

# PACKERS AT BEARS - THE NFL SUN COMES OUT AGAIN TRASH TALK

Trash Talk is back baybee! The NFL season starts for real tonight with the first game of the league's centennial season. And, proving that even Roger Goodell and the NFL can occasionally get something right, the season starts with the Packers at the Bears. On Soldier field. Now *that* is a start to the season.



Honestly, the Bears are at home, and are probably, overall, the far better team. But the Cheesers have that Rodgers guy. If Green Bay's O-Line can hold, they have a chance. If not, they don't. It is pretty much that simple. Even a couple of Khalil Mackers to Aaron Rodgers will slow the Cheese train down. But, either way, it is one hell of a season opener.

There are a myriad of additional games on tap for Saturday in the college ranks, and Sunday, in the pro ranks. Not to mention the timeless speed of the Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Last weekend at Spa was a sensational race at, perhaps, the most beautiful circuit on the Circus calendar. Monza is not far behind, even if it is not the same as it once was with the feared steep banking.

So, Saturday is a big day here at Casa de bmaz as our daughter is coming home in the afternoon after six months on work assignment in India. We are extremely excited, but will try to get some more content up in the morning. If not, now you know why. The NFL sun is coming out starting tonight at Soldier Field. So the official Trash Talk season opening music is Sun King by The Cult. It is one truly kick ass song. Let's rock and roll peoples!

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## **SUPER BOWL SUNDAY 2019 TRASH TALK**

Well, here it is, Super Bowl LIII game day. The last time Atlanta hosted a Super Bowl, it was basically a disaster. It was freezing cold with frozen rain, transportation was sketchy, many integral events had to be cancelled, the game was a thriller and Ray Lewis was arrested for double murder for an altercation after the game. It was a black eye for Atlanta of epic proportion. Things have, by all reports, gone much better this time, and the newish Mercedes Benz Stadium looks beautiful and ready for today's action.

There are a LOT of people who think the wrong teams are in the game, and it should be the Saints and Chiefs. The Saints fans actually have the better argument, they were robbed and jobbed at the end of the NFC Championship game. The Chiefs may have deserved to have a chance to get the ball after the Patriots' touchdown drive in overtime, but those are the rules, and the Pats did what they had to do.

As to the the teams that are in the game, they both seem extremely healthy with little of note on the injury reports. Even the always nicked up Gronk seems at full speed and energized. And Julian Edelman will be on the field after being

noticeably absent last year. Same for Dont'a Hightower, notably absent in the Pats' De last year. The Rams' biggest concern seems to be how to allocate snaps between Todd Gurley and the white hot CJ Anderson. If you have to have a concern, that is a pretty good one to have.

Both teams have potent offenses capable of taking the game over. So this game will be won on defense. The better D is going to win the game. The Rams quartet of Aaron Donald, Ndamukong Suh, Aqib Talib and Marcus Peters, while maybe not the Fearsome Fousome of old, is pretty fearsome. The Pats have less (if any) big names on defense, but have been playing very well down the stretch and in the playoffs. As far as coaching, Sean McVay is a wonder kind and worthy of all the accolades he has received. Hard to envision that the edge still doesn't go to Bill Bell with all his caginess and experience, and with Josh McDaniels still coaching up the offense and Brady.

The blueprint for beating the Pats is to get such immense pressure on Brady that he is rattled or hit constantly. It is no secret, that has always been the plan. The plan for avoiding this is for Brady to get the ball out fast in midrange and get the running game going with Sony Michel, James White and Burkhead. Look for a lot of play action and short flat throws, with an occasional shot to Gronk or Dorsett.

The trend line has the Pats favored by a couple of points, but I don't see it. This is a complete pickem.

The national anthem will be performed by Atlanta's own Gladys Knight, and that is a fine choice, but she should kneel in support of Kaepernick while doing so. That will never, of course, happen, but it should. The halftime show looks to be absolute rancid bullshit. So, today's music will go back to a better time for Super Bowl halftime shows with a little bit of the Boss from ten years ago. Rock it up!

