

# LA Times NFL Speaker Series

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## Jim Everett

THE MODERATOR: The great Jim Everett. So great to have you. Number 3 pick -- although a great LA Ram, No. 3 pick of the Houston Oilers in 1986. How did that go down?

JIM EVERETT: Sam, as you look back on it, you're like, hey, who drafted you? A team that's not around. It's kind of ironic. You see all these other guys, hey, I was the first round pick, like Eric Dickerson with the Rams, whoever it might be. I'm like, yeah, my team's gone.

It was kind of a wild trip, but you know what's even more wild, Sam, is being in the kitchen with you having this discussion. We're here in the kitchen. I want to know what goes on? Is it farmer to plate? Is that what we're doing here?

**Q. That's good. I do have some dishes for you in back to clean up.**

JIM EVERETT: You know I'll be good at that.

**Q. It's exciting having you because you know more about the quarterback position than the vast majority of people out there. Tell me about this quarterback matchup we're going to see in the Super Bowl.**

JIM EVERETT: I love this quarterback matchup. Let's first talk about Matthew Stafford with the Rams because that's -- that to me is kind of a -- you know, I was friends with Jared Goff. And when he left, McVay and him had his -- they had their whatever they have going. They targeted Matthew Stafford. When I look at Matthew, here's a guy who's a good football player, and you're seeing that right now. But he played for a bad organization, maybe not as complementary a team.

It's kind of a symbol when I look at the 1,800 guys that play around the NFL. It's like I know there's some good players out there, but they might not be playing for organizations that are prepared to win a Super Bowl. So seeing Matthew Stafford get targeted, brought in by Sean McVay, because he knows exactly what he wants, and all of a sudden operating.

The thing that impressed me about Matthew, I don't know if you see all these other quarterbacks, they wear the wristbands with all the plays, you didn't see that from Matthew. He went right from -- if you know anything about offenses, it's like different languages. You go from French to Spanish to whatever system you're running.

As a matter of fact, Bernie Kosar in his first eight years, had to learn eight new offensive systems because they kept rotating people out. Matthew just took it upon himself to understand all the verbiage from McVay, which is huge. So that's the kind of pro he is.

**Q. How did it happen that -- we saw a different Matthew Stafford for that three-game stretch where he had three pick sixes. I understand that each interception has its own story. But you see him, these surgical strikes, surgical precision on a lot of passes, and then there's something that's sort of flung up to the middle of the field and gets picked off. How does that happen with a quarterback?**

JIM EVERETT: It's going to happen at least one time a game, and sometimes, like for example on the last one, they'll drop it, and then it's not a thing. But if the San Francisco 49er makes that catch, it's a thing. Can't win the big one. All off of one throw.

So it happens during a game. You try to maintain your concentration. I mean, you've played golf. You can play a great round and have that one hole where you get a snowman. It's like, oh, damn, it ruined my rep. But you just hope that it doesn't happen.

I think going back to that November you're talking about with Matthew, you talk about the MVP discussion, there is no doubt that, if he doesn't have that November, that he is hands down the favorite for the MVP of the NFL. I still think he has that quality. I think that's the type of work that he's put in. His quality of work has been phenomenal.

The thing I see with Matthew Stafford from a quarterback standpoint is he manipulates the defense as well as anybody in the league. Now, you could say, okay, Patrick Mahomes, he has all these wild throws, Russ does all this crazy stuff, but what you see in the pocket from Matthew, for example, if I need to move my safeties over here, he's



going to bring everybody over here. It's just even the smallest things just to create space over there. Then he'll whip right back and do it.

I didn't see those things from Jared Goff. Those are the different -- little micro things to be able to create -- if I can create two feet of distance from a safety from my quarterback position, I can get a completion. If I'm just like looking around and then I just throw to where I'm looking, the defense starts collapsing.

So Matthew, when I talk about being able to manipulate the linebackers, being able to manipulate the safeties, huge. And there's sometimes -- I don't know if you saw when he did that little rollout, he's still looking back there and he flips it over here, and that's Matthew Stafford, and that's what makes him so special.

**Q. What is it like as a quarterback when you're playing that game within a game and just moving people with eye movements and it's almost the Jedi mind trick you're doing. Obviously, you have to be at a level of awareness and comfort. You had that when you played?**

JIM EVERETT: Oh, yeah.

**Q. What was that like?**

JIM EVERETT: I had the hardest time fooling Ronnie Lott. I swear to God. I'm on his board. Ronnie would -- the great players have that anticipation. There's a lot of good players. The great players, like you're tricking me. They have the force with them as well to bringing up the Jedi. You know, it's like, hey, Ronnie, I'm looking over here. Move, move, and that son of a bitch never moves. He took that away. Now I've got to go down here and do this and that.

