



PREMIUM PODCASTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BLEAV Sports with Fred and the Fantastics HIGH STAKES AND HARD QUESTIONS



Hey everybody, it's that time again. Fred and the Fantastics on BLEAV and on PodClips, talk this and that and everything in the wonderful and wacky world of sports. With Art, with Laura, with Mark. I am Fred. You can email us at sportsfred@aol.com, sportsfred@aol.com. We are taping this Friday afternoon, 1 o'clock Pacific Time. NCAA tournament later this evening. Art. Who do you like in the NCAA tournament this evening? Of course, Connecticut against Michigan State. I was hoping it was UCLA against Michigan State. Art. Who do you like?

You know, I'm a big Izzo fan, but I just have a funny feeling. Danny Hurley is going to have those UConn Minutemen playing well. I also think that I was really excited to hear about Bill Murray's son getting the job at Boston College, Luke Murray, who's his son, getting the job. So I like them. In some of the other games. You know, I've always had this thing kind of going for Iowa State. I really liked them at 25-1 in the beginning of it all. So I'm kind of pulling for them. Because there are a bunch of guys that have been there four and five years, which is the way college basketball used to be. So I got a kind of a little lean on them, but those are my two favorite picks right now.

Laura. I said many times, when UCLA goes out, I don't really care. You're a UCLA fan, do you care?

Well, I'm also a Duke fan, because, you know, I was born at Duke, and I think that Duke is playing phenomenal basketball. And I'm amazed at how good Cam Boozer's playing. I mean, he is already playing like an NBA player, and he's only a freshman. I mean, so I think Duke's — I picked Duke to win it all. I did pick UCLA to go farther than they did, unfortunately. But yeah, I think Duke's going to win it all. I think they're going to win tonight. I think they're going to win it all.

Mark, the world's worst sports handicapper. Who do you like? So we know who not to wager on. Go ahead.

Well, I got one team standing and one team in the rearview mirror. Alabama, I had from the start. And I like them, I like their coach, Nate Oates, I like how they have overcome the adversity and everything, so I really like them. Team you got to watch out for, this guy wins wherever he goes, is Rick Pitino, and they'll draw Duke. If they get past Duke, it'll be UConn, so Pitino's going

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to, you know, he knows these teams inside and out. And boy, the Big East is coming back, the old Big East, huh?

What'd you think Arizona looked like last night? Did you like the way they played basketball?

They were good.

Scored 109.

But they beat an Arkansas team without Nolan Richardson, either.

I guess Calipari's the lousy coach, huh?

No, I mean, Calipari's good, but you know what, did he transfer? Darius Acuff is not a bad player. I just thought that was going to be a closer game. You guys, you don't think St. John's?

How about St. John's?

Man, I love St. John's. If they hit their threes, they get a chance to play with anybody.

Art. What do you think about Mr. Bennett, from St. Mary's, now coaching at Arizona State after 28 years with the Gaels?

I'll tell you what, St. Mary's was one of the really, really underrated teams this year. They've had a great program for probably almost three decades now under Bennett, and I think Arizona State is a great, great university to make a stand. I was a little upset, I thought that Danny Hurley was going to be there for a little longer.

But I think that's a great move by Arizona State and the Sun Devil Brass. Let's take a break and come back with more on Fred and the Fantastics on BLEAV and on PodClips, all straight away.

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Hey, welcome back, everybody. It is Fred and the Fantastics with Art, with Laura, with Mark, and with you. You can email us sportsfred@aol.com. Major League Baseball has arrived, and everybody is thrilled with that. It's my favorite sport, so I certainly am very happy with that. Not happy, though, with opening day. And, of course, Netflix taking control of that opening game between the Yankees 7-0 over the San Francisco Giants and Art Netflix. The future. It can only get bigger and bigger, I guess, because Manfred wants more and more money.

Well, you know, we talked a little bit about it during the off-show and also on Sports Overnight America. One of the things that's amazing is other than the fact that the Yankees are going to be on 12 different networks this year. And that you have 10 major league teams that haven't put together a broadcast package yet that MLB is going to help them with. I feel like we're in a situation where the streaming and linear TV battle, coupled with cable TV, we're seeing things move. And Laura brought up a great point, and I want her to talk about it a little bit is when watching the game on Netflix.

The other day, they had some real buffering problems where, in the middle of a pitch, the camera would kind of shake or the screen would kind of shake. And they have to work those bugs out before people are going to turn around and spend the amount of money that we're spending now. To watch our favorite sports, golf is into it now, the PGA Tour, you have to have ESPN Plus, or Peacock.

I mean, it's almost as if the person at home, that's the consumer, is not being thought of in any way, shape, or form. Laura.

Yeah, I think I try not to get upset about things I can't control. And I think that this is the future, whether we like it or not, I mean, the future is going to be streamed. I had an experience with streaming where I got DirecTV streaming, and it was so bad. And it screwed up all my other components that I just went back to using; Apple on streaming. The buffering was a problem during the Super Bowl, if you were streaming the Super Bowl. And because that happened at my party. And we had to have one TV on streaming. And they weren't lined up either. The one that was on cable probably was eight seconds behind, well, streaming is a little behind.

