

Fox Sports NFL

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Michael Vick

Tony Gonzalez

Colin Cowherd

FOX NFL Kickoff Show



CHARISSA THOMPSON: Welcome to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Lake Michigan may be icy -- look at that scene -- but snow is not expected to be a factor as two of the greatest quarterbacks in league history do battle. The frozen tundra at Lambeau will definitely be chilly. The forecast calls for temperatures in the 20s, but 9,000 fans will do their best to keep the Packers feeling warm. Championship Sunday is here. This is "Fox NFL Kickoff".

>> The true legacy game transcends its era. That's why this matchup needs no introduction. As the golden age of quarterbacks concludes, two faces remain. We know the characters, the stats, the stakes of this story.

[MUSIC]

>> It's a battle about respect. Let's go!

>> It's once in a generation. The steely success driven by the standards of his own raw talent facing the greatest of greats, ruthless in the pursuit to eclipse his own records.

>> 14 conference championship appearances.

>> But somehow there's still more to prove.

[MUSIC]

After all these years, Brady, Rodgers, head to head, for legacy at Lambeau.

Welcome to "Fox NFL Kickoff" presented by IBM.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I mean, down to the NFL final four. We have the Bills, Bucs, Chiefs, Packers, and add to that NFC game. It should be one for the ages. Looking at the numbers, there isn't much left for either of these to accomplish. It's a matchup like unlike we've ever seen.

Welcome to "Fox NFL Kickoff". I'm Charissa Thompson alongside Tony Gonzalez, Michael Vick, Colin Cowherd and the Coach, Dave Wannstedt, we finally made it, guys. We were all just saying how fortunate we all feel. And kudos to the NFL and every player and coach and personnel that was able to get through this entire season. It's a job well done.

And it culminates in Brady-Rodgers on our air, and of course the Bills and Chiefs later on. Let's make it clear, the battle of the 12s isn't the only headline this morning. There are a dozen other reasons why today is going to be great.

>> Championship Sunday, not just one big game, two. In the AFC, as Bills fans face a familiar foe from their playoff past.

>> Congratulations, Buffalo.

>> This may be the championship rivalry for years to come -- Allen versus Mahomes. What more could you want? How about a little history.

>> Patriots win the Super Bowl!

>> Packers won the Super Bowl!

>> A lot of history. Greatest of all time. Plural. Brady. Rodgers. Lambeau Field. A chance for Tampa to be the first team to ever host a Super Bowl, but quarterbacks aside, even the biggest of stars need help to shine bright.

>> Touchdown!

>> Good luck trying to cover this.

>> Four teams left standing. It doesn't get any better than this.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: It's a little ironic, right, Tony that Tom goes down to Tampa, and now he ends up right back where he started in cold weather. Guy's had a ton of success in cold-weather games. Kind of fun to watch this.

TONY GONZALEZ: It's kind of fun. We've been watching



him as he's been walking into the stadium every week. Going into Tampa he's got his sunglasses on, his tanned skin. And now he's back where it all started where it gets cold back in the frozen tundra. It's good to see him here just soaking it all up out there in Lambeau Field.

But I'll tell you what, cold weather, obviously, is not going to affect Tom Brady or Rob Gronkowski. They've been there, done that. But it's the rest of the team that I'm concerned about. Being from California, when I played out there, I had to play in Lambeau Field in December, and it is shocking when you come out and that weather hits your skin and cheeks you haven't been practicing in it all week, that's going to be something that the Buccaneers team is going to have to overcome. Obviously Tom's been there, done that, but I'm worried about those other Florida boys where the sunshine --

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You wore sleeves, didn't you?

TONY GONZALEZ: Sleeves, gloves, heat packs.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You weren't man enough to go out there with --

TONY GONZALEZ: I have a condition, I get cold.

DAVE WANNSTEDT: He was always late coming out for warm-ups when you played him.

Talking about cold weather, how about Buffalo? Buffalo is truly, if you think about it, they're the Rodney Dangerfield of the NFL. No respect. They really don't. Particularly in the state of New York. All the love and attention goes to the Giants and the Jets.

And when you talk about fan bases -- and I've coached in Dallas, some of the -- Chicago, Pittsburgh, great fan bases -- but this fan base in Buffalo, I'll tell you, what they have done and stepped up and they were so supportive. How about just raising money and honoring donating money to a charity to help the grandmother of Josh Allen?

And then last week, with Lamar Jackson goes up there, and they raise money, over 400,000, to donate to his charity. I'll tell you, this is a special group of people up there in Buffalo. And I'm so happy that for the Mafia, the Mafia up there, that they can get to the AFC Championship game again. They deserve it.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Absolutely. Great fan base right there. Mike, when you look at these offenses, the top three passing offenses in the NFL have made it to the final four here. Packers, what are you expecting from them today?

MICHAEL VICK: I'm expecting them to pass the football and why? It's a pass-happy league. It's ultimately going to come down to who can run the ball the best out of the four teams who play today, and while the run game is going to have to be consistent for everyone.

But we love to see the ball thrown all across the yard, and we see it and talk about it all the time: How important the run game has to be. Today is the day where the run game has to show up; it's championship football. Whoever does it the best is going to advance, I'm sorry, Green Bay can run it, Tampa can run it. These teams can run the football. I expect these teams to run the football. Who can do it effectively will advance.

