

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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COMMUNICATIONS

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NFL REGULAR SEASON ENTERS FINAL QUARTER

There are only four games remaining in the regular season to decide who advances to the playoffs for a shot at a trip to Super Bowl LII in Minnesota. As the NFL enters the final quarter of the regular season, there are 22 teams either in or within two games of a playoff spot.

Entering Week 14, no teams have clinched a playoff berth. Four teams – Minnesota, New England, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh – can clinch a division title this week. Three others – Jacksonville, Los Angeles Rams and New Orleans – can secure a playoff berth. Pittsburgh can also clinch a playoff berth with a Buffalo loss.

In the AFC, the Patriots (10-2) can lock up the AFC East with a win or a Buffalo loss. The Steelers (10-2) can secure the AFC North title with a victory over Baltimore. Pittsburgh can also clinch a playoff berth before the team plays on Sunday night with a Buffalo loss. The Jaguars (8-4) have a chance to secure a playoff berth with a win combined with other scenarios.

In the NFC, the Eagles (10-2) can secure the NFC East with a win or a Dallas loss. It would complete a “worst-to-first” turnaround for Philadelphia, which finished last in the division in 2016, and this would be the 14th season in the past 15 years in which at least one team won its division the season after finishing in or tied for last place. The Vikings (10-2) can lock up the NFC North with a victory or losses by both Detroit and Green Bay. The Rams (9-3) and Saints (9-3) each have an opportunity to clinch a playoff berth with a win combined with other scenarios.

Week 14 begins on Thursday night (8:25 PM ET, NBC/NFLN/Amazon Prime) with an important NFC South contest as the Atlanta Falcons (7-5) host the first-place New Orleans Saints (9-3). With four games to go, the Saints lead the division by one game over Carolina and two games over Atlanta. However, the Falcons finish with four consecutive division games – including two against the Saints – and both New Orleans and Atlanta are in control for the NFC South title.

The week concludes with a pair of primetime contests with AFC playoff implications. On Sunday night (8:30 PM ET, NBC), the Steelers (10-2) will host Baltimore (7-5) with a chance to clinch the AFC North with a victory. On Monday night (8:30 PM ET, ESPN), the Patriots (10-2) will visit Miami (5-7) and can lock up the AFC East this week with either a Buffalo loss on Sunday or a win against the Dolphins on Monday night. Some of the key contests in Week 14:

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS (9-3) at ATLANTA FALCONS (7-5) (Thursday, NBC/NFLN/Amazon Prime, 8:25 PM ET)

- The Saints have won nine of their past 10 games, including last week's 31-21 victory over Carolina. New Orleans leads the NFC South and is in control for the division title. The Saints can clinch a playoff berth this week with a win on Thursday night combined with other scenarios in Sunday's games.
- New Orleans running backs **ALVIN KAMARA** and **MARK INGRAM** have combined for at least 200 scrimmage yards in five consecutive games. During that span, the duo has combined for 1,243 scrimmage yards and 13 touchdowns. Kamara and Ingram are the first pair of running back teammates to each gain at least 100 scrimmage yards in the same game four times in a season since the 1985 San Francisco 49ers (**ROGER CRAIG** and **WENDELL TYLER**).
- The Falcons have won three of their past four games and finish the season with four division contests. Atlanta is in control for the NFC South and can seize the division title by winning the team's final four regular-season games.
- Atlanta quarterback **MATT RYAN** has reached 3,000 passing yards (3,057) for the eighth consecutive season. In his past six games against New Orleans, Ryan has completed 162 of 229 passes (70.7 percent) for 1,970 yards with 14 touchdowns and one interception for a 115.4 passer rating.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS (10-2) at CAROLINA PANTHERS (8-4) (Sunday, CBS, 1:00 PM ET)

- The Vikings have won eight consecutive games, including last week's 14-9 win at Atlanta. Minnesota can clinch the NFC North with a win or losses by both Detroit and Green Bay.
- Minnesota quarterback **CASE KEENUM**, who was named the NFC Offensive Player of the Month for November, has recorded a passer rating of at least 100 in four consecutive games, tying Pro Football Hall of Famer **BRETT FAVRE** (2009) and **DAUNTE CULPEPPER** (2000 and 2004) for the longest streak in franchise history.

- The Panthers, who have won four of their past five games, are 8-4 and right in the mix for a postseason berth.
- Carolina linebacker **LUKE KUECHLY** leads the team with 89 tackles this season. Since entering the league in 2012, Kuechly leads the NFL with 782 tackles.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (10-2) at LOS ANGELES RAMS (9-3) (Sunday, FOX, 4:25 PM ET)

