

An Interview With:

**TOM BRADY**  
**Quarterback**  
**New England Patriots**

MODERATOR: Tom, do you have any opening comments regarding the Raiders and Thursday night's game?

TOM BRADY: Sure. I think our entire team has been looking forward to this for a long time, and every time you start training camp, you're working to build for the season, but you're also working to build for the first game. I know we're all excited about playing a terrific Raider team. We've been working hard on them for the last few days and I think everyone is excited for Thursday night.

**Q. We read a lot out here about how you have lost two of your coordinators; tangibly, what does it change for you this year, are you calling more plays or scripting more in the week than you would have before?**

TOM BRADY: I don't think so. I think as a player, my job is to play what's called. And really, playing quarterback and running the offense on the field, there is enough for me to do there than for me to worry about what's going on with our coaching.

I know that every year my role continues to change, and I think going into my sixth year and being that much more comfortable on our offense and with the players we have, I feel more comfortable certainly. At the same time, I'm just trying to improve like everybody else with another year under my belt.

**Q. Does the Raiders defense remind you in any way remotely of what you guys were doing in New England when you faced them in practice considering that they do have Rob Ryan and he brought some of what you guys did in New England?**

TOM BRADY: Yeah, and I think there's some similarities that we see on film. I think in some ways we know the players that we're playing against, a guy like **Ted Washington**, a guy that we practiced against, and **Bobby Hamilton**; and I played with **Charles Woodson** for three years and played against him. I've played against some of those Raider players.

You know, there's some familiarity with what they are doing, but at the same time, you realize in the opening game you're bound to see anything from a team. Whatever you see in preseason is not necessarily what you're going to get in an opening game. We're just trying to prepare as much as we can so we're not really getting out there on Thursday night and trying to figure out what's going on.

**Q. Everyone is always trying to analyze what has made you guys so successful. In a nutshell, even though you could speak so long on this subject, what in your eyes has made the Patriots successful on a consistent basis over the last few years from an organizational standpoint?**

TOM BRADY: I think each year it's been entirely different. The strengths of the team have been different throughout the years. I do think we try to play a certain way of football. I think our philosophy is that we try to play smart and that we try to play tough and we try to play physical out there. I know the years that we've been successful, our defense has played well. They have played a physical style of football and offensively we've played smart. We haven't turned the ball over in critical situations and we've been opportunistic on offense. The times we've needed to score points, that's what we've done.

Even in those years, we were not perfect in every phase. I think often times when you are successful, you think, 'Oh, man, well, we must have been everything right,' but the guys who are here, we realize that we're always trying to improve and that's no different this year. It's an entirely different team this year and we're trying to go out there and establish our own identity. We have as much to gain this year as anybody in the league. We're really going out there and we have to go prove ourselves week-in and week-out, and it starts this week.

**Q. You've probably talked ad nauseam about the playoff game against Oakland back in 2001, but do you ever still think about how that kind of vaulted you, was a springboard for your team to go on to win three of the next four Super Bowls?**

TOM BRADY: That was really one game, and that led us to go play Pittsburgh the following week and that's really all that amounted to. I

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mean, we needed to go and play -- we needed to play our best game in the AFC Championship Game that year.

I don't think there's a whole lot of carry over from year-to-year, I really don't. I don't think anybody cares what you did the year before. I know this team doesn't care about what we accomplished last year. We're just trying to go out and prove to ourselves that we can go out and be a good, physical team.

The identity of each team is different every year. You would like to think that things carry over but they really don't. One game back in 2001 didn't do anything for us back in 2002 because in 2002, we went 9-7 and didn't even make the playoffs. So I really don't think that that one game did a whole lot to get us to the next game.

**Q. You've talked about one yard at a time but you're also going for a "three-peat," which has never been done before. Do you try to downplay it or do you take pride in what you're trying to accomplish Thursday night?**

TOM BRADY: I think each year is entirely different. Like I said, the 2004 team was a Super Bowl Championship team. **Coach Belichick** always makes a point that we're not defending anything because when you defend something, that means it can be taken away, and you can't take that championship away from us.

At the same time we realize that whatever happened last year is entirely different from what can happen this year. Like I said 2001, we won the Super Bowl, in 2002 we started 3-0, finished 9-7 not making the playoffs. If we don't play well, we're going to get beat. That goes without saying for every team in the league.