COLIN COWHERD: We've got four unbelievable quarterbacks, arguably the four best. But I think the pressure is on Aaron. If Mahomes lost, he has an out. He was just in concussion protocol, a bad foot. Josh Allen loses, he's going on the road. He's never been here before and experience. And if Brady loses, he's 43.

But if Aaron loses, it's what quarterbacks don't want: A negative narrative. It's like, oh, Aaron's lost his last four NFC Championship games. Aaron's 7-8 his last 15 playoff games. You get into that -- Peyton Manning dealt with this for his beginning of his career. We know you're great, you're going to the hall. But not as great in the playoffs. I think Aaron wins today. But I do think he's the one quarterback if he lost Monday takes some heat.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Well, this is his first NFC Championship game at home. So maybe just being in a comfortable situation will help him. Time to get you "In the Know", brought to you by Burger King. Peter Schragger joins us now with the latest injuries affecting both the Bucs and the Packers. Hello, Peter Schragger.

PETER SCHRAGER: Hello, Charissa Thompson. Let's start off with the Buccaneers. Antonio Brown is out today. Didn't even travel with the team. Expect Scotty Miller to play the Antonio Brown role in that offense. But more pressing right now is the status of Antoine Winfield Jr, the safety for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the rookie who made a huge play in last week's divisional round win over the Saints. He was wearing a boot on Friday after hurting his ankle in practice. I'm told up to the minute.

He worked out for a long time pregame. And it is not looking good for today. We'll know at 1:40 eastern for sure. And Jay Glazer will have it in the next show. But as of right now, as he headed off the field in pregame warmups, my sources said not looking good.

As for up front, they get Vita Ve a back. This is a huge addition for them. Hasn't played since week five when he fractured his ankle. A 360-pound run-stuffer, who, by the way, in goal-line packages, has a role on offense. Yes, let's see the footage from high school. This is 360-pound Vita Ve a at Milpitas High School in California where he was a running back. Bruce Arians has a package on the goal line where you might see Vita Ve a on offense today.

And last but not least, at the combine this is what the plan was. They wanted to get Tom Brady. When free agency opened they were able to secure it. Back then they dubbed it Operation Shoeless Joe, with the plan "if we build it, he will come." If they win today, they're playing in the Super Bowl at home, and they can ask themselves: Is this heaven?

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Well done, Schrag, I see what you've done, is it heaven. It is for me. Greg Olsen is here. We bring in the big guns for Championship Sunday. Look at this guy. The last time we saw you, we didn't know what your future was going to be. Then you ended up in Seattle.

>> The next three hours will be a star-studded affair featuring the best of both bays. Find out what the Tampa Terrific has. Michael Strahan once again tackles Tom Brady. And CT goes one-on-one with Bucs' breakout defensive star Devin White. Packers fans will find greener pasture as EA huddles up with and Aaron Rodgers. And Tony gets wide open with Davante Adams.

>> Any time I play them I'm definitely going to try to remind them what they could have had.

>> Plus, Cooper tries to infiltrate the Mafia, much to the chagrin of Hall of Famer Jim Kelly.

JIM KELLY: Good friends with your dad and Peyton and Eli. But really not you, Coop.

>> Championship Sunday done right only on Fox. [COMMERCIAL].

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I love a demonstration. So, Rob and Greg, get up here.

>> Explosiveness, that's what it's about.

>> I was totally braced up.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You guys must have had so much fun. Both of you decided to go back and play football. So that doesn't bode well for us here at Fox Sports. But we are happy to have you back. We talked to

you after that good time in Miami, and you weren't sure what you were going to do, so it came down to Seattle and Buffalo.

GREG OLSEN: Yeah, so, I'm here playing with you guys. So we see how well that -- hanging with you guys instead of playing today. We'll see how well that decision played out. I enjoyed my time, I'm rooting for Buffalo. But that was a tough one. That was a tough decision.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: We're happy that you're here especially because this graphic would not make sense if you weren't. Here are the combined career numbers for four number one tight ends in today's game, which includes two future Hall of Famers, and even they can't hold a candle to you. And, Tony, look at the numbers.

TONY GONZALEZ: Best graphic I've ever been on because I hope people don't know how much of that -- [laughter].

GREG OLSEN: That's the best graphic -- from now on I'm only sharing my stats that are combined with Tony.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: That's what we do for teammates. See right there. It's collective.

Speaking of teammates, we talked about those guys, a lot of great tight ends. Of the four in today's game, Greg, who are you keeping an eye on?

GREG OLSEN: Last year down at the Super Bowl talking about Kittle, talking about Kelce. And here we are again, seems like every year the teams that are vying for the Super Bowl, to win it, to make it, they all have top tier tight ends.

And I think this year a guy that gets lost in the shadow in some of the other guys is Robert Tonyan. I think he's the guy that gets maybe left out. Davante Adams is catching a million balls and Aaron Rodgers is throwing it all over the yard.

This guy had 11 touchdowns, in my opinion should have been one of the representatives in the NFC for the Pro Bowl. He's a big-time game away today from putting himself in the upper tier category.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Amazing, 11 touchdowns this year. He only 10 catches all of last year. 10 catches all the way to 11 touchdowns, so really a breakout run for him.

TONY GONZALEZ: Crazy break-out for his third year. And I think he's one of the best complete tight ends. As you said, he blocks his butt off.



