

CBS NFL Today

Sunday, December 19, 2021

James Brown

Phil Simms

Nate Burleson

Boomer Esiason

Bill Cowher

Hosted by James Brown

[MUSIC]

JAMES BROWN: Week 15 in the NFL.

>> There's Tua Tagovailoa, won five in a row. Five in a row 78 percent completion. Five touchdowns one interception without Waddle.

>> One pass in the last six days. Meyers gone. Coaching change. May be what the league needs.

>> And despite missing games it's about stopping the run.

>> Brian of the Tennessee Titans completing 65 percent, 14 touchdowns, 13 interceptions and he's run for 225 yards and six touchdowns.

JAMES BROWN: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the "The NFL Today" presented by the all new 2022 Grand Wagoneer I'm James Brown. Good to be back with my colleagues here in studio 43. The former NFL MVP that would be Boomer Esiason, the man who has won every award imaginable that would be Nate Burleson and the hall of fame coach Bill Cowher and can we call him a fashion model who also happens to be a Super Bowl MVP, is that okay? Fashion model. It's been a busy weekend. Folks, as we round the corner towards season's end expect the unexpected as the real madness begins. On Friday, a surge in COVID cases across the NFL caused the league to postpone three games in week 15. Now, the matchup between the Raiders and the Browns moved from Saturday, it will now air tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. on the NFL Network, make that NFL Network. While Philadelphia and Washington, along with the Rams and Seahawks, both originally scheduled for today, will now be on Tuesday night 7:00 p.m. on Fox, but first back to today. Our late games, Phil with play off implications, the Bengals and Teddy Bridgewater and and the Falcons. The Dolphins have won five games in a row to put themselves back in



the playoff hunt. Today Tua and company hope to keep things rolling Jets visit Miami in Pittsburgh, the Titans look to solidify on top of the AFC south and Big Ben fighting to stay in the postseason chase.

>> And the Vikings can blowing out the Steelers.

>> Two points.

>> Here it is. Three seconds to go in the game. To the end zone. And it's dropped.

>> We have the ball, we've got to make a run.

>> Here we go.

>> Let's get it rolling.

>> Landry, one-handed pick.

>> Touchdown Titans.

>> Touch down Pittsburgh.

>> Ready to win this game?

[MUSIC].

JAMES BROWN: These are the machinations that Boomer loves. Looking at the playoff race, heading in today Titans find themselves with the 2 seed behind the Chiefs but ahead of the Patriots and Ravens, while the Steelers are on the outs alongside the browns, Bengals Broncos Raiders and Dolphins, all within striking distance of our own wild card teams, those that we have in position right now. They being the Colts, Chargers, bills. Over in the NFC, Packers, Buccaneers, cowboys have decent shots to wrap up today. And meanwhile Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington hold the wild card spots for now. While the Vikings, Eagles Saints and Panthers Seahawks scramble Phil for opportunities to get in P.

All right. And coming to us live from coach's backyard in Pittsburgh, there's that smile, where he'll be calling today's game the always insightful Tony Romo. Hey TR, Titans have been able to stay afloat without Derrick Henry. What's been the key to getting that done?



>> Tony Romo: The first thing is turnovers. They're 3-2, three games they've won they've won the turnover battle. They won the penalty battle in a couple of them. That's it. They're playing really smart football and winning the ways a Belichick team, Mike Grable, that's how it happens. The problem they'll keep getting better and better teams especially when you get to the playoffs, to me they've got to win that but I think Ryan Tannehill has to play a little bit better and he's thrown more interceptions in the five games without Henry than the previous eight. Right now he's got to improve a little bit then they've got to keep winning the turnover battle.

JAMES BROWN: Coming off the impressive fourth quarter come back in the loss to the Vikings last week, what's the game plan for Ben and the Steelers today?

>> Tony Romo: Not to be down 29 early in the game that would put them in too big of a hole. You'll find they're starting to do a little bit better. They're throwing the ball down the field. They've got to work these intermediate routes in the middle of the field. The key it's open there. They just haven't done it a ton. It's that intermediate not just the three to five yards but that 15-yard level. And all of a sudden things will open up quickly for them. They get their later in the game they don't just do it as much early.