There's the game -- you're talking about the game with the quarterback. There's the game with the offensive linemen. There's the games with the linebacker. The little play action RPO stuff to bring the linebacker up, you're peeking at him, and throw right over his back shoulder. All of that is part of the deal.

You know, I think there was some of that, if you go back with Matthew Stafford during November, there was still some learning curve coming through that. So I think that's what you talk about, each one of those interceptions or the pick six, I think he was maybe trying to take on a little too much. I think a lot of great players, that would be some of the downfall. I'm trying to do too much.

Once there's this fine line of being in the zone, doing too

much, you start going back down. Doing too little, you're down here. So there's this fine line of being in the zone, and that's where Matthew Stafford, I think, if I was giving advice for the Super Bowl, I'd say -- and the fact is they're all having their home cooking during the Super Bowl. You know how crazy the Super Bowl. You've been to how many Super Bowls. You snuck into a few too. I know you (laughter).

**Q. True.**

JIM EVERETT: You were a little younger, I know that. They didn't have terrace like they do now. It's like, you know, they're going to get relaxed, take a deep breath. It's another game. Just do your thing. Don't try to do too much.

I think even Sean McVay has relayed, back in 2018 when they were in Atlanta, I think Sean tried to do too much. Just do what you do and do it well and get out of there with the victory and get that trophy.

**Q. So is it a big advantage that the Rams are playing at home?**

JIM EVERETT: Huge, huge. I mean, Tampa Bay last year had the same advantage, and I don't think there's been hardly any other teams. But when you're talking about you got two weeks out, it turns into a circus, you're going to a new city. You've got your family over there. You've got your players over here. You've got all these logistics. You're practicing in a new facility, everything.

It turns into like, I would say, closer to being like at the Pro Bowl, where you've got -- when the Pro Bowl was actually played (laughter). Now it's two-hand touch. But any time you go on a vacation, you have a different mindset than when you're doing it.

They were taking -- I know they were at the practice field taking Super Bowl pictures on their own practice field. That sounds pretty relaxing to me than being at some foreign place. So it's huge, Sam. I don't think you can understate what that means to this game.

**Q. You talked about two-hand touch and football and the Pro Bowl. You know, a lot of people feel like quarterbacks are overprotected by the league. Obviously, those are the centerpiece of every team. How vicious was it playing -- I've looked back. I remember, but I look back now, and it almost looks like a different sport.**

JIM EVERETT: It was. It was Darwinism. I mean, and that was what it was. It was survival of the fittest. 1997

was all the rule change. I retired in 1998. So I got a minute of that, but they were still trying to figure out what the rules were.

But the idea was, if you could take out John Elway, you could take out Dan Marino, you could take out Jim Everett, then you have a much better chance to win. You know, ball's gone, and as long as you're within one step of the quarterback, free game.

**Q. Wow.**

JIM EVERETT: So that was what it was. I look at guys -- like a friend of mine, Rob Johnson, played for Buffalo. A little smaller stature, maybe in the size bracket like Patrick Mahomes. They broke Rob all the time. Just pile on him. He's like, I couldn't survive. He goes, I'd love the rules right now. I think a guy like Rob Johnson could be doing great things.

And that's when I look at Kyler Murrays of the world, the Patrick Mahomes, I don't think during our era that they could survive, but the game has changed. I'm not saying I'm not an advocate of it because I am. I think that I'm paying the guy 30, 40 million a year, I want him on the field. I don't want him out with an ACL. So it makes a lot of sense.

**Q. What were some of the memorable hits that you'd like to forget?**

JIM EVERETT: So we're playing at the coliseum against the Raiders. Jackie Slater's guy on the right side is coming off. I didn't know Irv Pankey's guy was absolutely free. So I moved to the left. Because most of the time, if you look at football players, if you can move a little bit where the hit's coming, it's like a glancing blow. It's those head-on collisions that you multiply, what is it, EMC-squared or whatever. The energy is a lot.

So I move left, and Pickel ear holes me because I move right into him, and I was out. I'm sitting here, and I'll never forget. I stood up, and I'm looking at the sideline, and all I see is blue and gold. And I'm looking -- at the time, we didn't have the green dot. We didn't have speakers. We had signals. So I'm looking over at the sideline, and I'm like where is he? I'm looking for Norv Turner because he had the signals and he had the orange gloves and we had all this stuff. I couldn't even see orange gloves.

