

# Fox NFL Special

Saturday, January 16, 2021

**CURT MENEFEE**

**ANTHONY MACKIE**

**JAY GLAZER**

**DAVANTE ADAMS**

**COLE BEASLEY**

**KRISTINA PINK**

**CAM AKERS**

**Coach MATT LAFLEUR**

**Coach SEAN MCVAY**

**JIMMY JOHNSON**

FOX NFL SPeial



"Fox NFL Special."

[MUSIC]

[MUSIC]

ANTHONY MACKIE: There's a place beyond the pines for which all those who dream must pass through in their pursuit of being remembered.

[MUSIC]

>> A great run. Packers advance.

ANTHONY MACKIE: And there's a place beside the sea from which all those dreams come --

>> I see it!

ANTHONY MACKIE: -- where every day people fight --

>> Talk about physical football.

ANTHONY MACKIE: -- scream, scrap to convince the world and themselves that they deserve a place in it.

>> Touchdown, L.A.!

[MUSIC]

>> Everybody give me your best.

>> Let's go!

ANTHONY MACKIE: A small town meets a small country. How different can they be?

>> You feel me? Let's go. Let's move.

ANTHONY MACKIE: To write history, to change it, first you must understand it.

>> You be proud of this game, and you could do a great deal for football today.

ANTHONY MACKIE: This is where the end of the earth meets the end of the line. Los Angeles versus Green Bay is next on Fox!

[MUSIC]

CURT MENEFEE: Yes, this is the way. The road to the Super Bowl in the NFC goes through Lambeau Field where Za'Darius Smith and the Packers are just a win away from hosting the NFC title game. And it will be the Packers second straight championship game.

But Jared Goff isn't far behind. Despite coming off the bench last week following thumb surgery, Goff is in the starting lineup today and a win away from getting the Rams into the NFC title game for the second time in three years.

So we've got a divisional playoff showdown from the best on the planet, the L.A. Rams taking on the Green Bay Packers live from Lambeau right here on Fox.

Hey, what a way to kick off a glorious weekend of football. Do-or-die games for some of the greatest quarterbacks ever like Rodgers, Brees, and Brady. And with young phenoms like Mahomes, Allen, and Lamar Jackson also making noise, it's a weekend for the ages, young and old.

And we'll cover it all here on the one and only Built Ford Tough "Fox NFL Special" pregame show brought to you by the Ford F Series, the official truck of the NFL.

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sports

Come on in and stay awhile, folks. I'm Curt Menefee. Thank you for joining us, and thanks to Anthony Mackie for kicking things off. Make sure you catch his new movie, "Outside the Wire." It's streaming right now on Netflix.

We say hello to Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Michael Strahan. Hello, boys.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Hello, Curt.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Hello, fellas. Here we go.

Real quick shout out before we get going. I have to say happy birthday to my momma, Louise Strahan, the big 8-0.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Happy birthday, Momma.

HOWIE LONG: Happy birthday, Momma Louise.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: And I have one more, like a mother to me, Pietza Schwartz. Happy 95th birthday.

>> There you go.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: They both are doing it with class and style.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Happy birthday.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: They're both still --

CURT MENEFE: Happy birthday.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: -- fiery and still kicking.

CURT MENEFE: Oh, yeah. Momma will still get my butt.

Hey, you know, here's something. Also last week, if you remember, we had the playoff game between the Rams and Seattle. My man Terry said no way the Rams are going to win. In fact, if they won, he would give up one of his horses. Don't say my man doesn't pay his bets.

TERRY BRADSHAW: His name is Garbage. All right? Here he is, boys. Enjoy. Fight over him. Easy, fellow.

Michael, I think he'll make a great jumper for your kids. Michael and Howie don't know a burro from a horse. Come out of that stall. He crosses on pretty much anything, just a great stud. We're going to miss him.

[LAUGHTER]

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Garbage is like us. He doesn't listen to you either, just like us.

TERRY BRADSHAW: He would make a great little burro for your baby girls, Mike.

HOWIE LONG: Or if Jay wants to go for --

CURT MENEFE: Hey, Jay will join us in just a bit, as will Jimmy Johnson.

And you know what? When Jimmy joins us, there will be a total of eight Super Bowl rings on this panel. And that's the same number of rings among the legendary quarterbacks left in the NFC playoffs, which is a record for the divisional round.

HOWIE LONG: Love you, Jay.

CURT MENEFE: AFC, it's all about the young guns. For lot of these QBs, Canton will someday be calling.

TROY AIKMAN: When it's all said and done and Father Time has his say, if you were good enough -- scratch that -- great enough, your life's work is immortalized on the bronze walls in Canton, Ohio --

[MUSIC]

TROY AIKMAN: -- a place these gentlemen punched their tickets to years ago. But for every achievement earned, they still play as if they're overlooked, undervalued, still a little wet behind the ears.

>> Let's go!

Let's go!

TROY AIKMAN: Love 'em or hate 'em, there's that childlike enthusiasm they still wear on their sleeve you can't help but appreciate, because after all, this is a kid's game; right?

[MUSIC]

TROY AIKMAN: Well, Tom, Drew, and Aaron stole the airwaves. They studied, picking and pulling the traits of their predecessors and revolutionizing their position whether you like it or not.

>> We need more. We need more. We need more.

TROY AIKMAN: Gunslingers, risk takers, jaw droppers. Sound familiar?

They left their mark on the generation that follows just as their idols did before them, and now it's catching up to



them. Or is it?

