

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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COMMUNICATIONS

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FOUR TEAMS REMAIN AS NFL ENTERS CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND

The final four teams are set and this Sunday will determine the two teams heading to Minnesota for Super Bowl LII.

	Visitor	Home	Time	Network
AFC Championship Game	Jacksonville Jaguars	New England Patriots	3:05 PM ET	CBS
NFC Championship Game	Minnesota Vikings	Philadelphia Eagles	6:40 PM ET	FOX

Championship Sunday begins with the AFC title game between the Jacksonville Jaguars and New England Patriots. The Patriots defeated Tennessee 35-14 in the Divisional round and the Jaguars knocked off Pittsburgh 45-42. The NFC Championship Game will feature the Minnesota Vikings and Philadelphia Eagles. In the Divisional Playoffs, the Vikings knocked off New Orleans 29-24 and the Eagles defeated Atlanta 15-10.

Both Philadelphia and Jacksonville completed “worst-to-first” turnarounds. 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. The Eagles and Jaguars are the first “worst-to-first” teams since the 2009 New Orleans Saints to advance to the Championship Game.

Three of the remaining four clubs – Philadelphia, Minnesota and Jacksonville – missed the postseason in 2016. This is the first time since 2008 in which three of the four teams in the Championship Games missed the playoffs in the previous season.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS (12-6) at NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (14-3) (Sunday, CBS, 3:05 PM ET)

- The Patriots and Jaguars meet in the postseason for the fifth time. New England has won three of the previous four meetings, including the 1996 AFC Championship Game which the Patriots won 20-6. In the team’s last postseason meeting, New England knocked off Jacksonville 31-20 in the 2007 AFC Divisional Playoffs (January 12, 2008).
- New England has won 10 of the 11 all-time meetings between the clubs (including the postseason). The teams last played in Week 3, 2015 (September 27) with the Patriots winning 51-17.
- The Jaguars have advanced to the AFC Championship Game for the third time in franchise history. Jacksonville previously played in the AFC Championship Game in 1999 (January 23, 2000 against Tennessee) and 1996 (January 12, 1997 against New England).
- Jacksonville is the second team since the 1970 merger to advance to the Conference Championship Game after winning three or fewer games in the previous season (2006 New Orleans).
- Jacksonville rookie running back **LEONARD FOURNETTE** rushed for 109 yards and three touchdowns in the Divisional Playoffs, becoming the youngest player (22 years, 361 days old) in the Super Bowl era to rush for at least 100 yards and three touchdowns in a playoff game.
- The Jaguars led the NFL with seven defensive touchdowns during the regular season and scored on a 50-yard fumble-return touchdown by linebacker **TELVIN SMITH** in the Divisional Playoff.
- **Smith** leads the NFL with three defensive touchdowns this season (including the playoffs).
- Jacksonville quarterback **BLAKE BORTLES** has won his first two career playoff starts. In both postseason starts, Bortles has thrown a touchdown pass with no interceptions.
- Jaguars defensive end **CALAIS CAMPBELL** had a franchise-record 14.5 sacks in the regular season and teammate **YANNICK NGAKOUÉ** added 12 sacks. In the Divisional Playoff, Ngakoué had a sack and forced fumble which led to Smith’s 50-yard fumble-return touchdown.
- The Jaguars had four players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: cornerbacks **A.J. BOUYE** and **JALEN RAMSEY**, defensive end **Campbell** and defensive tackle **MALIK JACKSON**.
- New England has advanced to its seventh consecutive AFC Championship Game and are the first team since the 1970 merger to play in seven Conference Championship Games in a row.
- The Patriots have won nine AFC Championship Games, the most in NFL history. New England is 6-1 all-time in AFC Championship Games played at home.

- The Patriots defeated Tennessee 35-14 last week in the Divisional Playoffs. Patriots head coach **BILL BELICHICK** and quarterback **TOM BRADY** have won 26 postseason games together, the most in NFL history by a head coach and starting quarterback combination.
- **Belichick** has advanced to 12 Conference Championship Games, the most by a head coach since the 1970 merger.
- **Brady** has 26 career playoff wins, the most by any starting quarterback in NFL history. Brady is also the NFL postseason leader in career completions (866), attempts (1,378), passing yards (9,431) and touchdown passes (66).
- Last week against the Titans, **Brady** passed for 337 yards and three touchdowns. He has 13 playoff games with at least 300 passing yards, the most in NFL history. Brady recorded his 10th career postseason game with at least three touchdown passes and surpassed Pro Football Hall of Famer **JOE MONTANA** (nine) for the most all-time.
- Patriots running back **JAMES WHITE** scored two touchdowns – one rushing, one receiving – in last week’s win over Tennessee. In his past four playoff games, White has scored six touchdowns (three rushing, three receiving).
- New England tight end **ROB GRONKOWSKI** had six catches for 81 yards and a touchdown in last week’s game. Gronkowski has 10 touchdown receptions in his postseason career and trails only Pro Football Hall of Famer **JERRY RICE** (22) and **JOHN STALLWORTH** (12) for the most in NFL playoff history.
- New England won its ninth consecutive division title, the longest streak in NFL history. The Patriots are the only team to win 14 division titles in a 15-year span.
- The Patriots had four players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: quarterback **Brady**, fullback **JAMES DEVELIN**, tight end **Gronkowski** and special teamer **MATTHEW SLATER**.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS (14-3) at PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (14-3) (Sunday, FOX, 6:40 PM ET)