I'm sitting there going, I can't see him. The ref, I felt someone right here, he calls time-out because he thinks I'm blind. It was just so fuzzy. That was probably the hit, if I look back on it, because the ear hole is kind of the soft spot of the helmet. I never saw it coming.

**Q. And that was in the rub some dirt on it era of football. When he got his bell rung was a phrase you heard a lot.**

JIM EVERETT: Oh, I came back in.

**Q. You did?**

JIM EVERETT: Oh, yeah, throw some ice on my neck for a quarter and a half and I finished up the fourth quarter.

**Q. Do you even remember that?**

JIM EVERETT: I don't remember the middle part, but I do remember the fourth quarter. I think -- I remember bits and pieces of it. I remember back at Purdue, for example, I don't -- we beat Notre Dame, and I don't remember second and third quarter.

**Q. Wow.**

JIM EVERETT: But we had runners in that would say the play, and I would do the play and it was all off on rote. But that's just how we did it. Nowadays, I would be in the blue tent for about two weeks (laughter).

**Q. You look at these receivers in the Super Bowl, and I think you could argue that it's one of the best in history, from Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins, Cooper Kupp, OBJ, Tyler Boyd, Van Jefferson. How do you look at these receivers in this game, and what kind of role are they going to play?**

JIM EVERETT: The Ram receivers, we're not even talking about Bobby Woods, who is one of my all time favorites, who's out with an ACL, they're asked to do so many other things than some of the receivers. If you look at Cooper Kupp, he's asked to not only run these routes -- and he actually picked up a triple move from Renfrow.

So they're practicing against the Raiders, and Renfrow has this sick move where they come, they set up, give a little shake, and then they go the other way, right? So the DBs are used to the double move, you hear that. So Renfrow comes up, does a shake, does a shake, gives a little, and then goes back outside. DB is already inside, and he's breaking his ankle.

And Cooper Kupp, as professional as he is -- and I'll say he's so professional because I would say, if Sean McVay could come back in a different body, he'd come back at Cooper Kupp because that's the kind of mentality. They both have the same mentality, but Cooper has way more talent than McVay had on the field.

That's the kind of guys they're bringing in. I always said, if Cooper Kupp -- and I don't mean to digress from your conversation. But if you had Cooper Kupp, you had Andrew Wentworth, and you had Weddle, you could get rid of all the coaches because those three guys could do the coaching. That's how important those guys are as far as mental-wise, and that's what Sean wants.

That's what you're seeing with those guys. When I would go to Pro Bowl, I would see not only great athletes, but I would see great leaders and guys that knew the ins and outs of everything as much as the coach.

Back to the receivers, the blocking that Cooper Kupp, Van Jefferson -- and OBJ doesn't get in the blocking scheme as much, Woods would. But they try to line OBJ up on more singles.

On the other side, Ja'Marr Chase, you don't see a rookie doing the things he's doing. That's phenomenal. Hopefully, Jalen can shut some of that down. But the guy that scares me is Higgins because he's going to go against D. Will, and the size difference is just phenomenal. I think you saw that in the last game, that Cincinnati game, Higgins basically carried him. He has that ability. If I'm looking at the matchup part, that's the part I'm worried about.

**Q. How about the defensive front of the Rams against that offensive line, which has been sort of maligned? They gave up nine sacks in I believe it was the Tennessee game.**

JIM EVERETT: I think they're underrated. Of course they give up the sacks. They're going to go against Aaron Donald. I don't think it's still going to be a gimme. I think Joe Burrow is smart enough to get it out. I think they're going to be smart enough to throw the slant to Higgins so they can get the ball out quick. I think that's what Tampa was trying to do.

They don't want to -- I think Cincinnati is really good at the intermediate to deep routes. I just think they're not going to have that time. So they're going to have to do something to create screens, all these other little things that they can bait everybody in for aggressiveness and then get right past them.

I think you saw some of that with Shanny with the 49ers. What they try to do is bait them in and then try to leave Reader in the middle and run everybody deep and get the one-on-one against Reader. That was working well. I think if Shanny would have stayed with that, it would expose the middle linebacker, who's more of a run guy,

and he got away with it. I think that was a big -- for the 49ers, that was a strategy thing that I wouldn't have done.

**Q. What do you think it says about Matthew Stafford that he has so many fans still in Detroit pulling for him?**

JIM EVERETT: Oh, my gosh, he's like a hero for a bunch of guys. Like I said earlier, here's a guy that's on a team that he's done a bunch of good things for them. The thing about Detroit also, it's kind of like New Orleans. The fans are super loyal. When I was a Ram and then I went to New Orleans, I saw a whole different level of like just life as a football player.