[MUSIC]

TROY AIKMAN: These kids will one day, too, have to find the secret to longevity, and a lot of things need to go right before we save space for them here. But one thing is for sure. The future is in good hands, whenever that may be.

CURT MENEFE: You guys are already there. As a fan, if you've never been to Canton, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, it's a special place. It's still open seven days a week right now if you want to take some time and go there.

HOWIE LONG: A great job by Troy.

CURT MENEFE: That was Troy Aikman. He is on that big Brady-Brees game for us tomorrow.

T.B.?

TERRY BRADSHAW: Yeah. You know, for all you young people out there watching the games today, you're going to see Rodgers. And you're going to see Brees tomorrow. You're going to see Brady tomorrow.

Watch how they play. Watch the fundamentals that they have. All the great ones have great fundamentals. And I think you'll enjoy that. And you should enjoy it.

The average age of these three great players who definitely are going into the Hall of Fame right now is 41 years of age. They have tremendous poise. Always has been the number one ingredient of a great quarterback. You have to have poise. A great leader can make -- can bring a team from behind. They can do it all, and I think you're really going to enjoy watching these quarterbacks.

CURT MENEFE: The average age of these three is 41.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Yeah.

CURT MENEFE: How old were you when you retired?

TERRY BRADSHAW: I was 33. If I'd have played another eight years, that's another 1.4 million I left on the table.

CURT MENEFE: Probably another six Super Bowl rings along the way.

Jimmy, take it over.

JIMMY JOHNSON: Hey, Terry, you mentioned Brees and Brady. Of the quarterbacks playing today and tomorrow, they're the only two that were not drafted in the first round.

Now, years ago, you could win a championship if you'd run the football, play great defense, and have a quarterback that could manage the game, not turn it over.

Well, because of the rule changes and opening up the passing game, that won't happen anymore. If you're going to win a championship now, you've got to have a franchise quarterback that can carry your football team.

And, Howie, the AFC's got some young guns. I think they can carry it.

HOWIE LONG: Yeah. I think, when you look at these three quarterbacks, it's the end of an era. I think we've adapted to the style that is being played in our country, both Pop Warner, high school, college. It's all RPO, bootleg, run-pass options, mobile quarterbacks. I think it's a reflection of -- that we're in subpackages, five DBs where four wide receivers were spreading it out.

And all these young quarterbacks, they're all different physically, but have that one specific trait in common. They're all mobile. They all have the ability to cause problems for defenses by extending plays. And I think that will, in turn, extend their careers.

You know, the one that you worry about is you worry about Lamar, of course, because Lamar pulls it down and goes so much.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Yeah, but -- you worry about Lamar, but I look at the quarterbacks, and I think it's amazing how these guys can be so young but yet can really take over a game, how they can go out there and they can -- they can win the game on their own.

And this Super Bowl is going to be interesting because it's going to be one where the parents and the kids -- the parents are going to be rooting for age.

[LAUGHTER]

TERRY BRADSHAW: I want the old guy!

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Just to prove a point. But when it comes to this game, the game of football, what I love the most is where the kids don't care about disrespecting their elders when they get into the game.

We're going to see some fantastic football, which we have been blessed to see, and I love to know that the next generation is in good hands.

CURT MENEFE: All right. Let's give a little bit more

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respect to Jay Glazer than we did the last time we saw him as we bring him in right now to tell us about some of the new head coaching jobs.

JAY GLAZER: Hey, Curt and everybody but Howie up there, how are you today?

[LAUGHTER]

CURT MENEFEE: Fill us in on what's going on with some of these guys who are assistants this weekend.

JAY GLAZER: Well, look, Brandon Staley, who's coaching this game today for the Rams, he has interviews lined up with the Eagles and the Texans. Interestingly enough, though -- so if the Rams lose today, he can go interview in person. If they don't, his interviews are going to have to be on Zoom.

Now, let's just go through the games this weekend. Brian Daboll -- Bills, they play later today against the Ravens -- right now, he's the front runner for the job with the Chargers. Actually went to high school with the Chargers' GM, Tom Telesco.

The Chiefs, they play tomorrow. Eric Bieniemy, the Eagles have an interview lined up with him. The Texans finally jumped in on Eric Bieniemy. Let's see if they'll actually interview him.

And finally, the Saints, we have them tomorrow, huge game against the Bucs on our air, Brees versus Brady. But, also, Sean Payton one of his top lieutenants there, an ex-teammate of Michael Strahan. Dan Campbell, he'll be the next head coach of the Lions.

CURT MENEFEE: All right. Those aren't official yet. Three guys officially hired. We'll talk about them in a bit.

As we head outside next, though, we'll be joined by Hall of Famer Tony Gonzalez to break down the greatness of Davante Adams.

ANNOUNCER: We're hitting the ground running -- that's right -- with Rams rookie Cam Akers, who tells Kristina Pink why he's relishing his new star role.

Cole Beasley's gone from role player to all-pro. He talks to Charissa Thompson on being beloved in Buffalo.

Plus, they're long-time friends turned foes. Today, Jay Glazer reunites Sean McVay and Matt LaFleur in their win-or-go-home game. Why don't you get comfy at home and enjoy this "Fox NFL Special."

[COMMERCIAL]

[MUSIC]

ANNOUNCER: 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](http://fordhalloffans.com). Plus, enter for your chance to win a trip to Super Bowl LV.

>> Rodgers, shotgun.

DAVANTE ADAMS: I'm speaking of wide receivers and future wide receivers.

>> Yes, I am that guy.