So we're trying to focus our attention throughout training camp, and especially this week on trying to play our best for the Raiders. And if we don't, then I'm sure the Raiders will come out and be able to make a lot of plays, and they have a great chance of beating us if we don't play well. Our energy is focused on going out and trying to play as well as we can in order for us to feel like we're in the best position to go out and execute against a very, very tough team.

**Q. Three or four years ago, no one in the NFL would have even thought about talking about dynasties anymore in this league because it is so parity-filled. Given that and what you guys have been able to do, where do you think your Patriots teams fall in line with some of the great teams in the league's history?**

TOM BRADY: Well, I have no idea and to tell you the truth, I'm so far -- I'm not concerned at all with that. I don't write stuff like that and I don't talk about dynasty. I think this team is 0-0 and we're trying to focus on getting to 1-0. Our preparations, the way it's going this week, we're trying to improve every day so that we can go out and be the best we can on Thursday night. I don't care about three years ago. I don't care about two years ago. I don't care about last year. The only thing I care about is this week.

I wish I could give you guys a better answer, but in reality, I don't think in those terms. If I did, I don't think we'd be nearly as successful. The formula that we've taken, the road that we've taken has seemed to work and I don't think we're going to change that.

**Q. The Super Bowl Championships, the cover shots, the appearances, the fame, how does that affect how you have to prepare or has it?**

TOM BRADY: Has it affected the way I've had to prepare?

**Q. Has it changed your career in the way you have to prepare or do things; do you have to be more focused or is it any distraction at all?**

TOM BRADY: Well, I think you prioritize things in your life, and I think just football for me has been a priority since day one and I don't think anything gets in the way of that.

For me, the things I've chosen to do have always been with football first in my mind and that's really my priority.

So it doesn't affect the way I prepare at all. I try each year learn more and more from what I've done the previous year so that I can prepare better. And I feel like I'm at a better point now and I feel like I'm better able to prepare, for example, this week, than I was at any point in the past. Hopefully that works.

**Q. Your team has had some players over the last couple of years that have obviously made some sacrifices for the benefit of the team, changing positions and so forth. Do you think that it's actively bringing in players who are willing to make those sacrifices, or can you more or less create players like that when you bring them into a winning environment?**

TOM BRADY: Well, I think the goal of every player on a team, and that's why it's a team

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sport, is to do whatever you can to help the team win. If you can't do anything to help the team win, then you may as well not be here. If you don't have a role on the team, then you're just taking up space.

So when guys are asked, like **Troy Brown** last year was asked to go play defensive back, if that's the role they call on him to do, that's what he's going to do. And if they are going to call on starting defensive players to play special teams and certain players to switch sides of the ball, then I think everybody really enjoys that because they realize that they can really help the team.

**Coach Belichick** always stresses: The more you can do to help the team, the better we're going to be. The great part about a team sport is that responsibility that you have to your teammates to go out there and do whatever you can transcends any individual awards and any individual sacrifices you might make. Ultimately the only sacrifice you have to make is for the team and I think that's the kind of guys we have here. The guys seem to take to that.

**Q. I wonder, a big game coming up with your old coordinator, Charlie, versus Michigan, against your old school, what you think about that, if anything?**

TOM BRADY: What do I think of that? I'm hoping the Wolverines beat them. I was rooting hard for Charlie last week and I was sitting up; I did, I was actually nervous for him. I wanted him to do really well, and it was great to see Notre Dame go out and win. I think it's going to be a little different with the Wolverines. I don't think I'll be rooting as hard for Notre Dame as I was last week.

**Q. At what point after a Super Bowl win do you stop thinking about that and think only in terms of the here and now?**

TOM BRADY: Well, pretty shortly actually. It's hard to say you put it completely out of your mind but, I think as soon as you start the new year, it's pretty much out of your mind.

We've done all the celebrating we needed to do from last year. We went to the White House and we had ring ceremonies and parades and parties, and that's all great and you appreciate those moments because you're proud of yourself and the way you worked. But you do have to put it out of your mind because it's not going to do anything for you next year. I know how miserable I would be if we went out this year and didn't play the way that I thought we were capable, so I'm going to do everything I can. I know my teammates are going to do everything they can, so

that we go out there this year and really put our best out on the field. I think everybody would be disappointed regardless of what happened last year if this year we don't go out and play to the level of our expectations that we have for ourselves.

