Bob Wallace’s After the Buzzer Podcast
with Jim Thomas (Part 3)

Bob Wallace: We have Jim Thomas back for his third segment with us and this time we thought we'd have a little fun just talking ball as we open the NFL season. So in reality, this is between the buzzer instead of after the buzzer. We are, we are going to talk a little about what's going on in the NFL. What teams or players we like? What surprises may play out, or what teams or players will disappoint? So as we look at week one, we'll touch upon those dynamics. Jim, welcome.

Jim Thomas: Great to be here and it feels a little strange after my, what, six years in the in the hockey realm to be covering football. You know, I always used to play a game in my head with the draft, so we go to the combine, I'd write a draft series. I'd go to a pro day or two for many years. I'd also go to the Senior Bowl. So when the draft happened, I'd say, OK, where is the first guy drafted that I either haven't heard of or know very little about, and it usually would be in the third round sometimes a little later, and this would be maybe about three years into covering the Blues, they're playing playoff game. A late starting playoff game at the Enterprise Center and they had the draft on. It was the night of the draft. So guess one that was the first player so this is like maybe 2020, something like that, or maybe even a little later. It was like the 11th pick of the draft (laughter). I’m like Who is this guy?

Bob Wallace: Do you remember who it was?

Jim Thomas: No, I don’t, but so you can forget in a hurry. But even when I was covering the Blues, I try to watch the NFL college football too. Because you don't spend 27 years of your professional life covering a sport. Bobby, this is we're going into the 8th season without NFL football in Saint Louis Time has flown and it…

Bob Wallace: So what are you? Are you a football fan still? You know, a lot of people in Saint Louis say they don't watch. I have people here in, in this, in my office and we don't follow football anymore.

Jim Thomas: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: Do you look forward to the football season?

Jim Thomas: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I really love college football, but I like the NFL too and I, my Sundays even if, again when I was doing hockey, if I was busy working and couldn't watch that that much. But Sundays were a little better if the Rams lost. I can say that now, you know? But yeah, yeah, I love the sport.

Bob Wallace: I think you have maybe 60% of the St. Louis population that feels the way that you do. Well before we go in the NFL a little bit, what about college? Who do you follow in college?

Jim Thomas: Well, you know, I had two sons go to West Point so I follow Army religiously and you know how it is, when you and I grew up, there might be one or two games on this is like before ESPN.

Bob Wallace: I’m predicting that we'll go into just really two conferences. There'll be two conferences, and, and I actually think and I have advocating this to my college football contacts, they ought to go into, they ought to divide. it should no longer be conferences, it should be by sports, because there's no way that Stanford should be playing Duke in Field Hockey on a Tuesday.

Jim Thomas: Right, on a Tuesday, right.

Bob Wallace: You know those kids are student athletes they get. I mean the football to a lesser extent basketball, they’re on a different realm by themselves, so let them you know, you only play football once a week so let them travel.

Jim Thomas: Right, right.

Bob Wallace: You know my view on all

Jim Thomas: And that’s not, it's on the weekend, so the missed class time. It’s not always on the weekend. There are some games on Wednesday night or whatever. No, I totally agree and you know there are precedents for that in a way. Notre Dame is independent in football, but they play in the ACC and everything else. Even Army, Army is an independent football. They play in the Patriot League, so the travel is limited. That's a great idea. I I've read a lot about it because I'm just interested in what's happening. So that's a great idea. I’m surprised no one has brought that up.

Bob Wallace: Well, you know I have this, a very serious argument with friends of mine that are in college athletics and I keep arguing that they really want to put a band-aid over a gun war.

Jim Thomas: May be a lot?

Bob Wallace: Oh okay, excuse me. The system is a lot broken in college athletics, and they keep trying to just plugged on, you know, repair the. They need to put everything in the center of the table and talk about how do we reform it based on 2023 and beyond not on beyond, to 2023, the landscape has changed and with NIL, with transfer and all that

Jim Thomas: And also the power that the networks have. If it were up to the schools and maybe the present, maybe it be easier to find a solution. The reason the PAC 12 will no longer exist as we know it is because they couldn't get a big enough TV contract.