JAMES BROWN: All right. Tony, give our best to Jim and Tracy and knock them alive today. Let me turn to Phil. This has to be a must win game for the Steelers.

PHIL SIMMS: I think it is. Tony said it right. I think Ben Rothlisberger has to play well for this team to have a great chance to win. What does he do well? He throws the football quick, gets rid of it quick and throws the football with power and accuracy. Look, he has a very talented wide receiver group when you look at it. Deonte Johnson and Chase Claypool lead the group. A lot of quick screens, why, they want to get the football in the hands of these guys and get some extra yards and they do that. They can throw as many as five to ten of those a game. And they love throwing the football down the field, taking deep shots. Fades, back shoulders. Jump balls, and they know one thing that's going to happen. It's either going to be caught, incomplete or they're going to get pass interference because Ben really trusts these wide receivers not to give up those interceptions.

COACH COWHER: That's true, for defensively we're in week 15, talking about the Pittsburgh Steelers worst run defenseses in the National Football League. They've not been able to get down the off third the running game has been able to do that. Looking at the Tennessee Titans, running the ball. T.J. watt in the front man fronts. They can put guys up there, roam, gets disruptive. They'll take

away the run from the Tennessee Titans I see them doing that but you're vulnerable to the pass as they talked about Ryan Tannehill particularly on first and second down.

NATE BURLESON: Pat passing, run will be key. All hands on deck, 11 guys targeted by Tannehill, five different guys rushed the ball including Ryan Tannehill. This is about Ryan Tannehill the man behind him offensive coordinator Todd Downing, I knew we would be talking about it on CBS, I texted Todd this morning how are you getting it done without Derrick Henry. This is what he texted me this morning, believing in your foundation. If you jerk the wheel the players don't trust that you ever believed in the first place. I love that. And that's why this team hasn't lost faith even after they lost Derrick Henry.

COACH COWHER: I think the Titans major advantage Jeffery Simmons Denico Autry, 13 and a half sacks combined. Ben Rothlisberger over the last five games has been sacked 16 times, guys. As a matter of fact, those two have 28 hits on the quarterback. And then you think about Bud Dupree. He's coming back. What a revenge game against his former team the Pittsburgh Steelers, if you ask me Mike Vrabel knows he has a great defensive line. He'll get pressure on Ben Rothlisberger and as Tony Romo talked about, if they're going to win they have to force the turnover that's how you do it get pressure on the opposing quarterback, Titans major advantage.

JAMES BROWN: I texted young Dillon, information from Jason. The Titans win over the Giants will be the final time we saw Urban Meyer on the Jacksonville sideline and for more on that and all the latest news around the league let's go to our guy the insider, Jason.

>> About the benching of Urban Meyer in a pattern of repeated untruthfulness led Sean Kahn to fire him. Sources said he felt a moral obligation to terminate the coach something that the players and staff were hoping for. Former Eagles coach, and Byron Leftwich will merit consideration. Interim Jared will be an option. And the omicron spreading. The vast majority vaccinated and asymptomatic. The outbreak in Washington. Only two of the 23 players would have been held out of practice without a positive test according to team doctor Tony, and vaccinated and nonpositive will be tested weekly, with negative result. Nonvaccinated still tested daily. And the league urging all to get boosters not fully required for full vaccination status. NFL Chief Medical Officer Alan Sills he's confident that the three postponed games will kick off as currently scheduled, J.B.

JAMES BROWN: Jason, I'm sure you want to know the answer this from our Hall of Famer as well. Over 100 players are on the COVID reserve list, the 19 list.

League-wide, also coaching staffs impacted live. How do you deal with this disruption.

COACH COWHER: I commend them. Talking about the teams still in it we're talking about competitive imbalance, push them and postpone. And for NFL last year was one set. We dealt with it all year now you're coming back to another set of unprecedented breaking of routine and structure you have. That's what coaches are all about. I can only imagine what they're going through. If I was sitting there today, if I was a coach it's about messaging right now it's about adapting and adjust. We do that in a game but now you have to do it on a daily basis. Adapt and adjust. Message out to the players.

NATE BURLESON: Do it in life.

