

NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
8/26/05

NFL & SKY SPORTS REACH TWO-YEAR AGREEMENT FOR LIVE COVERAGE OF REGULAR SEASON, PLAYOFFS & SUPER BOWL IN THE UK

SKY SPORTS and the National Football League have agreed a new two-year contract that will mean more games than ever being broadcast live each season in the United Kingdom, the NFL announced today.

Sky Sports will show two games live every Sunday evening, with additional games on Saturday towards the end of the season. Every playoff game will be aired live, with Sky's 11th season of live NFL coverage culminating in Super Bowl XL from Detroit on Sunday February 5.

"Sky Sports' reputation for high quality production and technologically innovative game presentation makes them an excellent partner for the NFL," said **KATIE BOES**, the NFL senior director of international media. "Our game ratings increased by over 300 percent during the last three seasons on Sky and we look forward to continued audience growth over the next two seasons."

VIC WAKELING, managing director of Sky Sports, added: "This agreement will give viewers more live games over the next two years and extends a relationship we have enjoyed for a decade. The NFL is a fixture on our Sunday evening schedules. Its popularity is no surprise given the numbers of teams that have legitimate Super Bowl ambitions each season."

Sky's coverage begins with the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots hosting the Oakland Raiders in the NFL Kickoff 2005 season opener on Thursday, September 8. The Sunday evening schedule begins on September 11 with the Miami Dolphins hosting the Denver Broncos and the Arizona Cardinals' visit to the New York Giants.

Other games planned during the first five weeks of the season are: **Week 2** -- Jacksonville Jaguars at Indianapolis Colts, Atlanta Falcons at Seattle Seahawks; **Week 3** -- Oakland Raiders at Philadelphia Eagles, New England Patriots at Pittsburgh Steelers; **Week 4** -- Houston Texans at Cincinnati Bengals, New York Jets at Baltimore Ravens; **Week 5** -- New England Patriots at Atlanta Falcons, Philadelphia Eagles at Dallas Cowboys.

Sky Sports' enhanced coverage of the NFL will once again feature various options for Sky digital viewers including game highlights, statistical summaries, live scores from around the NFL, and access to a beginner's guide.

In other NFL TV arrangements in the UK, the league is entering the second year of a three-year deal with **ITV** for live coverage of Super Bowl and weekly playoff coverage. **Five's** new two-year deal includes live broadcasts of *NFL Monday Night Football* throughout the season, plus live Sunday night football during the second half of the season. The **North American Sports Network** (NASN) is currently featuring live preseason games and will air ESPN's preview, highlights and magazine shows throughout the 2005 season.

"For us to have four major broadcast partners in one country shows the increasing interest in the NFL," said **ALISTAIR KIRKWOOD**, NFL Europe vice-president of strategic planning. "The UK is a priority market for the NFL and we continue to see encouraging signs of growth in many areas. For example, two million people watched Super Bowl live last year and the interest in the sport has enabled us to look very seriously at bringing a regular season game to Britain when the new Wembley Stadium opens next year.

"Television remains the cornerstone of our activities in the UK and our new agreement with Sky, offering access to many live games, is at the heart of that strategy."

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