Bob Wallace: Well, I'm not going to give the presidents the hook because they chase the money. The president chased the money. I mean, you know, there's no, I mean, there's no way you can argue. and I used to have to again this argument with college athletes going to play games six hours away, a basketball game, right on a Tuesday. And so what are they losing leaving on Sunday to get there? So they have Monday to relax. They play on Tuesday. They don’t get back till Thursday, when do they go to class? And so the answer that I’m given all the time is we have tutors. Well, I mean, tutors is not the same as sitting in a classroom and being engaged. And if we’re changing what college athletes, being a student athlete means to being an athlete student, then let’s change it. Let’s not convince ourselves that we’re, that this is an educational mission and do what they’re doing now in college athletes.

Jim Thomas: Such a great point. That’s such a great point, especially, let’s just say in football maybe there are I don’t know, 50-60 teams that are, you know; we talk about the Power 5 conferences and then the Second 5.

Bob Wallace: Well now it’s Power 3.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, right.

Bob Wallace: I mean maybe you could argue…

Jim Thomas: Yeah, sooner or later, and the big problem is putting up a great fight because sooner or later, they’re going to be, I mean, either it’s going to be the Big 10 and the SEC. But all the colleges that are below that, that’s even a..

Bob Wallace: Well, it’s hard I mean, you know again I from a Yale background. I mean Yale’s got 100,000 seat stadium and for most games we get, they get 7,000 people and you know just these colleges that aren’t competing for national championships. You know the SEC, they draw 70,000 you know..

Jim Thomas: Yeah most of them

Bob Wallace: …for their games

Jim Thomas: Like Tennessee 100,000.

Bob Wallace: I’m not sure what Mizzouis drawing these days. I mean I know that

Jim Thomas: I think maybe they can put about 70,000 in or 65…

Bob Wallace: But do they fill that?

Jim Thomas: No, no. Maybe once or twice a year for

Bob Wallace: Alabama

Jim Thomas: A big game or maybe Georgia comes in or whatever. I think Georgia does play there this year, so, no it’s LSU I think comes in this year so. Yeah but yeah, they, yeah.

Bob Wallace: And when I asked you to do this podcast and sort of just the fun part of it, just talking about football, NFL football, you said you did some research. So going into this season in the NFL, who you picking?

Jim Thomas: I had to do some research. I think, this is no great brainstorm here but it always starts with Kansas City and Patrick and Patrick Mahomes. You know as well as anybody better than most people with each passing year, pun intended, I mean, we can go back to the time when you were with the Rams, you better have a, it's a quarterback driven league and the teams with the quarterbacks are the teams that have the best chance. Yeah, it helps to have a running game. Yeah, it helps to have a defense. I think when the Rams with Vermeil (sp?), Rams won the Super Bowl, that really helped. I remember the national media saying, oh, you got to be able to run the ball to win the Super Bowl. You got to be able to play defense one as you know, now granted, they're playing with the lead a lot. That 99 defense was very underrated. I think they finished what scoring difference or something and even better in scoring difference. Something like that. But even running the ball, you know, Marshall Faulk ran for 29 yards in the Super Bowl and who won the Super Bowl? Kurt Warner had 420, it was a record. While anyway, that kind of….

Bob Wallace: Until he broke, I think in that he broke it.

Jim Thomas: Did he break it when he was at Arizona?

Bob Wallace: Yeah, when he was at Arizona.

Jim Thomas: And I think it’s since been broken again but that kind of, yeah you still need defense, you still need a running game, but that’s kind of, that team helped once and for all explode that that that a pass first, a so-called finesse offense came with so, so it’s all about the quarterbacks. So I think you start with Mahomes, and then it goes from there since then.. Let’s start with the AFC. Cincinnati with Joe Burrow is that real, I mean, you and I when we look back at Cincinnati…

Bob Wallace: Right

Jim Thomas: …and think they’re going to mess it up somehow. (Bob laughs) You need good ownership and you need stability. Now they’ve had stability with Mike Brown, don't. Yeah. And they don't. They just don't have a I mean, are they going to be able to keep that up? I'm fascinated and your son is a scout for Miami; I’m fascinated with the AFC East. New England is all, I think it’s, there are three teams that have a legitimate chance to win the AFC East. Miami, the Jets and of course Buffalo.

Bob Wallace: Until it’s proven otherwise, you can’t really vote, you can’t really bet against Bill Belichick.

Jim Thomas: That’s true and I was stunned so and I covered it for many years. They won that AFC East 17 times between 2000 and 2019. So, 17 times out of 20 seasons, which is amazing.

Bob Wallace: Right, right.

