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Jen Hale 00:00:00

Wow! All right, Shannon. This time, is he really retiring for good?

Shannon Sharpe 00:00:05

But it seems like there's something going on with February 1st, if I'm not mistaken. I think it was last year, one year ago today. Skip, I do think it's for real, just because how the season played out; I think the finality of it, I think last season, it weighed a lot. Skip, he has started to look gone and I don't know if what happened off the field had that been brewing, weighed on his mind. It had to have weighed on his mind, and then the season not going according to-- A football season for Tom Brady has always pretty much gone according to plan, even if they didn't win the Super Bowl, Skip, he played well.

Skip Bayless 00:00:38

That's true. Yeah, I agree.

Shannon Sharpe 00:00:38

Last year, he didn't play well. They didn't go to the Super Bowl and he had all the things going on with him off the field and just listening at his voice, and as it start to break—you see the hurt, the pain—that, you know what, it's over. "This 23-year ride that I've been on and it's been great, and you're probably never gonna see another ride quite like mine, ever in your life, in the NFL," is over. It's come to a stop and it's tough. It's tough to walk away from doing from something to, Skip, that you absolutely love. He absolutely loved everything about the game of football. He loves watching film. He loves meetings. Obviously, you love the game, you love to hear the roar of the crowd. He loves being around his teammates—in the locker room, on the bus ride, on the planes—and that's over. It's never gonna be like that again, Skip. I don't care if you play a thousand rounds of golf—you can play with Michael Jordan, you can play with Tiger Woods—it's not gonna be the same what you had in the locker room. That camaraderie ain't coming back.

Skip Bayless 00:01:38

Yeah.

Shannon Sharpe 00:01:38

You can call the guys and talk to him, but it's not. But, Skip, this year, it weighed on him and you can tell, Skip. From the opening snap, Skip, he was highly agitated. Yeah, Tom is a fierce competitor. We get that. But the going, the volatility, in which he displayed early on, I'm like, Skip, he's very, very agitated. Things didn't go well right out the gate. Yeah, they look good the opening night. But after that opening night and then the, what? The second to the last game of the season when they played Carolina.

But everything in between did not go the way Tom Brady envisioned and he just come to the realization, "It's gonna be a bad look for me to start all of a sudden. I need to go to a team that has an offensive line like Philly, that can run the ball like Philly, that have skill position like the Dolphins."

That ain't what Tom Brady. Tom Brady was the missing ingredient. He didn't need to go somewhere, Skip. It's like, well, if everything is perfect, Tom can fit right in. And he's like, you know what, once he surveyed the landscape, he is like, "Man, come on." I know it's hard, Tom. It's very hard. I can hear the crackling as your voice starts to break when you say the finality of "My career is over." But I think this is

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the right thing to do, Skip, and if you watched him—if you watched him this season—I think most people realize that, "Yeah, Tom, it's time to hang it up."

Skip Bayless 00:02:53

*\*Phew\** Okay. I hear everything you just said. I will say, that as opposed to last year when I pushed back on this day last year and I said, I don't get this and I'm not trusting it, this feels permanent to me because of what did and did not happen this year on the football field, and what did happen off the field to Tom in his personal life.

Shannon Sharpe 00:03:27

Yeah, and it played out so publicly.

Skip Bayless 00:03:29

It did. Even though ESPN reported just this past Sunday that at least two teams were very interested in signing Tom Brady and there may have been more than the two. So, it's not like he didn't have options. You said last year, remember you were a little miffed, well, they didn't, the league didn't make him retire. They didn't finally shut the door and say, "No, nobody wants you anymore." They did want him, somebody wanted him, two or three or whatever teams wanted him.

Shannon Sharpe 00:03:58

No, I wanted the league to make him-- I wanted the guys to hit him so hard.

Skip Bayless 00:04:00

That's what I mean.

Shannon Sharpe 00:04:02

Yeah. "I don't want to do this anymore."

