

AFC



1. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
Coach Bill Belichick and Tom Brady, who will be 40 by next season, begin their quest for a fifth Super Bowl championship against either Houston, Oakland or Miami on Jan. 14 at 8:15 p.m.



2. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
Coach Andy Reid is 3-0 in divisional playoff games when his team has a bye. All three wins came with the Eagles. The Chiefs open against Pittsburgh, Houston or Oakland on Jan. 15 at 1:05 p.m.



3. PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Riding a seven-game winning streak, Ben Roethlisberger is aiming for his fourth Super Bowl ring. Big Ben, Le'Veon Bell and Antonio Brown sat out an OT win Sunday over Cleveland in preparation for the Dolphins.



4. HOUSTON TEXANS
Houston's NRG Stadium hosts the Super Bowl and no team has yet to reach the championship game when played in its home stadium. If the Texans are to end this NFL curse, they'll need to sort out their quarterback issues.



5. OAKLAND RAIDERS
Derek Carr's season-ending injury has deflated a team making its first playoff appearance since losing the 2003 Super Bowl to Tampa Bay.



6. MIAMI DOLPHINS
It's unknown whether QB Ryan Tannehill will return from injury when the Dolphins play their first playoff game in eight years. Matt Moore was 2-1 in Tannehill's absence, with the loss to the No. 1 Patriots.

NFL PLAYOFFS



Familiar Foes

Aaron Rodgers, Eli Manning meet again in the playoffs.
Plus: Teams filled with uncertainty entering wild-card games

Aaron Rodgers tossed four touchdown passes to help the Green Bay Packers capture the NFC North title with a 31-24 victory over the Detroit Lions during the final night game of the regular season. The Packers (10-6) will host the Giants (11-5) on Sunday while the Lions (9-7) visit Seattle (10-5-1) on Saturday night.

New York's 19-10 win at Washington in the season finale eliminated the Redskins (8-7-1) and allowed the Packers and Lions to secure playoff spots before their game kicked off. But the teams are heading in opposite directions. The Packers have won six in a row while

the Lions lost three straight.

Matt Ryan and the Atlanta Falcons (11-5) secured a first-round bye with a 38-32 win over New Orleans. The Seahawks beat San Francisco 25-23 and earned the No. 3 seed.

The Cowboys (13-3) already locked up the NFC's No. 1 seed before they played last week.

In the AFC, Tom Brady and the Patriots (14-2) beat Miami 35-14 to secure the No. 1 seed and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. The Chiefs (12-4) clinched a first-round bye thanks to Denver's win over Oakland coupled with their victory over San Diego.

The Raiders (12-4) fell from No. 2 to the fifth spot and will open the playoffs on the road at Houston (9-7). That matchup could feature rookie quarterback Connor Cook making his first career start for the Raiders after they lost Derek Carr last week and backup Matt McGloin went down in the second quarter against the Broncos.

The Texans also have uncertainty at quarterback. Tom Savage sustained a concussion in a loss at Tennessee and was replaced by former starter Brock Osweiler. The Steelers (11-5) will host the Dolphins (10-6) in the AFC's other wild-card game.

WILD-CARD ROUND All times EST

MIAMI (10-6) at PITTSBURGH (11-5)

Kickoff: Sunday at 1:05 p.m., (CBS)

Regular-season series record

Steelers lead 12-11, but Dolphins won in October.

Postseason series record

Dolphins lead 2-1

Most impressive win

Dolphins: Fittingly, they beat Pittsburgh 30-15 after opening 1-4. Win began six-game string.

Steelers: They dominated the Giants 24-14 in November, snapping New York's six-game winning streak.

Worst loss

Dolphins: Routed 38-6 at Baltimore on Dec. 4, ending win streak.

Steelers: To Dolphins.



OAKLAND (12-4) at HOUSTON (9-7)

Kickoff: Saturday at 4:35 p.m., (ESPN)

Regular-season series record

Texans lead 6-4, Raiders won 27-20 in Mexico City on Nov. 21.

Postseason series record

First meeting

Most impressive win

Raiders: Beat Denver 30-20 as part of six-game win streak.

Texans: A 19-12 win over Kansas City back in Week 2.

Worst loss

Raiders: Being swept by Chiefs cost them division title.

Texans: Managed to lose to Chargers at home in Week 12, San Diego's last win.



DETROIT (9-7) at SEATTLE (10-5-1)

Kickoff: Saturday at 8:15 p.m., (NBC)

Regular-season series record

Seahawks lead 8-5. Didn't play this season.

Postseason series record

First meeting

Most impressive win

Lions: A 20-16 decision at Minnesota in early November, sparking a run to top of division.

Seahawks: Held on with goal-line stand to win 31-24 at Patriots in Game 9.

Worst loss

Lions: Falling to Packers twice, especially in season finale to lose NFC North title.

Seahawks: Somehow they stunk it up against Rams in Week 2, though it was LA debut for Rams.



REST OF PLAYOFFS

Saturday, Jan. 14

Seattle, Green Bay or N.Y. Giants at Atlanta, 4:35 p.m. (FOX)

Houston, Oakland or Miami at New England, 8:15 p.m. (CBS)

Sunday, Jan. 15

Pittsburgh, Houston or Oakland at Kansas City, 1:05 p.m. (NBC)

Green Bay, N.Y. Giants or Detroit at Dallas, 4:40 p.m. (FOX)

Sunday, Jan. 22

Conference Championships

Sunday, Feb. 5

Super Bowl At Houston 6:30 p.m. (FOX)

NFC



1. DALLAS COWBOYS
Rookie stars Dak Prescott and Ezekiel Elliott lifted the Cowboys to their best season since 2007, the last time the team earned a bye. That year Dallas lost its only playoff game to rival New York, which also beat this season's Cowboys twice. The Cowboys will open against New York, Green Bay or Detroit on Jan. 15 at 4:40 p.m.



2. ATLANTA FALCONS
The Dirty Birds are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2012. They will host Seattle, Green Bay or New York on Jan. 14 at 4:35 p.m.



3. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
Russell Wilson and the Seahawks start their drive for a third NFC championship title in four seasons against the Lions.



4. GREEN BAY PACKERS
Aaron Rodgers has the Packers riding high into their eighth straight playoffs. They were a No. 6 seed in 2010 when they last won a Super Bowl.



5. NEW YORK GIANTS
Eli Manning has won two playoff games at Lambeau Field, including beating Brett Favre and the Packers in a frigid NFC championship game following the 2007 season.



6. DETROIT LIONS
Matthew Stafford hopes to lead Detroit to its first playoff win since the 1991 season.