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# CHAMPIONSHIP SUNDAY 2019 LAISSEZ LE BON TEMPS ROULER

There are notable football weekends in the year, both for the Pros and the Joes. But nothing matches the conference championship games weekend nor the Super Bowl.

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## DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS 2019

Getting close to the home stretch in the NFL. There are four games this weekend, and the first one up is Colts at Chiefs. The weather looks to be very nasty, with below freezing temps and snow already accumulating. It will be interesting to see how young Pat Mahomes fares in this environment for his first playoff game. He has such a strong arm, that my guess he will be fine, and same for Andrew Luck. But the Colts have a far better running game than the Chiefs, and KC run defense is not the best. Oh, and KC has not won a playoff game at home since the mid 90's when Joe Montana was their QB. This has a real potential for a Colts upset.

The second game Saturday is Cowboys at Rams. Dallas really is starting to play better lately, and the Rams seemed to stall a little toward the end of the regular season. That said, hard to see the Boys having enough offense to keep track with Goff and Gurley, and the Rams defense is superior.

The early game Sunday is maybe the most interesting game of the weekend with the

Chargers at Foxborough to visit Bill Bel and the Pats. The Bolts have the offense to make this very interesting, and have solid defense too. The Pats will need a big game from Sony Michel, and Brady and Gronk have to get out of their funk. And the Pats are basically at full health finally. It is tempting to take the Bolts in an upset, but not going to bet against the Pats. Nope just not gonna do it.

The late game Sunday has the Eagles at the high flying Saints. Drew Brees is simply a machine, and he has a hot running back duo in Alvin Kamara and Mark Ingram. Fun fact, Brees and the Eagles' Nick Foles both went to the same high school, though obviously separated by quite a few years. Foles has been absolute magic for the Iggles, but I think that luck runs out in NOLA.

As a fun little parting shot, today is the 50th anniversary of Super Bowl III in Miami, where Joe Namath and the Jets shocked the world by beating the heavily favored Colts. Here is a fun story looking back at that game and the really earth shattering consequences it had for pro football.

This weekend's music courtesy of Van the Man.

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## **DANCING WITH MS. AOC (AND OTHER WEEKEND TALK)**

Apparently the ignorant bigot Trumpalos set things a little bit of Footloose is now some kind of slam on AOC. But it it is not. It is just stupid. Seriously, what kind of bigots go there? AOC is bigger and better than that, why are her detractors not?

As Ray Davies and the Kinks would say:

Don't be afraid to come dancing,  
It's only natural.

And off we go.

Yep, dancing is real. it is awesome, and completely great and @AOC is the epitome of that.

I hope I am not too late for critical Mr. Gun Scribe, but I have been at the vet with my one of my dogs, Kiki. I know he will write 1000 words of bullshit about "his" dysfunctional Steelers. So be it.

At this point, let us talk about teams that are actually in the playoffs. And, no, that is neither the Stillers or the Cheese. Nor the local dope Cardinals.

As to games and teams that can and will happen, let us lead with the AFC.

On ESPN, the Colts are already leading the Texans by 7-0. I do not feel good with it, and will not bet one red cent on it, because Deshaun Watson is really special, but Captain Andrew Luck seems on a real roll.

Second game today is Squawks at Boys. Hard to take a second road team on a home turf, but I will do that. Yes, I know, I will die with my hat in my hand, okay. So be it, and just wait for the next predictions for Sunday!

As to that...And, no I do not feel good about this, but I will take Phil Rivers and the Bolts over the Ravens. Rivers is a WAY better QB than people give him credit for being. This is his opportunity to show it or blow it. I think show it, but need to see it.

The Philly Special will be in Chi Town, The Windy City. Khalid Mack is the anchor the Bears defense always relied on. The importance of his arrival to the Midway because Chucky Gruden was, and is, a total dope, cannot be underestimated. The Bears have been transformed. They were a team on the obvious upswing, and are now

legitimate contenders.