The other guy you brought up, how about Travis Kelce? He's probably the best tight end in the league right now. I know Kittle was hurt this year. But what he does so well, he has that wiry snake-like, frame. And what Andy Reid and Eric Bieniemy, the offensive coordinator, what they do is they set him up perfectly to use his skills.

Watch, he's going to dip inside and go up the field and cut the out route. This is significant because obviously people see this on tape and they say, all right, when he goes into that inside release he's going to cut out. And, so, you're going to see him going inside release. Okay here it comes again. He's going to cut out, but you're going to watch the Y return here, a whip route or whatever you want to call this thing.

And this is what he does best. In the NFL, I love -- when he gets the ball in his hands, he's got that snakey way, I talked about it, that wiry way to get up and make defenders miss and score touchdowns. That's why he's one of the best in the league.

GREG OLSEN: What I love, they almost run routes with him like he's a wide receiver. So often we see tight ends run cross routes, drags. He runs routes that a lot of other teams, that's your slot receiver, even your No. 1 receiver. You don't see guys -- I know I couldn't do it when I played -- get in and out of that whip route you just showed for the touchdown last week. There's not many tight ends in the league who have the footwork and body control to do that. I think he's the best guy in the league right now. He's special.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: That athleticism. Speaking of athleticism, we're going to go to Colin -- Greg, stay with us -- we're here all day with you. Colin?

COLIN COWHERD: Tom Brady is 14-2 all time in freezing weather. Most of those in Foxboro. We know Tampa's offense is loaded. But today Mike Evans is limited, and Antonio Brown is out. So, Mike, Tampa game plan is what.

MICHAEL VICK: You said it. Evans is limited; Brown is out. Run, run, run and just keep running the football. Leonard Fournette and Ronald Jones, gonna have to get heavy doses of them. Then you can go to play-action with Chris Godwin and Scotty Miller as you get the run game going. But the run game for them, winning at the line of scrimmage will be paramount.

DAVE WANNSTEDT: This is not the same Green Bay defense, the Packers that we saw in that 38 -- giving up 38 points and losing the game. The two biggest concerns, and they were kind of average then. And everyone was

talking, we were, about can they play the run? Could they be physical?

Guess what? They ended up in the top ten in the league in stopping the run. So, they got that solved.

The other thing, Tom Brady throwing the deep ball, the last five weeks the Packers defense, with just rushing four, have given up the least amount of big plays of anybody in the NFL.

COLIN COWHERD: Antonio Brown is out. He was very critical in the last four weeks. The good news, they're so deep at wide receiver. Scotty Miller, who is a speed guy, can supplant some of that. But you do think AB's departure, just a play or two.

MICHAEL VICK: Could have an effect.

COLIN COWHERD: Yep. Charissa.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Thank you. Coming up, a look at the incredible legacies Aaron Rodgers and Tom Brady will eventually leave behind. Plus, my interview with Bucs star Devin White when "Kickoff" returns.

[COMMERCIAL].

AARON RODGERS: As a kid you dream about playing in big games and playing in Super Bowls.

TOM BRADY: The clock is ticking on all of us. It's given me a great opportunity to be at this age still playing.

AARON RODGERS: I remember the first moment I stepped on the field as a starter, and you take your first snap as a playoff quarterback and get to the Super Bowl for the first time. A lot of special moments.

>> This guy does things that other quarterbacks just can't do.

TOM BRADY: There's no play I haven't run. There's no defense I haven't seen.

>> Nobody's ever won more Super Bowls no one's ever been better.

TOM BRADY: Ultimately my goal is to go out there do what I've always done is be the best.

COLIN COWHERD: What do they have in common? They're hall of fame level players.

AARON RODGERS: I've been involved in a lot of big

games over the years. This is no different.

TOM BRADY: If you were to tell us six weeks ago, you'll be in Green Bay for the NFC Championship, you'd have a bunch of guys raising their hand, saying, all right, we'll prepare for that, we'll be ready for that.

>> Tom Brady was built for moments like this.

AARON RODGERS: Each year has different challenges and different special memories.

TOM BRADY: I've never been one to think about legacy or what it would mean for me down the road.

AARON RODGERS: Just getting in that good head space, allowed me to play very free.

TROY AIKMAN: It's going to be a great matchup between two of the all-time greats.

TOM BRADY: I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had in the past and certainly grateful for this opportunity.

AARON RODGERS: It's going to be one of those fun, old-school NFC Central games.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Fun to hear from both of those guys. Next hour, Strahan sat down with Aaron Rodgers and Tom Brady. When you look at this, Tony, does Aaron Rodgers -- we make a lot of, you know, put a lot of attention on Super Bowl rings -- but does Aaron Rodgers need another one to cement his legacy?

TONY GONZALEZ: You know what, unfortunately, I hate to say it, yes, he does. No doubt about it. I think especially from the experts. I'm not saying that I agree with it. But he will be judged ultimately by how many rings that he has. And it's one of the reasons that I was rooting for Drew Brees to finally, to get that second one, because it just puts you in a different stratosphere when you get the second one.

Aaron Rodgers has done everything great. He has set the tone for the NFL, that new age, making plays with the legs, the accuracy and all that good stuff. It would be the difference between Jim Kelly and Joe Montana, right? Went to the Super Bowl same amount of times. One has four rings, the other -- if you said who is better, you would say Joe Montana just because of the four rings.