COACH COWHER: Nothing greater in life than to do things something tells you to do. Use it as an opportunity to do something special.

JAMES BROWN: Speaking of opportunity, Zach Wilson another opportunity without Cory Davis or Elijah Moore. Going against one of the best defenses one of the more difficult defenses to play against because of the amount of blitzes he's going to see today.

[COMMERCIAL]

>> As families continue to recover from the southern and Midwest tornadoes, we ask you to help by texting tornados to 90999 to give \$10 to the American Red Cross southern and Midwest tornadoes relief. You know it hasn't been pretty at times for either Ryan Tannehill or Ben Rothlisberger this season. With the clock ticking Big Ben is hoping for one last run at the postseason while Tannehill has an opportunity to further solidify his status by snatching the tenth win. Last night caused a little shake up in the AFC, the Patriot loss places them 3 seed opening the door for the Titans and Chiefs to compete for that first-round bye while the Colts have firmly planted a flag in one of the wild card spots. An MVP-like performance from Jonathan Taylor last night. Simply awesome. Putting an offense on his back in a statement win for the coach who snapped New England seven game win streak T Boomer.

BOOMER ESIASON: I texted frank. Fist bump back, 170 carries, one TD. They won every facet of the game except with their passing game. It was not very good yesterday. But their run game, the turnovers that they got, the special teams, and take a look at these numbers. He's got 1518 yards, 17 touchdowns, and J.B. you're right firmly entrenched now in the MVP conversation.

NATE BURLESON: Maybe it was a representation of the

body blows to the Patriots they were stepping up. 20 percent blitz rate. Fifth fewest in the league. They rushed four here. Who dropped under the pass, Darius Leonard and Bobby Arake this is another defensive stand where they rushed four dropped seven you're allowed to put pressure on the quarterback and now your playmakers, quarterbacks, safeties, can be there when the ball is in the air.

>> And turnovers as you pointed out just a blocked punt led to a touchdown right here. That's something you don't see from New England. You couple that with all of a sudden there's a missed field goal New England jumps off side ten points right there. This is this is New England hasn't done I was encouraged when you talk about this football team New England being down what they showed in the of course particularly Mac Jones.

PHIL SIMMS: Mac Jones, he didn't want to talk to you, that's why he gave you the fist bump. But he came through, give him and the team confidence. Harry down the field when they needed it. Throws it down, big plays, threw 299 yards. Watch the hit he's going to take, falls back and throws it.

PHIL SIMMS: Hunter Henry caught it for the touchdown. Mac had to get confidence the organization needed to feel good they can fall behind in the playoffs they find a way to come back.

JAMES BROWN: Boomer's time of the year, eight machinations, no doubt about it. So many things up for grabs including the entire AFC north and we'll bring in Jim Rome show and ABC and the hall of fame work.

JIM ROME: Who wants the AFC North does anybody want to win this division go to the playoffs? I know this Pittsburgh has not won in a month they're not going to figure in anything at all. Of course Baltimore is always going to be Baltimore except this year where they don't look anything at all like themselves. And Lamar looks nothing like Lamar of late. The Bengals look like the future had arrived when they smacked the Ravens in October. But then the future immediately lost to Mike White and the Jets and they've been up and down ever since. And who knows what to expect from the Browns tomorrow, when we don't even know who is going to be playing for them. I mean, somebody, J.B., has to win this division. I'm just not sure that anybody actually wants to.

JAMES BROWN: We'll see how it plays out as you said someone has to be crowned the kings of the north and who they is hoping it's the Bengals to stake their claim as they get set to take on a tough Denver Broncos team. Phil.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

PHIL SIMMS: It's going to be tough what do you do crowd the line of scrimmage stop the run if you're the Cincinnati Bengals, two corners, Eli apple Trae Waynes coming after injury, covering Sutton outside and Patrick both really big receivers tough matchup for the Bengals.

COACH COWHER: Most balanced in the AFC North. One thing they can't do something that's sustained success the last component is having the ability in the fourth quarter to close a game and believe you can close a game not hoping you can close a game.

NATE BURLESON: Broncos have a couple of running backs that can close out a game. Gordon only four more carries than Javontae, split system with the Denver Broncos. That's why they're so good.