Hell of a last game for an insanely good wildcard weekend.

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## END OF YEAR/NEW YEAR'S BAD BOY TRASH TALK

It is yet another end of the year. On a weekend, that, with the New Year holiday, will stretch out. So this will likely be the Trash Talk post that takes us through all that.

Speaking of an end of the year compendium, do go read Alex Pareene's on the Huff Po. It is pretty spectacular.

Before we get to football, let us get to some historical level of skiing by Mikaela Shiffrin. Lindsay Vonn, appropriately, has the love and attention of the public attuned to skiing, but Mikaela Shiffrin deserves the same amount. If not more. What she has done, and is doing, is beyond remarkable.

Mikaela Shiffrin became the most successful female slalom skier in the 52-year history of the World Cup by winning the final race of 2018 on Saturday.

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Only Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark has won more World Cup slaloms. He claimed victory in 40 events between 1974 and 1987.

By winning Saturday, Shiffrin also became the first skier, male or female, to win 15 World Cup races in a calendar year, moving one victory past men's overall champion Marcel Hirscher of

Austria, who has won 14 times in 2018.

Ms. Shiffrin is only 23. She has quite a game changing future ahead of her.



Give Ms. Shiffrin a little attention. These are world class and historical level feats she pulls off every day.

Back to football. The games come up as this – First, there are the critical BCS games: Notable to this blog, the Gators and Wolverines are about to tangle in the Chik-fil-A Peach Bowl. This is literally Marcy versus Jim thing, will either one of them weigh in?

Later, of course, are the BCS semi-final games. First up is Oklahoma versus Bama. Oklahoma has an offense that only a team like Alabama might contain. I think the Crimson Tide rolls on, but it is no given, because Kyler Murray is scary good. In the other semi-final, Clemson, who would have been a heavy favorite against a Notre Dame team that arguably should not even be here, has three players suspended at the last minute. The most prominent of which is on defense, Clemson's offense will be okay. Is that enough? Probably, but if you want to bet an upset, this could be it.

Off to the pros: The Colts at Titans is literally a play in game. The winner goes to the playoffs and the loser goes home. Captain Andrew Luck seems healthier than Marcus Mariotta. It is really hard to discount the extremely plucky Titans. But the Colts seem to have found some magic in the second half of the season. So, against some instincts, I will take the Colts to



win even in Tennessee, though I am no where near sure of that. The next most winner take it game is Bears at the Vikings. Bears trying to find a way to a first round bye, and Vikes looking to clinch a wild card spot in the playoffs. The Bears sure look like the better team at this moment, but it is in Minnesota, not Soldier Field, so this looks to be a really interesting tossup.

Raiders are at Chiefs. Chucky had a nice little PR spot with that win over the Donkos on the MNF closer for the year, but it is pretty hard to see them winning in KC. Chargers at Broncos is a far harder call. The Bolts look to be a far better, and healthier, team right now. If the Iggles beat the Skins, and the Vikes lose to Da Bears, Nick Foles and the Eagles slip back into the playoffs, as improbable as it may be.

Lastly, and curiously, maybe most interesting, is the Brownies at the Ravens. The once Cleveland Browns versus the now Cleveland Browns. With the playoff hopes of the old Brownies, and now Ravens, on the line. This is simply precious. And, in case you have not been watching, Baker Mayfield and the Browns have been on a roll. This should be an incredible game, irrespective of how it plays out.

This post has music from some lads from Liverpool. Bad Boy is one of their more under appreciated tracks. Behave yourselves!

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## LAMB AND SHEEP TRASH TALK

Here we are in the Ides of December, and there is some Trash to be talked. Because someone accused me of not knowing or caring about the NBA in the last trash, let's open with that.