Jim Thomas: The only one to break the streak now, Buffalo enters the season they’ve won three in a row. So yeah, you have that but I think there’s, don’t you think there’s more of a sense that, I think Buffalo, we all like Josh Allen but he led the league in turnovers and you know

Bob Wallace: But he is like Superman when plays

Jim Thomas: oh yeah, and

Bob Wallace: He’s really good. I …

Jim Thomas: Well he rushed for like what 700 yards. I don’t think that can keep up, especially the older you get, the more you’re going to be. I also think, it happened with Kurt Warner. His quarterbacks get more established they have more, so much confidence which is a good thing for a quarterback. They take more chances, remember all the, even in 01, the second Superbowl Team, Warner started throwing more interceptions, so you wonder about that. Miami now they had, they have Vic Fangio. so that that's a very much a proven defensive coordinator. They weren't very good on defense last year, right.

Bob Wallace: Yes, well you know they were feast or famine to get a lot of glitching and stuff that you know the they their scoring defense wasn't great. Yeah. The defense had room for improvement.

Jim Thomas: And then they had Jalen Ramsey. I think he’s a little bit overrated but he’s still, he’s got a good, he’s only 28.

Bob Wallace: But he’s hurt now, he’s out until December or maybe, right?

Jim Thomas: Yeah, OK, OK. And but, you know, having Tyree Kill can too, can he? Are the concussion problems over because he's definitely a talent, right?

Bob Wallace: Right. Concussion problems are over until you get your next one right.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah. And then obviously the Buffaloes, the Bills with Josh Allen and then The Jets, Aaron Rodgers, four time MVP former, Super Bowl camp. They haven't won the East title since 2002, Bob since 2002.

Bob Wallace: So, speaking of Kansas City, they open up against Detroit and you know Detroit is Brad Holmes, who we hired here in St. Louis in the PR department and then moved up to scouting, college scouting, who are you picking in that game?

Jim Thomas: Where's the game at? Isn’t it the Kansas City?

Bob Wallace: Yeah, of course. Champion always has the game.

Jim Thomas: Right, right, right. I would say the Chiefs. Brad Holmes let that sink in. There's Brad Holmes start out not just in the public relations department where he was helping out the writers. He was an intern in the PR and then switched over to scouting with the Rams, followed them to LA, now he’s the general manager and I tell you, the Lions, they have an old school coach, who was it Don Campbell, Dan Campbell?

Bob Wallace: Dan Campbell

Jim Thomas: And they really came on

Bob Wallace: And you who know their assistant general manager is?

Jim Thomas: Who?

Bob Wallace: Ray Agnew.

Jim Thomas: Really, Ray Agnew, defensive tackle of the Super Bowl champion, 34 champion Rams. Wow. Anyway, Brad Holmes, always a football mind before he kept rising in the depth chart. Brad and I would always, we have nice conversations, debate about players in the draft talking about the draft. Talking about the draft, he got even with the Rams. He got higher up the food chain he was more reluctant to share his thoughts because he was having more on his plate than what they were doing. They’re kind of a chic pick.

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: And the uh, and I’ve seen more, so.

Bob Wallace: But I think he’s –

Jim Wallace: Do you think Detroit will come back to the pack. Jerrod Golf. Listen, the guy is accurate.

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: If you protect him, he’s going to complete passes. I remember Mike Barns used to always say, and it stuck with me, he looks for toughness, brains and accuracy. He doesn’t necessary care about arm strength and Jerrod Golf is tremendously accurate.

Bob Wallace: Two things I’ve noticed about – speaking about arm strength – is, you know, when you look at the highlights of the Rams team back in 1999, Kurt Warner’s arm was better than I remember.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. Now he threw some wobbly balls and wasn’t always the prettiest brass.

Bob Wallace: He wasn’t’ always pretty but he was always accurate. But he was going down field a lot.

Jim Thomas: Oh yeah.

Bob Wallace: The other thing I notice is how – I don’t think I realized how good Marshal Faulk was. I mean, his edge running was just unbelievable. I mean it was – the highlights are extremely…

Jim Thomas: I got to tell you. I uh, he had been retired and he – I don’t know if he was first ballot, I think he was, but I remember the owner’s meetings were in uh, Phoenix. They were at the Biltmore and it was the year that he got nominated, so it’s five years after and they were showing highlights – it look my breath away.

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: And you see it in real time and you appreciate it but after - and not quite Barry Sanders-like but more toward that than I thought and the other thing about him was, you know, what a great pass catcher.

Bob Wallace: Right, right. This is spectacular. You know, back to the – go off back to the greatest show on turf, but you just don’t – didn’t appreciate how special that was while you were in the midst of it.