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There's always a delay on streaming.

But it is the future, and I think Art's right. They have to get it, they have to figure it out, because otherwise they're going to lose their fan base.

I mean, nobody wants to watch a baseball fluttering through the air. Did you watch the March Madness pregame show on CBS?

Parts of it, yeah, I mean, what does Nate Burleson know about basketball?

Well, I think he does a good job hosting a sport he doesn't really know, but I mean, you know, there's so many great hosts out there. You got J.B. I mean, I went down the line of all the people I can remember that would be a great host. And I'm like, Is CBS really just forcing us?

I mean, and the guy does have talent, you know, we're people in high places. Thank you. What about Bruce Pearl? Any comments?

His pearls of wisdom. Yeah, I wish he would run for governor or senator or something. Get off TV, all right, let's talk about it very quickly, let's talk about the payrolls in 2026 for Major League Baseball, all right. The Yankees, actually, the Dodgers lead because of deferrals, but the way it's here is the Yankees lead with 357, the Dodgers second. The bottom, the Cleveland Guardians at 69. The Pirates have a mark at 109 million. We have a major, major problem: the Giants at about 200 million.

But there's a major difference between 200 million and 350 million. We're going to have to do something. We talked to Jane Levy and Sports Overnight America about that. Is there a way to resolve it, really? Because the owners are never going to open their books?

Totally, I don't think, no, they're not, they're not going to, they don't play baseball. Mark, you could talk a little bit about this as well, being a big Pittsburgh Pirate fan, which I am as well.

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But the Pirates went out and got some good free agents this year, which I think is the first time. But the haves and the have -nots, I mean, I look realistically at it, and there are basically six or seven teams that are going to be there in the end. And, you know, Jane Levy brought something up very, very interesting.

She did say that Kansas City has a great ball club, and then you have, you know, the Detroit Tigers. So you've got 10 basic teams that look like they've got it in, and then you've got another 20 teams that are not. And Fred? Unless the owners open up the books and they figure out a way to even things out.

And I have another way to do this, possibly, which is by way of draft picks, if you put the seating together, where you threw a couple of extra number one picks in. For the teams that have the lowest payrolls, that might be a way to maybe change the balance. Because I do know that if you have a really good product on the field, the people in Cleveland are going to show up.

The people at Pittsburgh are going to show up, the people in Kansas City are going to show up, the people in Tampa Bay will show up. But it's incumbent on those teams to put a real good product on the field.

Laura, you're a big Dodger fan, a big baseball fan. \$350 million versus \$69 million. We have to resolve this. You're an attorney. Can you resolve it?

Well, probably if I sat down with all the contracts, I could figure it out, but I don't know that anybody would buy it.

How much are they going to pay her?

For my hourly rate.

Like I said earlier, it's like supply and demand, it's like Capitalism 101. It is. And I think our solution about the draft is a good one, but that's not going to deal with free agency.

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And unless there's some benefit to a top player, the top players don't want to play certain markets. If they have a choice, they just don't.

John Elway started that. I agree that parity is good for the game. It's good to have a big fan base. But I don't know how you get around the fact that some places are more attractive than others to top players.

And Fred, did you see how much the Denver Broncos owner, Mr. Walden, is worth?

A lot of money.

\$136 billion. So watch the Broncos in the next few years in the NFL. I think the real problem is not so much baseball. Because I don't think we're going to have a season next year at all. I think it's going to be completely shut down.

Because the owners don't want to open up the books, the players aren't going to play without having them books open. But basketball is the big problem with the tanking issue there. They've come up with three different parameters on how to solve that. I saw that earlier today.

That was bizarre. And that league has definitely gone off a cliff. Who's watching that? Unless it's a foreign country? Nobody's sitting here watching basketball.

Well, they're very big in China. Yeah, the Bucks have gotten blown out the last three games by 30 to 34 points. So I mean, basketball is a big, big problem. The Lakers scored 75 points in the first half last night. Big defense, huh?

Yeah, we're taping this Friday. Against Indiana, they scored 75, scored 137. Do they have a chance in the playoffs, honestly, Lakers?

No, they've been playing a great ball lately. I know they're playing great. Why do you think they have no chance? They're playing great.

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Does Doncic guard anybody? I guess he guards his ex-wife. He's lost weight. You know, Doncic's lost weight since he's been divorced. Still, yeah, and I heard that she, like federally, went after him.

But they did it in California because he gets more money in California by divorcing him there. I thought that was hilarious, unbelievable. Mark, do you have a favorite basketball team besides Milwaukee?

Uh, you know, I've always liked the Bucks, but you know the Lakers, I don't mind the Lakers in the heyday when they weren't good. But I'm a big Pat Riley guy. Do you guys see the Charlotte uniforms? The tan-colored uniforms? Yeah,.

Aren't those bizarre? I mean, I would think the Phoenix Suns would get mad at them because that's what they reminded me of in the old days. Remember, in the day we grew up with one baseball hat?

Now everybody's got four or five of these things; it's all marketing, Mark. All right for Art, for Mark, for Laura, for Mario. Thank you guys and gals, for listening to Fred and the Fantastics on BLEAV and PodClips. More later, stay tuned. Bye everybody.

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