

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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COMMUNICATIONS

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FOOTBALL HAS RETURNED & HERE COMES WEEK 2

***Chargers host Dolphins as franchise returns to Los Angeles
Falcons open Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Sunday night against Packers***

The NFL got back to football last weekend and the season now heads into Week 2.

Everybody wants to get off to a good start as history has shown that teams that are victorious in their season openers are more than twice as likely to reach the playoffs than losers of an opening game. But that doesn't mean an 0-1 start is impossible to overcome as nearly 25 percent of teams that lost the opener went to the playoffs.

Since 1978 when the NFL went to the 16-game schedule (and excluding the abbreviated season of 1982):

Of the 570 teams which won openers... 297 went to the playoffs (179 won division titles)

Of the 571 teams which lost openers... 137 went to the playoffs (79 won division titles)

(Note: There are a different number of winning and losing teams in season opening games due to the fact that the NFL had 31 teams in each season from 1999 to 2001, which creates an odd number for the total number of results.)

Week 2 kicks off with *Thursday Night Football* as the Houston Texans visit the Cincinnati Bengals (NFL Network, 8:25 PM ET). The two teams have combined for nine playoff berths since 2011 (Cincinnati, five and Houston, four).

On Sunday afternoon, the Chargers make their return to Los Angeles for the franchise's first home game in LA since 1960 as the team hosts the Miami Dolphins in their regular-season home opener at StubHub Center (4:05 PM ET, CBS). And, that night in primetime (8:30 PM ET, NBC), the Atlanta Falcons will open their new home – Mercedes-Benz Stadium – when they host the Green Bay Packers in a rematch of last season's NFC Championship Game on *Sunday Night Football*.

Here's a look at a few interesting storylines entering Week 2:

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (1-0) at KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (1-0) (Sunday, FOX, 1:00 PM ET)

- Philadelphia quarterback **CARSON WENTZ** passed for 307 yards and two touchdowns – including a 58-yard TD to wide receiver **NELSON AGHOLOR** – in the Eagles' 30-17 win at Washington. Wentz improved to 4-0 in his career as a starter in the month of September with seven touchdown passes, one interception and a 101.8 passer rating.
- The Eagles sealed the victory over the Redskins when defensive end **BRANDON GRAHAM** forced a fumble on a sack which defensive tackle **FLETCHER COX** returned 20 yards for a TD with 1:29 remaining in the game.
- Kansas City head coach **ANDY REID** spent 14 seasons (1999-2012) with the Eagles, compiling a team-record 130 regular-season wins and 10 postseason victories while capturing six division titles and making five NFC Championship appearances.
- In the Kickoff Weekend opener on Thursday night, the Chiefs defeated New England 42-27. Rookie running back **KAREEM HUNT** amassed 246 scrimmage yards (148 rushing, 98 receiving) – the most ever by a player in his NFL debut – and scored three touchdowns. Kansas City quarterback **ALEX SMITH** posted a 148.6 passer rating against the Patriots and became the first quarterback to complete at least 80 percent of his passes (80.0) for 350 yards (368) with four touchdowns (four) and no interceptions against the defending Super Bowl champion.

BUFFALO BILLS (1-0) at CAROLINA PANTHERS (1-0) (Sunday, CBS, 1:00 PM ET)

- Buffalo head coach **SEAN MC DERMOTT** notched his first career victory as a head coach last week in the Bills' 21-12 win over the New York Jets. McDermott spent the previous six seasons as Carolina's defensive coordinator, helping the Panthers win three division titles and advance to Super Bowl 50.

- In last week's victory over the Jets, running back **LE SEAN MC COY** rushed for 110 yards and quarterback **TYROD TAYLOR** threw two touchdown passes. Taylor and Carolina's **CAM NEWTON** are the only players with at least 5,000 passing yards and 10 rushing touchdowns since the start of the 2015 season.
- The Panthers limited San Francisco to three points and 217 total yards (51 rushing, 166 passing) in Carolina's 23-3 Week 1 victory at Levi's Stadium.
- Carolina quarterback **CAM NEWTON** threw touchdown passes to wide receiver **RUSSELL SHEPARD** (40 yards) and running back **JONATHAN STEWART** (nine) in the win. In his NFL debut, rookie running back **CHRISTIAN MC CAFFREY** led the team with five receptions and 85 scrimmage yards (47 rushing, 38 receiving).

