

Fox Sports NFL

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Curt Menefee

Terry Bradshaw

Michael Strahan

Howie Long

Jimmy Johnson

FOX NFL Kickoff Show



>> Excellence is an art, a preference for perfection, a synchronized symphony of intellect and movement.

>> It's a touchdown.

>> Orchestrated on cue, sweeping and soaring scores, crescendos by proven masters with a dominating presence.

[MUSIC]

The more all seems to change, the more so much remains the same. Positioned over a swirling season, a classic confrontation, Los Angeles-Seattle. Only one will take a bow. Experience the tradition of the NFL playoffs on Fox.

[MUSIC]

CURT MENEFE: Russell Wilson has orchestrated the Seahawks into the playoffs for the eighth time in his nine NFL seasons. After finishing second to Aaron Rodgers in touchdown passes this year, his focus is now on leading the Seahawks to a second Super Bowl title, while the Rams are trying to get back to the big game for the second time in three years. But who is going to start for them at quarterback today? Jay Glazer will give us the official starter two minutes from right now.

As super wild-card weekend continues, the Los Angeles Rams at division rival Seattle. The winner moves on; the losers goes home. And it all begins with this one and only Built Ford Tough Fox NFL special pregame show, brought to you by the Ford F-Series, the official truck of the National Football League.

Come in and stay a while, folks. I'm Curt Menefee. Thanks for joining us, and a special thanks to the musicians and staff of the Seattle Symphony and Benaroya Hall. Sorry, I had to stutter over it a little bit on the

Benaroya, but we got there.

It's time for us to open up the playoffs. We've got Terry, Howie, Michael -- and Jimmy will join us in just a little bit from the Florida Keys. Boys, it's super wild-card weekend for a reason.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: I'm excited. I haven't been as excited since they gave me this job at Fox.

CURT MENEFE: That's a lie.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: I'm really excited because you've got four of the seven NFC quarterbacks have won Super Bowls. You've got Brees, Brady, Aaron Rodgers and Russell Wilson, who is on our air today. You've got a lot of other stars from Aaron Donald to Chase Young, young and old. Is it going to be the old guard that wins, or is it going to be the new young pups I'm excited?

CURT MENEFE: That may be the question that's going on with the Los Angeles Rams at quarterback -- new gold or old guy, we don't know. Jay Glazer does.

JAY GLAZER: There's been a lot of subterfuge about who the starting quarterback will be for the Rams. We're here to end that mystery right now. Rams head coach Sean McVay told me it will in fact not be Jared Goff, but John Wolford will be the starting quarterback in this playoff game.

Jared Goff, just two weeks removed from thumb surgery, however, will be active and will be the backup quarterback. But, again, John Wolford, he gets the go for the Rams.

TERRY BRADSHAW: He likes him. McVay likes this Wolford kid. You know why, Howie? He told me it's because he reminds him of himself when he played in college. So, it will be interesting to see how he plays today.

CURT MENEFE: It's a really interesting turn to make for a playoff game, a guy who is making only his second ever NFL start. His first was last weekend.



Let's bring in one of the best reporters in the business, who is making his Fox debut in this playoff game, as we say hello and welcome to Tom Rinaldi.

TERRY BRADSHAW: What do you say, Tom?

TOM RINALDI: Thanks so much for having me, guys. I know there's probably a big question out there: Who is John Wolford?

We're here to tell you, an undrafted quarterback out of Wake Forest. Back in 2018 he had a job lined up as an investment banker. Has an active LinkedIn page which has gone viral. Made himself a deal. Gave himself one year to make it in football. After a stint with the Alliance of American Football and the Arizona Hotshots, a now-defunct league, he signed on with the Los Angeles Rams in August 2019. Now, fast-forward, he finds himself the starter in this playoff game against the Seahawks.

He said he's gotten total support from Goff as Goff continues to return from surgery to his throwing thumb. As for his approach, he wants to keep it simple, and he's relishing the chance to, quote, prove people right. He's certainly got the stage on which to do it.

CURT MENEFE: So basically Tom, he had to change his business cards, a lot like you do as we welcome you to Fox. Thank you.

TOM RINALDI: Thank you, guys.

CURT MENEFE: Have fun on the sideline there today. We have a lot more coming your way as we continue here. Here's what else is coming up, presented by GEICO.

>> Still to come, we keep things rocking on this Fox NFL special as EA sits down with DK and talks running up the numbers when it matters most.

ERIN ANDREWS: It's postseason, baby. Look at that smile.