Skip Bayless 00:04:03

That's it. "I don't wanna do this anymore," because that's what happens to every other human who plays this sport.

Shannon Sharpe 00:04:08

Especially, the quarterback.

Skip Bayless 00:04:09

Okay. But now, as a long-time supporter of his—I don't know him off the field at all, I don't have any personal connection with him at all, but just as a believer in him as a football player—it was starting to smell wrong, to taste wrong to me that Tom Brady was suddenly gonna become, once again, a mercenary quarterback chasing one last ring. "Am I gonna chase it to the Raiders in Las Vegas? Am I gonna chase it all the way back to the Bay Area where I grew up, to the San Francisco 49ers? Would they have me? Would they stoop to have me?" The Shanahans for one year—as a stopgap—as they try to get Brock Purdy healthy again and see what they have in Trey Lance, or trade Trey Lance. That was the

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runaway conjecture. The speculation was that look like, "Oh, well, he's almost gift-wrapped to the 49ers." Really? Well, how long are you gonna chase? If you're the GOAT—which I believe, it's no doubt runaway GOAT—then, how many times do you chase another ring? How many more places do you go? Because at some point people are like, "Huh, here we go again." Right?

Shannon Sharpe 00:05:24

Right. Exactly. But, Skip, when you say that, let me ask you this—let's just say for the sake of argument—Tom Brady goes somewhere, he wins another ring. Does that change the way you think of him? So what, he's a bigger GOAT? He's the 5-, 6-, 7-time GOAT? He is Tom Brady. Every record, passing record that you can possibly have, every playoff, whatever measure you want to use for a player in a team sport, he has it. So, what could he do that would change what Skip Bayless thinks of him?

Skip Bayless 00:05:52

It's just who he is, how he's built, what makes him happy. Clearly, if you could have played another 10 years, you would have played another 10 years, but you just couldn't.

Shannon Sharpe 00:06:00

Neither.

Skip Bayless 00:06:02

It happens to every mortal who plays this game. At some point your body betrays you, your psyche betrays you, and it just says, "I can't do this. It's just too hard." Right?

Shannon Sharpe 00:06:13

Yes. Special skills, Skip. You gotta run, you got to be able to run. I mean, Tom was never reliant on his legs.

Skip Bayless 00:06:19

No. So, what stuck in my craw was, can he really walk away from 8-10? Because that's what they finished this year, 8-10. Can you really walk away from pretty much getting blown off your home field by my Dallas Cowboys, a team that you had owned, a team that you were 7-0 against? Can you say, that's my swansong game? Can you live with that going forward? Because it's not Brady-esque to do that. So, that's why I thought, well, maybe he'll say, "Okay, I need one last draw somewhere, and I got to right the wrong of 8-10."

Shannon Sharpe 00:06:55

But here's the thing, okay. You say, how can he live with 8-10? What's to say he's not 5-12 next year? What's to say he's not 6--?

Skip Bayless 00:07:00

Okay. Well, you could make that case.

Shannon Sharpe 00:07:02

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I think he started to look at it like that, too.

Skip Bayless 00:07:04

But then I look back on, how did he finish? In the end, how did he finish? Well, you pointed out, when all the chips got pushed to the middle of the table in a terrible division nonetheless, but when the chips got pushed and they had a home game against a very hot Carolina team with a head coach who still should be their head coach, and Steve Wilks, because they had rallied back around him, and they were on a late season roll on both sides of the ball—running the football especially, and playing top 10 defense over their last six games of the year—

Shannon Sharpe 00:07:38

Right.

Skip Bayless 00:07:38

—what did he do to that top 10 defense? He destroyed it. He threw for 432 yards and he hit Mike Evans with 3 home run touchdown bombs that flipped the script in that game because they were in trouble losing that. They were down 14 to nothing. Then they were down again, whatever it was, in the early fourth quarter they were down 21-14.