DALLAS COWBOYS (1-0) at DENVER BRONCOS (1-0) (Sunday, FOX, 4:25 PM ET)

- Dallas quarterback **DAK PRESCOTT** passed for 268 yards and a touchdown in the Cowboys' 19-3 win over the New York Giants. Tight end **JASON WITTEN**, who had 59 yards and a touchdown, has 11,947 career receiving yards and surpassed Pro Football Hall of Famer **MICHAEL IRVIN** (11,904) for the most in franchise history.
- In the team's Week 1 victory, the Dallas defense limited the Giants to three points and 233 total yards (35 rushing, 198 passing) while recording three sacks – including two by defensive end **DEMARCUS LAWRENCE** – and an interception (cornerback **ANTHONY BROWN**).
- Denver quarterback **TREVOR SIEMIAN** threw two touchdown passes – both to wide receiver **BENNIE FOWLER III** – and rushed for a score in the Broncos' 24-21 win over the Los Angeles Chargers on Kickoff Weekend. Siemian joined Pro Football Hall of Famer **JOHN ELWAY** and **BRIAN GRIESE** as the only Broncos quarterbacks to record multiple touchdown passes and a TD run in a Week 1 opener.
- Broncos defensive end **SHELBY HARRIS** sealed the victory for Denver by blocking the Chargers' potential game-tying 44-yard field goal with one second remaining in the game.

GREEN BAY PACKERS (1-0) at ATLANTA FALCONS (1-0) (Sunday, NBC, 8:30 PM ET)

- This will be the first regular-season NFL game at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium. The stadium, which will host Super Bowl LIII on February 3, 2019, is expected to have its unique retractable roof open for this game (weather conditions permitting) for the first time.
- The contest is a rematch of last season's NFC Championship Game which the Falcons won 44-21. Atlanta quarterback **MATT RYAN** passed for 392 yards and scored five touchdowns (four passing, one rushing) in that game while wide receiver **JULIO JONES** had nine catches for 180 yards and two TDs.
- The Packers opened the season with a 17-9 home victory over Seattle. Quarterback **AARON RODGERS** passed for 311 yards with one touchdown and running back **TY MONTGOMERY** added 93 scrimmage yards with a rushing TD.
- Against the Seahawks, wide receivers **RANDALL COBB** (nine catches for 85 yards) and **JORDY NELSON** (seven catches for 79 yards with one TD) combined for 16 catches and 164 yards with one touchdown.
- The Falcons used a late defensive stand deep in their own territory to hold on for a 23-17 win at Chicago in Week 1. Defensive end **BROOKS REED** sealed the victory with a sack on fourth down from the Atlanta five-yard line with three seconds remaining in the game.
- Atlanta's **AUSTIN HOOPER** had two catches for 128 yards, including an 88-yard touchdown, the longest TD reception by a tight end in a season opener in NFL history.

DETROIT LIONS (1-0) at NEW YORK GIANTS (0-1) (Monday, ESPN, 8:30 PM ET)

- The Lions opened the season with a 35-23 win over Arizona as the team rallied from a 17-15 fourth-quarter deficit. Last season, Detroit won eight games when trailing in the fourth quarter, the most by a team in a single season in NFL history.
- Detroit quarterback **MATTHEW STAFFORD** passed for 292 yards and four touchdowns in the win over the Cardinals and has 27 game-winning drives in the fourth quarter or overtime since 2011, the most by a QB in the NFL over that span. Rookie wide receiver **KENNY GOLLADAY** had two touchdown catches in the fourth quarter, including a 45-yarder, in his NFL debut.
- The Giants have won 50 home openers in franchise history and are one of only four teams all-time with at least 50 victories in home openers.
- Last week at Dallas, Giants quarterback **ELI MANNING** started his 200th consecutive game, joining Pro Football Hall of Famer **BRETT FAVRE** (297) and **PEYTON MANNING** (208) as the only quarterbacks in NFL history to start at least 200 consecutive games.

NFL WEEK 2 SCHEDULE
THURSDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 17-18

(All times local)

Thursday, September 14

Houston at Cincinnati, 8:25 PM (NFLN)

Sunday, September 17

Cleveland at Baltimore, 1:00 PM

Buffalo at Carolina, 1:00 PM

Arizona at Indianapolis, 1:00 PM

Tennessee at Jacksonville, 1:00 PM

Philadelphia at Kansas City, 12:00 PM

New England at New Orleans, 12:00 PM

Minnesota at Pittsburgh, 1:00 PM

Sunday, September 17 (cont'd)

Chicago at Tampa Bay, 1:00 PM

Miami at Los Angeles Chargers, 1:05 PM

New York Jets at Oakland, 1:05 PM

Dallas at Denver, 2:25 PM

Washington at Los Angeles Rams, 1:25 PM

San Francisco at Seattle, 1:25 PM

Green Bay at Atlanta, 8:30 PM (NBC)

Monday, September 18

Detroit at New York Giants, 8:30 PM (ESPN)