

NFL Playoff Predictions

BY THOMAS PRESNALL

OVER THE PAST WEEKEND, the number of playoff teams was reduced to eight. In the AFC, the Cincinnati Bengals, Kansas City Chiefs, Buffalo Bills, and Jacksonville Jaguars are fighting one another to represent their conference in the Super Bowl while the New York Giants, Philadelphia Eagles, Dallas Cowboys, and San Francisco 49ers are doing the same in the NFC.

Starting with the AFC, it looks like it will be a slugfest between four young and supremely talented quarterbacks. Patrick Mahomes, the only quarterback among the remaining eight to have won the big game, will take on the second-year phenom Trevor Lawrence and the Jacksonville Jaguars on Saturday while Josh Allen and the Bills duel Joe Burrow and the Bengals.

Both games should be must-watch TV. Mahomes put up an impressive 5,250 yards and 41 touchdowns throughout the season, but the Jacksonville defense is opportunistic and will not hesitate to swarm the quarterback if they smell any amount of fear. Allen and his running mate, wide receiver Stefon Diggs, have to match the production of Burrow and his star receiver, Ja'marr Chase.

Due to the talent of the quarterbacks alone, there's no easy choice to make. Ultimately, there's a good chance that Burrow and the Bengals get

past the Bills before facing off against the Chiefs in a rematch of last year's championship game. With this match-up, it feels like Burrow might be able to take down the Chiefs for a second year in a row, but it all depends on whether or not the offensive line of the Bengals can hold up.

In the other conference, there appear to be two favorites: The Eagles and the 49ers. The Cowboys, with the exception of their kicker, played a stellar game against the battered Tampa Bay Buccaneers, but the offensive machine that Kyle Shanahan has created in San Francisco is a different beast entirely. Anything can happen in a football game, but it's hard to see Dallas making it out of California.

The Eagles and Giants will certainly be fun to watch. Two physical teams with mobile quarterbacks always make for good TV, but the Eagles not only have a superior team on paper, but they've also played better this season than the Giants. Brian Daboll, the head coach of the Giants, orchestrated an amazing turnaround in New York, but his team simply is not ready for their shot at the title just yet.

The battle between the 49ers and the Eagles is a coin toss. Philadelphia is tough to deal with. Jalen Hurts has always been a very mobile quarterback, but he has shown remarkable improvement with his throwing ability this season, which is good since A.J.

Brown and Devonta Smith are serious threats out at receiver. However, Kyle Shanahan has his own offensive threats with Deebo Samuel, George Kittle, and Christian McCaffrey. Whatever happens, it's almost guaranteed to be two explosive offenses trying to outlast the other.

While it's tough to decide between the two, the nod will be given to the Eagles simply because they seem like the more complete team.

So the Eagles versus the Bengals - although Joe Burrow has an elite trio of receivers and a solid running back with Joe Mixon, his team's Achilles heel might once again be the offensive line. Last year in the Super Bowl, Aaron Donald and Von Miller wreaked havoc on the Bengals' offensive line, which ultimately led to the Bengals losing the game. While Cincinnati's general manager has thrown lots of resources at the unit, it still doesn't seem like it's ready to compete with the team of maulers that the Eagles have in their front seven.

On February 12th, the Eagles should defeat the Bengals in the Super Bowl, returning and winning the big game for the first time since their last appearance in 2018 when they played and defeated Tom Brady and the New England Patriots.

CSP Swim & Dive Update

BY DAVINA BELLINGER

THE CSP SWIM & DIVE team is thriving as they continue to grow in both numbers and progress this season. The Bears recently hosted Augsburg at home and came away with a win scoring 161 points over the Auggies mere 54 points. Charly Horn, a sophomore, who has been with the women's swim team for two years now said, "We are currently in our last couple of weeks of hard practices before our conference championship. The conference will be in the middle of February, so we are all ready for taper." She goes on to say, "This year's meets have gone pretty well. We were able to beat some teams bigger than us, which was a huge success for us as a team."

The CSP women's swim team has been working hard and knocking out some bigger teams in their recent meets. One of their biggest successes was winning two home meets with the support of their classmates, family, and friends. According to Horn, "We are swimming very well for being in a hard training period. A big success for us

this year was having two home meets and being able to swim in front of our friends and classmates." Horn accentuates her excitement as they are preparing for their conference meet coming up in the middle of February along with her fellow team members.

The swim team is very supportive of each other during their meets and practices because of the sense of community and family that they have made since they were formed. The team still calls the pool at Henry Sibley High School their home. When Horn was asked about what she enjoys about being part of the team, she said, "The team atmosphere is amazing. We all support each other. It feels more like being a family. During practices, we all motivate each other, we help each other in the classroom, and we enjoy spending time together. Another very cool aspect is that I met so many new people worldwide. Since our team is very international, I learned a lot about different cultures, and I

know that I have friends and connections in multiple countries, which is awesome." Horn continued to express her thoughts about her team members with more thoughtfulness of motivation not only in the water but also in classes in order to succeed in everything they do.

Horn wanted to add one thing about the CSP women's swim team: "This team has become my second family, and I am so grateful for all of them. Our team support is amazing, and we are actually a pretty fun group to be around, in my opinion." The enjoyment and success can be seen on the swim team's Instagram page.

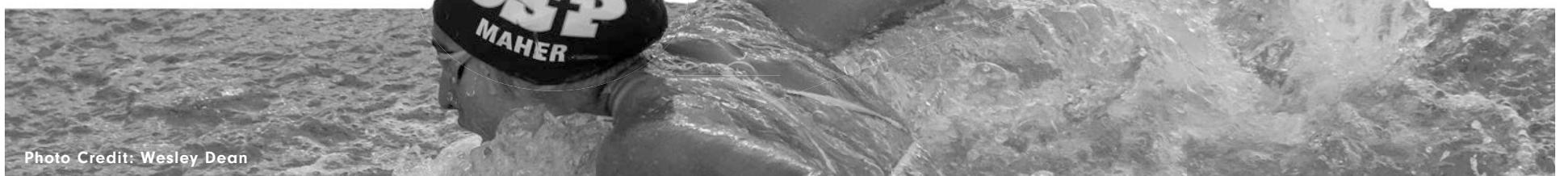


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