Shannon Sharpe 00:07:58

I think this is when you know it's time. You said, Tom Brady won seven Super Bowls, but you can't remember a throw in which he made in any of those Super Bowls. Now, you go back, you can remember a game, Tom Brady played all these years, there is never a game that you can remember in his career where Tom Brady did this, this, and this. This season, you can remember one game that lets you know the greats. You don't remember a particular game because they've been great for so long, every game seemed like it was damn near great.

Skip Bayless 00:08:25

Okay. But you said that he played horrible the whole year, but 432 and 3 touchdowns without an interception is pretty great to me in a game for all the division marbles. That's something you can hang your helmet on and say, "I'll hang onto that, going forward." Right?

Shannon Sharpe 00:08:41

If you want to say, okay, 17 games. If I give you the first game, they won 19-3. If I give you the game they played in Munich, they beat Seattle, 26-21. And I give you the game against Carolina. That's three games in which you said Tom Brady look like Tom Brady, out of 17.

Skip Bayless 00:08:58

Okay. But obviously, nothing worked out, as you said. I thought they were gonna be really good and the offensive line never came back together and started to get hurt with both the tackles. So, they fell to 24th in pass block win rate. When you're 45 years of age and you're fairly immobile, you're gonna have a hard time if you're 24th because his needs to be top 5 in pass block win rate, and then you're gonna have something because he can still throw. There's nothing wrong with his arm, there was no

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diminished arm talent. You saw what he did against Carolina, you saw the three bombs to Mike Evans. There's nothing wrong with the arm, but you have to have another second to throw those kinds of passes.

Shannon Sharpe 00:09:38

Yeah, Skip. I mean, there are not very many offensive line that can give you an opportunity to hitch and then double hitch, and throw the ball. Normally, when you hitch once, that ball needs to come out or you're gonna get chopped.

Skip Bayless 00:09:46

24th, you're gonna lose, you're just gonna lose. Patrick Mahomes would have a hard time with the 24th pass block win rate. The receivers as a group this year, there was no Gronk, I thought he was gonna come back. He called them, they had discussions and he decided, "No, they don't have any salary cap left for me, and I don't want to do this for free. As much as I love Tommy, I don't want to do it for free." So, there was no Gronk, he had two rookie tight ends. You had Mike Evans and Chris Godwin coming off of knee reconstruction, they're not speed receivers. Mike can trick you and run by you as we saw against Carolina—that's Carolina's fault—but the point is they fell to a passing receiver grade of 19th overall in receiving corps grade. Well, it's not good enough, and then the run game—we're gonna talk about Sean Payton here in a minute, going to your Denver Broncos—but what is his big mantra? "We have to improve running the football to protect our quarterback," that's the quote from him yesterday. Well, Brady's run game protected him zero because it was dead last in the NFL, okay. So, that's not working, and then the defense that it helped carry them to the Super Bowl victory over Patrick Mahomes, going back to, it was just terribly inconsistent. And I thought it hurt that Todd Bowles—who I still consider the best defensive coordinator in football right now—became the head coach, and what happens is it dilutes your ability to focus just on the defense.

00:11:15

So, all of a sudden you're struggling in every area, the defense can't have your back, and it went from bad to worse. But, what's the big picture of it? Well, I'm trying to rationalize how he's thinking about this. In the second half against Dallas, he didn't exactly fold his tent and go home because he just kept on flinging. He threw for 255 in the second half against my Dallas Cowboys—they were a top 5 defense obviously—and you saw what they did at San Francisco against the kid, Brock Purdy. They were pretty good. There was no 255 yards passing in the second half of that game. And then let's see if we can, let's see what happened at the end of this game for Tom Brady because he throws, one, to Mike Evans at the 2-minute warning that would have actually made the game somewhat interesting, this is to Mike Evans, and I thought it would hit him right in the fingertips. Usually, Mike catches that ball. I consider that by his standards a drop.

Shannon Sharpe 00:12:12

It is a drop.