>> Not if Jalen has got anything to say about it.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Are you trash talking or teaching?

>> Doing a little bit of both.

>> As he and CT talk leading the way and shutting down DK. Then Joe and Troy have the call and get you ready for this clash of epic proportions. Stick around.

[MUSIC]

[COMMERCIAL].

>> It's time to cast your vote and select the fan who will be inducted into the Ford Hall of Fans class of 2021. Vote now for your favorite nominee at FordHallofFans.com. Plus enter for your chance to win a trip to Super Bowl LV.

>> I'm telling you, Buffalo is going to win it all.

>> I don't know. Can you imagine being a Bills fan, going to four straight Super Bowls, no rings and then nothing ever since. And you live in Buffalo.

>> I went to four straight puppy bowls.

>> That's not possible. You're not a puppy after your first birthday.

>> Dude, I'm little. I got a baby face.

>> Let me tell you something, the only thing puppy bowl gets right: No field goals -- no missed field goals. And I don't lose rent money because it's windy in Kansas City.

>> You know they let kickers in the Hall of Fame? They should be in the shed behind the fame.

>> Remember Cody Parkey?

>> Yes, I remember. That double doinker kept the Bears out the playoffs. Now he's on the Browns. Used to be if a kicker ruined the season he had the decency to just disappear.

>> Now watch your money disappear. Boom.

>> What?

>> How does she always win?

CURT MENEFE: Part of a new project at Fox, from Denis Leary. We'll be checking in with him from time to time.

That wish for Buffalo, hmm, looking pretty careful right now. "Careful" is the word I was trying to say. All right.

It wouldn't be a stretch to say that for this playoff game Jalen Ramsey is animated about spending as much time as possible with DK Metcalf, now would it, Charissa Thompson?

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I see what you did there, Curt. The one-on-one matchup between Metcalf and Ramsey is



must-see TV, animated or not. Of course, Ramsey has always been an elite corner ever since his days in Jacksonville. What's changed for Ramsey now that he's playing lights out in LA? He's matured into a locker room leader.

JALEN RAMSEY: I feel like I'm a different person. Sometimes I don't even remember things that I do or say. When I'm out there on the field it's just a zone I get in.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Playoff football, man. Here you are for the first time in a Rams uniform. You've got to be fired up.

JALEN RAMSEY: Yeah, I was anticipating this. I'm excited about this. I'm ready to go really. We'll have to get fierce and grinding potentially. It's going to be real out there. It's playoff football.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: And this is the third time you'll line up against DK. I notice that after the last couple of times you guys played, after the game was over, kind of put your hand on his shoulder. Are you actually giving him pointers? Are you trash talking? Or are you teaching?

JALEN RAMSEY: I do a little bit of both. I still do my trash talking, don't get it confused.

>> The matchup within the matchup.

JALEN RAMSEY: I've got a lot of respect for him. I love competing with guys who want to be the best, who are competitors themselves.

>> DK Metcalf is an absolute freak show.

JALEN RAMSEY: We don't have these matchups for years and years to come. That's basically what I tell them, to just cherish these moments. That's what we're brought into this league to do. But we still are going at it. No matter what when we're on that field we're still going at it.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I know you're playing coy who your starting quarterback is going to be. But I think it should be Sean McVay or Sean McVay off a bender in Vegas. (Laughter). Come on, man.

JALEN RAMSEY: They look alike don't they, a little bit.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: A little bit? They look a lot alike.

JALEN RAMSEY: Never looked at them like that, but they do.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: By the time this interview airs, it will be almost game time, so you can just tell us who is going to play.

JALEN RAMSEY: I don't know. Sean, maybe. Sean gonna suit up himself.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Sean would. He would do whatever it takes to win for sure.

JALEN RAMSEY: Yeah, he would.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Turning your focus back on you. Your reputation precedes you. The accolades that follow. How have you, Jalen Ramsey, changed?

JALEN RAMSEY: You go to new levels in life. You gotta grow up, mature and change for the better. I'm older now, working hard and trying to be a leader, trying to set the right example for younger guys coming into the league who may look up to me.

Things that I may not have been doing previously just because I felt like I was the young guy, I was just out to earn respect and I didn't care about nothing else. It's just me embracing my journey and growing up on my own time and living my life.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: And there's no question that Jalen Ramsey and Aaron Donald are two of the biggest reasons why LA finished as the top-ranked defense in the league. Howie, both guys were named to the All-Pro First-Team yesterday, just doing big things.