The Phoenix Suns were once a model franchise,

started and run by Jerry Colangelo. They never won a championship, but they were always pillars of the community, always competitive and the precursor of the Warriors as the consistently most fun team to watch. Then Colangelo sold the team to a banker jerk named Bob Sarver, who has proceeded to turn the once proud Suns into the worst team in the league, and a laughingstock in Phoenix and the NBA. He recently tried to arrogantly extort the city for improvements to the city owned arena, and that has not gone well. Last night was yet another humiliation as the Suns tried to execute a trade and didn't even know who they were fucking trading for. Seriously, Bob Sarver makes former Clippers owner Donald Sterling look like a good owner. And the Lakers still suck. So there's your NBA coverage for you.

I will add one more semi-NBA thing in here, because it is a seriously fantastic story. I can't say I am close friends with Charles Barkley, but I have been around and talked to him numerous times, whether at the Suns Arena, in Scottsdale bars or the local grocery store (he lives not far away from me and, yeah, actually goes grocery shopping). He has always been nice, and pretty funny to talk to. But this story from a young lady whose late father stumbled into a truly deep and good, if unlikely, friendship with Chuck is just wonderful. Read it, you will be glad you did.

Okay, back to our staple of football. There are several small time bowl games today including The Air force Celebration Bowl (NC A&T v. Alcorn State), New Mexico Bowl (North Texas v. Utah State), Auto Nation bowl (Tulane v. Louisiana), Mitsubishi Las Vegas Bowl (Fresno State v. Arizona State), Raycom Camellia Bowl (Georgia Southern v. Eastern Michigan), and the R&L Carriers Bowl (Middle Tennessee v. Appalachian State). The only one that interests me is the Las Vegas Bowl with ASU in it at 3:30 pm EST on ABC. Fresno State is not a bad team, and it could be an interesting game.

In the pros, there are two Saturday games today. First up is Houston Texans at the Jets. I keep thinking the Jets Jets Jets are going to pull things together, but hard to see them stopping Deshaun Watson and the Texans, who are on a serious roll. The later game is Cleveland at Denver. Both teams have a thin hope for making the playoffs if they win out, but the loser here is done. Cleveland has really been playing better lately, and last 4-5 games, Baker Mayfield has been actually fairly impressive. Mile High tough venue though, even if the Broncos are a little beat up on defense. I'll call it a tossup, but am rooting for the Brownies for a slight upset. The Chargers already edged out the Chiefs (in Kansas City!!) in a thrilling Thursday night game. The Bolts came back from a 14 point deficit late in the 4th quarter and won by executing a 2 point conversion after a TD, with four seconds left on the clock. It was well worth staying up for.

In the Sunday games, Cowboys at Colts could be a pretty good game, but I'll take Oliver Luck and the Colts at home. Packers at Bears in Soldier Field should be really interesting. Bears defense has the edge on a battered GB O-Line, but Aaron Rodgers ain't gonna roll over and this oldest of rivalries is always hard fought. Pats at Steelers is probably the best game of the day. Stillers are desperate for a win at this point, but the Pats are desperately trying to maintain a first round playoff bye. Both teams have been uncharacteristically inconsistent this year. That's a tossup. Lastly, the Eagles at Rams is a must win for the Iggles, but hard to see them pulling that off at this point.

Well, that's it. Music today is courtesy of Punaise who made me remember a very old Blue Oyster Cult song from their first album way back in 1972. Enjoy *I'm On The Lamb, But I Ain't No Sheep*, it truly rocks.

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# LATE TRASH IS BETTER THAN NO TRASH AT ALL

It is a weekend well into December, so far that there is really no college football between now and the preternaturally expanded NCAA schedule of Bullshit Bowls That Don't Matter season and the end of the year and real BCS bowls. Fl is over until the spring. Basketball is nothing but clacking about LeBron on on otherwise D-League team. Baseball is waiting for the winter meetings or whatever. In short, there is not squat but the NFL. So, here we go on a truncated, but necessary, Trash Talk because Scribe, rightfully, demanded it. There were other circumstances last weekend, and earlier today. Sorry about that, but every now and then things impinge on the trash collection.

