

TOP SEEDS

NFC

No. 1



New Orleans (13-3)
Postseason record: 8-10

- Saints won the franchise's only Super Bowl appearance in 2010.
- Reached playoffs for second straight season.
- Went 1-1 in playoffs last season, losing at Minnesota in divisional round.
- Never lost a home playoff game since coach Sean Payton took over in 2006 (5-0).
- Quarterback Drew Brees is in 18th NFL season, 13th with Saints, and turns 40 on Jan. 15.
- Payton and Brees are 7-5 in postseason with Saints.

No. 2



Los Angeles Rams (13-3)
Postseason record: 19-25

- Rams are 1-2 in the Super Bowl.
- Won only Super Bowl title in 1999.
- Reached playoffs in consecutive seasons for first time since 2003-04.
- Seeking first playoff win since defeating Seattle in wild-card round in January 2005.
- Have not won a playoff game in Los Angeles since defeating Dallas in divisional round in January 1986.
- Went 7-1 at home this season.

AFC

No. 1



Kansas City (12-4)
Postseason Record: 9-18

- Won AFC West three consecutive seasons, the longest streak in franchise history.
- Quarterback Patrick Mahomes shattered franchise records for yards and touchdown passes.
- Only one playoff win since the 1993 playoffs, losing five straight divisional games.
- Spencer Ware and Damien Williams have starred after running back Kareem Hunt's midseason release.
- Chiefs defense ranks near bottom of NFL in nearly every statistical category. Tight end Travis Kelce has more than 1,000 yards receiving in third straight season.

No. 2



New England (11-5)
Postseason record: 34-20

- Patriots have won five Super Bowls and appeared in 10.
- Won fifth NFL championship with Tom Brady as quarterback in 2016 season.
- Won 10 straight AFC East titles.
- Brady and coach Bill Belichick are only such combination with five Super Bowl wins.
- New England has earned 13 first-round byes in AFC playoffs since 2001, most in NFL during that span.
- Patriots have never won Super Bowl without first-round bye.

NFL PLAYOFFS



PATRICK MAHOMES
QUARTERBACK
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

AARON DONALD
DEFENSIVE END
LOS ANGELES RAMS

KHALIL MACK
DEFENSIVE END
CHICAGO BEARS

DREW BREES
QUARTERBACK
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

HIGH STAKES

BY BARRY WILNER | AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The playoff chase went down to the final minutes of the season Sunday, when Baltimore squeezed in as AFC North winner and defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia got some help to secure an NFC wild card.

That left Pittsburgh and Minnesota out.

Kansas City (12-4) grabbed the AFC's top seed, followed by New England (11-5), Houston (11-5) and Baltimore (10-6). The Chargers (12-4) own the first wild card and will play at the Ravens next Sunday at 1 p.m. EST. The Colts (10-6) beat division-rival Tennessee on the road to get the other wild card, which means they will travel to Houston on Saturday afternoon to face another division rival in the Texans.

The Saints (13-3) have the top seed in the NFC, and the Rams (12-4) got the No. 2 spot when they beat San Francisco. Chicago (12-4), whose win at Minnesota knocked out the Vikings and put the Eagles into the postseason, is seeded third and gets Philadelphia (9-7) next Sunday at 1:40 p.m.

Dallas (10-6) is the fourth seed and will play Seattle (10-6) on Saturday night.

C.J. Mosley intercepted a fourth-down pass by Baker Mayfield to preserve the Ravens' 26-24 win as Baltimore rushed for a season-best 296 yards. A year ago, Baltimore missed the playoffs by losing its finale at home to the Bengals, who rallied with a last-minute touchdown.

Steelers players remained on the field after they edged Cincinnati 16-13 and watched the drama from Baltimore on the videoboard. But their archrival Browns couldn't help them against the equally hated Ravens.

Nick Foles, who led the Eagles to the Super Bowl title over the Patriots in Minneapolis last February, guided them to a resounding 24-0 victory at Washington. Then the Bears helped out at Minnesota with a 24-10 win even though they had nothing to play for, being set as the NFC's third seed.

Earlier, the Texans rallied from losing their first three games to win the AFC South and become the No. 3 seed. Houston

easily handled Jacksonville 20-3 Sunday as Deshaun Watson threw for 234 yards and ran for a touchdown, and DeAndre Hopkins had 147 yards receiving.

The Texans finished last in the division in 2017. They and the Bears have done the worst-to-first turnaround this season, making it 15 of the past 16 seasons that has occurred in the league.

"It's do or die now, so you've got to put everything on the line now," Watson said. "Prepare harder than you did before and anything can happen at this point. The tournament is wide open and it's my first playoff, so I'm just excited to get in and see how things go."

New England, meanwhile, will get a week off in early January for the 13th time since 2001, most in the NFL during that span. The Patriots routed the Jets 38-3, and because they defeated Houston during the season, they get the bye.

"Eleven and five is nothing to be sad about," Tom Brady said. "We fought pretty hard and put ourselves in good position."

WILD-CARD ROUND

ALL TIMES PST

SATURDAY, JAN. 5



Indianapolis (10-6)
at Houston (11-5)
1:35 p.m. (ESPN)

The AFC South champion Texans and their division rival Colts split their regular-season games. Indianapolis won the most recent matchup 24-21 in Houston on Dec. 9.



Seattle (10-6) at Dallas (10-6)
5:15 p.m. (FOX)

The Seahawks beat the then-inconsistent Cowboys 24-13 in Seattle on Sept. 23. That was before Dallas finished out the season with an impressive 7-1 record and won the NFC East title.

SUNDAY, JAN. 6



L.A. Chargers (12-4)
at Baltimore (10-6)
10:05 a.m. (CBS)

The Ravens beat the Chargers 22-10 in Los Angeles on Dec. 22, but this time get the added bonus of homefield advantage by winning their division, the AFC North.



Philadelphia (9-7)
at Chicago (12-4)
1:40 p.m. (NBC)

The defending champion Eagles barely made it back into the playoffs while the Bears make their first playoff appearance in nine seasons after winning the NFC North.

REST OF PLAYOFFS

Divisional Playoffs

- Saturday, Jan. 12**
- Baltimore/Los Angeles Chargers/Indianapolis at Kansas City, 1:35 p.m. (NBC)
 - Chicago/Dallas/Seattle at L.A. Rams, 5:15 p.m. (FOX)

- Sunday, Jan. 13**
- Houston/Baltimore/Los Angeles Chargers at New England, 10:05 a.m. (CBS)
 - Dallas/Seattle/Philadelphia at New Orleans, 1:40 p.m. (FOX)

Conference Championships

- Sunday, Jan. 20**
- AFC (3:40 p.m., CBS)
 - NFC (12:05 p.m., FOX)

SUPER BOWL 53

Sunday, Feb. 3
at Atlanta
(3:30 p.m., CBS)



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