HOWIE LONG: Both are generational players. I think you can make a strong case for Jalen Ramsey being the defensive player this year. His extraordinary athleticism and toughness -- I don't throw that out there lightly. This guy is a willing participant.

You watch him in coverage today, but watch him in the run game. His attitude is infectious particularly with the secondary. He more often than not travels with the No. 1 from the other team; we talk about DK Metcalf. In the two games, they targeted him four times when Ramsey was on him. He has one interception.

I think Brandon Staley has the opportunity to be so creative with the secondary and the front because of his presence in the secondary. This is Super Bowl defense, and I think Brandon Staley, the defensive coordinator, is going up to Seattle with a thought process that we have to win this game on defense.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Boy, how has it changed in that

division, because usually when you think about defenses you go, oh, Seattle. Now it is the Rams. I mean, this is the first time in franchise history they're number one in total defense. They're number one also in scoring defense. And that is all led by the other guy who could be Defensive Player of the Year, Aaron Donald.

HOWIE LONG: Every year.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: He's second in the league in sacks -- he could be every year, Howie. This guy is fantastic. But they put a lot of pressure on the quarterback, second in the league in sacks with 53. But when you've got a guy like Ramsey in the backfield, you've got a guy like Donald up front, in a lot of ways that makes you about as tough as it can get. We always used to always say the best defense, the best pass defense is the pass rush.

But in the case with them having a guy in the secondary like this and a guy up front, I don't know which way it is. This is a team that has too much talent.

CURT MENEFEE: You can never have too much talent, they say. Let's bring in Jimmy Johnson for the first time today from the Keys. And Jimmy, I want to hear your take on the Rams starting a guy at quarterback who has only had one other NFL start.

JIMMY JOHNSON: It's Sean McVay's decision to make, Jared Goff the backup and John Wolford the starter, you know, the first decision has got to come from the doctors and the trainers. They've got to say Goff is ready to play. And then Sean's got to look at it and say who gives me the best chance to win?

Understand this with Jared Goff: No. 1, he hasn't practiced; No. 2, he's not 100 percent healthy. And this is the most important part. He's been inconsistent. He's been struggling. So McVay says, hey, Wolford gives me the best chance to win.

Terry, I don't know that this was an easy decision, but we'll find out pretty soon if it was the right decision.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Normally when you're talking playoff games, you're talking, all right, who has the best quarterback. That's Wilson, hands down here. Wolford coming in, all he does for the Rams is provide a little more athleticism, rolling right and left.

If you go back to the Arizona Cardinal game, you noticed he threw nine passes over 20 yards, completed three. That's something they haven't had all year long. And unlike Howie and Michael, who automatically are just salivating over this Rams defense, I happen to think if they

win today, it will be a miracle.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Really?

TERRY BRADSHAW: Yeah.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: You'd go that far?

TERRY BRADSHAW: Absolutely. You're telling me the Rams are going to beat Seattle in Seattle in playoffs, and I'll tell you right now the worst horse on my ranch, I'll put up against anybody if I'm wrong.

CURT MENEFEE: So, not only can you win Terry Bradshaw's money --

TERRY BRADSHAW: I said the worst horse --

CURT MENEFEE: -- which we'll talk about later, you can win his horse as well.

Still ahead, we'll take a look at the Seattle side of things as Jamal Adams makes his first playoff start ever. The blitzing, game-changing safety is good to go besides both his shoulders being banged up. His return to the lineup along with a trace of Carlos Dunlap, part of the impetus that saw the Seahawks allow the fewest points in the league over the entire second half of the season.

[COMMERCIAL]

>> DK Metcalf. Breakout star, physical freak, you may not be able to play like DK, but you can dress like him with DK Wear. Train like the process with DK Wear.

[MUSIC]

>> What are you wearing?

>> And the ladies will notice, too.

>> DK Wear. Muzzles is not included.

CURT MENEFEE: I love that. You can always say you look like the guy in the DK Wear commercial. Look at him. This is during the warm-ups right now. Just an incredible athlete. Not only can he catch the ball, but our cameras caught him during warm-ups on the field -- look at Josh Allen just kind of wing it out there.

It's unbelievable what he can do. Set the franchise record for receiving yards this year. When you take a look at that body it might actually surprise you that just a few years ago he was in a brace after a broken neck threatened to end his football career entirely. We bring in EA right now for

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

more on the remarkable story of DK. Hello, EA.

