 or something draft picks in the draft.

Hey, before we go, Aaron Glenn falls to sleep at the Combine. Art. Wasn't a good, wasn't a good look for him.

We'll tell you one thing. I watched a little bit of the Combine and those edge rushers this year. These kids are 6'5, 250 plus, running 4.6, 4.5, 40-yard dashes. I mean, that kind of payload going that fast, yikes. I don't know if I'd want to be a quarterback.

Oh, that is incredible.

Yeah, they're jumping like 40 inches.

Oh, I know it's amazing.

All right for Laura, for Art, for Mario. I'm Fred. Stay tuned for more of Fred and the Fantastics on BLEAV and on PodClips. Bye everybody.

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