

COUNTDOWN TO KICKOFF (7 DAYS)



NFL RATCHETS UP THE EXCITEMENT...HOPE IS ALIVE!

The 2011 season was full of excitement, but that should be no surprise. Unpredictability is the norm in today's NFL.



Scoring at a 46-year high...comebacks galore...new teams making the playoffs and winning divisions...consistent teams excelling once again...passing records falling...rookies making their mark...and so much more!

"One year to the next, anything is possible," says San Francisco 49ers quarterback **ALEX SMITH** (left). "That is the great thing about the NFL."

The NFL is never short on surprises, and the 2011 season was no different:

A record 11,356 points were scored, with games averaging 44.4 points, the highest average in 46 seasons (46.1 in 1965).

2011 marked the first season in NFL history in which three different teams scored at least 500 points – Green Bay (560), New Orleans (547) and New England (513). Those three clubs finished with a combined record of 41-7 (.854).

A record-tying six teams won 12+ games – Green Bay (15), New England (13), New Orleans (13), San Francisco (13), Baltimore (12) and Pittsburgh (12). Six teams also won at least 12 games in 2003.

Last season, six teams – Cincinnati, Denver, Detroit, Houston, the New York Giants and San Francisco – made the playoffs that were not in the postseason the year before. It marked the 16th consecutive season in which at least five teams (out of 12) accomplished the feat.

SEASON PLAYOFF TEAMS NOT IN PREVIOUS SEASON'S PLAYOFFS

1996	5 (Carolina, Denver, Jacksonville, Minnesota, New England)
1997	5 (Detroit, Kansas City, Miami, New York Giants, Tampa Bay)
1998	5 (Arizona, Atlanta, Buffalo, Dallas, New York Jets)
1999	7 (Detroit, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Seattle, Tampa Bay, Tennessee, Washington)
2000	6 (Baltimore, Denver, New Orleans, New York Giants, Oakland, Philadelphia)
2001	6 (Chicago, Green Bay, New England, New York Jets, Pittsburgh, San Francisco)
2002	5 (Atlanta, Cleveland, Indianapolis, New York Giants, Tennessee)
2003	8 (Baltimore, Carolina, Dallas, Denver, Kansas City, New England, St. Louis, Seattle)
2004	5 (Atlanta, Minnesota, New York Jets, Pittsburgh, San Diego)
2005	7 (Carolina, Chicago, Cincinnati, Jacksonville, New York Giants, Tampa Bay, Washington)
2006	7 (Baltimore, Dallas, Kansas City, New Orleans, New York Jets, Philadelphia, San Diego)
2007	6 (Green Bay, Jacksonville, Pittsburgh, Tampa Bay, Tennessee, Washington)
2008	7 (Arizona, Atlanta, Baltimore, Carolina, Miami, Minnesota, Philadelphia)
2009	6 (Cincinnati, Dallas, Green Bay, New England, New Orleans, New York Jets)

2010 5 (Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Seattle)
 2011 6 (Cincinnati, Denver, Detroit, Houston, New York Giants, San Francisco)

The 2012 season promises more of the same. Every team enters the new year with hope!

Houston (AFC South) and Denver (AFC West) both rebounded to win their respective divisions after finishing in last place or tied for last in 2010. This marked the NFL-record ninth consecutive season that at least one team went from “worst-to-first” in its division.



THE NFL IS SO UNPREDICTABLE THAT IN 2011...

Nothing exhibits the unpredictability of the NFL more than the tightness of NFL games:

- “A lot of real close, competitive games come down to the last possession, the last play or one key play right at the end of the game,” says New England Patriots head coach **BILL BELICHICK**. “The league is very competitive all the way across the board.”

Games continued to be ***thisclose***. Nearly 67% were within one score in the fourth quarter:

GAMES DECIDED BY ONE SCORE			GAMES WITHIN ONE SCORE AT ANY POINT IN 4TH QUARTER		
POINTS	GAMES	PCT.	POINTS	GAMES	PCT.
8 or Fewer	132 of 256	51.6%	8 or Fewer	171 of 256	66.8%
7 or Fewer	125 of 256	48.8%	7 or Fewer	166 of 256	64.8%
3 or Fewer	50 of 256	19.5%	3 or Fewer	110 of 256	43.0%

- Seven of eight divisions were won by new teams in 2011 – Baltimore, Denver, Green Bay, Houston, New Orleans, the New York Giants and San Francisco – the most such clubs since realignment in 2002.
- Comebacks were another 2011 theme, with teams erasing large deficits seemingly every week.

There were 18 games in which a team overcame a deficit of at least 14 points to win, the most of any season in NFL history. The previous high was 17 (1979, 1983, 1987 and 1996).

- There were six games in which a team trailing by at least 20 points rallied to win, the most such games in any season in NFL history.

With comeback wins of 20 points in Week 3 and 24 points in Week 4, the Detroit Lions became the first team in NFL history to win consecutive games in which it trailed by at least 20 points in each contest.



KICKOFF WEEKEND RECORDS OF NFL TEAMS

AFC	W	L	T	Pct.	<u>Longest Streaks</u>			NFC	W	L	T	Pct.	<u>Longest Streaks</u>		
					Win	Loss	Current						Win	Loss	Current
Jacksonville	11	6	0	.647	6	3	W-2	Dallas	34	17	1	.663	17	5	L-2
Denver	32	19	1	.625	4	4	L-2	Chicago	52	35	5	.592	9	6	W-2
San Diego	30	22	0	.577	6	6	W-1	N.Y. Giants	49	33	5	.592	4	3	L-1
Pittsburgh	40	33	4	.545	8	3	L-1	Green Bay	52	36	3	.588	5	6	W-5
New England	28	24	0	.538	8	3	W-8	Minnesota	28	22	1	.559	5	3	L-2
Miami	24	21	1	.533	11	5	L-1	Detroit	43	37	2	.537	10	4	W-1
Kansas City	27	25	0	.519	7	4	L-1	San Francisco	32	29	1	.524	5	3	W-1
Tennessee	27	25	0	.519	4	3	L-1	Atlanta	24	22	0	.522	5	3	L-2
Indianapolis	34	33	1	.507	8	8	L-2	St. Louis	38	36	0	.514	5	6	L-5
Baltimore	8	8	0	.500	4	4	W-4	Washington	39	37	4	.513	6	5	W-2
Houston	5	5	0	.500	2	3	W-2	Arizona	37	52	2	.418	6	7	W-2
Oakland	25	27	0	.481	5	8	W-1	Philadelphia	32	45	1	.417	5	9	W-1
Cleveland	27	32	0	.458	5	7	L-7	Tampa Bay	14	22	0	.389	3	5	L-1
Cincinnati	20	24	0	.455	4	4	W-1	Seattle	13	23	0	.361	3	8	L-1
N.Y. Jets	23	29	0	.442	3	5	W-1	New Orleans	16	29	0	.356	3	6	L-1
Buffalo	21	31	0	.404	6	5	W-1	Carolina	6	11	0	.353	3	4	L-3