

CBS NFL Today

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James Brown

Phil Simms

Julian Edelman

Brandon Marshall

Hosted by James Brown



THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Julian Edelman and Brandon Marshall. JB, do you want to introduce us to your new teammates?

JAMES BROWN: I'm just smiling because the fraternity of players I have huge respect for, my job is just to pull out of the best of them, and I'm just smiling wondering what in the world is Julian thinking he's getting himself into when he knows Phil clearly is a technical neophyte.

I know that I am. Brandon still has a lot of brash and cockiness in him, but I can say this as I tee up Julian Edelman. Brandon Marshall, unless you knew you were going to retire and come to the show, he was giving you big props as a player.

Phil has always done that because Phil knows -- Phil watches more film than anybody I know other than John Madden, Julian. And finally, for the audience, yes, Julian Edelman, recently retired, 12 years in the NFL, three-time Super Bowl champion, and oh, by the way, a Super Bowl MVP in Super Bowl LIII.

Julian, give us your thoughts about what you're about to step into on Inside the NFL with these guys.

JULIAN EDELMAN: Holy moley, what an intro that was.

First off, I just want to say hi, Mr. Simms.

JAMES BROWN: Oh, no! Mr. Simms!

JULIAN EDELMAN: I'm happy to be along with you. B-Marsh, my dog, how you been?

BRANDON MARSHALL: I'm good, man. I'm glad that you're joining the team, bro. Miss you, man. When you retired in 2009 and we had an opportunity to talk after a game, I think it was 2010, and I told you you're one of my favorite players, man, so I'm excited to be on this team with

you.

JULIAN EDELMAN: I'm so honored and excited to be a part of this with the respect levels that I have for every single one of these cast members. I grew up watching this, so to be in it and to get to sit and talk football with some of the best guys in the business, I'm just so excited, and I can't wait.

Man, it's a very, very exciting time and a new chapter in my life that I'm looking forward to, and like I said, it's going to be an honor to get to sit down here with you guys, talk ball, maybe a little crap talking here and there, little of this, little of that.

Mr. Simms, I don't want you intimidating me. I've heard all the stories through Bill when he used to coach you over in New York.

I actually remember a story with Mr. Simms that we were doing a pregame show or something, like one of those production meetings, and I told him my dogs were Dwight Montana from the Niners, and he goes, oh, well, I didn't like those guys or something.

So that always stuck out to me, so that's why I have to give him his props and his respect, and I will always call you Mr. Simms, Mr. Simms.

JAMES BROWN: If I may before I turn it back to you, this is unbelievable. Mr. Simms he's calling you. Brandon, this is from a guy, Edelman, who all players say flat-out was tenacious personified on the football field, had no fear, and now he's calling Phil Mr. Simms.

Julian, what are you expecting from your compadre Brandon Marshall. What are you expecting from him?

JULIAN EDELMAN: First off, I'm expecting nothing but swagger when I see him on the set with his get-ups. I'm expecting a perspective on the game from someone who's been on a bunch of teams, which that's a totally different perspective than I had. So I'm looking forward to hearing that because I only know one way. I don't know how other teams do it.

When you get to sit and talk with a guy that's been in multiple organizations, it opens up my eyes. It opens up



my thought process on how things are in different areas.

I'm looking forward to that. We have a relationship because he was drafted in 2008 with one of my good friends, Jack Williams. Remember that, Brandon?

BRANDON MARSHALL: Jack, man, yeah, I know Jack, of course, 100 percent. He was a great little feisty player.

JULIAN EDELMAN: You always used to talk so highly of him, and that's what I remember, and I remember us talking after that game, as well. I believe that was 2009 because you guys were wearing those ugly uniforms with the mustard stripe throwback.

BRANDON MARSHALL: It was definitely after a Miami-Baltimore game. It was when I was playing for the Dolphins. I know they brought you in to be a return specialist and you spent some time playing DB.

I'm going to be honest, you were nobody at the time. I remember looking at you and I'm like, Yo, this is the type of dude that I would want to play with. This is the type of passion that I approach practice and games. That's me.