DAVANTE ADAMS: Make it all look the same. Make everything feel like it's a go route. You don't want to give anything away. Put everything into it. You want to run every route like you're in a maze. If you're in a maze, you can't start leaking early. Otherwise, you'll hit that wall.

Think about everything in a straight lines. Head, eyes, and shoulders added to the equation. It's time to go.

>> Looks like trouble for whoever's --

DAVANTE ADAMS: The slant, the goal line fade, the dig, the out, the comeback. The go route right now, that's my favorite route for sure. They know the ball's coming to me either way. The midtown squeeze. I'm Davante Adams, and this is my master class.

[MUSIC]

CURT MENEFEE: What a year for Davante Adams. Yes, he gives us a master class as we welcome you outside here in Los Angeles at our Fox Studios.

Joined for the first time today by our Hall of Fame tight end Tony Gonzalez. We take a look -- Randy Moss and Jerry Rice, the only two receivers ever to have more touchdowns in a single season than Davante Adams, and he missed two games. Sean McVay compared him to a basketball player. Why?

TONY GONZALEZ: Well, I think that's a great comparison because what he does off the line of scrimmage, before the snap even starts, right when they yell hike, he takes off. And I'm going to show you how -- what I mean here. Michael, you come guard me even though you can't -- even though you can't --

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Oh, you know what, this wouldn't --

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this wouldn't work, but if we going to -- we going to make it work for demonstration purposes.

TONY GONZALEZ: So what he does, when he says hike, what -- he calls him a basketball player because he becomes like Allen Iverson. Remember Allen Iverson and that killer crossover? He does like a jump and does this.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Oh!

TONY GONZALEZ: And so what he does -- and all I want to do is freeze him because he wants to get in and hit me. But if I jump like this and you miss, and then I'm going to run the slant here. Now I have him off balance and I'm coming across. So hit me right there, and then it's off to the races.

And when Davante Adams gets the ball in his hands, he is very, very good.

But here's the route that he loves, and we talk -- and we referenced it in the master class. You saw he loves that fade because it's unstoppable. When he runs that fade, he does his little thing, gets them -- and now, Michael, you got me. If I beat you off the line of scrimmage, it's over the top. Right, Terry? And boom, that's a touchdown.

But let's say I do it again, but then this time, I don't really fool him and we're even now. That's when the back shoulder succumbs right there and that becomes unstoppable. See, you understood this right here.

TERRY BRADSHAW: For four yards, babe, I'm as good as ever!

HOWIE LONG: And everybody's talking about the Aaron Donald matchup versus this team. And you've got five offensive linemen and a tight end and a running back to kind of deal with Aaron Donald. Who do you deal with Davante Adams with? It's Jalen Ramsey. The question is, it is every play, or is it key situations?

End of half. End of game. Red zone. I think that's the fascinating matchup because I think that's best on best.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: And now, also, I think when you know you got this rush coming, they get it to Aaron Rodgers. They're going to get the ball out quick out. They're going to get this ball out of his hands. He's not going to sit back there and hold it. Aaron Donald, we know he's a little banged up.

HOWIE LONG: Yeah.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: How effective is that going -- is he

going to be in this type of weather, too, because that cold weather and an injury like he has, it definitely affects you.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Well, one thing you can always do as a coordinator, and LaFleur will do this, you move him around. You move him around. When you move him around, defenses change from every position you go to. And one thing I think he has --

TONY GONZALEZ: Not if it's manned.

TERRY BRADSHAW: If anything, he's smart. He takes the step, he knows man, zone, in and out, long and short.

TONY GONZALEZ: Yep.

CURT MENEFEE: We will break down this matchup much more as we continue. Tony Gonzalez will join us a little bit later to make his pick on this game and more.

But up next, we'll feature another wide receiver, the heart and soul of Buffalo, Cole Beasley. Charissa Thompson speaks with him as the Bills get ready to battle the Ravens.

Plus we'll preview the other AFC matchup between the Browns and Chiefs while Jay has a little fun with Matt LaFleur and Sean McVay, who were truly best friends.

JAY GLAZER: Who do you think has aged better during these 10 years?

[MUSIC]

[COMMERCIAL]

>> I'm telling you, Kyle's pass to DeAndre, play of the year.

>> Ah, the Hail Mary, incredible.

>> They shouldn't call it the hail Mary. They should call it the hail Hopkins.

>> You're out of your mind. Well, I'm going to need some hail Goffs today. I took the Rams. I'm getting six.

>> Oh, my good. Drew Brees, Rodgers, Goff, Brady versus Brees. You'd think they were playing all by themselves.

>> Exactly. Who's Tom Brady without Gronk.

>> Giselle's husband.

>> Let me ask you something. How's any receiver ever drop the ball with those sticky gloves they all wear now?





What's next? We going to give running backs rocket shoes?

>> See, Dick is a QB guy.

>> The gloves are like putting a hand on top of a hand. They are playing with four hands, of course they're going to come down with the ball.

>> Speaking of balls, maybe it's time we get you fixed. I'll give you the name of the guy who did mine. Changed my life, really.

CURT MENEFEE: Hey, four hands will help Aaron Rodgers as we get you ready to see how he does today against the Los Angeles Rams right here in the divisional matchup on Fox.

And keep in mind that while you're waiting for this game to go, you can check out Dennis Leary and the longer version of what we just saw, Dogs Playing Poker, by logging on to social media and checking it out at @animation on Fox.

All right. While we're talking about dogs, I guess you could say the last quarter century, the Buffalo Bills have been loveable underdogs. And last week they won their first playoff game in 25 years. Mark Twain once said it's not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog.