Skip Bayless 00:12:12

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So, if he hangs on, that would have given Brady—just in the second half alone—306 yards passing against Dallas. You can argue empty calories, like, they're down and out. But that would have presented an onside kick possibility for them to miraculously get back in the game. Well, he's had a few miracles that he's made in his career. Okay. So, instead of that being 306 yards, then he throws-- If we'd see the next pass, this is gonna be his last completion. So, this is what you're gonna have to hang on to for Tom Brady. This is to Julio Jones, and I kind of love this because Julio is wide open on this play, he went for 12 yards. I love it that he completed a pass to one of the great receivers we've ever had in this game. I think that's a great, right?

Shannon Sharpe 00:12:58

That's a trivia. That'll be a trivia question one day.

Skip Bayless 00:13:01

But I do love it went to Julio, because he recruited Julio to come help and Julio couldn't stay healthy all year, right? Okay, then let's see the very last pass because now it gets to fourth down. It's fourth and six at the 35, this is a minute and twelve left, and unfortunately this is the last pass that Tom Brady threw in his career. This is it, and it's just a little high and hard for Julio and he couldn't get his hands up to snatch it. Okay. So, I'm going to presume at this point that's the last ball Tom Brady ever threw in the National Football League, you just saw it right there. That's the one you're gonna put in the time capsule. Okay, what else does he have to hang on to, to walk away from? Well, he has to know in his heart, "Okay, I did break my own record this year for attempts and completions." Well, it's not great because you went 8-10 and they're having to just throw the fire out of it because they can't run the ball at all. You can say they abandoned the run. Well, they just decided they couldn't run it. So, here we go, and he completes the most balls ever completed in the history of the league. Trust me, he's clean to that, like, "Okay, I still have that as a last sign of respect. I did do that." And so, it makes it slightly easier for him to walk away saying, "Well, I did break the all time completion record."

Shannon Sharpe 00:14:17

Well, I'm gonna disagree with you on that because Tom Brady was never defined by numbers. Remember, when Peyton Manning was putting up the Star Wars numbers, Tom Brady was winning Super Bowls, and everybody said, "I'd rather have Super Bowls than the Star Wars numbers." So, we can't move the needle for Tom because he didn't win and said, well, he did throw to complete the most passes. He did have the most pass attempts.

Skip Bayless 00:14:36

I got it. But I'm just talking about how does he justify in his mind, not needing a straitjacket to pull him off the field. He made this choice. He said, "Okay, I can walk away from what?" Well, trust me, he doesn't love the 8-10.

Shannon Sharpe 00:14:51

Right.

Skip Bayless 00:14:52

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He did have the 432. He had a decent second half against Dallas and he broke his own record for completion. So, he's trying to justify or rationalize in his mind, "At least, I did that at 45."

Shannon Sharpe 00:15:03

I think he justifies in his mind, Skip, "I can't do this on a consistent basis." And that's what I've said, the thing is, as you start to age as an aging player, Skip, you can summarize it up here and there, but it's the consistency. Skip, we never worried about Tom Brady. We never focused on one game, where he did this one game. Tom Brady was 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 games of consistency.

300, 350, 3 touchdowns, 4 touchdowns. Skip, I mean, the only thing we got to hang our hats on is if we really look at it as one game. The 432, 3, 4 touchdown games against Carolina, that is not how Tom Brady wants to be remembered. That's not how he wants to be measured.

Skip Bayless 00:15:43

But there are not many mortals who can throw for 432 in a game for all the marbles in the division. Trust me, even playing right now—as young as you want to go—it's hard to do that against that defense.

Shannon Sharpe 00:15:55

Yes. But, Skip, here's the thing though. What about all the 199s, the 200s, that he threw for?

Skip Bayless 00:16:00

Okay. Well, again, terrible pass blocking, no run game, average receivers, no Gronk, no AB. It was a long, hard year and I think it took an emotional toll on him, as did trying to go through a divorce and finalize it during the football season, and enough is enough. And again, I don't think there's any way that a team could call him next week or the next week and say, "Hey, we need you." I think it's over and out. I think he just told you that in what he posted, "I did the big retirement speech last year. So, you only get one of those. So, I'm not gonna do it this time, but it's over."