So different cities represent are not all the same. Detroit is one of those, and they're loyal. But Stafford and his wife have really embraced the city, had done so much. If I was in Detroit, I'd root for him too. He'd never had that team to present a Super Bowl deal.

All of a sudden he comes here and he's got these talented people that we were just talking about, receivers, Aaron Donald, Cam Akers, who we haven't even talked about, you've got all these guys. When you get to the Super Bowl or championship game, you play against teams that don't have holes. And when they don't have holes, they make you look bad.

But if you play against some team and you know, hey, we can pick on the linebacker or we can pick on this, then all of a sudden you start taking advantage, and that's what we did in the past. I mean, that's the game. It's the chess. The game within the game.

**Q. LA finally has a football dedicated stadium, state of the art, SoFi stadium, unbelievable, \$5 billion palace. Does that change the equation, the calculus? You talked about the football fans in New Orleans. Could you have those type of fans in LA?**

JIM EVERETT: Well, Sam, we both know we went 20-some years without a team. That's almost a generation. And I always looked at it, Sam, that some of the best fans are when you're 10 years old, and you never forget that person. I remember my guy was like Lenny Dawson or Terry Bradshaw, always. I'm friends with both those men. As a matter of fact, Lenny recruited me to Purdue, and that was kind of my story of like, oh, here's my childhood hero.

So getting back to that, Los Angeles hadn't had that for 20 years, but I think they're getting a taste of it now. I think Arizona is also a melting pot. So when teams go to play Arizona Cardinals, you're going to get half the fans. Los Angeles are a little bit like that. Everyone is from

somewhere else. No one claims I'm from Los Angeles. I'm from Chicago. I'm from New York, I'm from somewhere else. And that's their team.

But I think, if they experience success like the Lakers experience success, they bring home championships, they do that, I see people coming out of the wood work. I mean, this has been phenomenal, phenomenal for this whole -- I mean, I feel for the Chargers. They're like who? (Laughter).

**Q. Why did you choose Purdue over Stanford?**

JIM EVERETT: Good question. I wanted to be in business. I thought Stanford had more economics. Purdue had a school of management that I liked better. So my parents both being educators, I was weighing -- so I gave Purdue a few more points for that. I went to Stanford, you have a feel. I liked Stanford. I liked the area. I just wasn't ready for the West Coast.

I go back to Purdue, I had a kegger. It was just more like just -- and then at Purdue, the people that go to Purdue are either astronauts or great quarterbacks. I'm like I want to be one of those. And then, of course, Lenny Dawson recruited me, and I'm going to an IU-Purdue basketball game. It was like going to one of those cities we're talking about that was all in.

When I went to Purdue, it was like -- it wasn't easy. They tried to make me a tight end. Yeah, I had a lot of struggles of being able to get through. I almost wanted to transfer. If we'd have had the portal, I'm sure I'd have been out of there. Nowadays, I'm sitting here looking at this thing, with this portal, these coaches have to recruit not only guys from the portal, they have to recruit junior college guys, but they have to recruit their own guys every year too so they don't go to the portal. It's an interesting dynamics, the weight of that.

Anyways, it just felt like home to me.

**Q. College football is a little different now with name, image, likeness. What would a Jim Everett at Purdue been worth? How would life have been different had you been able --**

JIM EVERETT: Let's go back to the Purdue-Stanford thing. Let's say Stanford had NIL going and I knew I could make \$50,000 over there, and Purdue didn't have as much NIL money and let's say there's \$10,000 over there, I'm sure that would have weighed into my decision, which is probably weighing into a lot of the decisions.

Someone was saying Texas A&M had \$100,000 for NIL

stuff. You've got a big alumni base, you've got to tell me some of these kids -- and I know they come from lower income houses. I was pretty medium income. But if I'd have known I didn't have to lean on my parents for money and could make a little more over here, I might have chose that.

So I think it comes into the discussion. I don't think it's a bad thing. I always felt like the NCAA was a little bit more like an institution, where they were using my name, image, and likeness for the cradle of quarterbacks. They still do this year. We'd never seen a dime from that.

**Q. Couldn't that change college football in a devastating way for some of these programs that just can't keep up?**

JIM EVERETT: Well, it's certainly going to change. If you want to add devastation, that's because maybe you don't want to see change. So I think it does need change, and I'm going to embrace the change.

It's probably like if we want to talk about crypto assets compared to fiat money. It's change. Some people will resist it, of course. That's what's going to go on. But I think maybe some people resisted social media, which I embrace it because now you have a voice.

