



COMMUNICATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12/13/16
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PLAYOFF RACES HEAT UP AS 26 TEAMS REMAIN IN CONTENTION FOR TRIP TO SUPER BOWL LI

-- Week 15 also features return of Saturday night football as Dolphins visit Jets on NFL Network --

With three weeks remaining in the regular season, the suspense continues to build as teams make their final playoff push. Twenty-six teams remain in contention for a trip to Super Bowl LI.

The Dallas Cowboys are the only team that has clinched a spot in the postseason. So as we approach the final three weeks of the regular season, there are still 11 playoff berths up for grabs.

Dallas (11-2) can clinch both the NFC East division title and a first-round bye with a win and a New York Giants loss. If the Cowboys win and the game between the Giants and Detroit ends in a tie, Dallas will also secure home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs. The Lions (9-4) can win the NFC North with a victory and a Green Bay loss. Seattle (8-4-1) can clinch the NFC West with a win or an Arizona loss. The Giants (9-4) can secure a playoff berth with a win and losses by Washington, Green Bay and Minnesota.

New England (11-2) can clinch the AFC East division title and a first-round bye with a win. If the Patriots lose in Week 15, New England can still win the division with a Miami loss and can still secure a first-round bye with a Miami loss and either a Pittsburgh loss or a Kansas City win. Kansas City (10-3) can clinch a playoff berth with a win or with losses by Denver and either Pittsburgh or Baltimore. Oakland (10-3) can secure a playoff spot with a win. There are also various scenarios for Oakland to advance to the postseason this week even if the Raiders lose.

Week 15 begins on Thursday night when the Los Angeles Rams visit the Seahawks (8:25 PM ET, NBC/NFLN/Twitter) in an NFC West match-up. The Rams have won each of the past three meetings between the teams, including a 9-3 victory in Week 2. Seattle is 13-2 (.867) in the team's past 15 home games after December 1, including the postseason (4-0).

The action continues on Saturday night (8:25 PM ET, NFL Network) when the Dolphins visit the New York Jets in an AFC East showdown. The Jets have won three of the past four meetings between the clubs, but the Dolphins won the Week 9 contest between the teams, 27-23. At 8-5, Miami is right in the middle of the AFC postseason race with three games remaining.

The week concludes with a pair of primetime contests with playoff implications. On Sunday night (8:30 PM ET, NBC), the Cowboys host the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Dallas, which had its 11-game winning streak snapped last week, is looking to lock up the division title and a first-round bye. The Buccaneers have won five consecutive games, tied for the longest current streak in the league (Detroit), and enter Week 15 with an 8-5 record, tied with Atlanta for first place in the NFC South.

On Monday night (8:30 PM ET, ESPN), the Washington Redskins host the Carolina Panthers. At 7-5-1, Washington is in the thick of the NFC playoff race with three weeks remaining. Carolina, the defending NFC champions, have won four in a row against the Redskins and look to keep their playoff hopes alive. Some of the key games in Week 15:

TENNESSEE TITANS (7-6) at KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (10-3) (Sunday, CBS, 1:00 PM ET)
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- Tennessee has won two games in a row and is tied with Houston for first place in the AFC South. With three games remaining, the Titans are in control for the division title. Last week, Tennessee defeated Denver 13-10 as running back **DE MARCO MURRAY** rushed for 92 yards and a touchdown. Murray leads the AFC with 1,135 rushing yards.
- The Chiefs have won eight of their past nine games, including last week's 21-13 victory over Oakland. **TYREEK HILL** had a 78-yard punt-return touchdown and a 36-yard receiving touchdown in the win against the Raiders. Hill is only the third

rookie in NFL history – and the first since Pro Football Hall of Famer **GALE SAYERS** in 1965 – to have a receiving touchdown, a rushing touchdown, a punt-return touchdown and a kickoff-return touchdown in a season.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS (8-5) at CINCINNATI BENGALS (5-7-1) (Sunday, CBS, 1:00 PM ET)

- Pittsburgh leads the AFC North by one game over Baltimore heading into Week 15. Last week at Buffalo, running back **LE'VEON BELL** had 298 scrimmage yards (236 rushing, 62 receiving) and three touchdowns in the Steelers' 27-20 win, joining Pro Football Hall of Famer **JIM BROWN** as the only players in NFL history with at least 225 rushing yards, three rushing touchdowns and 50 receiving yards in a single game. With three games remaining, Pittsburgh is in control for the AFC North division title.
- The Bengals kept their playoff hopes alive with a 23-10 win at Cleveland last week. In the victory over the Browns, quarterback **ANDY DALTON** threw two touchdown passes to tight end **TYLER EIFERT** while running back **JEREMY HILL** rushed for 111 yards and a touchdown.