Charissa Thompson, you spent time with a guy who knows all about being a little dog fighting for respect because he's basically been doing it his entire career.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Yeah, you're right about that, Curt. When you said "speaking of dogs," I got nervous about this transition, but you covered yourself there with the Mark Twain quote.

Cole Beasley is an undersized and undrafted wide receiver and he found a new home in Buffalo and was just named second team all pro. And although not everyone agrees with that, it's okay for Beasley because he's used to blocking out the noise.

[MUSIC]

>> I know Cole Beasley really well. One of the best slot receivers in the league.

>> He's impressive. In man coverage, I'm not so sure you can cover him.

[MUSIC]

CHARISSA THOMPSON: What's up, man?

COLE BEASLEY: How you doing?

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I'm good. How are you? Are those noise-canceling headphones? Because I feel like you've got a good way of quieting the critics.

COLE BEASLEY: Yeah, that's something that I had to learn and get better at through the years. I didn't do it as well as I should have early in my career. I feel like I've, you know, become so much better.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You always felt like an underdog?

COLE BEASLEY: Oh, yeah. From day one I had people telling me what I wasn't going to do. And public perception is big on stat and they -- they let that determine how good you are as a player. You just worry about beating your man every play. When everybody sees you winning on film, that's when -- I mean, you're going to -- the people who matter are going to know.

>> Touchdown, Buffalo, Cole Beasley!

>> What a sensational athletic, acrobatic catch.

COLE BEASLEY: Buffalo saw it and they got me here and now I'm doing everything that I always wanted to do.

>> There's Beasley, touchdown!

>> Beasley is the guy who wins on the inside.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You've had a front row seat to the Josh Allen show the last couple of years. How much fun is it to be on the receiving end of those passes?

COLE BEASLEY: You know, I knew when coming here, you know, that he had the ability, you know, to be where he's at now. And, you know, you never know if they're going to actually, you know, get to that point or not. It all came down to just experience and having confidence.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

COLE BEASLEY: And once he, you know, just played enough games to see everything and feel what it feels like, you know, he just took off.

>> Touchdown, Buffalo!

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Cole, are you having fun?

COLE BEASLEY: Oh, yeah, for sure. This is the most fun I've had playing football since high school. Play a game that I love with a bunch of my best friends.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Well, it's an incredible backdrop. The city of Buffalo embraced you and seems like you've embraced them.

COLE BEASLEY: Oh, for sure. And not just me. You know, more importantly, my family did as well. You know, it's really going to be hard to get them to leave this place when it's all said and done, whenever that may be. I'll probably be there as long as they let me, until they kick me out the door.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Yeah, I don't think they're kicking him out anytime soon.

In last week's wildcard win over the Colts, Beasley fought through a knee injury while playing with a brace and yet had a team high seven catches. And afterwards, both Josh Allen and Sean McDermott called Beasley tough as nails. His knee is improving and he'll grind it out today against Buffalo.

So Coach, you got to love a guy like that.

JIMMY JOHNSON: Great interview with one of my favorite players, Cole Beasley.

And you talked about him catching it seven times, you know, last week. When he catches the football, it's usually a first down. That's why in Buffalo, that's why they lead the league on third down and second in the league in scoring.

But the concern today has got to be the blitz.

You know, a year ago December, Baltimore went to Buffalo, blitzed Buffalo 31 times. Josh Allen, he didn't handle it very well. Baltimore won the ballgame. And Baltimore blitzes more than anybody in the league.

Michael, if Buffalo doesn't handle the blitz today or tonight, it will be a concern and they'll have a tough time.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Yeah, they're playing a defense that has to have a lot of confidence, Jimmy, because last week they shut down Derrick Henry. You have Peters, you have Humphreys in the secondary; two of the best corners in the league.

And on offense, for Buffalo, I'm worried about them stopping the run. They're going to get the quarterback who had the record for the most rushing yards. The only guy second to him is on their team with Josh Allen. But

stopping Lamar Jackson in the run game is tough. And the rookie, D.K. Dobbins, he has seven rushing touchdown games in a row with one touchdown. And that is the biggest -- biggest thing. Buffalo's had a hard time stopping the run, and with Baltimore, it's not necessarily about the pass game. It is the passing off the run game. If you don't stop that run, it's going to be a long day for you.

CURT MENEFFEE: The AFC divisional matchup going on today. The other one happens tomorrow when the Browns take on the Chiefs. And it's got Baker Mayfield facing off against Patrick Mahomes.

Now, four years ago, these two met in college. And folks, I can tell you, people are still talking about this epic shootout. Here are some of the mind-blowing stats from that game. This is one game, keep in mind. Baker, seven touchdown passes. Mahomes, 734 yards, tying an NCAA record. He also scored seven total touchdowns himself. And Baker's Sooners outscored Texas Tech 66-59. The two sides combined for more than 1700 yards of total offense.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Wow.

CURT MENEFFEE: I don't think they're to get that many when they match up tomorrow, T.B. What should we expect, though?

TERRY BRADSHAW: I didn't get 700 yards passing in practice --

[LAUGHTER]

TERRY BRADSHAW: -- let alone in a game.

This is a game that kind of makes me extremely nervous. I know my wife is a huge Chiefs fan, but the Browns have got my respect, you guys. What they did to my team in Pittsburgh last week, the key to that was that running the football so well with Chubb and Kareem Hunt, they're just doing a great job of that. Jarvis Landry making great catches when they needed. And that quarterback, I mean, I -- Baker Mayfield is just playing lights out. No turnovers in the six wins. This is a setup games and it scares me to death. But it could very much be Texas Tech and Oklahoma again very easily.

