



NFL PLAYS IN MEXICO: FIRST REGULAR-SEASON GAME OUTSIDE U.S.

For the first time in its 86-year history, the NFL will play a regular-season game outside the United States on October 2 when the Arizona Cardinals host the San Francisco 49ers in Mexico City, Mexico.

The Sunday night game at Estadio Azteca will be televised live at 8:30 PM ET in the U.S. on ESPN. Televisa will provide live television coverage throughout Mexico.

"Mexico is the country with the most NFL fans outside of the United States," says NFL Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE**. "Our fans in Mexico are knowledgeable and passionate and they are ready for this next step.

They have supported our American Bowl games in record numbers and NFL programming has been part of television in Mexico for many decades.

"The Cardinals and 49ers play in markets with large Hispanic communities, including many people of Mexican decent. This game will generate new excitement both in Mexico and in Hispanic communities throughout the United States, and it promises to become a milestone in the NFL's history as a global sport."

The Cardinals will be the home team, shifting one of their eight home games to Estadio Azteca. Mexican fans have long exhibited enthusiasm for the NFL, especially on August 15, 1994, when 112,376 people filled the stadium for an American Bowl game between the Dallas Cowboys and Houston Oilers – the largest crowd in NFL history.

"The Cardinals are honored to have been selected for this historic and unprecedented game," says **MICHAEL BIDWILL**, the team's vice president and general counsel. "When we learned of the league's interest in staging an international regular-season game, we felt the Cardinals would be a natural fit this season for a number of reasons. Cultivating the Hispanic fan base has been a long-standing priority of ours, and our final season at Sun Devil Stadium certainly provides the optimal timing to host the game this season. We couldn't be more excited about the direction in which our organization is headed. This game will provide a phenomenal opportunity to showcase the Cardinals to a national and international audience."

The 49ers have been one of the NFL's most popular franchises worldwide.

"This organization has always embraced the opportunity to serve as ambassadors of the NFL," says owner **JOHN YORK**. "We have played in eight American Bowl games – the second most in league history – and we are excited about the prospect of playing the first regular-season game on foreign soil. Having this opportunity speaks to the popularity of the 49ers worldwide. The fans in Mexico are tremendous and we look forward to being a part of it."

NFL football has come to Mexico seven times for preseason games, including six as part of the popular American Bowl series. A closer look at the seven NFL preseason games played in Mexico:

Date	Teams & Result	City	Att.	Date	Teams & Result	City	Att.
8/5/78	New Orleans 14, Phil. 7	Mexico City	30,000	8/17/98	New England 21, Dallas 3	Mexico City	106,424
8/15/94	Houston 6, Dallas 0	Mexico City	112,376	8/19/00	Indianapolis 24, Pittsburgh 23	Mexico City	87,145
8/5/96	Kansas City 32, Dallas 6	Monterrey	45,128	8/27/01	Dallas 21, Oakland 6	Mexico City	88,309
8/4/97	Miami 38, Denver 19	Mexico City	104,629				

In addition to its passionate support of American football, Mexico is a land full of culture and tradition. This is especially evident in its capital, Mexico City. A look at some of Mexico City's interesting facts and figures:

Founded:	1325	Hospitals:	344
Population:	18.1 million	Hotel rooms:	25,000
Location:	Center of Mexican Republic	Museums:	161
Altitude:	7,200 feet	Concert Halls:	30
Cars & buses:	2.6 million	Art Galleries:	106

NFL INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE SQUAD PROGRAM ENLARGED FOR '05

The quality of American football players around the world continues to improve, and now, more of those international players will have a chance to learn from the best.

The NFL International Development Practice Squad program enters its second season, and due to the success of the inaugural run in 2004, has been expanded to two divisions – the AFC West and NFC South.

Eight promising players from around the world with NFL Europe League experience will spend the 2005 season as a member of the practice squad with an NFL team. The program will expose these players, brimming with potential, to the speed of the NFL as well as provide them with an opportunity to develop their skills and to face physical and mental challenges in an NFL environment.

The eight players taking part are tight end **KLAUS ALINEN** (Atlanta – Finland), defensive end **ANDERS AKERSTROM** (New Orleans – Norway), linebacker **ADEN DURDE** (Carolina – United Kingdom), guard **PETER HEYER** (Kansas City – Germany), defensive tackle **PATRICE MAJONDO-MWAMBA** (Denver – Belgium), safety **CLAUDIUS OSEI** (Tampa Bay – Germany), defensive tackle **MICHAEL QUARSHIE** (Oakland – Finland) and safety **RICHARD YANCY** (San Diego – Germany).

"Players from around the world continue to show improvement and development," says Kansas City Chiefs President **CARL PETERSON**. "That's evident by the contributions these players are making to their NFL Europe League teams. The practice squad program will hopefully further that development."

In 2004, four international players from NFL Europe were assigned to the practice squads of the NFC West, including offensive lineman **ROLANDO CANTU** of the Arizona Cardinals and defensive end **CHRISTIAN MOHR** of the Seattle Seahawks. Both impressed their clubs enough to be signed to the active roster and will compete for a roster spot in training camp.