- The Eagles and Vikings meet in the postseason for the fourth time. Philadelphia has won the previous three meetings, including the last matchup in the 2008 Wild Card round (January 4, 2009) which the Eagles won 26-14.
- The all-time series between the clubs is tied 13-13 (including the postseason). The teams last played in Week 7, 2016 (October 23) with the Eagles winning 21-10.
- Minnesota will play in the team’s 10th NFL/NFC Championship Game. The Vikings are 4-5 in the club’s previous nine appearances. This marks the franchise’s first NFC Championship Game since 2009 (January 24, 2010 at New Orleans).
- The Vikings are aiming to become the first team to play in a Super Bowl in the team’s home stadium.
- Minnesota defeated New Orleans 29-24 in last week’s Divisional Playoffs as quarterback **CASE KEENUM** connected with wide receiver **STEFON DIGGS** on the game-winning 61-yard touchdown as time expired. It marked the first postseason game in NFL history to end with a game-winning score as time expired in the fourth quarter.
- **Diggs** had six catches for 137 yards and a touchdown against the Saints.
- **Keenum**, who set career-highs in attempts (481), completions (325), completion percentage (67.6), yards (3,547), touchdowns (22) and passer rating (98.3) in the regular season, passed for 318 yards in his first career postseason start.
- Running backs **LATAVIUS MURRAY** and **JERICK MC KINNON** each rushed for a touchdown in last week’s victory.
- The Vikings, who led the NFL in total defense (275.9 yards per game) in the regular season, recorded two sacks and two interceptions against the Saints. Safety **HARRISON SMITH** and defensive end **EVERSON GRIFFEN** each had a sack while linebacker **ANTHONY BARR** and safety **ANDREW SENDEJO** recorded the interceptions.
- Minnesota captured the NFC North for the second time in the past three seasons and earned a first-round bye for the first time since 2009. The team’s 13 regular-season wins are the most since 1998 when the club went 15-1.
- The Vikings had four players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: linebacker **Barr**, defensive end **Griffen**, cornerback **XAVIER RHODES** and wide receiver **ADAM THIELEN**.
- Philadelphia has advanced to its 11th NFL/NFC Championship Game and the Eagles are 5-5 in the team’s previous 10 appearances. This is the franchise’s first NFC Championship Game since 2008 (January 18, 2009 at Arizona) and the first in Philadelphia since 2004 (January 23, 2005 vs. Atlanta) when the Eagles advanced to Super Bowl XXXIX.
- The Eagles defeated Atlanta 15-10 last week in the Divisional Playoffs. Philadelphia’s defense stopped Atlanta on fourth-and-goal from the Eagles’ two-yard line with 58 seconds remaining, only the third postseason game in the past 50 years in which the winning team prevented a go-ahead TD in the game’s final two minutes with a fourth-and-goal stop.
- Philadelphia quarterback **NICK FOLES** completed 23 of 30 passes (76.7 percent) against the Falcons and recorded a 100.1 passer rating. Foles has registered a 100+ passer rating in both career postseason starts (105 in Wild Card playoff against New Orleans on January 4, 2014) and joined **DONOVAN MC NABB** (three) as the only Eagles to have multiple postseason games with a 100+ passer rating. Foles has a 102.7 career passer rating in the postseason.
- Eagles running back **LE GARRETTE BLOUNT** rushed for a touchdown last week and has nine rushing touchdowns in his postseason career, tied for the most among active players (**MARSHAWN LYNCH**). Running back **JAY AJAYI** had 98 scrimmage yards (54 rushing, 44 receiving) against the Falcons.
- The Eagles tied a franchise record with 13 regular-season wins (2004) and earned the No. 1 seed in the NFC for the fourth time since 2002.
- Three Eagles had at least eight touchdown receptions this season: wide receivers **ALSHON JEFFERY** (nine) and **NELSON AGHOLOR** (eight) and tight end **ZACH ERTZ** (eight).
- Philadelphia had six players selected to the 2018 Pro Bowl: guard **BRANDON BROOKS**, defensive tackle **FLETCHER COX**, tight end **Ertz**, safety **MALCOLM JENKINS**, tackle **LANE JOHNSON** and quarterback **CARSON WENTZ**.