HOWIE LONG: And, you know, the question, I think, is what Kansas City will we see? You know, they're 14-2. Just talking about their record. They lost -- week 17 they sat Mahomes. You know, lost to the Raiders earlier in the season. Back end of the schedule, they looked solid but not great, but always won more often than not.

Coming out of the bye, what will they look like? Last year when they opened the playoffs, they were down 24-0 to Houston. It didn't look good. They didn't look sharp. That score ended up being 51-31. He threw five touchdowns, three of them to Kelce.

We're judging the Chiefs by -- against the Chiefs. That's the issue. If they are truly in sync like earlier in the year and like they were last year at the end of the year, they'll be hard to beat again.

CURT MENEFEE: All right. You took a look at some of the available head coaching jobs in the National Football League. Jay mentioned earlier a couple will get filled as soon as their teams lose.

Some got filled earlier this week, including our former colleague, Urban Meyer going to Jacksonville. Robert Saleh landing the Jets job. Everyone wanted him. And in the NFC, the Falcons named former Titans' offense coordinator Arthur Smith their new head coach.

All three of those guys first-time NFL head coaches. But obviously, Jimmy, Urban Meyer's a little bit different, having won three national championships. But he's never coached in the NFL before. You successfully made that transition. What's the biggest challenge for him there?

JIMMY JOHNSON: Well, Curt, it's a similar situation. He's going in with no NFL experience. I didn't have any NFL experience. The difference, I think, right now is we had to create some draft picks by making a bunch of trades. Well, he's already got the draft picks.

Now, you look at it, he's got the first pick in the draft, he's got 11 picks. He's got five in the top 65. On top of that, he has got over 70 million in cap space.

So that -- you know, he's organized. He's smart. You know, he's a winner. And if he picks the right players and the right coaches, he'll turn this franchise around in one year.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Quickly, Jimmy, is it really a difference between coaching a professional player as opposed to a college player?

JIMMY JOHNSON: It's not -- not only a world of difference, it's a galaxy of difference.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Wow.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Yeah, one's getting paid and one's not. That's the difference right there.

TERRY BRADSHAW: You don't know that, Mike.

[LAUGHTER]

MICHAEL STRAHAN: But I do like Arthur Smith. He took over for LaFleur down there in Tennessee. Did a great job with Henry and turned Tannehill around.

Now, you get Matt Ryan, who's on shaky ground, but he has Ridley, he has -- had, you know, Jones. He has some weapons down there. And this is a guy who's really earned his way, even though he was kind of born on third base. His father is a -- started at FedEx. His sister produced the choreo in "Lala Land" and "The Blindside." This guy's worked for everything that he has and I'm proud to see him do what he's doing now. Good luck to him in his --

CURT MENEFEE: As you said, Smith is the second Titans' offensive coordinator to get a head coaching job in the last two years.

The other is Matt LaFleur. He has his Packers just a win away from back-to-back NFC championship games. He and Sean McVay sat down with Jay. We'll have that in just a bit.

Still ahead, though, we'll also get to know L.A.'s breakout star, rookie running back Cam Akers.

And would you rather have the NFL's number one scoring offense led by Aaron Rodgers or the number one defense led by Aaron Donald? I guess it depends on how healthy Donald's ribs are.

We'll answer that as the Rams and Packers get set for kickoff from Green Bay, Wisconsin, where it's 36 degrees, which isn't bad for Wisconsin in January. It's not exactly Los Angeles, which is the hometown of the Rams and where we are. Right now, the temperature looking at 82 degrees.

Why are we inside, boys?

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Well, it's cooler here.

HOWIE LONG: Air conditioning, Curt.

[COMMERCIAL]

[MUSIC]

>> This Rams defense is swarming.

>> Eaten alive by Aaron Donald.





>> The best defensive player that I've ever seen.

>> Pick. Touchdown, Rams.

>> Pick six to end the half!

[MUSIC]

>> And the L.A. defense calls game!

>> Great execution by this Rams defense.

[MUSIC]

CURT MENEFEE: Well, the Rams have the number one defense, but how healthy are the ribs of their number one player?

Jay Glazer fills us in on that and more with ins and outs brought to you by GEICO.

JAY GLAZER: Curt, look, Aaron Donald, he has been in a lot of pain, is very limited this week and he has an injury to the rib area, but it's just kind of a different area. Instead of right here in the sternum, normally when you break or crack a rib it's over here. Instead, it's right down here next to the sternum by where the rib turns around. So, look, he had -- two of these have been made. One, Aaron Donald is wearing today. The other one we have by a company called XTECH. And what they did is they placed this -- they added this over here on the side here so it could protect that injured area and then coming around this side as well. This is a military grade material so they could try and protect Aaron Donald's ribs. Look, Sean McVay calls him the terminator. Terminator will be a go today.

However, they are going to lose Cooper Kupp. Cooper Kupp popped his bursa sac. Stray, I know you did that as well. That's another injury. They actually tried to drain the knee this morning. He did everything he could to try to play, but he is deactivated today.

CURT MENEFEE: Yeah, I'm sure the cold weather's certainly not helping there. Thanks a lot, Jay.

All right. Well, having the number one defense, yeah, it's a big reason the Rams are still in the playoffs, but so is the play of the young running back, Cam Akers.

Last week he became the first Rams rookie to run for more than 100 yards in a playoff game. He had 131. As a matter of fact, he racked up 176 total yards, proving, Kristina Pink, that this Ram can batter you in more ways than one.

