

National Football League # Overview

Football is a hugely popular North American sport, particularly in the United States. Rabid fans follow league play on all levels, from high school showdowns to college bowls. But the granddaddy of them all is the National Football League.

The NFL came into play in 1922, after the league changed its name from American Professional Football Association to the National Football League. There are thirty-two teams, divided into the American (AFC) and National (NFC) Football Conferences. Each conference is divided into North, South, East and West divisions, with four teams playing in each division.

Teams currently playing within the NFL are as follows: Arizona Cardinals, Atlanta Falcons, Baltimore Ravens, Buffalo Bills, Carolina Panthers, Chicago Bears, Cincinnati Bengals, Cleveland Browns, Dallas Cowboys, Denver Broncos, Detroit Lions, Green Bay Packers, Houston Texans, Indianapolis Colts, Jacksonville Jaguars, Kansas City Chiefs, Miami Dolphins, Minnesota Vikings, New England Patriots, New Orleans Saints, New York Giants, New York Jets, Oakland Raiders, Philadelphia Eagles, Pittsburgh Steelers, St. Louis Rams, San Diego Chargers, San Francisco 49ers, Seattle Seahawks, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Tennessee Titans and the Washington Redskins.

The National Football League regular season begins in the autumn and lasts until the Super Bowl is played, usually in late January or early February. Half of the fun of Super Bowl can be found in the sidelines, as football pools become the center of attention in neighbourhood bars, staff lunchrooms and even corporate boardrooms. Of course, these Super bowl pools are strictly for fun, as gambling outside of a licensed establishment is strictly prohibited. OK, who are we kidding # everyone puts their NFL expertise, and a few bucks, at risk by playing the Super Bowl pools. Aside from the chance to win a healthy pot, pool participants can keep up on all the action as they follow their Super Bowl pool standings.

Following the regular NFL season is much like watching Survivor on television. Every week, teams battle it out to see who will advance to the playoffs and eventually show down for the big prize. At the end of the season, there is one top team in the American Football Conference, as well as a winning National Football Conference team. These two conference finalists will go head-to-head to play in the Super Bowl. Unlike hockey's Stanley Cup, which is a best-of-seven series, the Super Bowl is one game, with one winner and one loser. In the 2006 Super Bowl, the Seattle Seahawks played for the NFC and the Pittsburgh Steelers played for the AFC. The Steelers won the Championship Cup.

Super Bowl day is really big deal in the sporting world, and it's usually a day of fun and parties for all football fans. Many stores and workplaces will actually close to let their employees go home to watch the game. Team merchandise and memorabilia is sold everywhere, particular in the AFC and NFC home states. Those who can't get a ticket to the game will still have a blast at any of the countless Super Bowl parties held in virtually every town in America.

Few things warm a cold winter afternoon quite like a great sporting event, and the NFL has been heating things up for fans from coast to coast for nearly 100 years.