Shannon Sharpe 00:16:39

I think last year, Skip, he retired, but he looked at his season. "I threw for 5,000 yards. I led the league in touchdown passes. Why am I walking away again?" I think when he looks back now, what is he looking back saying, "Okay, wow. Am I continuing to play?" Looking at his play, he evaluates himself. If he's honest with himself, looking at himself this past season versus a year ago, you can understand why.

Skip Bayless 00:17:02

Okay. But remember, coming off last year, his peers in this league—all the younger players in this league, all younger than he—they voted him "the best player," not the best quarterback, the best player in the whole league coming into his final season. Well, you got that to hang on to, right? And that's why I kept arguing last year. I don't see how he's done yet because he's playing at too high of a level. Because he was coming off a game in which they lost—what I'm sure he considered a heart crusher, not heart breaker—at home, to the team that was about to go win the championship, and you did fall behind but you roared back. You scored 24 unanswered points, right? To get it to 27-all, and they blew a defense, they blew up a blitz. Half of them got blitzed, half of them didn't get blitzed and they let Cooper Kupp—the triple crown winning receiver—run right down in the middle of the field, wide

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open, uncovered, to catch a little pop fly pass for a walk-off field goal. Okay, so that's what killed his soul last year and that's what drove him to say, "I'm on retirement. I got to come back because I have—*what was his line?*—unfinished business." Well, this year it didn't work out for him to finish his business.

Shannon Sharpe {timestamp}

He didn't come back for this.

Skip Bayless 00:18:16

So, I hurt for Tampa because he went down there in a pandemic year and turned the "suck-aneers" into the championship Buccaneers in his first year. Well, it forced you and I to make Tampa Bay Buccaneers games must-see TV, because we had no choice. We had to watch what's Brady gonna do next, okay? So, for the last three years, have you missed one snap of a Tampa game? I doubt it.

Shannon Sharpe 00:18:41

No.

Skip Bayless 00:18:41

Going forward next year, you might miss some snaps of Tampa.

Shannon Sharpe 00:18:45

Everybody gonna miss some snaps of Tampa.

Skip Bayless 00:18:46

I think so, because I don't know where they're gonna turn, are they gonna go to Kyle Trask or Blaine Gabbert, or what--?

Shannon Sharpe 00:18:52

And they got a lot of big ticket, uh-uh, guys that's getting on up there in age.

Skip Bayless 00:18:56

Man, it kind of leaves you high and dry for the moment. So anyway, I will miss him. I don't know that you will, but I will.

Shannon Sharpe 00:19:07

Well, we know that, we're gonna have at least one topic a week. I mean, a day to talk about him because he-- good, bad or indifferent, he's gonna do something. We must talk about Tom Brady.

Skip Bayless 00:19:18

And at some point down the road, obviously, we will welcome him into the FOX family in some, as yet undetermined role. But that's somewhere down the road.

Shannon Sharpe 00:19:27

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Skip, it's like, if debate-TV had been in an affair with Jordan, you think there could have been a game that Jordan played with somebody, we weren't gonna talk about him at least once?

Skip Bayless 00:19:36

[sighs]

Shannon Sharpe 00:19:36

He's Mike! He's Tom!

Skip Bayless 00:19:39

That was it.

Shannon Sharpe 00:19:40

Or Brady, however you want to address him. He should go by one name. He should be either Tom or Brady, but you know who he is.

Skip Bayless 00:19:46

Yes, we do.

Jen Hale 00:19:49

Guys, he posted that retirement video less than an hour and a half ago and it already has over six million views. Tom, we wish you the very best. Congratulations on an amazing career. All right. Speaking of amazing career, Shannon, let's talk about your guy, LeBron.

00:20:06

Thanks for watching, Undisputed fans. Subscribe here to get the very latest from Skip and Shannon. Plus, go watch a few segments from our other shows on FS1.