

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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COMMUNICATIONS

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NFL POSTSEASON BEGINS

After an exciting finish to the regular season, the NFL’s second season has arrived.

The NFL postseason begins with four games on Wild Card Weekend.

Saturday, January 6

AFC	Tennessee at Kansas City	4:35 PM ET	ESPN/ABC
NFC	Atlanta at Los Angeles Rams	8:15 PM ET	NBC

Sunday, January 7

AFC	Buffalo at Jacksonville	1:05 PM ET	CBS
NFC	Carolina at New Orleans	4:40 PM ET	FOX

Week 17 came right down to the wire. Sunday’s excitement was due in part to having 16 divisional games played on the season’s final day, a tradition instituted in 2010. Three playoff berths (Atlanta, Buffalo and Tennessee) and one division (NFC South) were decided on the last day of the regular season.

The final 12 teams are now set. It doesn’t matter *how* you got here. All that matters is *that* you’re here.

AFC

1. New England (13-3, AFC East champion)
2. Pittsburgh (13-3, AFC North champion)
3. Jacksonville (10-6, AFC South champion)
4. Kansas City (10-6, AFC West champion)
5. Tennessee (9-7)
6. Buffalo (9-7)

NFC

1. Philadelphia (13-3, NFC East champion)
2. Minnesota (13-3, NFC North champion)
3. Los Angeles Rams (11-5, NFC West champion)
4. New Orleans (11-5, NFC South champion)
5. Carolina (11-5)
6. Atlanta (10-6)

The NFL playoffs, which conclude on February 4 with Super Bowl LII at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minnesota (NBC, 6:30 PM ET), begin this Saturday and Sunday with Wild Card Weekend.

The Eagles and Jaguars both completed “worst-to-first” turnarounds and at least one team has won its division the season after finishing in or tied for last place in 14 of the past 15 seasons. Five of the eight division winners – Eagles, Vikings, Rams, Saints and Jaguars – finished in either third or fourth place in their divisions last year.

And there are eight new teams in this year’s playoff field – Eagles, Vikings, Rams, Saints and Panthers in the NFC and Jaguars, Titans and Bills in the AFC – which is tied for the most in a season (2003) since the 12-team playoff format was adopted in 1990. Since 1990, at least four teams have qualified for the playoffs in every season that were not in the postseason the year before.

A look at the four games on Wild Card Weekend:

TENNESSEE TITANS (9-7) at KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (10-6) (Saturday, ESPN/ABC, 4:35 PM ET)

- This is the third postseason meeting between the two teams and the first since the 1993 AFC Divisional Playoff (January 16, 1994) when the Chiefs defeated the Houston Oilers 28-20 at the Astrodome. Kansas City leads the all-time series 29-22, including a 2-0 mark in the playoffs. The teams last met in Week 15, 2016 (December 18) with the Titans pulling out a 19-17 victory as **RYAN SUCCOP** kicked a game-winning 53-yard field goal as time expired.
- The Titans have qualified for the postseason for the first time since 2008. Tennessee had three players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: defensive tackle **JURRELL CASEY**, punter **BRETT KERN** and tackle **TAYLOR LEWAN**.

- Tennessee running back **DERRICK HENRY**, who caught a 66-yard touchdown pass from quarterback **MARCUS MARIOTA** in the team's Week 17 win that clinched a playoff berth, scored three 65+ yard touchdowns from scrimmage (72-yard rush, 75-yard rush, 66-yard catch) this season, the most such scores in the NFL this season.
- The Chiefs have won back-to-back division titles for the first time in franchise history. Kansas City had three players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: return specialist **TYREEK HILL**, rookie running back **KAREEM HUNT** and tight end **TRAVIS KELCE**.
- Kansas City quarterback **ALEX SMITH** led the NFL with a career-high 104.7 passer rating. **Hunt**, who was selected in the third round of the 2017 NFL Draft, rushed for 1,327 yards and is the second rookie not drafted in the first round (**PAUL ROBINSON**, 1968) to lead his league in rushing yards in the common draft era (since 1967).