So after the game I pulled you to the side and I just told you how much I respected you. It was definitely a battle between the Dolphins and the Patriots, but I don't know how much of a battle it was because you guys just ran through it year after year after year.

JULIAN EDELMAN: See, that's false, though. Like every time we would go to Miami there was something in the air or the heat that would -- it always split, I felt. I felt like we split every year.

I do remember that, and I wish I got to play with a guy like that on the outside.

BRANDON MARSHALL: There was no splitting in the postseason. There was no splitting of Super Bowls, so I don't know what you're talking about.

THE MODERATOR: Sounds like there's going to be a lot of debate --

JULIAN EDELMAN: Well, there can only be one winner, sorry.

BRANDON MARSHALL: Listen, as long as you continue to call Phil Simms Mr. Simms you're going to fit in just right. And then also, take it easy on me. I'm the only one on the set that's not a Hall of Famer, I'm the only one on the set that never made the postseason, so just take it easy for me.

PHIL SIMMS: I'll make it quick, Jen. Yes, Julian, you're right, he called me Mr. Simms. I like that. And also remember, I'm the executive producer, so be careful what you say.

And then Brandon Marshall is really touchy and feely, so be careful what you say to him.

JAMES BROWN: Brandon Marshall is a six-time Pro Bowler who knows the game, unafraid to speak his mind. Phil Simms clearly a two-time Super Bowl MVP, and oh, by the way, a Super Bowl MVP as well, and we're going to have Ray Lewis and of course Michael Irvin. That will be a hoot, Julian, when those guys are on board.

Jen, back to you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, and I think I see what we have in store for us this year on Inside the NFL. There will be no shortage of opinions, put-downs, and whatnot. Let's get Mr. Edelman right to the questions.

Q. I know you missed the entire 2018 season, but the Patriots didn't win the Super Bowl that year. What's it like from a Chiefs' perspective coming back from losing the Super Bowl to try to win it again? That seems like a heavy lift; not a lot of teams have done that.

JULIAN EDELMAN: No, that year was a special year, specifically because we got the first-round bye. But we didn't own the playoffs. We didn't have home field throughout the playoffs.

And that was when the Chiefs hit the ol', like, We're here to play now button. We had to go on the road and play them in a hostile environment. They had the blood moon thing going, the crowd was rocking. If you guys have ever played there, which Brandon Marshall and Mr. Simms could attest to this, it's a rocking stadium.

To go out there and win on the road, that was like probably one of the most memorable games that I've ever had. You know, with all the headlines of Tom being so old, the teams is not right, which I thought was déjà-vu when you played with the Patriots at that time in our flow of what we were in.

People were always saying we weren't going to do this, we weren't going to do that, and we'd go out and prove people wrong. That year was crazy. It was an awesome, awesome, awesome experience to go out there and win on the road against a very explosive team, and I'll always remember that.

In 2017 I wasn't there, obviously. I tore my ACL in the preseason. But the year before that we were in the Super Bowl, then the team goes back to the Super Bowl the next year, which for a player mentally to see your team go on and win without you, like you have conflicted feelings.

Like you want them to do well, but, hey, this is a production in a what-have-you-done-for-me-lately business, so when you're not out there and you're seeing your team going out there and doing well, it's like, Oh, man, I don't know how to feel here.

For them not to get it done that year was tough to watch, but then to go out the next year and do it, it was an awesome feeling, and it was a memory that I'll always have; one of my favorites.

Q. As we talked about earlier, CBS and Viacom had a huge hit with the Nickelodeon game, and now the Manning brothers are going to do their own megacast for Monday Night Football. I wanted to ask all of you, what do you think of the potential future of this megacast format, particularly as a complement to the main broadcast?

BRANDON MARSHALL: I guess for me I'd say we're in a space right now, and Sean talked about it earlier, about entertaining, and there's so much information out there. We're in this space right now where people want to see things done a little differently, right?

So this is the time to create. This is the time to go out there and try to figure out different ways of saying the same things that everyone else is saying but a little differently, and maybe the set is a little different.

Phil talked about that. You turn on sports talk TV shows throughout the weekend, we're talking about the same stuff and it's competitive and you've got to find ways to be able to -- to be in that conversation but give your point of view.