**Q. What is the biggest challenge the team faces this season in defending the championship and is any of that different from previous seasons?**

TOM BRADY: Well, I don't think we're defending the championship. I think like I said, we have as much to gain this year as every team out there. We feel like a team that is 0-0 and we have our goals ahead of us just like everybody else, and we're going to go out there every day and work to accomplish them and it starts this week. We focused all of our energy for last week on this team, as it should be. We're just all excited, I know I'm excited and our teammates are excited to get out there and really see the work we've put in and see if it's going to pay off. We have an incredible challenge going up against one of the most storied franchises in the NFL.

**Q. What's been the adjustment to not having Charlie around, how big of an adjustment has that proven to be?**

TOM BRADY: He's a terrific coach and I had a lot of confidence in Charlie. Charlie was someone that always gave you the straight answer. I think any time you lose that type of experience, you need to try and make up for it in other ways. That all remains to be seen how well we've prepared with him being gone. I know we have great coaches and our coaches work hard every single day to coach our players and to get us in the best position for us to be successful in. I know we have very coachable players, so we're going to go out there and we're going to play the way that we're coached and hopefully that's good enough. Hopefully that's good enough without Charlie.

**Q. What are your thoughts on Jerry Rice retiring today, having seen him growing up?**

TOM BRADY: Well, I think there's a time for everybody and he's done more in his career and retiring as the greatest receiver of all time. He's a person I looked up to growing up, I had pictures all over my wall of **Jerry Rice**. Those times in the Bay Area were great growing up when the 49ers were as successful as they were. I had

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my **Jerry Rice** jersey like probably every other kid growing up in that area.

It was really -- he'll be missed. He was a great example of what it means to be a professional athlete, and he set a great example and is a great role model for children. He really used the popularity that he had for a lot of great things. Like I said, he's set a great example.

**Q. How do you think a player should be judged as best player of all time, whether it's him or somebody else, what do you think constitutes or defines that?**

TOM BRADY: Probably just the way that he's respected. He was so consistent for such a long period of time. I hardly ever remember him being hurt. He was always out there. He played his best in the biggest games. He has incredible statistics as a player, the best receiving statistics of all-time, but his consistency over the amount of time he played is unbelievable.

And him even being in training camp this year and playing well enough to make a roster, there's a lot to be said for that. That's someone that kept himself -- I know his work ethic was talked about since the day he started, and I think him going out there over the course of time and proving that he can hold up week-in and week-out, that's really where the payoff is for each player.

**Q. In the GQ story you were as saying that you were motivated by self-doubt, what do you have self-doubt about right now?**

TOM BRADY: I'm someone that was a sixth round pick; I was the 199th pick in the draft. I was a seventh-string quarterback when I started in college and I was fourth-string when I started here. I realize how fast it could go the other way and if you don't prove yourself week-in and week-out, there's going to be someone else right there to take your position.

I love playing this game. I love preparing for this game. I love the camaraderie of my teammates and I don't want to give that up. I think as long as I want to work hard every day to prove to my teammates and my coaches that I can be trusted as their quarterback, that's really what I'm out there to prove every day and I'm out there to prove that to myself, too.

**Q. You mentioned that each of the years have been entirely different, the Super Bowl champions. Can you put a label on each one of those three teams, a characteristic each one of them had?**

TOM BRADY: The first year, we were a great defensive football team that, like I said, offensively, we didn't -- I don't think we ran the ball particularly well and I don't think we threw it well. There were some times where we made enough plays to win. Even in the Super Bowl we won on a two-minute drive there and in the AFC Championship Game we scored on a field goal block returned for a touchdown, a punt returned for a touchdown, and one other touchdown. So one other offensive touchdown, two-minute drive, and that's the type of situational football that we were really took advantage of.

It's hard to remember back even two years ago when we beat **Carolina** in the Super Bowl, but that team was much more balanced I thought. I thought offensively we played better that year. Defense still was terrific.

The one thing that has been consistent is our defensive play. That's been unbelievable and that's because we have some incredible veteran leadership; **Willie McGinest**, **Mike Vrabel**, **Rodney Harrison**, the young guys who really helped in and played well. We had incredible depth. I think that year we had injuries week-in and week-out in the 2003 season, and the team always seemed to rise to the occasion and whoever was called on stepped up to play well.

Last year we had a tough loss at Pittsburgh but the team rallied. Once again I think it was very balanced and **Corey Dillon** was a huge impact on our team. Our running game was the best it's been here. Passing game, I think we're a little more vertical in the passing game. There were some real positives to take from last year. This year we're trying to establish something that is entirely different and remains to be seen how it will all play out.

