

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

345 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10154
p. (212) 450-2000

NFLCommunications.com
@NFL345



Jocelyn.Moore@nfl.com
Executive Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs

Jon.Schwartz@nfl.com
Senior Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs

Traci.Blunt@nfl.com
Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications

Michael.Signora@nfl.com
Senior Vice President, Football and International Communications

Brian.McCarthy@nfl.com
Vice President, Communications

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<http://twitter.com/nfl345>

NFL KICKS OFF 100TH SEASON

To help celebrate the NFL's 100th season, each week will feature an NFL 100 Game of the Week. Each game will be a nod to a momentous game played, a fierce rivalry that spans decades, a matchup of original teams and/or a game in which history was made. The NFL has designated the Packers-Bears contest as the **NFL 100 GAME OF THE WEEK** for Week 1. In arguably the league's richest all-time rivalry, the Packers and Bears will meet for the 199th time, including the postseason, in a series that spans all 10 NFL decades. The franchises first met Nov. 27, 1921, when the eventual NFL champion Chicago Staleys shut out the Packers, 20-0, but Green Bay leads the series, 97-95-6. Combined, the two organizations have accounted for 22 world championships, 13 for Green Bay, nine for Chicago (No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, all-time). The two teams have also combined to put 53 individuals in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, 28 from the Bears (No. 1 all-time) and 25 from the Packers (No. 2 all-time), with respect to those who spent the majority of their careers with a club.



Welcome to 2019. Expect new teams to earn playoff berths, a few consistent players and clubs to excel again, records to fall and young players to forge ahead as they introduce themselves to our collective excitement. It's a familiar script, a story that has fueled the league's popularity for 99 years. The blanks will be filled in come February.

What is known this week is that every team holds fast to a dream: Super Bowl LIV in Miami. And with history as an indication, every team has a legitimate shot.

- **THE FIELD IS OPEN:** In 2018, two teams – the **HOUSTON TEXANS** (AFC South) and **CHICAGO BEARS** (NFC North) – won their divisions after finishing in last place the year before. In 15 of the past 16 seasons, at least one team finished in first place in its division the season after finishing in last or tied for last place.

Since the NFL expanded to 32 teams in 2002, two clubs have gone “worst to first” en route to a Super Bowl victory – the 2017 Philadelphia Eagles and the 2009 New Orleans Saints.

Since the NFL adopted the 12-team playoff format in 1990, at least four teams every season have qualified for the playoffs after failing to make the postseason the year before. Seven teams that missed the postseason in 2017 – Baltimore (10-6), Chicago (12-4), Dallas (10-6), Houston (11-5), Indianapolis (10-6), the Los Angeles Chargers (12-4) and Seattle (10-6) – earned a playoff berth in 2018.

- **MOST-EVER SUPER BOWL WINS:** The **NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS** won their sixth Lombardi Trophy last year and begin their quest to break a tie with their Kickoff Weekend opponent, the **PITTSBURGH STEELERS**, for the most-ever Super Bowl victories. The AFC stalwarts clash to open *Sunday Night Football* (8:20 p.m. ET, NBC). By winning another title this season, New England would also join Pittsburgh as the only teams to win consecutive Super Bowls on two occasions.
- **RECORDS WITHIN REACH:** New Orleans quarterback **DREW BREES** (520) needs 20 touchdown passes and New England quarterback **TOM BRADY** (517) needs 23 to surpass **PEYTON MANNING** (539) for the most all-time. Brees (34) also needs two games of four-or-more touchdown passes to eclipse Manning (35) for the most four-touchdown games in NFL annals. And, Brees (9,783) needs 387 pass attempts to leap Pro Football Hall of Famer **BRETT FAVRE** (10,169) for most on the all-time list. Brady will play his 20th season with the Patriots, tying two Pro Football Hall of Famers, Washington's **DARRELL GREEN** and the Rams' **JACKIE SLATER**, for the

second-most seasons with one franchise in NFL history. Detroit's **JASON HANSON** (21) owns the league record. Los Angeles Rams defensive tackle **AARON DONALD** can become the first player in league history to earn three consecutive AP Defensive Player of the Year honors. With a third overall, Donald would tie **J.J. WATT** (2012, 2014-15) and Pro Football Hall of Famer **LAWRENCE TAYLOR** (1981-82, 1986) for most all-time. Buffalo Bills running back **FRANK GORE** (14,748) needs 522 rushing yards to surpass Pro Football Hall of Famer **BARRY SANDERS** (15,269) for third on the all-time list. Gore (18,544) also needs 611 yards from scrimmage to surpass Pro Football Hall of Famer **MARSHALL FAULK** (19,154) for fourth on the all-time list. Arizona Cardinals wide receiver **LARRY FITZGERALD** (1,303) needs 23 receptions to surpass Pro Football Hall of Famer **TONY GONZALEZ** (1,325) for second on the NFL's all-time list. Pro Football Hall of Famer **JERRY RICE** (1,549) holds the career record. Fitzgerald (9) also needs 1,000 receiving yards to tie Pro Football Hall of Famer **RANDY MOSS** (10) for second on the NFL's all-time list of most 1,000-yard seasons. Rice (14) holds the career record.