So change for the sake of change, I'm not for, but the change with -- let's embrace this and see how we can make this rock.

**Q. What was your relationship with another pursue quarterback Drew Brees? Did you guys have a special bond?**

JIM EVERETT: Not as much with Drew. My bond was more with mark Herman who recruited me and actually became my backup, now works at Purdue. We always hang out.

Drew was quite a few years afterwards. I think I was out of the NFL when he was just winning his Rose Bowl. So I really didn't -- I was involved in my career as much as seeing what's going with Drew, but man, what a fantastic career he has.

A friend of mine, Joe Tiller, was our defensive line coach. He goes to Wyoming, develops this fabulous wide open offense as a defensive guy, and goes back to Purdue and just kills it with Kyle Orton, Drew Brees, all these guys. At the time, I thought Kyle Orton had the bigger upside than Drew. Then I look back, Drew threw for 60,000 yards.

Then again, you look at, if he was doing our era football, I



don't know if Drew plays that long because he's not that big a guy. He's quick, he's cagey, he's so smart and such a great leader.

**Q. Let's talk about a quarterback who did play in your era, Tom Brady (laughter). Feels like it, doesn't it? I mean, can you believe that he was playing at 45 years old?**

JIM EVERETT: No.

**Q. I mean --**

JIM EVERETT: No. He came in. I remember we came back and did a Legends thing in Hawaii, and he was just a rookie, but he just came on. Very good. But such a humble kid. He was playing hide and seek with my kids in Hawaii. Yeah, we got to know Tom on a different level, and he was very respectful. That's right when he and Peyton started their stuff.

So I've always thought the world of Tom, and all these things that they say, oh, Tom Brady's this or he's deflating balls. I mean, I know Tom. I know punters that deflate -- or inflate the balls the other way. That's nothing new. They're trying to make it just a Tom Brady deal. I'm like that's not new.

**Q. How did you manipulate the football? You've got to tell me.**

JIM EVERETT: I liked them full. The punters always liked it. My receivers hated them full because I would whistle it. I wanted something that I could -- I had big hands. I don't want something squishy.

**Q. You don't want a Nerf ball?**

JIM EVERETT: But the receivers want something like a Nerf. They want something squishy. It was give and take. The punters always wanted to rub all the sides off it so it was more like a rugby ball. I'm like, no, don't rub these balls like that. They wanted to put them in the dryer and stuff like that. There was ball manipulation way before Tom Brady, way before.

Now they've got two different bags. You've got your punter ball and your passing balls. At least they recognize that fact. The fact that there was point whatever, I look at that and go that's a joke.

**Q. You're a businessman. Tell me what you're doing now.**

JIM EVERETT: I am working -- really I'm retired, to be

honest with you, but I'm actually on a board for a cryptocurrency mining company, Agora Digital. They're having an IPO come out at the end of this month. I've been in that space for quite a bit.

Like we were talking about earlier, I think -- I don't call it cryptocurrency because I think it's incorrect. I call it crypto assets. It's an exchange of value. When you start talking about currency, you're talking about money. You're talking about competing against the governments, which I don't think that that's -- they're going to have their own digital assets when China gets their stuff done.

I think the blockchain technology, not only for assets -- you hear about NFTs. You hear about all these different things. I think that's going to be the future. It will be the web 3.0.

**Q. I feel like Michael Scott asking this question, but explain it to me like I'm a 10-year-old.**

JIM EVERETT: Okay. So we're here in the kitchen, all right? (Laughter). Basically, blockchain, if you can think about that, just imagine a train, and that piece of information is then hooked onto another piece of information, another, so you've got this train. And just imagine that it depends if it's proof of work or proof at stake. Proof of work, that's bitcoin, where you've got this algorithm that says this train is legit. If it's proof at stake, then you've got 500,000 computers going, yeah, that's legit, that's legit. They all check with each other and go that train is legit.

So it's a way that information can go. Right now it's all centralized with central servers. But if you imagine 500,000 servers saying, with a spoke going, yeah, that's legit, that's legit. It's not centralized, that's decentralized, Sam. That makes sense.

**Q. Now I know why I didn't have the opportunity to turn down Stanford. (Laughter).**

Jim, it's awesome having you, buddy. Thanks so much.

JIM EVERETT: I never thought we'd be in the kitchen. I'll do your dishes. I'm good for that. All the stuff you've done and the hall you're in, and now the Hall of Farmer. I'm just honored. This is great. The city of Los Angeles, I can speak for everybody, loves your work.

**Q. Thank you so much, Jim. So kind.**

JIM EVERETT: Yeah.

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