So, Aaron Rodgers, hopefully I'm rooting for him, too. I think Green Bay has a shot here.

MICHAEL VICK: I agree with you. When I think about this

question, I think about myself. What if I just had one and what that would do for my career as far as perception and what people think.

When you look at Aaron Rodgers and his career and what he's been able to accomplish, the way he throws the football, the skill set, all the attributes, you look at his resumé and you see one Super Bowl and it's kind of unbelievable. So I think he needs two to just cement his legacy and then be mentioned in the upper echelon with all the greats that we always talk about.

DAVE WANNSTEDT: I think another one, I agree with you, would put him in the conversation of the great ones. You know, I mean Brady and Manning, guys you're talking about. The other thing he does -- 40 years of coaching, I've been around some quarterbacks that have had strong arms. Troy Aikman, right, very accurate. Obviously Dan Marino.

But Aaron Rodgers, I've never seen a guy that can throw off his back foot, Mike, and be so accurate, and then have the athleticism to get out of the pocket and extend plays and still be accurate. I mean, this is a very, very special player, in my mind.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Let's go to the other quarterback on the field. A lot of conversation headed into this season was about that Belichick-Brady divorce. If Brady gets that one today is that over or is it already over?

COLIN COWHERD: Well, I mean, I think that's a slam dunk. But Tom had 44 touchdown passes. New England had 10. It's gone from the Brady won the divorce to they have a systemic issue at New England; they can't draft skill people.

That was the greatest dynasty in the history of the NFL. We all knew that Tom would flourish to some level because Tampa was really loaded, but you start looking at New England now, it's like wow Tom really covered up over the last five or six years a problem. They don't have anything sniffing a Pro Bowler at a skill position in New England. Nothing close.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Yeah, there's a lot of conversation there. For more on today's championship game let's get you up to speed, brought to you by State Farm. And we begin with Tom Rinaldi. Tom, a delayed welcome. And how about this? You come over to Fox, we give you Brady and Rodgers. You're welcome.

TOM RINALDI: Not only that, we get light flurries Lambeau for the conference title game. How sweet is that?

Charissa, a lot has been made about the Packers' blowout loss to the Buccaneers in October. But a different take from their All-Pro center Corey Linsley, who said when the team walked into film session that Monday after, they largely expected their rear ends to be ripped by the coaching staff. Instead, it was turned into a learning experience. Why?

Because the staff took accountability for their own mistakes. Talking to Matt LaFleur, he said we made some bad calls; we used some bad schemes. And as a result, there was a bit of a turning point achieved in that film session, which has created momentum for the Packers which has led them here to a home chance to get to the Super Bowl.

For more on the team they're going to face, let's go over to EA, Erin Andrews.

ERIN ANDREWS: First of all, Tom, where is your hat? Where are your gloves? I look like I'm a snowman over here. Bruce Arians last week in the divisional playoff game against the Saints, he had some very colorful words when he talked about his team's identity. We asked him what the theme was this week, and he cleaned it up a bit. Bummer, he said, you need to protect the football, take care of the ball and it's football; it's not cold.

Gotta agree with Bruce Arians, it is chilly. I've been in worse at Lambeau. Bruce Arians saying 28 degrees at Lambeau in January, that's a gift. His quarterback, Tom Brady, telling us when it starts to get into the lower 20s, that's when I get cold. Obviously he's got a good formula to keep warm in this game.

Brady actually telling us -- and you'll love this, Charissa -- that he loves faster when it's cold because the guys on defense, they start layering up like Ralphie and Randy from "The Christmas Story." He said, I actually feel quick. This guy throwing in a "Christmas Story" reference. The second he throws in "Steel Magnolias", calm down, Tom, I'm in.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You drink that juice, in this case, a hot chocolate. I love you. You're bundled up like Bernie Sanders, and he was everywhere this week. Have a good call. A look at both sides of the ball for Tampa. And my chat with Devin White when "Kickoff" returns.

[COMMERCIAL].

>> The winningest quarterback in playoff history does his thing.

>> Touchdown, Tampa Bay!

>> It's Brady to Gronk again. Brady throws, it's caught, touchdown! Bucs win!

CHARISSA THOMPSON: The Bucs offense is impressive, but so is the defense. They lead the NFL with a plus-12 turnover margin, forcing four against the Saints last week.

I sat down with linebacker Devin White who had a huge takeaway in that game and is ready for a repeat performance against Green Bay.

>> This kid is a budding superstar in the NFL, Devin White.

>> By golly he is fired up to play football.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: How was your week? It was good to be Devin White.

DEVIN WHITE: My week was great. It's all about attacking this position and making the best of it because one thing you know you can't do, you can't get this game back.

>> Balls out, fumble, picked up by the Bucs Devin White. Bucs come up with the football.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You called your shot, too, man. You said you were going to do it and you went out there and did it.

DEVIN WHITE: I'm going to put it there, watch.

>> Brees throws and he's picked by Devin White.

DEVIN WHITE: That was fun. Big-time players step up in big-time games when we need it the most. That's why we all play the game. We talk about it every day; we're here to put rings on our fingers.

>> That guy's got a jetpack on his back.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You're only 22. But your quarterback has played in a conference championship game over three decades. That's a trip.