ATLANTA FALCONS (10-6) at LOS ANGELES RAMS (11-5) (Saturday, NBC, 8:15 PM ET)

- This is the second postseason meeting between the two teams. The Falcons defeated the St. Louis Rams 47-17 in the 2004 NFC Divisional Playoffs (January 15, 2005). The Rams lead the all-time series 47-29-2, including the postseason. Atlanta won the last meeting between the clubs 42-14 in Week 14, 2016 (December 11).
- The Falcons, the defending NFC champions, are back in the playoffs for the second consecutive season. Atlanta had two players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: wide receiver **JULIO JONES** and center **ALEX MACK**.
- Atlanta quarterback **MATT RYAN** completed 70 of 98 passes (71.4 percent) for 1,014 yards with nine touchdowns and no interceptions for a 135.3 passer rating in last year's postseason.
- The Rams are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2004 and won the team's first division title since 2003. Los Angeles had five players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: return specialist **PHAROH COOPER**, defensive tackle **AARON DONALD**, running back **TODD GURLEY**, punter **JOHNNY HEKKER** and kicker **GREG ZUERLEIN**.
- **Gurley** led the league in scrimmage yards (2,093) and touchdowns (19), closing out the regular season with 749 scrimmage yards (187.3 per game) and eight touchdowns in the four December games in which he played.

BUFFALO BILLS (9-7) at JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS (10-6) (Sunday, CBS, 1:05 PM ET)

- This is the second postseason meeting between the two teams. The Jaguars defeated the Bills 30-27 in the 1996 AFC Wild Card Playoffs (December 28, 1996). Buffalo leads the all-time series 8-7, including the postseason. The Bills won the last meeting between the clubs 28-21 in Week 12, 2016 (November 27).
- Buffalo has qualified for the postseason for the first time since 1999. The Bills had three players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: safety **MICAH HYDE**, guard **RICHIE INCOGNITO** and running back **LE SEAN MC COY**.
- Bills linebacker **PRESTON BROWN** led the league with a career-high 144 tackles. Brown has recorded more than 100 tackles in each of his four NFL seasons.
- The Jaguars have advanced to the postseason for the first time since 2007 and won the division for the first time since 1999 (AFC Central). Jacksonville had four players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: cornerbacks **A.J. BOUYE** and **JALEN RAMSEY**, defensive end **CALAIS CAMPBELL** and defensive tackle **MALIK JACKSON**.
- Jacksonville led the NFL with seven defensive touchdowns, including two by linebacker **TELVIN SMITH**. **Campbell** led the AFC with 14.5 sacks and teammate **YANNICK NGAKOUÉ** tied for third in the conference with 12 sacks.

CAROLINA PANTHERS (11-5) at NEW ORLEANS SAINTS (11-5) (Sunday, FOX, 4:40 PM ET)

- The teams will meet in the postseason for the first time. New Orleans swept the season series this year, winning 34-13 at Carolina in Week 3 (September 24) and 31-21 at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in Week 13 (December 3).
- The Panthers are back in the postseason after a one-year hiatus. In 2015, Carolina went 15-1 in the regular season and advanced to Super Bowl 50, the second Super Bowl appearance in franchise history.
- Carolina linebacker **LUKE KUECHLY**, who led the team with 125 tackles, was selected to his fifth Pro Bowl. Since entering the NFL in 2012, Kuechly leads the league with 818 tackles. In six career postseason starts, Panthers quarterback **CAM NEWTON** has eight passing touchdowns and two rushing touchdowns.
- The Saints have qualified for the postseason for the first time since 2013 and claimed the team's first division title since 2011. New Orleans had six players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl, tied with Philadelphia for the most in the NFC: quarterback **DREW BREES**, running backs **MARK INGRAM** and **ALVIN KAMARA**, defensive end **CAMERON JORDAN**, cornerback **MARSHON LATTIMORE** and wide receiver **MICHAEL THOMAS**. Kamara and Lattimore are two of the four rookies who were selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl.
- **Kamara** (1,554) and **Ingram** (1,540) became the first running back teammates in NFL history to each record at least 1,500 scrimmage yards in the same season. Brees completed 386 of 536 passes for a 72.0 completion percentage, the highest single-season mark in league history. Brees also extended his NFL-record streak to 12 consecutive seasons with at least 4,000 passing yards.