ERIN ANDREWS: Absolutely incredible. And of course he dropped to the 64th pick in the 2019 draft. That's insane. Now, last year, his rookie season, it went well. But it wasn't until the postseason that he really exploded onto the scene. DK telling me, I was just excited to be in the NFL.

Look at him now. He's one of the top wide receivers in the league and he's so much fun to watch. And as you can imagine, as he gets set to take on Jalen Ramsey and the LA Rams for the third time this year, DK is all business.

I want to know what the hair color is. Now we're going to see.

DK METCALF: It's brown.

ERIN ANDREWS: Doing something for the game?

DK METCALF: No, time to lock in, business.

ERIN ANDREWS: I got up this morning. I'm, like, okay, I'm going to prep for this interview. I did extra abs because I feel like when I'm talking to you the abs have to be tight. It's DK, baby, we've got to bring it.

DK METCALF: Yes, ma'am.

ERIN ANDREWS: We don't have to get into your whole story because we know it. It's been documented well. DK when you look at the last two years and what you've gone through to get where you are now, what do you think of?

DK METCALF: I would just say it's a blessing taking a rear seat and just looking at my life and how it's unfolded quickly. Just never take anything for granted. Just gotta keep pushing and believing in yourself. That's one thing I did and one thing I'm going to continue to do throughout the rest of my life.

>> Guess who? DK Metcalf.

>> You can't be more covered.

ERIN ANDREWS: When teams get set to play the Seahawks, they look at how they'll cover you. What is that mindset for you, knowing that's the number one priority?

DK METCALF: It's a gift and curse because I get frustrated on the sidelines when I'm not getting the looks that I want. I have to take a step back and I realize it's a team game.

And it's opened my eyes to how big the game is right now

and the role I've been thrust into. I want to be one of the greats. This is a step that I have to go through just to be remembered as one.

ERIN ANDREWS: You're looked at as one of the top wide receivers right now. Tell me how it's changed throughout the year, how teams are playing you.

DK METCALF: Teams are scared to play us man now, whoever is at receiver.

[MUSIC]

I know ever since the Patriots game, teams have really started to take a step back and just see, all right, how can we slow down the offense, because at the end of the day they can't stop us; they can just pretty much slow us down.

ERIN ANDREWS: Third time playing these Rams. Obviously we know Jalen. He's a trash talker. This guy does not stop. What has going up against this guy already twice this season taught you as a player?

DK METCALF: To continue to work on my craft, to never get satisfied or get complacent and always work. So just going up against him really tests my ability.

>> DK Metcalf, Jalen Ramsey, a lot of mutual respect.

DK METCALF: Probably the best corner I've been against this whole season, just how physical he is. I've got a lot of respect for him. This is a big matchup that I'm looking forward to for years to come.

ERIN ANDREWS: And we are, too. Today and in the future in the NFC West. Stray, I want to ask you this: As the King of trash talking back a long time ago when you were playing -- just kidding, I love you -- DK said: I'm not the guy that initiates it with Ramsey; he starts; I laugh a little; I try to walk away.

But if you were Jalen and you were back in the day with the talking, how do you know it's really getting to him, what's the key?

MICHAEL STRAHAN: When he's dropping balls or can't catch anything, you know you got 'em. And Jalen Ramsey has Metcalf's number. In two games against the Rams, Metcalf only had 87 yards out of his 1303 yards this season. But then he needs a little help on the offensive side of the ball. You get Greg Olsen back. Hopefully that will open some things underneath.

If you can get Chris Carson really involved in the running game that's going to open up some things as well. But this



team has created so much with Russell Wilson's ability to move around the field, create things on the run and on the fly. But against the Rams, in two games, he's been sacked 11 times. He's been hit 20 times. In this game against this defense he needs to get the ball out of his hands quickly, Howie.

HOWIE LONG: Early in the season, the first nine games, Russ was cooking. And he was averaging 34 points a game. He had 28 touchdowns. Then they had issues with the offensive line. The defense was playing historically bad.

Pete kind of reeled it in. The defense started playing better. They started playing more like the Seattle teams we've seen over the years. And it's tempting, with Lockett and DK Metcalf, to want to throw the ball all over the yard. But they've got their entire offensive line back, just for the sixth time this year, and they're 5-0 when they had that offensive line in play.

TERRY BRADSHAW: You're right about, they toned it down ostensibly because Pete Carroll was smart enough to realize, hey, look, we've got to help our defense; let's run the football more. And that in effect is what they've done.