DEVIN WHITE: That's crazy. My quarterback's been playing in the NFL, like, since I was one years old. In the position we're in right now shows you what's up with Tom Brady. And that's all I want out of this league. I'm not selfish. I'm not an individual. It's just about getting a championship. So he has had tremendous impact on me.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: And Tom Brady has this one and this one and this one and this one and this one. And



he's looking for this one.

DEVIN WHITE: There you go. There you go.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You've got to help him get that now. He didn't come down there just for the sun and nice weather.

DEVIN WHITE: I know he's on a mission. I'm on that mission with him. I'm so thankful I get to play with him. I hope I can help him get number seven.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: You're one game away from the Super Bowl, my friend. One game. You were vocal about the last time you guys played Aaron Rodgers.

DEVIN WHITE: Those guys don't deserve to be on the field with us. We got too much talent. We fly around to the ball.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Coming out with that same attitude this weekend?

DEVIN WHITE: Most definitely. I said it there, I stand on it. I back it up. When I come into this game, I'm coming in with all the same emotions and all the same energy. I don't believe in what they say the bulletin board material, at the end of the day you gotta come to play. I say a lot of things on the field.

>> We're going to kick their ass and we're go back to Florida victorious.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Devin, I want to run through the tunnel. I want to beat people up right now.

>> We're the best in the league, you know what?

CHARISSA THOMPSON: When I think Aaron Rodgers, you think what?

DEVIN WHITE: Not better than Tom Brady.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: And that's a wrap.

TONY GONZALEZ: Great job. That was fun. I can tell you got a little fired up there.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Of course. Football.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'll tell you what I really love about him. I mean, the guy's 240 pounds. He runs a 4.42. I didn't know that -- 4.42. And he's got that neck like Mike Tyson, meaning when he hits you, he's putting a mark, leaving a sting on you and the energy he brings.

Another big thing for this defense they're getting back today talk about Vita Ve'a coming back. That guy is a huge, 360, 370-pound run stopper right in there the middle. That's going to help those linebackers fly around even more. And don't forget Lavonte David. They form one of the best linebacking duos in the NFL. Vita Ve'a is a big part of that.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: "Big" is the operative word, 360 big. Calling the blitz works very well against Aaron Rodgers back in week six. Can they shut him down again?

COLIN COWHERD: No, I mean, Aaron had his worst quarter as a pro, second quarter he got a bad break and interception. He had a 0-0 passer rating. It was very windy. He's on the road. I think Aaron returns today. I just think this Green Bay team is built for today; they're hot. Matt LaFleur, second year. Remember, this is a system -- the second year is the key for all these quarterbacks. I think they're tough to beat.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Greg, you saw this Bucs team, albeit a little different than when you were in Carolina, but what is it that makes them tick?

GREG OLSEN: When Brady was free agent last year, everybody talks about he wants weapons. He wants weapons. I also think a big part of why he picked the Bucs was this defense.

And I think Todd Bowles, he's a bona fide head coaching candidate. He's going to get another shot, whether it's this cycle or the next. He's pulling all the right strings. Good mix. Some of the back-end guys, Mike, I know you like those guys, a little younger, less experience up front, got some veterans. He's put this together. And I think Tom knew he needed this defense to go along with these weapons if he wanted to go win another Super Bowl.

MICHAEL VICK: You're right, Greg. Great stage, young secondary. If I'm Aaron Rodgers, I gotta be looking at last week. We faced Jalen Ramsey and came out okay. I'm taking my star receiver in Davante Adams, and I'm going after Dean, I'm going after Murphy-Bunting, and I'm going to make them defend every blade of grass on the field. I'm attacking --

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Because it's a young secondary.

MICHAEL VICK: Young secondary. You gotta get after them.

DAVE WANNSTEDT: When you look at the other side of

the ball, a shout out to Bruce Arians. Since they've been on this six-game winning streak, the offense is hitting on all cylinders. What Bruce has done is he met Tom Brady halfway. And they came up with a conclusion, okay, we're going to run the ball more. We run it. Then we're going to throw play-action passes.

Gronk is used as a blocker almost as much as a receiver nowadays. What's that done? It's gotten Tom more time. He gets hit less. He can throw the ball down the field. Everybody's happy.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I'll tell you who is not happy. Breaking news Peter Schrager told us this might happen. The Bucs will be without Antoine Winfield Jr. today, a blow for him. We will have more kickoff right after the break.

TONY GONZALEZ: That's a big deal right there.

[COMMERCIAL].

>> Tell me how you feel about the Buffalo --

>> Come on, man. Josh Allen set franchise records. MVP candidate. Stefon Diggs, game changer. They're going to be running around the field making plays.

Mahomes, you're in trouble, dog. Not since 1993, dog. AFC Championship. AFC Championship. And you know what? We're ready to celebrate the only way the Bills Mafia know how. Come here, dog. Go, Bills! Kansas City Chiefs, your AFC Championship run is over. Can you dig that, sucker? Aaaaah!

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Peter Schrager ain't no sucker. He's broken every table to find out who is in, who is out. You told us about Antoine Winfield Jr. What else are you hearing?

PETER SCHRAGER: I've always wanted to be introduced by Booker T.

Let's get into it, Patrick Mahomes for the Chiefs. All week it was about the concussion protocol, but the real concern is the big toe on his left foot. He was hampered against the Browns. They say it's turf toe, something to watch the entire game. But it's not just him.