Jim Thomas: I know, right.

Bob Wallace: And as you look back, and I always tell people, I’m not sure I really enjoyed the Superbowl because we were working the whole time.

Jim Thomas: Right, same way.

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: And the players is happy. One of the things that stuck with me, I don’t know if it was – it might have been DeMarco Far. There is a locker room and believe it or not, I went down to the locker room because normally there’s so many media you don’t think the press conference is up there and what no and you just settle for that. I remember DeMarco’s like yeah they were happy but they were like okay, who do we play next. They were just in that kind. You’re in that daily, week-to-week, day-to-day moan and uh, I said DeMarco, you don’t have to play anybody else. You’re the champion.

Bob Wallace: Uh, the thing I remember is always for me the leaning over from the stage saying, DeMarco, you’re a world champion.

Jim Thomas: And both Bob, Camille and Mark saying special place and time. And you know Mahomes, I remember right when he came out, going to Kansas City up to River Falls and interviewing him, Andy Reed was there, who I knew from the Mizzou days. I’ve known Andy Reed forever. Not that we’re like this, like the best of friends, but we kind of have a relationship in a way – just every vibe that Mahomes set off. You’re like this kid’s got it, you know. And maybe he’s different now. Didn’t he have the big head, sharp, focused, confident in himself and boy you got to have a quarterback.

Bob Wallace: Right. You got to. You mentioned Josh Allen, and uh, Josh Allen is special and I think they open up against, where’s that, Buffalo -- well they play Monday night against the Jets.

Jim Thomas: Ooh that’s Must-See TV to see Aaron Rogers – they’ll be how we will he be with the Jets? I mean, I don’t know, they have a top five defense or they did last year. A lot of times with Green Bay, he didn’t have that, so we’ll see what happens there. Pressure cooker in New York. It’s a pressure cooker. There were some very intrepid reporters in Green Bay. No, Bob McGinn, you know Bob. Tom Silverstein, they get after us but it’s a little bit different in New York. And they always show New York as a tough media market and I’m like well, it’s a bandwagon market.

Bob Wallace: What do you think --

Jim Thomas: If you’re doing great, they love ya, if you’re not, look out. I’m going to go with Buffalo at that game. I just, I’m, I just wonder, and I don’t --

Bob Wallace: It’s at, it’s at New York.

Jim Thomas: I know. I’m still, I’m going to go with Buffalo. And I know he had thumb issues. I just wonder if Aaron Rogers is on the downhill slide.

Bob Wallace: Well the popular pick in the NFC is Philadelphia to return and they’re playing New England. And again, based upon what we’ve been talking about where it’s quarterbacks.

Jim Thomas: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: What do you think about that? Jaylin Hertz versus Mack Jowls, and Bill Belichick.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, I still, and I have a lot of respect for Belichick despite his flaws, but Jaylin Hertz is uh – and he just signed, didn’t he? He’s a quarterback and he used to do contract. Can you imagine signing someone for $50 million a year, $60 million a year, can you imagine that? No, I kind of like the Eagles now and the NFC east was song strong last year. You had three teams make the playoffs and the commanders – I have, still have trouble calling them the commanders. They were eight, eight and one so they have a losing team and a – so that, that is a strong division but there hasn’t been a repeat division champion in that league since Andy Reed was at the Eagles from 01 to 04.

Bob Wallace: Right. They were at the four NFC championship --

Jim Thomas: Right, right. And so, unpredictable but strong. I mean there were a few years when the east was weak but the uh --

Bob Wallace: Stay in the east then. Dallas at New York.

Jim Thomas: Oooo, oooo. I’m still not a believer in New York. I never liked – I watched Jan and Jones play a few times at Duke and uh --

Bob Wallace: You watched – you watched Duke?

Jim Thomas: They were little guys --

Bob Wallace: Okay, okay.

Jim Thomas: He was like a 53, 54 percent passer in college and I know you can get better but just not accurate enough uh, and he’s got $82 million guaranteed first two years. That’s just the guaranteed money. Jones just did a contract. Man, if you pick wrong, I mean it’s always been a – if you pick wrong on a quarterback --

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: And, you know, you have \_\_\_\_\_\_ at uh, as the \_\_\_\_\_\_ tore down. Look, you can sell the story where some of the players –

Bob Wallace: Right, right, right.

Jim Thomas: -- he was too tough on them. Well no. You don’t take teams to the Super Bowl by having it be a country club, you know.