And so I'm excited about this time that we're in right now. I'm excited about what we're doing with our show, adding Jules and his perspective.

It's going to be a -- I might get in trouble if I say this. I don't know if you guys made the announcement, but the set may look a little different. We're in a very creative space right now.

PHIL SIMMS: I think that's what's going on. Everybody is looking for a different platform, lots of things out there. I think about it all the time: What's the next big thing? The Mannings doing this? Of course. They're big names. Peyton is funny. Eli wants -- once you get done playing,

you go, okay, now what am I going to do, and I think he wants to jump in the fray, too.

So that's going to be interesting. I'll check it out when I can.

I'll just say this about Julian right now. Love the way you've come on, all that. You're going to fit right in. And just be ready for this. Brandon is always yelling, so I don't know what -- he's going to yell.

JAMES BROWN: Brandon is not by himself. Julian will need to buy a nice set of headsets, earmuffs, if you will, both when Ray Lewis and Michael Irvin come. Brandon can hand handle them well, but the volume and decibel level will go up.

Look, in answering your question honestly as well from my perspective, I think with the inexhaustible number of shows that are on TV, it is still personality driven. People buy the person. Brandon doesn't mince his words. He calls what he feels, whether it's the popular opinion or not.

There are those who are in the Howard Cosell mode that people love to hate but they tune into him. There are others people have big respect for but they'll tune in, as well. So Julian, to the reporter's question, it is still personality driven, and whether there is some substance being delivered by the personality that they respect and like.

JULIAN EDELMAN: I think it's super exciting to see a different perspective of how to watch games. I thought the Nickelodeon playoff game was awesome because ultimately it's giving the youth our sport, and it's kind of dying out with this generation that wants instant satisfaction through social media. Any way we can grow our sport, it's a great thing.

I love the new ideas. I think that's huge for our sport and for what I'm getting into, to bring different perspectives, because ultimately it's about growing the sport.

Q. For Phil, Dak Prescott is coming off a severe ankle injury and then he had a shoulder problem in camp. As a quarterback I think you fractured a foot with the Giants in '90. How can you overcome those things, especially a foot injury, and then you have a shoulder injury, something you had to deal with in camp?

PHIL SIMMS: Well, the foot injury was easy. I had the off-season to get ready -- or I was almost ready to play in the Super Bowl that year but still -- well, I shouldn't say almost; I was about a month away -- but I did have a high ankle sprain one year, 1989.



I had never had a sore arm in my life. I could throw all day every day, and when I got that right ankle sprain on my right foot, I got a sore arm that ached like -- I would go home at night and go -- it was incredible how much it ached.

Couldn't throw the ball as hard, all those things. So when Dak came up with this lat injury that he got throwing the football, I was not shocked. I actually went on Twitter and talked about it. When that plant leg is not feeling right for a quarterback, he had to make some adjustments to get power on the football, so he changed the way he threw the football.

When you change, the body wasn't ready for it, put too much pressure on it, and that's what we saw.

So I'm really interested to see. I watched Hard Knocks just to watch him throw during one of the practices. It looked okay, but I didn't see him put any mustard on the football, no power at all.

So it's really something to watch, and fortunately he's got maybe some time to really heal up, and when they start that first game against Tampa Bay, he can let the football go.

Q. For Brandon and Julian, a lot of times we forget how great a receiver Omari Cooper is. Just watching him over the years, tell me a little bit about what you see, especially on film, when you watch Omari Cooper.

JULIAN EDELMAN: I think he's got it all. He's got great feet. He's got speed. He's got change of direction. The guy's routes are immaculate if you watch him. He gets on guys' toes and he breaks guys off.

But being in the system he's in with having that relationship with Dak and them always going to a guy like him also helps him, as well. He's got all the attributes. He's a quiet guy. Seems like he works hard. I don't know him personally, but I'm a huge fan of him.

Brandon, do you see the same thing I'm seeing here?

BRANDON MARSHALL: Yep, yep. Yeah, great question. I agree with Jules. Jules, he covered it. There's one thing that jumps out when I watch film on Omari, and that's his creativity.