BOOMER ESIASON: They're the most sacked quarterback in the league as Joe bureaus, when you think about going against this Denver defense one of the best secondaries in football it's not a great matchup for the Bengals today.

JAMES BROWN: Professor Cowher is fired up. Taking notes from his maxims. With the excitement of the holidays upon us, Illuminations "Sing 2" is the feel good movie of the season that we won't want to miss. Celebrating unity the power of pursuing your dreams it's a film that brings together all the beloved characters from before and brand new ones through a concert-like experience for all to enjoy. Here's a special look at "Sing 2" only in theaters this Wednesday.

[Movie]

[COMMERCIAL].

JAMES BROWN: No Jaylen Waddle today so DeVante Parker will need to step up to make it six straight. And they'll need the services of rookie Jaelan Phillips six sacks in the last three games, Bill, leading a squad hotter than a summer's day on south beach.

>> Welcome to Miami. Something special here.

>> Miami Dolphins.

>> At one point they were 1-7.

>> Getting on a roll.

>> Now 6-7.

>> Beautiful, man.

>> Tua to the end zone, Miami. Scoops it up, powered it all the way touchdown.

>> They're flying around having fun.

>> Absolutely positively on fire.

>> One, two, three.

>> They're still alive for the playoffs.

>>

JAMES BROWN: Dolphins are a hot time somebody else, Tua Tagovailoa, 4-0, 78 percent of all passes. This is how they do it get rid of the football quick and stack formulation, roll to the left and Tua high-low read finds Matt Collins for the throw, good move. How do they get it down the field. Tua looks right, right, back shoulders and Parker makes a nice catch, feet in bond, getting rid of the football protecting the football and playing to their defense.

COACH COWHER: You talk about the defense as good as anybody, second in points allowed, first in sacks, you look at their scheme it's a different type of scheme that put everybody at the line of scrimmage, the illusion of everybody coming but what you have here is people dropping on and you'll have Jaelan Phillips here and Andrew Van Ginkel and these two guys, seven sacks in the last five games they get after the quarterback. You talk about bump and run, Xavien Howard, one of the best in the National Football League. Look at this technique. No grabbing no holding it's nearing the receiver stepping in front that's C.J. Moore one of the best receivers, in the National Football League that's why they're good good at every level do a great job giving you different looks they may have dug themselves earlier in the season one football team I wouldn't want to play right now.

PHIL SIMMS: That offense is hot and so is the defense talking about hot let's throw it over to two hot guys, Boomer and Nate.

NATE BURLESON: I'll take it, a compliment from Phil.

BOOMER ESIASON: Something we can listen to.

NATE BURLESON: Credit where credit's do Miami Dolphins playing well the question can they make the playoffs.

BOOMER ESIASON: Here's the wild card the list at the bottom Miami, I believe they'll have to win nine games in a row to get to ten wins. Take a look at the remaining schedule can they win all four of the games.



NATE BURLESON: I think we're on the same page when it comes to the schedule they have the next two games they could win those but then Tennessee that's going to be tough in Tennessee and then we know that last week history tells us that up against New England at the end of the year it gets a little crazy. What are you thinking about this team as they make this run for the last four weeks?

BOOMER ESIASON: I don't think they can get to ten wins, that's the problem. They've really made a nice run here. I agree with coach they started too late seven losses is a lot to get to 10 and 7 and to ultimately win nine games in a row, I don't see it happening.

NATE BURLESON: Flores has done a great job. And this isn't being dismissive to what they have going on it's just going to be tough because they buried themselves so early in the season. Let's toss to a guy who used to party a lot in Miami, J.B.

JAMES BROWN: Wow, did he get the FBI report on me? Hey folks with kickoff just about a half hour away Nate it's time to set the scene at your game as we take you out to first on the field presented by crown Royal for the latest news and updates on your matchup. And later today two contests between squads with playoff hopes, Joe Burrow and the Bengals roar into mile high for a meeting with the Broncos and the Falcons. Tie for a wild-card spot when they face Jimmy and the 9ers, on CB S.