Bob Wallace: But uh --

Jim Thomas: And Dallas. That press conf – you know, this is stunning to me. They have not been to a championship game, an NFC championship game, since 1995. Was that the year that Barry Switzer was there, their last Super Bowl.

Bob Wallace: Oh my gosh.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. The fans still come out. Now they’ve been a little better for a lot of years --

Bob Wallace: And yet the reporters voted Jerry into the Hall of Fame.

Jim Thomas: Knock, knock – when we left, and I know you want to move on when we – the night they approved the move, you remember Jerry when in and swayed the room, so when David Hahn, who’s now at Hat Newscenter Paper, he covered the press conference, the main news story. I was assigned to catch the owners as they were coming out. We got some great stuff, especially from Jerry Jones, but some of the others, and uh, all the Dallas writers, right after the – this is going to get Jerry in the Hall of Fame, which from a St. Louis perspective –

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: You tear a team out of St. Louis, that’s what puts them over the uh, the top. So no, the east though, the east will be fun.

Bob Wallace: Right. So let’s – we’ll talk about it in a couple. You mentioned earlier Joe Burrows in uh, in Cincinnati, and they open up at Cleveland with Deshon Watson, so that’s a pretty good quarterback match up.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah.

Bob Wallace: Who you picking there?

Jim Thomas: Yeah. I guess, I’m not going to break formula. I’m going to go with the Cinci one – but Burrow he’s really developed into quite a guy and then – didn’t he start out at Ohio State, so.

Bob Wallace: Right, right.

Jim Thomas: So this game will have meaning. They’ll be playing in this whole – at least where he played college ball for a little bit.

Bob Wallace: Well, I’ll tell you, but he’s in Cincinnati now so that’s --

Jim Thomas: Right, right, right.

Bob Wallace: And I guess that’s what he was wanting to go to the – one of the few players that wanted to play in Cincinnati.

Jim Thomas: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: Because he was from Ohio.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah.

Bob Wallace: Next, Jacksonville with Trevor Lawrence, up and comer. Are you a Trevor Lawrence believer?

Jim Thomas: Uh, I’m starting to be and that team was sneaky good last year. Do you have who – who are they opening here.

Bob Wallace: They open against Indianapolis which might be one of the worst teams in the league this year --

Jim Thomas: Who is – who’s quarterbacking --

Bob Wallace: Well they just – in Indianapolis they just named the kid from Florida, uh, what’s – Michichin?

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah, yeah, right. I’m going to go with the Jaguars, yeah.

Bob Wallace: Okay. A popular pick in – the other popular pick in the NFC is San Francisco.

Jim Thomas: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: Uh, and they open up at Pittsburgh. Now are you are a Brock Perty believer now?

Jim Thomas: I really like Jimmy Garabalo and he is in Miami now right? Is he the --

Bob Wallace: No, he’s uh – no no, he’s in uh, the Raiders.

Jim Thomas: Oh, okay. Okay, yeah.

Bob Wallace: To join Josh McDaniel from the Patriots.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, no I had, I have a lot of – and it could be a little salty with the media, a lot of respect for Mike Tomlin. They didn’t have a whole lot last year and he got what, seven winds or something?

Bob Wallace: No, they were eight, eight and one, I think.

Jim Thomas: Oh yeah.

Bob Wallace: He never had a losing season in Pittsburgh.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, he’s unbelievable. I think he’s, he’s – what, he’s won one or two Super Bowls --

Bob Wallace: In which he was one, one.

Jim Thomas: And, but very underrated, I’m going to go with Pittsburgh in that game.

Bob Wallace: That’s a big upset.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. Who they got now, the --

Bob Wallace: San Francisco, with Brock Perty and --

Jim Thomas: San Fran, okay. I’m going to go with – well, San Francisco --

Bob Wallace: And that defense over there, they don’t have Joey Bosa signed yet, so.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah. It’s a great defense. Christian McCafferty added so much. I’m not saying he’s Marshall Faulk cuz he’s not, but in terms of being a pass – uh, receiver, runner, combo, he’s – there aren’t a ton of them. Maybe there’s a few more that are running backs.

Bob Wallace: What is – what do you think about this --

Jim Thomas: You got to stay healthy.