Jules had a lot of this, as well, in the slot, being able to -- I don't know how the heck they found ways to run these traditional routes, these old school routes five different ways.

That's what makes Omari special, from bump and run coverage. Being in press against some of the best cornerbacks, how do you run a 15-yard comeback the way he does, how do you run a 12-yard hook route the way he does, a slant route? He has five different releases for a slant route.

That's the thing that makes him special, and then obviously consistency with catching the ball. You can be fast, you can run all the best routes, you can be savvy, but if you can't catch the damn ball then you don't got a chance to play in the National Football League.

That's what jumps out to me when I watch him on Omari Cooper.

PHIL SIMMS: You watch Hard Knocks, you see these moves and the shakes and all these things, the skips -- I would be on a field, Brandon, with kids in high school and college, and they would literally get their phones out and try to imitate Julian and you doing all those skips and everything from the slot position.

It's amazing, so it's trickling down so fast that we've got high schoolers trying to imitate the pros and all these extra moves they're making, and I've got to tell you, it's unbelievable to watch.

JULIAN EDELMAN: I think that's a huge reason why the game is getting so much better. I was talking about this with a friend of mine, that a 14 year old kid can go out and see what we're doing in the off-seasons and emulate that and be a little like field rat and just go out and do all the same drills we're doing at such a young age, so their artillery is insane.

They've got all these tools on their tool belt. It came naturally to me. I didn't practice it. It just happened. But when you have that on your tool belt and you can pull that two-step release, that three-step release, that speed release, the top of the routes, all those types of techniques, like these kids are doing it at such a young age. That's why there's so many really, really, really good young receivers out there right now that have the speed.

It's different because like I was an explosive player. I didn't have the long speed, but then you've got these guys that are long speed guys that have change of direction that practice all the techniques all the time. It's just a storm, a perfect storm for a really good football player, and that's what this game is getting.

That's why you're seeing these young quarterbacks. The AFC right now I think the oldest quarterback is Big Ben,

and then after that everyone is under 26. The AFC. That's insane to me. And these guys are great football players.

That's the evolution of the game, because of the information we're all getting at our fingertips with the phones and with the social media, it's just going to keep on snowballing and get better, I think.

BRANDON MARSHALL: Jules, what I'm seeing, as well, is there's some of our older guys, guys in the league that are learning from middle schoolers and high schoolers, different releases and different techniques.

I go down to these parks in South Florida and I'm seeing these kids do things. I'm like, man, it took me five years to learn that. So I'm actually seeing the opposite, as well.

And to your point, that's why we're seeing -- when we came in the NFL, 2006, 2009, it took time to pick up the system. It took time to learn how to beat one-on-one coverage. It took time to learn how to sit in those zones, cover three, cover four, identifying coverage.

But now you're seeing the D.K. Metcalfs come in early; the Jerry Jeudys and the kid last year, Justin Jefferson come in and go for 1000 yards, 10 touchdowns.

The game is getting better, and it's because of access to content and being able to go on social media, Instagram, YouTube and seeing these workouts by OBJ and AB, et cetera, et cetera.

JULIAN EDELMAN: The ends, too. The ends are crazy. After OBC made that one-handed catch, now I see like 14 year old kids practicing on Jugs machines practicing these crazy catches, and now you're seeing it like -- sometimes it makes me mad because then a kid goes for a one-handed catch in the game and he could have had two and he drops the one-handed catch.

BRANDON MARSHALL: Stop talking like Bill Belichick, man. You're retired. No one-handed catch, fundamentals.

PHIL SIMMS: That's why you were on 10 times, come on.

Q. Julian, what did you make of the Patriots' decision to go with Mac Jones yesterday?

JULIAN EDELMAN: Nothing surprises me with Bill. You look at the history. Logan Mankins was let go; Lawyer Milloy, Seymour, like it doesn't surprise me. I think the kid came out and he did well. He did very well. You could see in his eyes, you could see in his reads that he felt comfortable in the pocket. He was looking at the right areas, intentionally watching these play calls and how he

was handling them. He ran the no-huddle very well.