- **SUCCESS WITH FIRST-YEAR LEADERS:** Seven teams enter this season with a new head coach, **KLIFF KINGSBURY** in Arizona, **ZAC TAYLOR** in Cincinnati, **FREDDIE KITCHENS** in Cleveland, **VIC FANGIO** in Denver, **MATT LaFLEUR** in Green Bay, **BRIAN FLORES** in Miami, **ADAM GASE** with the New York Jets and **BRUCE ARIANS** in Tampa Bay. Four rookie head coaches have led their teams to the playoffs over the last two seasons: **MATT NAGY** (Chicago) and **FRANK REICH** (Indianapolis) in 2018, and **SEAN McVAY** (Los Angeles Rams) and **SEAN McDERMOTT** (Buffalo) in 2017. Kingsbury, Kitchens, Fangio, LaFleur and Flores are all first-time head coaches in 2019.
- **FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES:** Several notable players were on the move during the offseason and preseason, including quarterbacks **JOE FLACCO** (Denver) and **NICK FOLE** (Jacksonville); running backs **LE'VEON BELL** (New York Jets), **MARK INGRAM** (Baltimore), **FRANK GORE** (Buffalo) and **LESEAN McCOY** (Kansas City); wide receivers **ODELL BECKHAM JR.** (Cleveland), **ANTONIO BROWN** (Oakland) and **DeSEAN JACKSON** (Philadelphia) and **KENNY STILL** (Houston); tight end **JARED COOK** (New Orleans); tackles **TRENT BROWN** (Oakland) and **LAREMY TUNSIL** (Houston); guard **RODGER SAFFOLD** (Tennessee); center **MITCH MORSE** (Buffalo); defensive ends **EZEKIEL ANSAH** (Seattle), **FRANK CLARK** (Kansas City), **JADEVEON CLOWNEY** (Seattle), **TREY FLOWERS** (Detroit) and **CAMERON WAKE** (Tennessee); defensive tackles **MALIK JACKSON** (Philadelphia) and **GERALD McCOY** (Carolina); linebackers **KIKO ALONSO** (New Orleans), **DEE FORD** (San Francisco), **CLAY MATTHEWS** (Los Angeles Rams), **C.J. MOSLEY** (New York Jets) and **TERRELL SUGGS** (Arizona); cornerbacks **ROBERT ALFORD** (Arizona), **BRADLEY ROBY** (Houston) and **STEVEN NELSON** (Pittsburgh); and safeties **LONDON COLLINS** (Washington); **TYRANN MATHIEU** (Kansas City), **EARL THOMAS** (Baltimore) and **ERIC WEDDLE** (Los Angeles Rams).
- **YOUNG STARS TAKE THE STAGE:** Last season, seven rookies – New York Giants running back **SAQUON BARKLEY**, Seattle punter **MICHAEL DICKSON**, Los Angeles Chargers safety **DERWIN JAMES**, Denver running back **PHILLIP LINDSAY**, Indianapolis guard **QUENTON NELSON**, Dallas linebacker **LEIGHTON VANDER ESCH** and Cleveland cornerback **DENZEL WARD** – earned Pro Bowl honors.

Last year, 39 players age 25 or younger as of Dec. 31, 2018, were selected to the Pro Bowl. And 16 of those 39 were voted AP All-Pro, including New York Jets safety **JAMAL ADAMS**, Chicago kick-returner **TARIK COHEN**, Cleveland defensive end **MYLES GARRETT**, Minnesota defensive end **DANIELLE HUNTER**, New York Giants kicker **ALDRICK ROSAS** and the reigning MVP, Kansas City quarterback **PATRICK MAHOMES**.

Three quarterbacks – Oklahoma's **KYLER MURRAY** (No. 1 overall, Arizona), Duke's **DANIEL JONES** (No. 6, New York Giants) and Ohio State's **DWAYNE HASKINS** (No. 15, Washington) – were selected in the first round of the 2019 NFL Draft. At least one rookie quarterback has started a Kickoff Weekend contest in 11 consecutive seasons, the longest streak in the NFL since at least 1950.

NFL KICKOFF WEEKEND SCHEDULE, SEPT. 5, 8-9

(All times Eastern)

Thursday									
Green Bay Packers at Chicago Bears #	8:20 p.m.	NBC	Indianapolis Colts at Los Angeles Chargers	4:05 p.m.	CBS				
			Cincinnati Bengals at Seattle Seahawks	4:05 p.m.	CBS				
Sunday									
Los Angeles Rams at Carolina Panthers	1 p.m.	FOX	Detroit Lions at Arizona Cardinals	4:25 p.m.	FOX				
Tennessee Titans at Cleveland Browns	1 p.m.	CBS	New York Giants at Dallas Cowboys	4:25 p.m.	FOX				
Kansas City Chiefs at Jacksonville Jaguars	1 p.m.	CBS	San Francisco 49ers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers	4:25 p.m.	FOX				
Baltimore Ravens at Miami Dolphins	1 p.m.	CBS	Pittsburgh Steelers at New England Patriots	8:20 p.m.	NBC				
Atlanta Falcons at Minnesota Vikings	1 p.m.	FOX							
Buffalo Bills at New York Jets	1 p.m.	CBS	Monday						
Washington Redskins at Philadelphia Eagles	1 p.m.	FOX	Houston Texans at New Orleans Saints	7:10 p.m.	ESPN				
			Denver Broncos at Oakland Raiders	10:20 p.m.	ESPN				