BOOMER ESIASON: Awesome defense, Nick Bosa an amazing football player they have some of the best football players on their roster entire NFL, All-Pro defensive end here's the thing when you play against Matt Ryan you know where he's going to be means you don't have to worry about containment when you're a defensive end 14 sacks, 18 tackles for a loss he'll be a monster today and he'll be in the Thorne of the Ryan for sure.

NATE BURLESON: Monsters, offensive side of the ball, George Kittle we'll talk later in the show and Brandon eye up, they're first in the NFL when it comes to yards per catch, second in the NFL when it comes to yards after catch. That right there is dominance.

COACH COWHER: Let me give you the offensive, Sanders, five touchdowns rushing and Kyle Pitts, third in the league in total yards receiving behind only Travis Kelce and Mark Andrews. So these are younger players, not Cordel, but Kyle Pitts young upcoming tight end their only issue is on defensive end of the ball, Matt Ryan playing quality football.

PHIL SIMMS: And it's tough too. Cordel Patterson who do

we talk about more on the show than him every week it's something different I'll talk about Arthur Smith real quick when he took that job I said this is a total rebuild down in Atlanta. It's going to be a disaster. They started off 1-3, hung in there, they're organized, they're tough and I give Arthur Smith a lot of credit.

NATE BURLESON: Speaking of Falcons, former Falcon great, Julio Jones, not scored a touchdown this seen .season today is a great day for him to get into the end zone.

COACH COWHER: Why would you say that?

[COMMERCIAL].

JAMES BROWN: Walter Payton man of the year award recognizes players who exhibit excellence on the field and whose passion to impact lives extends beyond the game. The winner will be announced at NFL honors Thursday February 10th and to learn about this year's nominees visit NFL Dom/man of the year. And this year marks Cam Heyward's fourth nomination, the Hayward house has worked to impact lives of youth partnering with organizations since the Boys & Girls Club of western Pennsylvania and southeastern brain tumor foundation. Time now for pregame HQ delivered by dominos.

>> Tonight it's going to feel like a playoff game.

>> A lot of electricity in this place.

>> Scores in the end zone, caught. Touchdown, Chargers.

>> Caught, Kelce, touchdown. And Kansas City punches back.

>> Kelce and touchdown. In the biggest AFC West game in years.

>> To be in that moment, finding underneath, and making a dynamic play cut back, you'd think he's old can't run by people but he's still running by people got in the end zone, it was a special moment. All the hard work that he puts in every day is paying off.

>> Can't quit but left them for dead 2-4 defense couldn't get off the field and Patrick Mahomes was channelling inner Daniel Jones but they've ripped off seven in a row and letting everybody know we're back. Maybe not back to the dominant dynamic vocational tron of two years ago and no ma hones has not shown up for the full 60 week in, week out but he's showing up when it matters most ask the Chargers if you're telling me the team's biggest concern is

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Mahomes I'm rolling with that team every single time. Yes he's still missing throws he should never miss but he still has time to get right and looking around the AFC right now I just don't see anybody that I trust more. They're not what they were the last couple of years, but more importantly, they're not what they were in October. They are still the team to beat in the AFC. Meantime, Green Bay sits atop the NFC after Arizona's loss meaning Aaron Rodgers and TB44 on a collision course for rematch of last year's NFC title game. So a perfect setup for Green Bay, week on week off title game frozen tundra against a team from Florida perfect until you remember they had the same exact setup last year and they got wrecked by old man Brady and the Bucs. Not only that, the Rams suddenly look like a contender once again after punching Arizona in the face in their house or they will be once they're healthy. So yes, Green Bay has the inside track to the bye and the home field throughout but no it did not matter last season and it's not going to matter this season either if they do not clean up those terrible, horrible special teams play, J.B.

JAMES BROWN: Jim, thanks so much. I'll get to Nate for that definition again a Voltron that's an SAT word, right? As great as Patrick Mahomes was down the stretch in that game the Chargers had opportunities definitely Coach to put it away.