Bob Wallace: -- The mistreatment of running backs in the national football --

Jim Thomas: In terms of how they’re --

Bob Wallace: -- And how they’re compensated. I’ve always argued, and I’ve said I would draft, if I had a good running back, I would dr – I – I, you know, everybody’s – never draft a running back under pressure – and I don’t believe that. I think – I would draft him, sign him and if he was really good, maybe try to redo him after his third year for three more years --

Jim Thomas: Well after seven years --

Bob Wallace: Right. They’re done, right.

Jim Thomas: Right. Guy that last as long as Hemet Smith and Walter Peyton, they just – you’re – I – you got – exactly what you said. You got to plan on six years, max.

Bob Wallace: But if you’ve got a player, like Zeek, and when he came to Dallas, he made them really good right away because you got a running back, you got a game plan if you have a – If you have running backs by committee, I don’t believe he was game planning against a running back.

Jim Thomas: No.

Bob Wallace: The game plan against Zeek Elliot and Adrian Peterson, or now McCafferty, or Marshall, I mean he was, you could not forget Marshall.

Jim Thomas: No.

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: No, that, that – getting Marshall helped all the receivers because you had the game plan for them. It’s interesting because Atlanta, they picked uh, how’s the first name – Bijan Robinson – they took him eighth overall. I think he’s the highest draft at running backs and Sequan Barkley in 2018. So they’re thinking like – yeah just, don’t plan on them long-term but, but use them and get the most out of them.

Bob Wallace: -- That opens up against Carolina and Carolina’s got Brice Young. Who you picking there?

Jim Thomas: I – I -

Bob Wallace: You been watching that game?

Jim Thomas: No, no. But I’m going with Atlanta. I think Carolina’s not going to be very good. And not that Atlanta, I mean, Ritter. He got his feet wet last year, but yeah, Carolina is, yeah, they’re just not – I don’t think they’re in a good place right now. New Orleans is going to be interesting with Eric Carr. Who do they play, who do they open with?

Bob Wallace: New Orleans opens with Tennessee, Tennessee at New Orleans.

Jim Thomas: Oooo.

Bob Wallace: Ryan Terry Overse is uh --

Jim Thomas: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: Rick Paul.

Jim Thomas: And Derek Henry pounding it away, right, on the ground?

Bob Wallace: Yeah.

Jim Thomas: That’ll be an interesting game. I’m going to pick uh, I’m going to pick uh, oh I don’t know, I guess New Orleans. I mean Carr is a new quarterback but he’s a veteran so you’d think he’d be able to, he’d be able to step in right away but they, they really took a steep fall without Shawn Peyton. I mean they averaged like almost 29 points a game and no Drew Breeze. Over the entire Drew Breeze tenure, there were like 15 seasons they averaged like 19 points a game. So they got to figure out some things offensively so good luck with Derek and those fans are great fans but they’re a little spoiled.

Bob Wallace: You mentioned both Jimmy Garaffalo and you’ve mentioned Shawn Peyton in Denver, Las Vegas is out there.

Jim Thomas: Hmm. Who’s quarterbacking Denver now?

Bob Wallace: Russell Wilson.

Jim Thomas: Oh, God. Wilson was, boy, he was bad these last couple years with -- Held onto the ball too long. That’s why he’s always taking a lot of sacks, but with Shawn Peyton out, I think he’s going to squeeze something out of Russell so I’m going to go with Denver in that game.

Bob Wallace: Okay. How about your St. Louis football Cardinals which are now the Arizona Cardinals and they open up at Washington? You know, I went 20 years in going to games in Washington D.C., the old RFK stadium, and I never saw a victory there until the Rams finally beat them – no maybe it was one of the Eagles. I hated that hail to the Redskins song that they used to play.

Jim Thomas: Cuz you go there with the Eagles and then with the Rams?

Bob Wallace: And with the Cardinals.

Jim Thomas: The Cardinals --

Bob Wallace: I never saw a game that we won.

Jim Thomas: Wow, you were there when the --

Bob Wallace: Going again this year.

Jim Thomas: -- The Redskins were in the uh, in the uh – is Colin Murray healthy or no?

Bob Wallace: Well, he has a – I think he’s supposed to be set from week one but he hasn’t played any preseasons so you know how --

Jim Thomas: -- You already got Sam Howell as your quarterback --

Bob Wallace: He played well last night.

Jim Thomas: Did he?

Bob Wallace: Are you a Colin Murray fan?

Jim Thomas: Uh, kind of, yeah, yeah. So I, boy you know, they used to have, what was it last year, they used to have – is Taylor Heineke still on the roster – He was the backup for the first go-around on the Battlehawks.