KRISTINA PINK: Absolutely, Curt. And as Cam Akers told Sean McVay, the night before that wildcard game in Seattle, "Coach, when you stay ready, you never have to get ready."

He was more than ready in his NFL playoff debut. The rookie put on a show and it is clear he has emerged as the workhorse in this Rams offense.

But what does he have in store for the encore in his first trip to Lambeau Field? Well, I sat down with him this week to find out.

>> Akers is taking over this running back spot for the Rams and this rookie, they love.

>> Really impressed with Cam Akers. They look for this young man to be that bell cow for them.

KRISTINA PINK: Welcome to Green Bay, my friend.

CAM AKERS: Is that snow I see in the window back there?

KRISTINA PINK: Look, we've got snow and everything.

CAM AKERS: Oh, man.

KRISTINA PINK: Cam, I've got to look back at the season you've had so far because the first half was a bit of a challenge for you, right? Now you have shined since becoming the full-time starter.

What has made you such an effective runner, especially what you've done as of late?

CAM AKERS: First you start with the O-line. You know, nothing goes without those guys. But my success doesn't happen, you know, alone. It's a group effort, the other 10 guys on the field, receivers, tight ends, everybody blocking.

I just wanted to come in, you know, earn the respect of the league, you know, earn the respect of the team. Just want to build my own legacy.

>> Akers, a one-man gang for the touchdown.

>> The rookie with a finger roll over the goal post.

>> Cam Akers, a star today.

KRISTINA PINK: You have this record-setting performance in your debut in the postseason as a rookie. I see that confidence coming from you right now.

How much more confident are you now headed into your second postseason game?

CAM AKERS: I'm very, very confident, you know, not because of the performance that I had last game. Just in the preparation, you know, that makes -- that allows me to have confidence in the team and myself, you know, and ultimately going and winning games.

>> Cam Akers breaking free. Cam Akers.

CAM AKERS: When they starting to wear down, it's time for me to hit the gas. If they're letting off the gas, it's time for me to hit the gas.

>> Cam Akers won't go down.

CAM AKERS: That's the whole purpose of wearing them down, so you can strike when the time comes.

KRISTINA PINK: All gas, no brakes?

CAM AKERS: At all.

KRISTINA PINK: There's no secret. When it's cold, when it's windy, you've got to rely on the running game.

Is this your moment?

CAM AKERS: I look at every moment like it could be my moment, but cold game, everybody knows you got to keep the ball on the ground. More, now than ever, this could be the moment. And now, actually to be here, I'm going to go out and try to make the most of it and take advantage of it.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Great job by Kristina right there. She looked really comfy. The only thing missing was her lighting that fireplace and warming up that room like Cam Akers has warmed up the Rams offense. You like that, huh?

HOWIE LONG: I see what you did there.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: She did say that the first half was a challenge for Cam Akers. He averaged 25 yards a game for the first six games. In fairness, he had separated rib cartilage. But for the last six games, he's averaged 90 yards, and he's done that with a high ankle sprain.

And a lot is being made about Jared Goff and all those things. But when it comes to a road game in this weather, you need a running back. When the Rams had the top-rated running -- I mean, offense in the league, they had Todd Gurley.

They believe this guy could fill that void that they lost when they lost Todd Gurley. He had 30 touches of the football last week. He had more than the rest of the entire Rams team. I look for more of that today, T.B.

TERRY BRADSHAW: You know what? Go back when the draft was going on in Green Bay. He stood up there, and Gutekunst, the general manager, moved up in line and picked the quarterback Jordan Love out of Utah State. All right?

He didn't tell anybody he was doing that. He didn't tell Aaron Rodgers. Of course, he doesn't have to tell Aaron Rodgers. And he didn't tell LaFleur, the head coach. He did it on his own. And then the speculation was, well, Aaron's upset. Now Aaron has this 48-touchdown year, going to be MVP. Everybody says, well, that's the reason. That spurred on Aaron Rodgers.

I disagree with that. I think, actually, Aaron Rodgers doesn't need anybody to spur him on. When you look at Lazar at wide-out, when you look at Tonyan at tight end, when you look at Valdes-Scantling at wide-out, all of a sudden, they didn't really need to draft those players. They had them. They developed them. And now, you look at Rodgers, and he has plenty of weapons.

HOWIE LONG: Yeah. And this Rams defense, which is number one in the league, will have its hands full today. And let's not forget this defense, juts a couple years ago, held the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl to 13 points, albeit in a loss.

They're going to need the kind of dominant effort that they had then. Under Brandon Staley, they've been even better. And they have two generational players in Ramsey and in Donald.

I think for this group to be successful, they're going to have to have the kind of effort and performance that your Giants had versus New England Patriots in the Super Bowl to come away with a win versus a red hot Aaron Rodgers.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Beyond red hot.

JIMMY JOHNSON: Yeah. Howie, you look at this matchup. And looking at Aaron Donald there, he's jumping around, looks like -- those ribs are going to be fine.

But when you have a great cover corner like, you know, Jalen Ramsey, he can take away one half of the field. they can double-cover on the other side of the field.

Well, Aaron Rodgers, you know, he's not going to throw interceptions. He's the best ever as far as avoiding the

interceptions. So he's going to take, you know, Davante Adams in the slot, move him around. He'll keep throwing the ball to Adams. The other guy, tight end Robert Tonyan, he will be big in today's game.

CURT MENEFE: All right. We're going to take a quick break and talk more about this game on the other side of it.

But while we're giving you programming notes, with Monday being the day the nation celebrates the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we've got something very special for you.

