

NFL Schedule Formula

This week's topic comes from a suggestion from the Red Dragon. It is regarding how the NFL determines its schedule. The NFL consists of 32 Teams with 16 in each Conference, 4 Divisions in each Conference and 4 Teams in each Division. The NFL plays 16 games each year and their schedule is determined by formula. 14 of the games are laid out to perpetuity or until the Owners change their minds. This is how it works: Each Team plays its own Division members, home and away. This accounts for 6 games. Each Division will play another Division in its own Conference with an equal number of home and away games for each Team. This accounts for 4 games. Since there are 3 other Divisions in a Team's own Conference, this means a rotation of 3 years to get back to meeting those same Teams again. If you include the home and away factor, it is six years until a Team meets the same Team in its own Stadium. Each Division will play another Division in the other Conference with an equal number of home and away games for each Team. This accounts for 4 games. Since there are 4 other Divisions in the other Conference, this means a rotation of 4 years to get back to meeting those same Teams again. If you include the home and away factor, it is eight years until a Team meets the same Team in its own Stadium. The above two paragraphs give each Team eight common opponents which is used for tie breakers in the standings. A higher tie breaker factor is head to head competition. The remaining two games of the schedule is determined by how a Team places in its Division Standings. If a Team finishes first in the Division standings, it will meet the two first place Teams of the two Divisions in its own Conference not already played. The second place Team will meet the other second place Teams and so on down the list. I know, clear as mud. The only thing left is in what order does each Team play the other Teams in its schedule. Here are some of the rules: There will be games played on American Thanksgiving in Detroit and Dallas; There will be no games played on Saturday until the college football season is finished; Games of the final day of the schedule will only be against divisional opponents and only on Sunday, no Thursday, Saturday or Monday games; Where an NFL team and a Major League Baseball team share the same stadium, the MLB team usually gets preference; Where an NFL team shares a stadium with Major League Soccer, the NFL gets preference; Where a stadium shares a parking lot with another stadium (such as the case in Seattle), the two sports will schedule away from each other; NFL teams play a 16 game schedule over 17 weeks which means each team has a "bye" week. The bye weeks start on week 5 and end after the 11th week; and The NFL is playing more and more regular season games outside of country which have included Canada, England and Mexico. (Note: exhibition games have been played in Germany, Spain, Ireland, Japan and Australia.)