

Clubs

The NFL consists of thirty-two clubs divided into two conferences of sixteen teams each. Each conference is divided into four divisions of four clubs each. During the regular season, each team is allowed a maximum of fifty-three players on their roster; only forty-six of these may be active (eligible to play) on game days. Teams can also have an eight-player practice squad separate from their main roster, but the practice squad may only be composed of players who were not active for at least nine games in any of their seasons in the league. A player can only be on a practice squad for a maximum of three seasons.

Each NFL club is granted a franchise, the league's authorization for the team to operate in their city. This franchise covers 'Home Territory' (the 75 miles surrounding the city limits, or, if the team is within 100 miles of another league city, half the distance between the two cities) and 'Home Marketing Area' (Home Territory plus the rest of the state the club operates in, as well as the area the team operates their training camp in for the duration of the camp). Each NFL member has the exclusive right to host professional football games inside their Home Territory and the exclusive right to advertise, promote, and host events in their Home Marketing Area. There are several exceptions to this rule, mostly relating to teams with close proximity to each other: the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders only have exclusive rights in their cities and share rights outside of it; and teams that operate in the same city (e.g. New York Giants and New York Jets) or the same state (e.g. California, Florida, and Texas) share the rights to the city's Home Territory and the state's Home Marketing Area, respectively. The Los Angeles home territory has no team, but is "owned and controlled" by the league.

{clubs1.jpg} / Buffalo Bills

Every NFL team is based in the contiguous United States. Although no team is based in a foreign country, the Buffalo Bills play one home game each year at the Rogers Centre in Toronto, Canada as part of the Bills Toronto Series and the Jacksonville Jaguars will begin playing one home game a year from 2013–16 at Wembley Stadium in London, England as part of the NFL International Series. Mexico also has hosted an NFL regular-season game, a 2005 game between San Francisco 49ers and Arizona dubbed "Fútbol Americano", and 39 international pre-season games were played from 1986–2005 as part of the American Bowl series.

The Dallas Cowboys, at approximately \$2.1 billion, are the most valuable NFL franchise according to Forbes. Two other franchises, the New England Patriots and the Washington Redskins, are worth \$1.6 billion or greater. The Cowboys are also tied with the New York Yankees as the most valuable sports team in the United States, and for the third-most valuable sports team in the world; only soccer clubs Manchester United and Real Madrid are valued higher than the Cowboys. All 32 NFL teams rank among the top 50 most valuable sports teams in the world. Fourteen of the NFL's owners are listed on the Forbes 400, the most of any sports league or organization.

{SIDEBAR CONTENT}

NFL cheerleaders only make \$50 a game!

While it's easy to think that NFL cheerleaders are rich, and glamorous and have affairs with NFL players. However it's far from the truth. The average cheerleader makes between \$50 and \$75 per game. You might say: "well, but at least they get to hang out with NFL stars, I'm sure a few get married to them." You'd be wrong. In fact, they're forbidden from socializing with the players!