COACH COWHER: Talking about Brandon Staley's decision. And I understand you take it in but there's things you're talking about field position if you don't make it points at time if you don't make it but you talk about momentum. And I look at the possession that he had at the end of the first half, when they walked off that field he could have been up 17-10 with all the momentum. They stopped him and the Kansas City Chiefs went in halftime with all momentum on their side. Brandon said that real football people know, I'll say it to Brandon I coached 15 years hadn't made the same decisions you had to make. Real people know this. Points, field position, there's no metrics for momentum. Get a feel for the game. Don't lose the feel for the game because momentum is a real element to the game.

PHIL SIMMS: Man, I was there as a player we all were so we know, Bill. End of that game three guys came through the superstars won the game for the Kansas City Chiefs, Patrick Mahomes and Kelce and Hill. Patrick Mahomes, good a lot of short passes but at the end really tough throws down the field. How about this one to Travis Kelce on the run, terrific. And Kelce with the moves after they catch it, reroute by Tyreek Hill and Travis Kelce. And Patrick Mahomes is great. 22 receptions between the two of them. 339 yards, three touchdowns.

>> Last two Super Bowls they were there, AFC number

one quarterback is Patrick Mahomes, take a lot to knock them off. I think Justin Herbert is learning. He's learning they had a chance to win the football game. No question about it. And I agree with you, coach, end of the first half they should have had a field goal but at the end of the day they won it without Chris Jones we talked about him and Kansas City defense and the offense is up and running and they're going to be tough to knock out of this playoff run.

NATE BURLESON: Chiefs prime example why you don't panic in the early season. Uncharted water, other teams trying to find their way through. Trying to find the bottom with their feet struggling to stay afloat. Chiefs don't want to start swimming they know how deep the water is therefore good. Back to back Super Bowls. You only know how far it is because you've been there before. They're figuring it out at the right time. Never apologize for a win just stack them up.

JAMES BROWN: Also on Thursday as we all know some high-profile moves, if you will, from one of the worst teams in the league and a move that surprised absolutely no one for a lengthy list of reasons. Your Urban Meyer ousted as Jacksonville's head coach.

NATE BURLESON: I believe if you lose the fans start winning you can get it back. If you lose the execs or coaches you can get it back but if you lose that locker room it's inevitable you'll lose your job. So I saw this coming.

BOOMER ESIASON: Not surprising smoke equals fire, choices he made in his tenure went south. Not coming back to Jacksonville after the loss, that hurt them.

PHIL SIMMS: You did an interview with Vrabel early in the year. Xs and Os, Urban didn't connect with the coaches, players orphans.

COACH COWHER: It's about having the best players and recruit. It's culture, you've got to learn how to talk about the players not be offended if they're questioning you, you're talking to them. They're men. Men in that room. They don't work for you. They work with you. And that's the difference between college and professional and I think Urban, he didn't have the time to get to that part of it. He did not connect with the players. He did not connect with the coaches and consequently no longer coaching there.

NATE BURLESON: Connected with.

COACH COWHER: They did connect. This guy connecting two last eight games, five and three, and take over the game today, Ben, do your thing.

[COMMERCIAL].



JAMES BROWN: This week the Titans hosted 50 children from big brother big sisters gifting each child a \$300 gift card to academy sports and outdoors to shop for presents not only for themselves but their families. Here's Harold Landry, Tennessee Titans, speed rusher for this front. Very good. 11 sacks. And one forced fumble this year.

COACH COWHER: Talk about sacks, T.J. Watt, looking to break the record of Strahan. T.J. it's about stopping the run today.

>> How about Jerome Baker outside linebacker for the Miami Dolphins, unsung hero for defense, 11 turnovers 11 points as they won five in a row. Let's go over to Jim Rome for more on the 49ers.

JIM ROME: Appreciate that, Boomer hit on the Packers the Bucs and the Rams but the one team none of them want to run into is the 49ers who are at home against the Falcons. Yes, on their worst day, they can lose to just about anybody. Coached or not coached by Urban Meyer. But when they're right, they can beat anybody in the NFL, especially if that freak George Kittle continues to abuse defenses and Deebo wrecks fools and there's people outside the facility hate on GB but star linebacker Warner told me everybody within the building lives in Georgia rap low is a leader. I don't care how they were playing in October if they do get in, the Niners are not a team that you're going to want to see in January, Nate.