**Q. How are you able to balance the celebrity status you've achieved through football with actually playing the game?**

TOM BRADY: Some of the most difficult stuff is the off-the-field activity as an athlete, for me it is. It seems often times for me that it's easier to be here working out and playing football than it is to go out to the shopping mall or to go put gas in my car and stuff like that. It's almost like a safe haven for me when I'm here playing football, and I think that's why I probably enjoy being down here a whole lot because life seems like it's much more focused what I'm down here preparing. In the off-season, I get so antsy because I want to get back to some type of normalcy, to more of a schedule and being here and preparing and being

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around my teammates.

**Q. Do you enjoy the celebrity status? Obviously you enjoy football, playing the game more, but is the celebrity status something that you --**

TOM BRADY: I think there's some wonderful opportunities that I've had, things that I've enjoyed and things that are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that have added to my life and opened my eyes to incredibly new experiences that I really, really enjoyed. And there are some things that I could probably do without. But it's hard to pick and choose because with one usually comes some of the other.

I'm very fortunate to play professional football. I've been blessed throughout my life. I've had incredible opportunity. I've had great teammates around me and I think we've enjoyed a lot of that success. And I've enjoyed a lot of that success because of the people that I've had around me and the support that I've had from my family. There's a lot to be grateful for, and like I said, there's so much for me to be appreciative about.

**Q. Which were you most taken aback by: Meeting the Pope, hosting *Saturday Night Live* or being on the cover of *GQ*, which threw you for a loop the most?**

TOM BRADY: Those are the type of experiences, it's hard to ever pass those up, because you're just flattered; to meet the Pope and growing up in a Catholic elementary school and a Catholic high school, that was something that was just a great experience for me. Doing *Saturday Night Live*, I got more out of *Saturday Night Live* than I could have ever possibly imagined. I had so much fun. I think that the *GQ* thing, once again, it's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime; I'm very flattered by one of the biggest publications in the world asking me to be on the cover of a magazine. All three of those, they are very different, but at the same time, I was excited to do all of them and I enjoyed all of them.

**Q. When you run across Charles Woodson, does he ever remind you of the tuck play?**

TOM BRADY: I saw him the year after, 2002 -- I remember I was warming up out in Oakland, they kicked the crap out of us, he came up and kicked me from behind and we kind of got a chuckle out of it. I saw him at the Rose Bowl two years ago when Michigan was playing USC and we talked about it a little bit then. I think I was on

some great fortune that night. I'm glad the refs got the call right.

**Q. Would you talk for just a minute about how important it is for you to be a positive role model for young people?**

TOM BRADY: I sure do, and that's something that I take very seriously. I think a lot of my friends and teammates take that seriously. We have a tremendous opportunity to be a great example for children, and for the community in general.

Like I say, we've all had incredible opportunity in our life and to have the opportunity to play professional football and to use your good fame and -- your fame and good fortune for positive things. The world is looking for leadership in a lot of different areas, and I think we have a great example to lead people and to show people what a team is all about, and how a group of individuals can sacrifice for one another and what hard work does and what sacrifice and commitment does for communities.

I really feel that that's something we're all looking for. I'm proud to be a part of a team that is a great example of this. I look around, some of my best friends on this team, guys like *Tedy Bruschi* and *Rodney Harrison*, what those guys do and the kind of parents that they are to their children; what kind of brother and sister they are to their brothers and sisters; what kind of sons they are to their parents, and I think everyone is proud of the kind of people they are.

So I think we all get disappointed when we see people who don't really take advantage of being able to set those types of examples. I think it's up to each one of us to stand out and I'm proud of a team and a group of people that does this in the New England Patriots.

**Q. The word "three-peat," what does that mean?**

TOM BRADY: What does "three-peat" mean? Well, like I said, I'm hoping to put together three good days of practice. I don't think we've done that yet this year. So we're trying to do our best to get ready for a great Oakland team.

And the word "three-peat," some other teams have talked about that. I don't think you're going to hear our team talk about that a whole lot. We're trying to get to 1-0 and that should be the only goal on our mind. That's the only goal on my mind and the only goal on my teammates' mind, and we're going to do everything we can in the next two days to get ready, like I said, to play one

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of the most challenging Oakland games we've ever faced.

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