



NFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
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PLAYOFF RACES INTENSIFY AS NFL ENTERS FINAL THREE WEEKS

And now things get *really* intense!

The Chicago Bears are division champions and have clinched a first-round bye. Eleven other teams aim to win one of five remaining NFC invites to the playoff party as the path to Super Bowl XLI in South Florida heats up even more throughout the league.

The Seattle Seahawks (8-5), the defending NFC champions, can clinch the NFC West with a win over San Francisco on Thursday in primetime (NFL Network, 8:00 PM ET).

On Saturday night (NFL Network, 8:00 PM ET), the NFC East-leading Dallas Cowboys (8-5) travel to Atlanta to face the Falcons (7-6), who have won two in a row. Dallas can clinch a playoff berth with a win along with other scenarios.

Two NFC East rivals vying for a place in the postseason meet at the Meadowlands on Sunday afternoon when the New York Giants (7-6) host the Philadelphia Eagles (7-6).

The surging New Orleans Saints (9-4), winners of three consecutive games, aim to clinch the NFC South with a victory this week over the Washington Redskins. With a win and other scenarios, the Saints can clinch a first-round bye.

"We still have three big weeks left," says Saints head coach **SEAN PAYTON**.

Following are the records of NFC playoff contenders, their remaining games and their wins and losses against other NFC playoff hopefuls:

NFC EAST

TEAM/GAMES VS. CONTENDERS

DALLAS COWBOYS

Wins: Car, NYG; **Losses:** NO, NYG, Phi

OVERALL
8-5

DIV.
2-3

CONF.
5-4

WK. 15
at Atl

WK. 16
Phi

WK. 17
Det

NEW YORK GIANTS

Wins: Atl, Car, Dal, Phi; **Losses:** Chi, Dal, Sea

7-6

3-1

6-3

Phi

NO

at Was

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Wins: Car, Dal, GB, SF; **Losses:** NO, NYG

7-6

3-1

6-3

at NYG

at Dal

Atl

NFC NORTH

TEAM/GAMES VS. CONTENDERS

CHICAGO BEARS*

Wins: GB, Min (2), NYG, StL, SF, Sea; **Losses:** None

OVERALL
11-2

DIV.
4-0

CONF.
9-0

WK. 15
TB

WK. 16
at Det

WK. 17
GB

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Wins: Car, Sea; **Losses:** Chi (2), GB, SF

6-7

2-3

6-4

NYJ

at GB

StL

GREEN BAY PACKERS

Wins: Min, SF; **Losses:** Chi, NO, Phi, StL, Sea

5-8

2-1

4-5

Det

Min

at Chi

NFC SOUTH

TEAM/GAMES VS. CONTENDERS

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Wins: Atl (2), Dal, GB, Phi, SF; **Losses:** Car

OVERALL
9-4

DIV.
4-1

CONF.
8-1

WK. 15
Was

WK. 16
at NYG

WK. 17
Car

ATLANTA FALCONS Wins: Car; Losses: NO (2), NYG	7-6	3-2	5-4	Dal	Car	at Phi
CAROLINA PANTHERS Wins: NO, StL; Losses: Atl, Dal, Min, NYG, Phi	6-7	3-1	4-6	Pit	at Atl	at NO

NFC WEST

<u>TEAM/GAMES VS. CONTENDERS</u>	<u>OVERALL</u>	<u>DIV.</u>	<u>CONF.</u>	<u>WK. 15</u>	<u>WK. 16</u>	<u>WK. 17</u>
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS Wins: GB, NYG, StL (2); Losses: Chi, Min, SF	8-5	3-2	6-4	SF	SD	at TB
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS Wins: Min, StL, Sea; Losses: Chi, GB, NO, Phi, StL	5-8	2-2	4-6	at Sea	Arz	at Den
ST. LOUIS RAMS Wins: GB, SF; Losses: Car, Chi, SF, Sea (2)	5-8	2-4	4-6	at Oak	Was	at Min

* Clinched division and first-round bye