NATE BURLESON: Thanks, Rome if you want to see football covered like never before check out slime time to get the week's slime lights, tune in 7:00 p.m. eastern on Nickelodeon to see who wins the prestigious award only on NFL prime time this week I caught up with the recent MVP, George Kittle to talk about his spectacular performances over the week and what other tight ends he's a fan of.

[MUSIC].

>> Here they go, Kittle is on the move. Oh, he broke the tackle. Kiss him goodbye.

>> And it is caught by George Kittle!

>> Oh, my goodness.

>> What a catch that was.

>> Caught. It's a touchdown grabbed by George Kittle!

NATE BURLESON: Listen these last couple of weeks you've been doing your thing. What has been working for you, lately?

>> Feeling good, feeling healthy out there. Getting a lot of opportunities. When I get a little bit of space I like to YAC a little bit. That's been fun for me get the space, have fun a little bit get the ball in my hands.

NATE BURLESON: You were named as the NFC offensive player of the week and along with that you were named the NVP, Nickelodeon valuable player how did that feel to get that award and two why didn't you get slime.

>> For you, the NVP that was definitely awesome. Oohoo boys. The second one, the slime. I offered to slime my offensive lineman Alfredo he said yes. He didn't know what he said yes to. We've got slime can I dump it on you? I still have the slime at home. I think I'm going to use it on like whenever if my parents come for Christmas or something I'll slime them I have them in my back pocket to use.

>> Fella, fella it's national tight end day I have to say a few words it's not Jimmy G's day it's all our day because you're honoree tight ends.

NATE BURLESON: You've developed national tight ends day which is a holiday that we all love. Why was it important for everybody to recognize tight ends as a holiday?

>> I feel like 28 teams didn't get their tight ends highlighted enough respect or talked about. I just felt like we get to do everything. It's not, hey, you have to run block the whole day you have to pass proceed the whole day. We literally get to do everything all the time. We throw passes in Super Bowls. I just wanted those guys to be recognized more.

NATE BURLESON: Now I'm going to hit you with some rapid-fire questions and you can justifier back whatever pops in your head. Okay. So we're talking about in the league, at the tight end position, who has the best hands?

>> I feel like I always see like waller or Pitts just snagging things out of the air it's just wild.

NATE BURLESON: I know it's you but who is the best at yards after catch.

>> That's me. Don't think twice. (Laughter).

NATE BURLESON: You got it. Best touchdown celebrations for a tight end?

>> Oh, best touchdown celebration, I think Kelce has that just because he's gotten fined so many times bezel



abrasions.

NATE BURLESON: Best tight end from.

>> Me.

NATE BURLESON: Bring it T.J., Noah. I respect it. Thank you George for sitting down with me I appreciate you. Keep doing your thing not just on the field but off of it.

>> Appreciate you, Nate.

JAMES BROWN: So how good is George Kittle been since week nine basically in six weeks six TDs 530 yards on 38 catches. I asked him about being on the sideline and what was it like getting on the field again. He said I played angry. And you can tell with this style of play.

BOOMER ESIASON: Great to hear Jim Rome say spoke to Warner they believe in Garoppolo, and Nance not ready yet and traded him third overall past draft. It comes back to whether or not Garoppolo can stay healthy when he's healthy they're a playoff team without question.

COACH COWHER: Anybody better, five receiving touchdowns, five running touchdowns Kyle Pitts another up and coming tight end another guy to keep an eye on.

PHIL SIMMS: We thought Falcons in rebuild season, 6-7 hoping to go to the playoffs I don't think Matt Ryan gets close to the respect he deserves. He's playing hard, completing 68 percent of his passes. Leading the team. He's emotional on the sidelines and he can move in the pocket to throw the ball.

JAMES BROWN: Toya's decorations are awesome. It's time now for upset specials for week 15. Feel.

PHIL SIMMS: I like Tennessee Titans over the Pittsburgh Steelers because I'm going against Bill.

COACH COWHER: I'm going Las Vegas over Cleveland.

NATE BURLESON: I agree with Phil, going with Tennessee.

BOOMER ESIASON: I'm going with the Bengals over Broncos. First overall pick, Joe Burrow, going on the road. For some reason they play better on the road than at home.