Bob Wallace: Right.

Jim Thomas: And then he became a star. Kind of a fun guy to watch. I think I’ll go Washington in that game.

Bob Wallace: How about Green Bay at Baltimore?

Jim Thomas: Green Bay at Baltimore --

Bob Wallace: Justin uh, what is it --

Jim Thomas: Jordan Love.

Bob Wallace: Jordan Love versus Levar Jackson.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. I’m going to go Baltimore. I will say this. I think Jordan Love, maybe not right away – he’s going to be better than people think.

Bob Wallace: Uh, you know how they say on, on pregame shows, I can’t make this pick so Dolphins versus – I’m rooting for the Dolphins but the Dolphins open up, they open up at Chargers. So no, those are two young quarterbacks and they’re both pretty good. Uh, and two of them --

Jim Thomas: Justin Edwards.

Bob Wallace: -- Justin, I mean he’s --

Jim Thomas: He’s fun to watch.

Bob Wallace: Man he is. You know he is big, he’s fast but he’s never won a big game.

Jim Thomas: Nope. And uh, you always want to buy into San Diego but somehow they --

Bob Wallace: -- L.A.

Jim Thomas: -- disappoint you. Huh?

Bob Wallace: L.A. --

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah. Poor San Diego. What they got? They got the Padres, that’s it, yeah, yeah.

Bob Wallace: So who you picking?

Jim Thomas: I’m picking uh, Grant Wallace and the Miami --

Bob Wallace: Oh Ryan – Alright, and then of course, we know you’re picking against the Rams?

Jim Thomas: Who are they playing?

Bob Wallace: Seattle.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. I – I’ve always liked Seattle. Teams I enjoy watching. I enjoy watching the Chiefs and I enjoy watching Seattle. I I enjoyed watching Green Bay when they were, but I'm going to Seattle. Is Geno Smith still the man?

Bob Wallace: Geno Smith is still the man.

Jim Thomas: What a season he had

Bob Wallace: Yeah, what a comeback from him.

Jim Thomas: And ah, you know, I would say the Rams, that Sean McVeigh was a really good. Hire a really good hire now. Did they discover the secret to what they were? Only five, weren't they? 5 and 12 last year. Cooper Cup makes a big difference. So if he's healthy.

Bob Wallace: You know. My my old friend who used to be a scout, he's an age and the age and time which is guys get hurt once they start getting hurt they keep getting hurt.

Jim Thomas: He's a smaller guy, so I think smaller guys. If they keep getting, you know, they get hurt, maybe they have a shorter shelf life. Maybe they're more prone to –

Bob Wallace: He's a good I mean he's a good receiver.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. What a what, a dynamic. Yeah. And that was that was a show on McVey pick. I mean, he found him out of Eastern Washington. So.

Unknown speaker: Yeah, we're done. We're done, OK.

Bob Wallace: Oh yeah, Sean McVey was a really good hire, by the way. OK, so who your playoff teams?

Jim Thomas: Playoff teams?

Bob Wallace: You don't have to go. Give me 14 of them. But who's gonna play for the Super Bowl.

Jim Thomas: For the Super Bowl. I'm going to --

Bob Wallace: I. Want I want 14 conference championships.

Jim Thomas: Alright, NFC title game. Boy, Vikings tonight. It's a little hard in the NFC. I'm going to I'm. Going to say. Because I really like Shanahan, I know they're quarter. I'm going to say 49ers against…

Bob Wallace: Cowboys, Eagles, Saints.

Jim Thomas: I hate to say this because I'm not a jury. I'm going to say Dallas this year. Dallas has a really good defense. That Prescott's pretty good. I know he hasn't been everything to everybody, so I'm going to say that and over over in the in the AFC, you can't. You can't pick against Kansas City, so Kansas City against, let me think here. I'm just going to go. I'm just going to go off the wall on this one and, and say Jacksonville.

Bob Wallace: That's a, that's a that is a.

Jim Thomas: I like Trevor Lawrence. What is this about, his third year now.

Bob Wallace: What do they call that, a hot take?

Jim Thomas: No, that's, that's a BS take. I'm I'm very interested in. Not just because you're you're, you have a rooting a job. Very interesting in what Miami does, especially if Tua stays healthy.

Bob Wallace: That'll be interesting. So who's going to win Super Bowl, Jim?

Jim Thomas: I'm gonna go Kansas City. You never feel like you're out of a game with Mahomes if he's still in there,

Bob Wallace: But nobody repeats ever.