Le'Veon Bell will be out. Clyde Edwards-Helaire will play. For the first time in several weeks you will see him. The other issue is Sammy Watkins. They don't know if he'll be able to go or not. It will be a game-time decision.

As for Buffalo, rookie wide receiver Gabriel Davis has been having a fantastic season. Hobbled by injury. They're not

sure he can go. Just in case, they activated Kenny Stills -- yes, Kenny Stills -- off the practice squad. He might dress if Gabriel Davis can't.

And last but not least, Sam Farmer from the LA Times had a great piece on Josh Allen's hometown on Firebaugh, California. In it he noted it -- Josh Allen's father has been suffering from COVID-19 and pneumonia this entire month. He will not be traveling to the game as he nurses that. His mother, though, will be at the game in Arrowhead, as well as other family members. But Josh Allen dealing with the COVID-19 coronavirus issue as much of all of us in this country. His father Joel will not be in the building at Arrowhead.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Thank you, Shrager. No one is exempt. Our thoughts are to Josh Allen's father and everybody else.

When we look at the game, my friend, who are you picking? Are you picking the Chiefs? You just heard all the injuries -- no Sammy Watkins or Le'Veon Bell. They're banged up. Who do you like and why, Greg?

GREG OLSEN: I'm going to go with the Bills. Maybe in two weeks I would be playing. Sean McDermott, back in 2011, we all got to Carolina and kind of turned that around with Ron Rivera. He was our defensive coordinator. He played a huge role in turning that franchise around to a success, eventually getting to a Super Bowl.

Now in his short time, going up to Buffalo, I'm not surprised he's turned this into one of the best programs in the league. He's a great leader. He's going to have his guys prepared. They've got a talented young group led by the quarterback he just introduced. So, I'll go with the Bills, I think they'll pull it out.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'm going to go with the Chiefs, obviously. I'm contractually obligated. (Laughter).

But I do believe they have the better football team. And we talked about this last week, Colin, where I feel like during the season they were a little bored. And last week I liked what I saw. And if Patrick Mahomes doesn't go out in that game, I believe they would have won that game by 14 points going away, maybe more.

I look for them, now that he's healthy, Patrick Mahomes, Clyde Edwards-Helaire is back. And that's a huge boost for them. Remember he had 161 yards last time they played against each other. With all those weapons, and if Sammy Watkins can just get on the field -- remember last year in the playoffs he averaged 96 yards per game in the playoffs last year. If he can get back, too, I just don't see

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how you stop Patrick Mahomes for four quarters. I don't see any team stopping them for the rest of the year.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: All these injuries, real quickly, you mentioned Patrick Mahomes being healthy. If that turf toe is a thing, all I hear is how painful it is.

COLIN COWHERD: If you're a Chiefs fan this is terrifying. Since week 12 Buffalo, number one red zone defense in the league, since week 12. This is a reality.

Kansas City, 26 red zone offense. Now you take out Mahomes' ability to run in the red zone. Translation, Kansas City is going to settle for a lot of field goals today. That's what we've seen since week 12. And now you take out the component of Mahomes running, where we saw it last week -- very offensive early against Cleveland.

I would take KC close. If it was in Buffalo I take the Bills. I think it is a play late by a star player, a Stefon Diggs or a Tyreek Hill. That's the game.

MICHAEL VICK: I'm going with Kansas City because Buffalo has no run game. I don't know what happened with Devin Singletary. And as of late Josh Allen has been the guy who has been leading the Buffalo Bills in rushing. You can't come out and throw it 50 times like you did last week versus Baltimore. You've got to kill some clock, keep Patrick Mahomes on the sideline. That's playing exactly into what Andy Reid would want, and that's to get possessions.

DAVE WANNSTEDT: I go the other way. I like Buffalo. I think Buffalo. I hear what you're saying, Tony, but I think they're playing the best football now. You don't win eight games in a row by accident in this league.

And when you really look at them in the playoff thing, you know, they're hitting on all cylinders all phases. And we talked about Mahomes. But let me tell you something, he does a lot of improvising on his offense, Mike, getting out of the pocket, running, with that toe, with the concussion. I think he's hesitant today. And a big game like this, that makes the difference. Buffalo wins.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: All right. When you think of playoff success for Buffalo, you have to go back to the glory days and Hall of Famer Jim Kelly. Serious, focussed, meticulous in his preparation, both grateful for and humbled by all he's achieved. And then there's Cooper Manning.

COOPER MANNING: Lots of talk this week about the battle of No. 12s. So I brought my favorite number 12 of all time, Jim Kelly, to the "The Manning Hour".

JIM KELLY: Thanks, Coop. But my boys put an idle Terry Bradshaw, where is he on that list?

COOPER MANNING: Probably No. 12, Jim.

JIM KELLY: Say what?

COOPER MANNING: Jim, a lot of these whipper snappers with their TikToks and their Travis Scott meals, they don't realize you won four AFC championships in a row. That's like juice world dropping banger after banger.

JIM KELLY: Cooper, you have no idea what you're talking about.

COOPER MANNING: You would. The Buffalo Bills, Jim. They're even hotter than these buffalo wings.

JIM KELLY: There's no doubt about it. Josh Allen. Coach McDermott, those boys on that defense, getting tighter and better.

COOPER MANNING: Amazing how quickly they turned around. It wasn't that long ago that Nathan Peterman was throwing five interceptions in 54 seconds.