They bring in Carlos Dunlop from Cincinnati, put him in there to rush the passer. D.J. Reed at right corner, having a great year. And Jamal Adams at strong safety. They can play defense in Seattle now. And I think they will. But today I disagree. I think they've got to throw it deep.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Answer this question: What is the name of the horse Howie and I are going to win?

HOWIE LONG: What is his name? Trigger?

TERRY BRADSHAW: No, his name is Garbage. (Laughter) and he's yours, just come down. Ride him home.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: I'm not coming down to pick up Garbage.

HOWIE LONG: Poor Garbage.

CURT MENEFFEE: Does get some help there on defense, consistent help.

JAY GLAZER: Talking about Jamal Adams, the trade John Schneider made for Jamal Adams, bringing him in. We saw him last week. He was really banged up. And how about this, folks, Jamal Adams actually dislocated his shoulder in that game last week. Ended up having to pop it back in. But it's a shoulder injury that will require surgery

after this season. And Jimmy Johnson, Jamal Adams, the exact type of player that Pete Carroll wants.

JIMMY JOHNSON. Exactly. You talk about John Schneider bringing in Adams earlier in the year. That's one of the more impressive things that I have seen with Pete Carroll and John Schneider. They have revamped this roster year after year. They've had nine straight winning seasons. A lot of times we have looked at their team, we say, boy, their talent is down but they bring in new players. And all these coaches, you know, the openings around the league right now, these owners need to look at Pete Carroll. He was basically a defensive coach.

But some of these owners, they want the Xs and Os type of thing. Well, Pete Carroll is an outstanding leader. He's an outstanding motivator. And then more important than that, he's a great talent evaluator. And I think he got a lot of that from his recruiting days at Southern Cal when he won the National Championship. Him and Schneider have done a great job with this roster. You look at this game today, two of the best coaches in the entire league.

CURT MENEFFEE: All right. Two of the best coaches will be going head to head in just a few minutes when that game kicks off, but already the first game of Super Six weekend or actually super wild-card weekend, before we get to our Super Six, is over.

Indianapolis down by three. Final play of the game. Philip Rivers, Hail Mary, short. And that does it, 27-24. Buffalo advances. They move on in the playoffs. First time since 1995, TB.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Congratulations, Buffalo. We saw them last year lose in Houston to the Texans down there. And now this year we saw the progression of their young quarterback Allen.

HOWIE LONG: Final throw of Philip Rivers' career, do you think?

TERRY BRADSHAW: Final throw of his career? Golly, maybe in Indy. But I don't think in --

JAY GLAZER: Indy or no place.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: I'll tell you now, they should have kicked the field goal earlier in the game.

CURT MENEFFEE: At the end of the first half they decided not to kick the field goal, went for the touchdown. Didn't get it. Wound up losing by three.

Right now it's time for our Fox Super Six. Go on your



phone, whatever device you want, download the app. You can play for free. How much money do we want to give away?

TERRY BRADSHAW: I don't know. 150 -- 175. I don't have it anyway --

CURT MENEFE: How about \$150,000 of Terry Bradshaw's money? You can win that if you win our Super Six contest.

HOWIE LONG: And a horse.

CURT MENEFE: And a horse.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Garbage.

CURT MENEFE: Let's go to our picks officially right now as we go into the playoffs. The points will double. Michael is in first place. Howie is in last. Among all the remaining playoff games, why don't you make your choice.

HOWIE LONG: As much as I love the Washington story, I've got to go with Tampa Bay tonight by 10 over The Washington Football Team.

CURT MENEFE: TB?

TERRY BRADSHAW: Saints by 10 over the Chicago Bears tomorrow.

CURT MENEFE: Who are you taking, Jimmy?

JIMMY JOHNSON: I'm going to listen to Terry. He said Seattle is going to win. So I'm going to pick Seattle by three. Maybe I can win Garbage.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Get on this horse and ride, baby.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: I love Derrick Henry. One of my favorite players to watch in the NFL. But I think Baltimore is so hot right now, I'm going to take the Ravens by 9.

JAY GLAZER: I'm going to pick for Tony. He just called me. He's eating. That's exactly it. Tony Gonzalez is going to Pittsburgh by 7.

CURT MENEFE: That does it for us. We'll find out if Jimmy's pick is right, because the wild-card game with the division rivalry all rolled into one is coming your way. The Rams battling Seattle, kickoff is next. We thank you as always for watching this Built Ford Tough Fox NFL Special Pregame show. Enjoy the game, everybody.

[COMMERCIAL].