Make sure you join Michael and me on Monday for a unique show called "Fox Sports Voices," which illuminates the work of athletes lifting up their communities and honors the late civil rights icon John Lewis. That's coming up Monday at 5 p.m. Eastern right here on Fox.

[COMMERCIAL]

[MUSIC]

>> This, to me, is the most impressive team in the NFL.

>> Green Bay is hot.

>> You almost start to feel bad for these defenses.

>> Aaron Rodgers delivers the dagger, just playing with defenses this season.

>> Aaron Rodgers is playing at an MVP level.

>> Rodgers throws it to Adams. Touchdown, Packers.

>> One of the best receivers in this league.

>> This offense can just explode at any time.

CURT MENEFE: You know the cliché about throwing numbers out the window. Rams, number one defense; Packers, highest scoring team in the league. You throw all that out the window because, as Jay Glazer tells us right now, this game is all about bragging rights.

JAY GLAZER: Absolutely. Curt, look. Now, listen. Take it for what it's worth. The great Vince Lombardi, his first two years in Green Bay, 15-10. Matt LaFleur's first two seasons, 27-7 and already a trip to the NFC championship game. Now LaFleur is hoping to build off the legacies of other championship coaches who have paved the way for this legendary franchise.

And who better to give us insight on LaFleur than one of

his best friends, who, by the way, will be trying to beat him from the other sideline at Lambeau today, Rams coach Sean McVay.

JAY GLAZER: Ready to rock and roll?

MATT LAFLEUR: As ready as I'll ever be.

JAY GLAZER: I want to talk to Sean after you.

MATT LAFLEUR: I just talked to him yesterday. He's heard all I've got to say. I ain't saying no more.

JAY GLAZER: Do you ever have moments where you're sitting there like, I'm at Lambeau Field; I've got Aaron Rodgers out there; still feeling like you're waiting to wake up fifth grade and none of that really happened?

MATT LAFLEUR: That's every day for me, Jay. It is a really special place. And it's so fun. Like, you have these moments every now and again when you're walking back. It's -- it takes your breath away.

JAY GLAZER: You have 27 wins in your first two years. Your offense is unstoppable. Aaron's had the best year.

Do you understand the magnitude of where you are and what you're doing, and does it even surprise you, the job that you have done?

MATT LAFLEUR: Well, it's not the job I've done. It's the job we've done. And for me, when I look around our locker room and I see Aaron Rodgers, Davante Adams, Za'Darius Smith, you know, that calms me because I've got great confidence in those guys and their ability to go out there and execute and win a football game.

JAY GLAZER: How wild is it that you're going to be coaching in the NFL playoffs against one of your best friends? It's just not normal.

MATT LAFLEUR: Yeah. You know, he's like a brother to me, and we're super close and just really blessed to be in this situation, to be honest with you.

JAY GLAZER: Well, Matt, hold on. I've actually got McVay chiming in now, too.

SEAN MCVAY: All right. Looking sharp, man.

JAY GLAZER: Thank you for noticing.

SEAN MCVAY: Matt's always been, you know, a good bit older than me, so he's like my big brother. I think we've shared similar philosophies for a long time, but you know

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

what, he's not too good of a friend to try to get after his ass pretty good, man.

JAY GLAZER: What's the biggest thing you learned from Sean?

MATT LAFLEUR: There are so many things I learned, but I just think that his ability to be who he is. You've got to be genuine to who you really are. I thought he's done that better than anybody I've ever been around.

JAY GLAZER: Is there anything you've learned from him?

SEAN MCVAY: Yeah, what I would say, Jay, is just his consistent, relentless attention to detail. I think that's why, you've seen every place he's gone with the quarterback position, they're playing at a high level. Aaron's been doing it his whole career, but I think those two have really done a great job of working together and you see why they're the best offense in the league.

>> Hell of a job. Yeah.

JAY GLAZER: Oh, I just happen to have a little picture here from the 2010 Washington Football Team. Check this out. Sean McVay, Matt LaFleur.

[MUSIC]

JAY GLAZER: Who do you think has aged better?

MATT LAFLEUR: Oh, definitely me. No doubt about it.

SEAN MCVAY: Definitely him, because I look -- I feel like -- that's my fourth year, I look like -- it's been 40 years.

MATT LAFLEUR: He's been a head coach longer, so he's got more gray hairs.

JAY GLAZER: Okay. Who do you think has spent more on hair gel?

MATT LAFLEUR: Oh, sean, without a doubt.

SEAN MCVAY: That would be without a doubt me. I mean, look at him. I talked to him the other night. Just like he used to do in Washington, he was cutting his own hair last night when we talked. What you can say about Matt, even though he's rich now, he's still cheap.

[MUSIC]

JAY GLAZER: Coaches never talk when they're going to play each other. These guys talked twice this week.

And Howie, by the way, I know what it's like to have a cheap best friend.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Not me. I just took you on vacation.

JAY GLAZER: You took me? I took you!

MICHAEL STRAHAN: All right. You're going to walk home today. I'll see about that.