DETROIT LIONS (9-4) at NEW YORK GIANTS (9-4) (Sunday, FOX, 1:00 PM ET)

- The Lions improved to 9-4 with last week's 20-17 victory over Chicago. It marked the eighth time this season in which the Lions won a game after trailing in the fourth quarter, the most such wins in a season in NFL history. Quarterback **MATTHEW STAFFORD**, who scored the game-winning touchdown on a seven-yard rush with 3:17 remaining in the fourth quarter, has led eight game-winning drives in the fourth quarter or overtime this season, the most by a quarterback in a single season since the 1970 merger. With three games remaining, Detroit is in control for the NFC North division title and a first-round bye.
- The Giants defeated Dallas 10-7 on Sunday night as New York moved to 9-4 and remains in control for a playoff berth. Wide receiver **ODELL BECKHAM JR.** scored the game-winning touchdown on a 61-yard pass from quarterback **ELI MANNING**. Beckham has nine career touchdown receptions of at least 60 yards, the second-most by a player in his first three seasons in NFL history (**HARLON HILL**, 10).

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (11-2) at DENVER BRONCOS (8-5) (Sunday, CBS, 4:25 PM ET)

- The Patriots, who defeated Baltimore 30-23 on Monday night, are closing in on the AFC East division title and a first-round bye. With a victory, New England will become the first team in NFL history to win eight consecutive division titles. The Patriots remain in control for home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs. Against the Ravens, quarterback **TOM BRADY** passed for 406 yards and three touchdowns. Brady has 52 career wins in December, tying Pro Football Hall of Famer **BRETT FAVRE** (December) for the most wins by a starting quarterback in any calendar month.
- The Broncos find themselves in the thick of the AFC postseason race with an 8-5 record. Denver closes the season against three teams with double-digit win totals – New England (11), Kansas City (10) and Oakland (10). Broncos linebacker **VON MILLER** has 13.5 sacks this season, tied for the NFL lead. In last year's AFC Championship Game against the Patriots, Miller had 2.5 sacks and an interception as Denver advanced to Super Bowl 50 with a 20-18 victory.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS (8-5) at DALLAS COWBOYS (11-2) (Sunday, NBC, 8:30 PM ET)

- The Buccaneers have won five consecutive games and are tied with Atlanta for first place in the NFC South. Last week, Tampa Bay defeated New Orleans 16-11 as running back **DOUG MARTIN** rushed for a touchdown and the Buccaneers' defense recorded three interceptions. At 8-5, Tampa Bay is in control for a playoff berth.
- The Cowboys are the only team in the NFL that has clinched a spot in the postseason. With a win and a New York Giants loss this week, Dallas will secure both the NFC East division title and a first-round bye. The Cowboys also have a shot to seize the No. 1 overall seed in the NFC if they win and the game between the Giants and Lions ends in a tie. Rookie running back **EZEKIEL ELLIOTT** rushed for 107 yards last week – his sixth 100-yard performance this season – and leads the NFL with 1,392 rushing yards.

CAROLINA PANTHERS (5-8) at WASHINGTON REDSKINS (7-5-1) (Monday, ESPN, 8:30 PM ET)

- The Panthers defeated San Diego 28-16 in Week 14 to keep the team's playoff hopes alive. The defending NFC champions trail Atlanta and Tampa Bay by three games in the NFC South with three games to play. Carolina has won 12 of its past 14 regular-season games in December/January, outscoring its opponents by 127 points (382-255).
- The Redskins held off division rival Philadelphia 27-22 last week and remain in playoff contention with three weeks remaining. Last week, wide receiver **DE SEAN JACKSON** caught an 80-yard touchdown pass from quarterback **KIRK COUSINS**. Jackson has 22 career touchdowns of at least 60 yards, the second-most in NFL history (**JERRY RICE**, 23). Cousins has passed for 4,045 yards this season and is the only quarterback in franchise history to reach 4,000 passing yards in multiple seasons. He passed for a club-record 4,166 yards last season.