So, this is going to be all NFL, and we shall start, apropos, with the Steelers. They visit the Rayduhs who are still squatting in their former home of Oakland. Hard to see Big Ben letting this slip, take the Stillers. Rams are at Bears, and with Khalil Mack rounding back into shape, I think this is a better test than most seem to, but, still, take the Rams. Vikes are at the Squawks for SNF, but Seattle is a tough joint, and the Squawks are on a serious roll. Sorry Minnesota.

Detroit at Arizona is almost comical. Which loser will win? Who the heck knows? And does anyone really care? Stupidly enough, the game of the week may be the 6-6 Eagles at the 7-5 Cowboys. There is no team in the NFC East that deserves to be in the playoffs, but someone has to win the division. With the Redskins starting [spin the wheel] Sonny Jurgenson (Sanchize) at QB at this point, it is really down to Iggles and Boys. I'll take the Iggles in an upset at Jerry World. Colts at Houston is another interesting game. The way Deshaun Watson and the

Texans have been playing, you'd be nuts not to take them. But Andrew Luck has been quietly starting to totally rip it up again, and the Colts' O-Line has been protecting him to do so. This is in Houston though, I'll still take the red hot Tejans.

Pats always have a problem in South Beach, but it is hard to see the Fins taking this one any more than it is to think the Raiders will pose a problem for the Stillers, even though Pittsburgh has has issues in the Bay Area before.

So, that is it for Late Trash. As a shoutout to Sean and Janis, very long time readers and friends I recently had lunch with, this weekend's music is some Be Bop Deluxe.

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## **POST L-TRYPTOPHAN TURKEY HANGOVER TRASH**

Okay, Turkee day is over, as is Black Friday. I violated my rule of never going out on Black Friday once, to go to a grocery less than a mile away. I did watch The Match. The golf was interesting, the production of the event was total shit, and some of the "providers" are already refunding PPV fees people paid. What a clusterfuck. Phil won, both the match and the side bets, over Tiger. But it was very close. There should be no "gimmees" in this kind of match play, that was asinine. Make the golfers actually make their 5 foot putts. Oh well.

Oklahoma is probably going to be in the final four for the CFB playoff, and that is amazing for a team that cannot play a lick of defense. Washington State is out, having failed, sadly, to beat rival Washington on their home field for the Apple Cup. UCF keeps rolling even after apparently losing their starting QB in a still

huge win over a very talented USF team. UCF has won every game over the last two years, has done so consistently against all comers, and still will not even sniff the CFB playoffs. That is wrong. They are more deserving of a berth than whatever Big-10 schlub wins the idiotic Three Yards and a Cloud of Dust Trophy between the overrated Michigan and overrated Ohio State today.

Hard to see Florida and Florida State amounting to much, nor Georgia Tech and Georgia. I guess Auburn and Alabama is a "big game", but we all know what happens when an amateur tema like Auburn takes on a pro football franchise like Saban runs at Bama. One can only hope that USC can find the mettle to take out the Irish preeners, though I doubt it even though the game is a home one for the Trojans. Here in AZ, it is all about the "Territorial Cup", the somewhat mythical, and inconsistently in play, "trophy" for the "big game" between ASU and UofA. It is Tucson this year, and "might" be an interesting game on FS1, but not a lot but state bragging rights are at issue.

On to the Pros. What with three key games on Thanksgiving, there is a smaller schedule this Sunday. Pats at the ButtFumbles should not amount to much, though the combined age of the two starting QB's is like 192. Giants at Philly may be a better game than it looks; Good Eli has arisen and the Iggles look dead. Carolina is extremely tough at home, but Seattle is starting to look like they are on a roll. Bolts host the Cards in their soccer stadium, take the Chargers on that. Scribe's Steelers at the Donkos may be good, but I just can't see Denver taking out two better teams two weeks in a row.