JIM KELLY: Oh, boy, that's pretty funny.

COOPER MANNING: What is it about Buffalo Bills quarterbacks that they all have two first names? We're dealing with Josh Allen and Jim Kelly. If Nathan Peterman had just been Nathan Peter, he probably would have stood a chance.

JIM KELLY: I'm not going to touch that one.

COOPER MANNING: It's been 27 years since the Bills played the Chiefs in the AFC Championship. Two Hall of Famers, Montana, Kelly; now this year, Allen and Mahomes.

JIM KELLY: I looked at the whole thing, Coop, this could be the best four-quarterback weekend ever.

COOPER MANNING: You beat Montana. I don't see any reason why Josh can't beat Mahomes, do you?

JIM KELLY: Not at all. He can do it. No doubt about it.

COOPER MANNING: I like that confidence, Jimmy Boy.

JIM KELLY: Coop, you ever call me Jimmy again, I'm coming after you and I'll end up on your dad.

COOPER MANNING: Ease up, Jimmy Boy.

JIM KELLY: I'm on my way.

COOPER MANNING: I love it. Who do you think the Chiefs face in the Super Bowl?

JIM KELLY: Did you just say the Chiefs? Bills. Bills. Bills. Bills.

COOPER MANNING: Who do the Bills play, do you think?

JIM KELLY: I don't care, as long as it's the Bills.

COOPER MANNING: From your playing days to your battle with cancer, you're the toughest guy I know. I can't thank you enough for being on the show.

JIM KELLY: Coop, for you I'll always do it for you because you're one of the cool Manning brothers. I like it.

COOPER MANNING: Amen. Greatest show of all time. Jim, you're the best.

JIM KELLY: I'm one of the best liars, too.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Proud and true. Make you want shout as well. Ford "Fox NFL Sunday" is less than 30 minutes away. Our thanks to Greg Olsen who is already headed over to next door. We've got plenty more coming up. Back on the field Jaire Alexander made his first Pro Bowl this season. Congratulations to him. Tony's sit-down with his teammate, Davante Adams, is next.

[COMMERCIAL]

CHARISSA THOMPSON: NFC Championship game, he's only moved on once so far.

TONY GONZALEZ: It's crazy, especially with one of the best receivers in all the NFL, Davante Adams, who is now 0-for-3 in this round.

This guy is a maestro when it comes to running the perfect route. And after talking to him, it's clear he believes that the fourth time is the charm.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Maestro.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'm here in the recording studio, as you young bucks like to call it, the lab. Do you have any musical talent we should know about it?

DAVANTE ADAMS: I can lay a 16 down. But I'm not a singer or nothing like that, but I'm R and B and hip hop all

day.

[MUSIC]

TONY GONZALEZ: Do you obsess over route running? There was a great documentary called "Euro Dreams of Sushi", he's the best sushi maker of all time. He said he goes to bed dreaming about different sushi rolls he's going to come up with. Do you go to bed and wake up thinking about how to run the best route?

DAVANTE ADAMS: Real quick story. I got out of the shower the other day. I'm standing there next to my wife. She's doing her hair before bed. I was just locked in place I didn't realize how long I was sitting there. But I went through a whole play, caught the ball, made a move on the dude, scored a touchdown. I hear my wife say, "Babe, what are you doing?" I'm literally sweating, my forehead is sweating, I gotta to get back in the shower.

TONY GONZALEZ: I love it. I love it.

DAVANTE ADAMS: I'm thinking about that stuff all the time. I'm manifesting it. So I guess you could say, yes, I'm obsessed with my craft.

TONY GONZALEZ: That's exactly what it takes. By the way, when you retire, which is a long time from now, you can do the same thing. I come around the corner sometimes in my house, when I have to make a left. And I'll throw the head out there and get low and come out of the break just to go get a piece of toast.

Let's go back to the first time you played Tampa earlier this year.

>> 38 unanswered points by Tampa, it's been a pretty dominant performance.

TONY GONZALEZ: What did you guys learn from that game? And what can you take from that game into this week's contest?

DAVANTE ADAMS: They got a lot of momentum based on the mistakes we made and the bad positions we put ourselves in. But that game was not indicative of who we are as a team and what the matchup will look like this time around. Coming into Lambeau is not the same as playing in Florida.

TONY GONZALEZ: How does that feel to be on the field at the same time with, I guess, with two of the G.O.A.T.s?

DAVANTE ADAMS: It's awesome. It's something I definitely don't take lightly. Still an awesome experience

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being able to see two of the best ever at their positions go head to head like that, and be part of it is pretty special. First it was kind of crazy and I was mind blown being out there. But now it's kind of normal, I guess you could say, trying to play the way where people will add me to that conversation. That's my mindset now.

>> How about Davante Adams?

>> So hard to cover the best wide receiver in football right now.

TONY GONZALEZ: I haven't played in a Super Bowl. Obviously you have yet to play in one. What would that mean to you to finally be able to make it to the big game?

DAVANTE ADAMS: This is my fourth one in seven years. Being this close four times now. I know what it feels like to not be able to get there and to come up short. I've got it in the back of mind. It's going to keep me hungry.

[MUSIC]

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Good job.

TONY GONZALEZ: You know, think about Davante, a lot of people are really starting to learn about him. But he's somebody, in my mind, he's DeAndre Hopkins, Julio Jones, they're at the top.