2016 NFL STANDINGS

American Football Conference

East Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
New England Patriots	11	2	0	.846	349	230	5-2-0	6-0-0	8-1-0	3-1-0	4W
Miami Dolphins	8	5	0	.615	281	301	6-1-0	2-4-0	5-4-0	2-1-0	1W
Buffalo Bills	6	7	0	.462	325	301	3-3-0	3-4-0	3-6-0	1-3-0	2L
New York Jets	4	9	0	.308	229	324	1-5-0	3-4-0	3-6-0	1-2-0	1W

North Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Pittsburgh Steelers	8	5	0	.615	317	256	4-2-0	4-3-0	6-3-0	2-1-0	4W
Baltimore Ravens	7	6	0	.538	279	237	5-2-0	2-4-0	7-3-0	4-0-0	1L
Cincinnati Bengals	5	7	1	.423	268	269	3-2-1	2-5-0	4-5-0	2-2-0	2W
Cleveland Browns	0	13	0	.000	207	375	0-7-0	0-6-0	0-9-0	0-5-0	13L

South Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Houston Texans	7	6	0	.538	229	274	5-1-0	2-5-0	5-4-0	4-0-0	1W
Tennessee Titans	7	6	0	.538	321	306	4-3-0	3-3-0	4-5-0	1-3-0	2W
Indianapolis Colts	6	7	0	.462	328	333	3-4-0	3-3-0	4-6-0	2-3-0	1L
Jacksonville Jaguars	2	11	0	.154	240	338	1-6-0	1-5-0	1-8-0	1-2-0	8L

West Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Kansas City Chiefs	10	3	0	.769	302	255	5-1-0	5-2-0	7-2-0	4-0-0	3W
Oakland Raiders	10	3	0	.769	358	320	5-2-0	5-1-0	7-2-0	2-2-0	1L
Denver Broncos	8	5	0	.615	296	242	4-2-0	4-3-0	5-4-0	1-3-0	1L
San Diego Chargers	5	8	0	.385	350	347	3-3-0	2-5-0	4-5-0	1-3-0	2L

National Football Conference

East Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Dallas Cowboys	11	2	0	.846	340	238	5-1-0	6-1-0	7-2-0	3-2-0	1L
New York Giants	9	4	0	.692	255	244	6-1-0	3-3-0	6-3-0	3-1-0	1W
Washington Redskins	7	5	1	.577	330	317	4-2-0	3-3-1	5-4-0	3-2-0	1W
Philadelphia Eagles	5	8	0	.385	290	272	4-2-0	1-6-0	3-7-0	0-4-0	4L

North Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Detroit Lions	9	4	0	.692	295	268	6-1-0	3-3-0	7-2-0	3-2-0	5W
Minnesota Vikings	7	6	0	.538	258	225	4-2-0	3-4-0	4-6-0	1-3-0	1W
Green Bay Packers	7	6	0	.538	333	312	5-2-0	2-4-0	5-4-0	2-1-0	3W
Chicago Bears	3	10	0	.231	221	290	3-3-0	0-7-0	3-6-0	2-2-0	1L

South Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Atlanta Falcons	8	5	0	.615	428	345	3-3-0	5-2-0	6-3-0	3-1-0	1W
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	8	5	0	.615	293	296	3-4-0	5-1-0	6-3-0	3-1-0	5W
New Orleans Saints	5	8	0	.385	358	351	3-4-0	2-4-0	4-5-0	1-3-0	2L
Carolina Panthers	5	8	0	.385	311	337	4-3-0	1-5-0	4-5-0	1-3-0	1W

West Division

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	Conf	Div	Streak
Seattle Seahawks	8	4	1	.654	274	232	6-0-0	2-4-1	4-4-1	1-1-1	1L
Arizona Cardinals	5	7	1	.423	299	277	4-2-1	1-5-0	4-4-1	2-1-1	1L
Los Angeles Rams	4	9	0	.308	194	304	1-5-0	3-4-0	3-6-0	2-1-0	4L
San Francisco 49ers	1	12	0	.077	251	393	1-6-0	0-6-0	1-8-0	1-3-0	12L

NFL WEEK 15 SCHEDULE
THURSDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 17-19

(All times local)

Thursday, December 15

Los Angeles at Seattle, 5:25 PM (NBC/NFLN/Twitter)

Saturday, December 17

Miami at New York Jets, 8:25 (NFLN)

Sunday, December 18

Philadelphia at Baltimore, 1:00 PM

Cleveland at Buffalo, 1:00 PM

Green Bay at Chicago, 12:00 PM

Pittsburgh at Cincinnati, 1:00 PM

Jacksonville at Houston, 12:00 PM

Sunday, December 18 (cont'd)

Tennessee at Kansas City, 12:00 PM

Indianapolis at Minnesota, 12:00 PM

Detroit at New York Giants, 1:00 PM

New Orleans at Arizona, 2:05 PM

San Francisco at Atlanta, 4:05 PM

New England at Denver, 2:25 PM

Oakland at San Diego, 1:25 PM

Tampa Bay at Dallas, 8:30 PM (NBC)

Monday, December 19

Carolina at Washington, 8:30 PM (ESPN)