PHIL SIMMS: I misspoke earlier in the show, I have two guys who think they're hot.

NATE BURLESON: You already said it. It's too late.

JAMES BROWN: For some of you, we'll be back with more. That coming up after a quick timeout. But check it out. For the rest of you we'll get you out to your game next.

[COMMERCIAL].

JAMES BROWN: Coming up 4:00 p.m. eastern mattress four squads compete with the postseason in mind as Denver Broncos look to score a win over Bengals and 9ers and hope to maintain wild card status. Time for game day delivery presented by Amazon Bengals and Broncos currently on the outside of the AFC playoff picture Boomer knows that gut check field for both squads.

PHIL SIMMS: Both teams feels it keeps them or kicks them out of the playoffs. Couple things to look at. When I look at the game, the Cincinnati Bengals are they battle tested enough not to make the mistakes down end of games do they understand what being a championship team and going to the playoffs what you have to accomplish? I watch them play I don't see that I see them a little loose and I see Joe Burrow a lot of times when I watch him just taking too many plays, past the point of where they should go. In other words, give up on the play. Protect yourself a little more and don't take those chances throwing the football.

COACH COWHER: The other side look at the Denver Broncos 4-2 last game, Teddy Bridgewater 7-6 overall. 0 interceptions and six losses, seven interceptions they go as he goes. They can run the football. They can play defense. Right now to me they'll go as far as Teddy Bridgewater takes them if he plays within the system they're a team to look out for. This team very defining both teams need this one to validate who they are. This is a quality win for whoever wins the game.

NATE BURLESON: Teddy Bridgewater only thrown over 300 yards twice this season we know where their strength is run game, Williams and Gordon, balanced attack, when you load that box, that's when you take those shots to the big receivers it's is not just about the offense defensive side of the Broncos they're absolutely solid.

>> They're loaded especially in the secondary and they've gotten better since they traded Von Miller. Think about that for a second. Bengals are a nightmare matchup for everybody in the secondary. Maybe with the exception of this team right here. One thing that really disturbs me about the Bengals number one Joe Burrow is the most sacked quarterback in the NFL, 38 sacks against him. And the last two games they've had six turnovers. So that tells you that they're young, they've had blocked punts and

interceptions.

JAMES BROWN: That'll do it.

NATE BURLESON: In experience.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

BOOMER ESIASON: I go back to the jet game when they won the game the entire game, all of a sudden Mike white in a miracle happened in the Meadowlands. And since that time not a consistent football team. That's what I would worried.

PHIL SIMMS: I'll go back to the Teddy Bridgewater here. He wants to be part of the offense. He doesn't want to be focused on him. And look he loves boot passes, fake to the left, roll to the right. 90 percent of the time rolling to the right and he likes delegating and moving around and when they have those bad games they have to call on him now get it done for us the team's not built that way unfair to him it's not going to happen if you throw everything on the shoulder of Teddy Bridgewater.

BOOMER ESIASON: One thing I would say about the Broncos about next year who is their quarterback for next year. Their quarterback for next year may be playing in Green Bay today and that's Aaron Rodgers. This team is loaded with offensive talent. They have their three wide receivers now going forward for next three weeks. They've got tight end presence. They've got quality offensive line play and we talk about their run game. Think about this team if Aaron Rodgers were their quarterback next year, where would they be.

PHIL SIMMS: They want to get to the playoffs this year for sure.

COACH COWHER: San Francisco defensive for real five takeaways, talk about a team that was so uniquely they're very close. Denver and San Francisco running game. Defensive and go as far as the quarterback position takes them. Both quarterbacks, Garoppolo, seven wins, interception. Six losses seven interceptions they want to stay out of harms way let the other elements of your team take over.

JAMES BROWN: Abundantly clear that Bill Cowher is in a postseason mindset already. No question come game day whatever he says goes because he once told his assistant coach I'm concerned that you are not concerned. That's exactly right. He's on top of it.

COACH COWHER: Should be bothered at times.

JAMES BROWN: It's okay to be uncomfortable.

COACH COWHER: It's okay to be uncomfortable.