HOWIE LONG: For decades, the west coast offense was the thing or variations of it across the league. I think this zone run offense which was first devised by Mike Shanahan up in Denver and he took it to Washington and he had three young assistant coaches on the staff there, Sean McVay, Kyle Shanahan and Matt LaFleur, two of the three have gone to Super Bowls. And I know neither Kyle or Sean would say publicly, but I think they view Matt and say you hit the lotto with Aaron Rodgers because he takes a quarterback friendly offense and takes it to another level. They're so hard to defend. Particularly when the run game is working. Everything works off the run game. It's offensive line friendly. It's quarterback friendly. And it's one that I think Aaron Rodgers has taken to another level.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Yeah, he's taken it to another level because what they did is they empowered Aaron Rodgers. This off season, head coach LaFleur, offensive coordinator Hackett and the quarterback coach Luke Getsy, they all virtually got together, went through the playbook. All took these less is more approach. They took what they liked, what aspect they thought was going really to work. They all merged it together. LaFleur calls it R scheme. And when you put Aaron Rodgers in the position of empowerment, when you challenge him, you see what you get. You get a guy who set -- or tied the NFL record of 12 games with three touchdowns in the -- in one season. He tied Tom Brady's record of 2007.

And, you know what, this is a -- just a great way to give a guy like Aaron Rodgers who can -- at the line -- Howie, you talked about this. At the line of scrimmage, he's one of the few quarterbacks who knows the playbook, sees everything. The coach trusts him enough to change things as he sees them on the field.

HOWIE LONG: Which most teams don't do.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Most teams cannot give a quarterback that much leeway.

JIMMY JOHNSON: Yeah, you know, Michael, you look at this Green Bay defense and they rely so much on the offense scoring points, you know, because they can rush the passer. You know, they had 41 sacks this year. And,

you know, you look at the six-game winning streak, you know, sixth in the league as far as defense, only giving up 18 points a game.

But they have always struggled stopping the run. Four and a half yards a carry. And with Akers running the football for the Rams, you know, if this game is close, the Green Bay defense could struggle there at the end of the game.

CURT MENEFE: All right. While we're talking about Packers, real quick, remember, they're the only team in the league without an owner. They're owned by the community. We've got an exclusive look at a recent owners meeting they had.

>> The Green Bay Packers are the league's only publicly owned NFL franchise. So regular fans can buy stock in the team, but the stock is only worth like a thousandth of a percent. It's not like you're a real owner. Try telling that to my husband and his shareholder friends.

>> Order, order! Come to order. This meeting of the Packers owners is now in session.

Now, first up on the docket, we need to craft a plan to beat the Rams. Any ideas?

>> Jacob Jablonski.

>> I was thinking, what if we plan another Ice Bowl?

>> Do you think the Ice Bowl is something that we preplanned?

>> Aah -- no.

>> That would be stupid.

>> As Packers owner number 66,402, I want to know, how are we going to stop Aaron Donald?

>> Yeah!

>> Thanks for asking. I've drawn up just the plan.

[MUSIC]

>> What kind of play is that?

>> Oh, it's not a plan. This Aaron Donald's hotel. We'll sneak in there late at night and pull the fire alarm.

>> That won't work!

>> What we need to do is paint the end zones to look like

bread. People in L.A. hate carbs. They won't go anywhere near it!

>> Come on, Tom, quit flapping your gums. Here's what we do. We focus on defense. Instead of running the nickel defense, we run the quarter defense. It's a five-times better defense.

>> Oh, give me a break.

>> Give me a break.

>> Okay, okay. Settle down, please I got an idea. What if just maybe we let Matt LaFleur figure everything out, huh?

>> That's ridiculous. We're the owners.

>> He answers to us.

>> To the owners!

>> Better.

>> Like what if --

>> I really regret buying my husband that stock.

CURT MENEFE: Well, you can make enough money to buy stock in the Packers. You've got a chance by playing the Super 6 by getting -- to get \$250,000 of Terry Bradshaw's money.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Oh, yeah, throw my money out there.

CURT MENEFE: You can win that today and plus our game tomorrow, and even if you don't win that tomorrow, we will be giving away Terry Bradshaw's all new Ford F-150. Guaranteed somebody is going to get that --

TERRY BRADSHAW: There's the money. Not me.

CURT MENEFE: -- by playing the Fox Super 6 tomorrow.

TERRY BRADSHAW: I don't have any money left.

CURT MENEFE: You won't need it because someone's going to have your truck. Exactly.

Let's get to today's picks. Why don't we start with Jimmy first with the game we have coming up next, the Rams and Packers.

JIMMY JOHNSON: Yeah, Curt, you know, I've been





terrible picking games this year. You know, I'm going to go with the Packers --

CURT MENEFE: No.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Stop it. Stop it.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: He's just in last place.

CURT MENEFE: Terry.

TERRY BRADSHAW: I'm going to go with the Packers buy nine.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'm going to take the Packers -- the Packers at Green Bay, I'm going to take them by six points.

HOWIE LONG: I'll go Packers by seven.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: And which Aaron do I trust? I'm going to go with Aaron Rodgers. I'm going to take the Packers by 10.

CURT MENEFE: And you know what happens every time everybody picks the same team? Load up on the Rams. That's what they say.

Tonight's game, Baltimore and Buffalo, let's start with you, Jimmy.

JIMMY JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm going to go with Buffalo by three at home.

TERRY BRADSHAW: Baltimore by nine.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'm going to go Buffalo by -- you know, they are going to win. They're going to win. I don't know what I said.

[LAUGHTER]

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Baltimore by three. Oh, man.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'm going to go Baltimore by three.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Oh, man.

TERRY BRADSHAW: It is not just senior minutes.

[LAUGHTER]

CURT MENEFE: Who did you take?

TONY GONZALEZ: Baltimore by three.

CURT MENEFE: All right. The Rams are taking the field right now. We will hope now that they can upset all these guys who took Green Bay. The divisional playoffs begin right here on Fox. The winner goes to the NFC title game. Kickoff is next!

We thank you as always for watching the Built Ford Tough "Fox NFL Special" pregame show!