I don't think he quite beat them out, beat them out, but the ceiling is so high. They spent a 15 overall pick on the kid. They're going to go with him. It didn't surprise me. It's terrible for Cam. I feel bad for him. But with that whole situation, I don't think they wanted the distraction. I think they wanted him to -- give him his rein to go out and try to get on another team.

But like I said, that's not a very surprising act by the Patriots, as you know.

Q. Belichick was really aggressive this year; went out and spent a ton of money in free agency, drafted a quarterback in the first round, now starting him week one. Do you think that had anything to do with Tom winning the Super Bowl last year in Tampa?

JULIAN EDELMAN: I think it has to do with multiple things. I don't know personally if that's the reason. I think they had money to spend. For the last 20 years when you have a dynasty, it's hard to spend money like when you don't have the money.

He was building his teams with the players that he had around him at the time in the past that suited those teams. This is a completely new year. This is a completely new era, so he had to go out and create a new team.

I don't necessarily know if that was the reason because Tom went out and won a Super Bowl, but you know, it could be.

Q. Mr. Edelman, I must say seeing you now, this is quite night and day from the posing player conference call you did for us before a Bengals-Patriots game in 2013 --

JULIAN EDELMAN: We're on to Cincinnati, all right? We're on to Cincinnati.

Q. Just a question for both you and Brandon. Keenan Allen kind of seems among most people underrated as a receiver. What do you see from him and kind of his connection with Justin Herbert? And then maybe for Mr. Simms, who has now disappeared from the photo, just wondering among the second-year quarterbacks with Herbert, Burrow, and everyone who you think might make the biggest jump this year.

JULIAN EDELMAN: I think his craftiness at the line of scrimmage is second to none with Keenan Allen. If you watch his release game and his top of the routes, he's got like that basketball crossoverness that guys do, the

shimmy with the shoulders and great feet for how long and lanky he is.

I think that's like one of his elite strengths. He catches the ball. Like Brandon said, he's consistent. When you're talking about good football players, you always want to see consistency, and this guy has been doing it for a long time at the highest level.

But the thing that separates him the most is the line of scrimmage player that he is and the top of his routes. You don't see elite speed with him. He's a fast guy, but he's not a Tyreek Hill out there. It's his route-running ability and his length that is just something that stands out to me when I watched him on film, and I'd always watch how he released and how his top of the routes, and his craftiness in his route running and his stems, how he makes everything look somewhat the same.

He's got good head movements when he's doing double moves. He's a stud.

BRANDON MARSHALL: Yeah, I agree. I think when we talk about -- when we try to rank players and we talk about different positions, there's always people that get lost in the conversation, and he's one of those guys.

You think about Keenan Allen. Keenan Allen is a guy that you would put on your teach tape. What I mean by teach tape is where all wide receivers should sit down, watch this film, and they're going to be able to walk away from it learning something.

Keenan Allen does it all, from his releases at the line of scrimmage to what he does even in the run game. But going back to the pass game, his stems, like Jules said, the top of his routes, his savviness, his toughness, he has it all.

He's one of those guys that gets lost -- there's a few other guys out there that's in that same category: Allen Robinson out there in Chicago. He's a guy that gets lost in the sauce a little bit but he's phenomenal.

Even Adam Thielen. We always want to talk about the top wide receivers, the guys that are putting up 1,500 yards. But there's guys that get it done week in and week out, and Keenan Allen can easily be in the conversation of a top-5 wide receiver.

PHIL SIMMS: Also real quick for the receivers, he's got to be on a playoff team. That's how these guys become stars. They're on good teams. They're on the primetime games and they're in the playoffs, then we really learn the greatness of some of these guys.

There's many guys that get overlooked in the NFL because they're not on winning teams consistently.

Q. Phil, just for QB, among Herbert, Burrow, the group of second-year guys, who do you think could make the biggest jump this year?

PHIL SIMMS: Oh, well, I think Tua is going to make a big jump. I think he did a great thing at the end of the year, or I should say when this last year was over he just made a confession. I didn't work hard enough, study hard enough, I didn't train, do all those things.

He's done very well. He did very well in preseason. I think he's on a mission. He looks better physically, all those things, and he's really tuned into what they're doing.