Colts and Luck are rolling, will take a miracle for Miami to beat them at home in Indy. I, sadly, think the Packers are dead for this year, and a win in Minnesota would be a miracle. Kirk Cousins is not bad, at all, but he is no Aaron Rodgers, so it may be worth watching SNF. MNF is Titans at Texans. Titans really are improving,

but not by the leaps and bounds Deshaun Watson, JJ Watt and the Texans have been. Take the Lone Star state here.

Music today by Queen. They seem to be everywhere lately, from the Bohemian Rhapsody movie play theaters nationwide, to multiple commercials on TV. But I am going to go with a little bit of the classic "Day At The Races" and, with a shoutout to Mike Pence, the song Tie Your Mother Down.

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## **TURKEY BOWL TRASH TALK 2018**

Happy Thanksgiving to one and all, and we here give thanks for you joining with us and participating here. There are not many real remnants of the old blogosphere and commentary community left these days, and it still flourishes here, thanks to you. I was lazy this morning and am just now writing Turkey Trash, but Marcy has already posted the annual sister Food and Thanks Post, make sure to visit there too.

Okay, off we go. Thanksgiving has always been about football. Every year through college, law school and many years after, we had a Turkey Bowl. It was played among a bunch of us who played intramural flag football in college, and sometimes friends who actually played real college football. I even one time tried to recruit Pat Tillman, but he just laughed and said there was no way he was risking injury doing that. He was smart, I think there were more injuries to extremely hungover dudes in the Turkey Bowl than there would have been playing in full pads. Plus he would have hurt us. Game was always at 10:00 am at a local high school that would let us use their field. Stunned that none of us ever got a DWI driving to the game.

Okay, on to the games. First up is Chicago at Detroit. A week ago, this looked like another Kitteh mismatch for Thanksgiving. But Bears starting QB Mitch Trubisky is out and career backup Chase Daniel will be leading the charge. Daniel is a very decent backup, but has started just two games in his ten year NFL career. The Lions sure seem to have the edge here with Matt Stafford and, ahem, an improved running game lately (though Kerryon Johnson and Marvin Jones, responsible for that, are out). But Khalil Mack and the new Midway Monsters will be a problem. No clue, I rate it a toss up, even if Vegas likes Da Bears. The Bears defense may warrant that.

The second game is Redskins at Cowboys. Believe it or not, as horrible as the Cowboys have been to date this year, they will be atop the NFC East, tied with Washington, if they win this home game. On the other hand, the Skins will take a substantial lead if they win at Jerryworld. Speaking of starting QB's out for Turkey day, Alex Smith is very out. Closest thing to Joe Theismann's leg injury, eerily on the same exact date as Smith's injury, but in 1985. Colt McCoy takes over for the Skins in a really important game. McCoy is not a bad choice if you have to have a backup suddenly starting. Should be interesting. Look for Washington to run Adrian Peterson hard against a Dallas defense that is not so good against the run. Look for Dallas to throw everything at Peterson. Should be interesting, and is yet another tossup.

Last game is tonight with the Falcons visiting the Saints in Nawlins. This one is NOT a tossup, the Saints have to be a heavy favorite. They are home in the loud and crazy Superdome, Drew Brees is having an MVP year and is simply on fire, and the Saints are putting up ridiculous numbers on offense. The Dirty Birds have been extremely disappointing so far. Sure Matt Ryan can still get hot and light em up, but do they have enough to keep pace with Brees, Michael Thomas, Alvin Kamara, Mark Ingram and the entirety of the



Saints' offense. Nope.

Since today has been a little sleepy already, gonna rock it up with a little Silke Berlinn and The Addictions doing a cover of the old Nancy Sinatra hit Jackson. By the way, that is our old friend John Amato, founder of the Crooks and Liars blog, honking magnificently on the tenor sax. Enjoy your food, enjoy your drink, and most of all enjoy the people around you today.