What he does, he's not the quickest, not the fastest, not the strongest, but he does everything really, really well. And I think he's the complete wide receiver. And the reason he has so much success is Aaron Jones right now, we talked about that running game last week, Aaron Jones, Jamal Adams and AJ Dillon, with that running game, with Aaron Rodgers, the way he's playing right now, that helps Davante Adams. It helps Scantling and it helps Lazard go out there. By the way, those guys, you get one dropped ball today, that's it. And then you catch every one after that. And those guys will go have some success.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Coach, we talked about it. The Bucs had success against this team in week six. How do they do it again?

DAVE WANNSTEDT: I think it's going to be very difficult on Tampa for this reason: And Tom Rinaldi, he was right on point, when he said that the Green Bay coaches were disappointed watching the tape after the Tampa game, what he was referring to in that first game, watched it again this week, think about this, their star running back, Aaron Jones was lined up at wide receiver 14 times. And he only had 10 carries in that game.

And that's going to change today. And the second thing, Aaron Rodgers was under pressure all day with that Todd Bowles defense.

But guess what, for the last 12 weeks Aaron Rodgers has been sacked only one time when a blitz has come after him. So they're ready for that. I think it's going to be difficult.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Glad you bring that up. Because if you're going to face a three-headed monster of Rodgers, Adams and Aaron Jones, you better have your head on a swivel. It's Insights built by IBM Watson. This offense is near perfect on play-action this year with Rodgers completing over 74% of his throws, including 20 touchdowns and zero interceptions. Mike, how is he so successful?

MICHAEL VICK: You just said it. And Tony just said it as well. When you have a running back like Aaron Jones and you can turn around and hand it off to him, the options on offense become limitless. You can go play-action, run it and play-action to guys like Lazard and Davante Adams. The offense just opens wide open.

When you look at the plays right here, check out the safety Jordan Phillips, how he recognizes the formation. This is a simple formation. And it's just a simple inside zone run. But Jordan Fuller comes barreling in, zero to 100, and it's a six-shot game by the Packers, which is a successful game, but not so good for the defense, as Coach would tell you.

But this play right here, four plays later, you know, you put Jordan Fuller in the same situation, same formation, he comes down, gets nose, down 0-to-100 again. Puts Lazard one-on-one with Troy Hill. Aaron Rodgers sees it. Matt LaFleur understands it. He recognizes it. And then you get a play call with a touchdown and a post in the concept which really puts the star on the camel's back in this game and they were schemed up perfectly.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Yes, defensive has respective runs. Can't cheat on the back side and opens up everything else over the top. It does sound too simple.

For more on the Packers, let's bring back Peter Schragger. You've got some insights on Green Bay's head coach Matt LaFleur. What's up?

PETER SCHRAGER: Yes, Charissa everyone doing flips about the Packers today. Guess what, they were here last year. They were in the NFC Championship game and they were 13-3. I spoke to Matt LaFleur yesterday. And I said, "What's different?" And we had a good laugh because the

New York media is going nuts about Robert Saleh's slogan, "All gas, no brake." He said, "Last year we had a slogan. It was "all gas no bleeping brakes. This year no slogans, none of that. No motivational videos. We know how good we are. We're in the second year of what we're building and we believe we can beat anybody if we play our game."

COLIN COWHERD: I'll tell you, Green Bay, the front office got a lot of heat for drafting Jordan Love, right? But if you look at how dynamic Green Bay's offense is. Aaron's a first-rounder. So is Mercedes Lewis and Davante is not and Aaron Jones isn't. Their offensive line is tremendous. Front office took a lot of heat. This has been built and developed in your third round, your fourth round, your fifth round. Green Bay has done a tremendous job in the front office.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: They sure have. Coming up next we'll hear from both Tom Brady and Michael Strahan, they reunite for an exclusive interview. Plus Erin Andrews sits down with Aaron Rodgers. Everything you need to know ahead of Championship Sunday is coming up next.

[COMMERCIAL]

CHARISSA THOMPSON: Last week Terry from Maryland won Terry Bradshaw's all new 2021 Ford F-150 just by playing Super-6. And Terry is going to do it again. Because that's the kind of guy he is. Not only will one random entrant win Terry's newest truck, but also there's half a million dollars on the line. Download the app, play for free. Just answer six simple questions about the Bucs-Packers game. It's really that's easy. And we're also going to make some picks for the NFC Championship game. I'm going with the Bucs because it's Tom Brady and six rings, I've got them by a field goal. Schrages, who have you got?

PETER SCHRAGER: I've got the Packers. Aaron Rodgers finds a way. 30-28, Mason Crosby at the buzzer. Let's see.

TONY GONZALEZ: I'm going to go with the Packers of Green Bay. It is Aaron Rodger's time to go out there, have a statement game, and win. 31-24.

MICHAEL VICK: Aaron Rodgers is too much for Tampa Bay's defense. 31-30, Green Bay wins.

DAVE WANNSTEDT: Yeah, I'm going with Green Bay too. 24-17. I think the defense shows up for the Packers and makes a difference.

COLIN COWHERD: 33-26. Green Bay will not be that

close.

CHARISSA THOMPSON: I can't wait to be on a text chain when the Bucs win. Thanks for watching. It's been an incredible season. Enjoy Ford "Fox NFL Sunday".

[COMMERCIAL]

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