Look, to me, Justin Herbert, he did it all last year. My only question with the Chargers is this: Is Joe Lombardi the new offensive coordinator going to be able to put Justin Herbert in the spots that he was last year to be the star that he was?

Justin Herbert was absolutely terrific last year. If he can repeat what he did last year, then the Chargers have a chance to be a big-time playoff team.

Q. Obviously here in Houston, the legal situation with Deshaun Watson is still pending, but his relationship with the Texans got sideways before those lawsuits were filed. How surprising and unprecedented is it in this era of the franchise quarterback for a relationship to deteriorate like that just months after signing a big extension? And for Julian, I'd also like to get your thoughts on Nick Caserio. You spent a lot of time with him in New England. What are your impressions of him so far on the job in Houston?

BRANDON MARSHALL: As far as Deshaun and the Houston situation, it's definitely unfortunate for Deshaun and so many others to be going through this. There's not a lot of information out there. We need more information. We need to understand everything that's involved in the situation.

But as far as the team goes, look, I think we're at the beginning of something interesting in the National Football League and in the NBA where players want a seat at the table. Players are asking for more power when it comes to controlling their destiny.

So when you think about Deshaun, I think Deshaun sat back and looked at the offensive line, he looked at the head coach, he looked at ownership, he looked at

management, he looked at everybody in that organization and said, Can I get it done here, and I think that's where it started with Deshaun.

But outside of football, I think Deshaun and others have more things to worry about than just football right now. I've been around Deshaun. I'm looking forward to seeing him move forward, but really stand up and tell the world who he really is and take accountability and help others through this situation.

We'll see what happens in the next couple weeks, but something has to get done.

JULIAN EDELMAN: Yeah, about Caserio and how he stepped into this role, I can tell you right now, this is a tough spot to be in for a first-time GM of a new organization coming out from under Bill and doing his thing, because I know specifically that Caserio does not like distractions, and this is a huge distraction going into his first year.

I mean, this is something that like Patriot 101. Like eliminate all distractions, and this is the biggest distraction in the NFL on multiple levels, which we're going to see how he comes out of it with more time, with Caserio.

But I'm excited for him. He's a really knowledgeable guy in football. This guy has got like one of those photogenic memories, grinder; he's a guy that's going to be at the office all day long until things are done well.

I'm excited for his opportunity, but it's still early to give him a grade. I mean, we can't just say -- we haven't played a single game yet. We're in the preseason. I'll let you know that answer after about eight weeks. If those guys are accumulating some wins, that's when you're going to see how good your GM is.

He also doesn't have all his players in. It's his first year, so you've got to give him a little time. This is a new regime over there, but I'm excited for his opportunity because I think he's a brilliant mind when it comes to football. He's a big numbers guy.

He was actually the receivers coach -- me and Chad O'Shea came in the same year in 2009, and he was the type of guy where he could put on the GM hat, player personnel hat, and then he could come into the coaching room and put on a coaching hat, and he was actually leading the meetings. He knew the offense.

He came from the bottom.

Hard work is something you're going to get from him, but to

judge and see how he's doing, it's still too early to tell. I'll give him a real grade, too, because ol' Nick was a little stiff in there sometimes, but I love that guy. He's a good dude.

PHIL SIMMS: Let me just say this real quick. I think Deshaun Watson, forget what's going on in the legal process. I don't think this just happened out of nowhere. I think his feelings for the Houston Texans is something that's been building for years, and finally this past year was when he said, I've had it.

I don't think it came out of nowhere. That's something that probably was in the back of his mind festering with him, unhappy with certain things, and that's why he asked to be traded and do all that.

Of course now we'll just wait to see what happens in this legal battle and make decisions from there.

JULIAN EDELMAN: You've also got to know that quarterbacks are like the most -- they're the guys closest to NBA players because there's such a small amount of really good quarterbacks in this league, so now you're going to start to see these types of actions that you've seen in basketball for the last 20 years, 10, 15 years. It's going to start coming over to football. People want to make some changes.

Like Brandon said, these guys want a seat at the table. If you're going to be giving these guys that kind of money. Boy, I picked the wrong position.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone. I think we're all after this looking forward to Tuesday on Paramount+ with the Inside the NFL crew. We thank you so much for your time.

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