- The Eagles and Rams are both averaging 30.1 points per game, the best mark in the NFL.
- Philadelphia, which has won nine of its past 10 games, can clinch the NFC East with a win or a Dallas loss. It would complete a “worst-to-first” turnaround for the Eagles, who finished last in the division in 2016. This would be the 14th season in the past 15 years in which at least one team won its division the season after finishing in or tied for last place.
- Eagles quarterback **CARSON WENTZ** leads the NFL with 29 touchdown passes and ranks second in the NFC with a 102 passer rating (minimum 200 attempts). Wentz’s 29 touchdown passes are the most by an Eagles quarterback through the team’s first 12 games and he needs three touchdown passes to tie Pro Football Hall of Famer **SONNY JURGENSEN** (32 in 1961) for the franchise single-season record.
- The Rams, who have won six of their past seven games, lead the NFC West and can clinch a playoff berth this weekend with a win combined with other scenarios.
- Los Angeles running back **TODD GURLEY** leads the NFC with 1,502 scrimmage yards and is tied for the NFL lead with 11 touchdowns. Gurley and Pro Football Hall of Famer **ERIC DICKERSON** (1983) are the only players in franchise history to have at least 1,500 scrimmage yards and 10 touchdowns in the team’s first 12 games of a season.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS (8-4) at JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS (8-4) (Sunday, FOX, 4:25 PM ET)

- The Seahawks have won seven of their past nine games, including last week’s 24-10 win over Philadelphia.
- Since 2012, quarterback **RUSSELL WILSON**’s first season, the Seahawks are an NFL-best 20-5 (.800) in regular-season games played in December/January. In those games, Wilson has 50 touchdown passes and a 104.1 passer rating, the highest mark among active quarterbacks over that span.
- The Jaguars, who defeated Indianapolis 30-10 last week, are 8-4 and enter Week 14 tied with Tennessee for first place in the AFC South. Jacksonville can clinch a playoff berth this week with a win combined with other scenarios.
- Jacksonville defensive end **CALAIS CAMPBELL** leads the AFC with a career-high 12.5 sacks, the most in a single season in franchise history. The Jaguars lead the NFL with 45 sacks and Campbell has recorded at least a half-sack in nine of the team’s 12 games.

BALTIMORE RAVENS (7-5) at PITTSBURGH STEELERS (10-2) (Sunday, NBC, 8:30 PM ET)

- The Ravens have won three consecutive games, including last week’s 44-20 victory over Detroit, and are right in the middle of the playoff race in the AFC with a 7-5 record.
- Baltimore leads the NFL with 29 takeaways and a +14 turnover differential. Safety **ERIC WEDDLE** had a sack, forced fumble and 45-yard interception-return touchdown in last week’s win against the Lions.
- The Steelers have won seven consecutive games, including last week’s 23-20 comeback win at Cincinnati, and can clinch the AFC North division title with a victory over Baltimore. Pittsburgh can also lock up a playoff berth before the team plays on Sunday night with a Buffalo loss.
- Pittsburgh running back **LE’VEON BELL** leads the NFL in rushing yards (1,057) and scrimmage yards (1,559) while wide receiver **ANTONIO BROWN** ranks first in receptions (88) and receiving yards (1,296). Brown, who has 569 catches and 7,611 receiving yards since 2013, surpassed Pro Football Hall of Famer **MARVIN HARRISON** (1999-2003) for the most receptions and receiving yards by a player in any five-year span in NFL history.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (10-2) at MIAMI DOLPHINS (5-7) (Monday, ESPN, 8:30 PM ET)

- The Patriots, who defeated Buffalo 23-3 last week, have won eight consecutive games and can clinch the AFC East with either a Buffalo loss on Sunday or a win on Monday night. New England has won at least 10 games in 15 consecutive seasons, the second-longest streak in NFL history (16, San Francisco, 1983-1998).
- New England quarterback **TOM BRADY** has won 55 games in December in his career, the most by a starting quarterback in any calendar month in NFL history. Last week, Brady became the fourth player in NFL history to reach 65,000 career passing yards (65,214).
- The Dolphins defeated Denver 35-9 last week and remain alive in the race for a postseason berth.
- Miami cornerback **XAVIEN HOWARD** had two interceptions – including a 30-yard touchdown – in the victory over the Broncos. The Dolphins added two safeties in the game and are the third team in NFL history to have an interception-return touchdown and two safeties in a single game, joining the 1927 and 1961 New York Giants.

NFL WEEK 14 SCHEDULE
THURSDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 10-11

(All times local)

Thursday, December 7

New Orleans at Atlanta, 8:25 PM (NBC/NFLN/Amazon)

Sunday, December 10

Indianapolis at Buffalo, 1:00 PM

Minnesota at Carolina, 1:00 PM

Chicago at Cincinnati, 1:00 PM

Green Bay at Cleveland, 1:00 PM

San Francisco at Houston, 12:00 PM

Oakland at Kansas City, 12:00 PM

Dallas at New York Giants, 1:00 PM

Sunday, December 10 (cont'd)

Detroit at Tampa Bay, 1:00 PM

Tennessee at Arizona, 2:05 PM

New York Jets at Denver, 2:05 PM

Washington at Los Angeles Chargers, 1:05 PM

Seattle at Jacksonville, 4:25 PM

Philadelphia at Los Angeles Rams, 1:25 PM

Baltimore at Pittsburgh, 8:30 PM (NBC)

Monday, December 11

New England at Miami, 8:30 PM (ESPN)