Jim Thomas: True, true, but I. But maybe that maybe they'll repeat. And Andy Reid, what a what a coach. You know, what a coach.

Bob Wallace: Coach of the Year Andy Reed?

Jim Thomas: Yeah, can't you know? Can't, that he can't win the big one. So very innovative mind. And so yeah, I I would say well, coach of the year they do before the playoffs voting. So if I'm picking Jacksonville to make the the Super Bowl then then then it's gotta be Chuck Peterson.

Bob Wallace: Chuck Peterson.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. Thank you for the help you know that's one thing and. I know, I know. We gotta go. Yeah. Don't. There weren't as many colorful coaches, as it used to be when you and I were in the game. These guys are more like button down coaches and I don't know that the weird characters like Wade Phillips and Sam Wise or just all the you just don't even know Jim Mar. You never knew when he was going to explode.

Bob Wallace: Well you know, Read, Read’s a little colorful.

Jim Thomas: Yeah.

Jim Thomas: You still have Belichick in his own way.

Bob Wallace: The Dolphin’s coach is kinda entertaining, dirty looking Yale guy.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bob Wallace: So the NFL MVP, if you're picking Mahomes again, hey. Well, you're picking Trevor Lawrence. Trevor Lawrence, you're picking.

Jim Thomas: Yeah. Let me go with. Lawrence. Yeah, yeah.

Bob Wallace: Coaches are Nazi.

Jim Thomas: I can't believe I. I can't believe I I I just picked up Jacksonville coaches on the hot seat. If if what? What if the --

Bob Wallace: Did you ever like doing that when you were a writer? Did you know putting guys on the hot seat before the season?

Jim Thomas: Yeah, if I didn't have to write about the the the Raiders guy. Sure, I. Write about the rest of the league. What are they going to do to me?

Bob Wallace: Did you ever put a Rams guy in the hot seat?

Jim Thomas: Well. I I got Rich Brooks mad at me that basically writing that he was going to get fired. This was near the end of the season.

Bob Wallace: Was just after our our dinner, we went to dinner at Atlanta.

Jim Thomas: Well, after the 2nd. Second year, you wondered. He was definitely on the hot seat. He knew it and we wrote about that, that's right and, and remember, John Shaw said he felt bad getting rid of Brooks after two years, and that was part of the reason he gave her meal a third season. Who knows what would have happened if they brought in somebody, somebody else? Take your coach on the hot seat. I'm. I'm just trying to. I'm just, trying to think. Maybe McCarthy in Dallas.

Bob Wallace: McCarthy in Dallas, I think Josh McDaniel was in Las Vegas if they don't win because you know they ... You know, when a new coach comes in, they want to get rid of a lot of good players and I don't know if you --

Jim Thomas: Right, bring in their own guys. McDaniel’s been much better as a coordinator than a head coach, and when he strays, when he strays away from the mothership, when he gets away from New England, it doesn't seem he's nearly as successful.

Bob Wallace: Any chance Bill Belichick's on the hot seat?

Jim Thomas: Well, I I don't. I don't. I don't think so. You just wonder if if they continue to be mediocre. How long he, how long he stays and how long, Pete Carroll, isn't he, 70? A little over 70?

Bob Wallace: He's the, I think he's either the oldest. Well, I think he --

Jim Thomas: He still looks vibrant. He still looks young

Bob Wallace: He may be the oldest coach in the NFL.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah, now, how long did Mark Levy coach? I mean, was he in his 70s?

Bob Wallace: Yeah, he was in his 70s and Belichick is in his 70s as well.

Jim Thomas: Is he really, well okay, okay.

Bob Wallace: Well, Jim, thank you. This was a little bit more fun than just talking about, you know, problems with teams moving and relocating.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, yeah, no, well I do look forward to watching more games now that I –

Bob Wallace: We'll check after the season to see how our picks were.

Jim Thomas: Ooh, that may be, that may be rough. I'd be curious to see how, how the opening game picks will do too?

Bob Wallace: OK, well, well, I'll let you know.

Jim Thomas: Yeah, well, alright.

Bob Wallace: Well, Jim, thank you very much to our listeners, thank you. I I hope you enjoyed listening to Jim with his 48 years of experience around the sports world. And if you want to, you can watch this on Apple or listen to it on apple.com or stitcher.com. And please give us your feedback. Thank you, Jim..

Jim Thomas: Thank you.

[End of Podcast]