

## Season Arc

### NFL DIVISIONAL PREVIEW

10,000 Monte Carlo simulations using ELO ratings.

Seattle enters with a 212-point ELO climb—the largest of any playoff team. But seeding doesn't match strength: both 3-seeds are favored over their 2-seed opponents.

*Championship equity = probability of winning the Super Bowl from current position.*

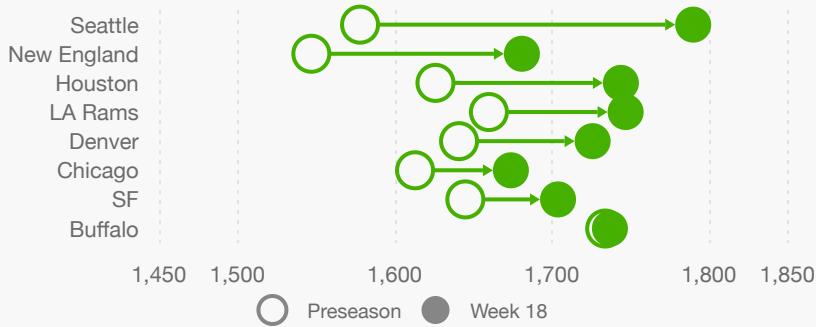
**25%**

Seattle Title Prob

**19%**

Denver Title Prob

#### ELO Movement



#### What the ELO Says

**Seattle's rise is historic.** From 1578 to 1790—a 212-point jump. They started as a borderline playoff team and finished as the field's best.

**Buffalo stayed flat.** Started strong (1734), ended at 1737. No improvement despite 12 wins.

**New England's quiet surge.** Up 134 points from 1547 to 1681. The biggest AFC mover.

**The 3-seeds are better than the 2-seeds.** Rams (1747) > Bears (1674). Texans (1744) > Patriots (1681). Seeding lies.

## THE FIELD

### Path to the Title: All 8 Teams

TEAM	SEED	RECORD	ELO	WIN DIV	WIN CONF	WIN TITLE	TITLE % IF WIN DIV	SEASON
Seattle Seahawks	NFC-1	14-3	<b>1790</b>	68.9%	45.3%	<b>25.0%</b>	36.3%	
Denver Broncos	AFC-1	14-3	<b>1726</b>	60.2%	37.4%	<b>19.2%</b>	31.9%	
Los Angeles Rams	NFC-3	12-5	<b>1747</b>	54.3%	24.9%	<b>12.9%</b>	23.8%	
Houston Texans	AFC-3	12-5	<b>1744</b>	48.3%	23.3%	<b>12.1%</b>	25.1%	
New England Patriots	AFC-2	14-3	<b>1681</b>	51.7%	21.4%	<b>9.4%</b>	18.3%	
Buffalo Bills	AFC-4	12-5	<b>1737</b>	39.8%	17.9%	<b>8.9%</b>	22.4%	
Chicago Bears	NFC-2	11-6	<b>1674</b>	45.7%	17.0%	<b>6.9%</b>	15.0%	
San Francisco 49ers	NFC-4	12-5	<b>1704</b>	31.1%	12.9%	<b>5.6%</b>	17.9%	

**The Narrowest Path::** Chicago's 15% title probability IF they win their divisional game is the lowest of any team. Seattle's 36.3% is the highest. The gap between favorites and underdogs compounds through the bracket.

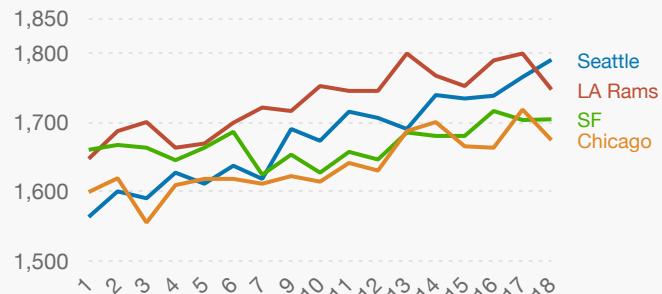
## NFC DIVISIONAL ROUND

**69%** Seattle    **31%** SF    **54%** LA Rams    **46%** Chicago

### Model Spreads

GAME	SPREAD	EQUITY AT STAKE
SEA vs SF	SEA -6.3	30.6%
CHI vs LAR	LAR -1.4	19.8%

### NFC ELO Trajectory



### NFC Analysis

**Seattle vs SF: The Revenge Game** Split 1-1 in regular season. SF won Week 1 (17-13), Seattle dominated Week 18 (13-3). Seattle's 5-0 finish and +191 point differential make them heavy favorites.

**Chicago vs LA Rams: Seeding Lies** The Rams are 73 ELO points better than Chicago despite being the lower seed. LA leads all playoff teams with 30.5 PPG. Chicago limps in at 2-3 in their last 5.

**Head-to-Head:** SEA-SF split 1-1. CHI-LAR didn't play.

## NFC Form Guide: Last 5 Games

TEAM	LAST 5	WK 14	WK 15	WK 16	WK 17	WK 18	PTS +/-
Seattle	5-0	W ATL +28	W IND +2	W LAR +1	W CAR +17	W SF +10	+58
SF	4-1	BYE	W TEN +13	W IND +21	W CHI +4	L SEA -10	+28
LA Rams	3-2	W ARI +28	W DET +7	L SEA -1	L ATL -3	W ARI +17	+48
Chicago	2-3	L GB -7	W CLE +28	W GB +6	L SF -4	L DET -3	+20

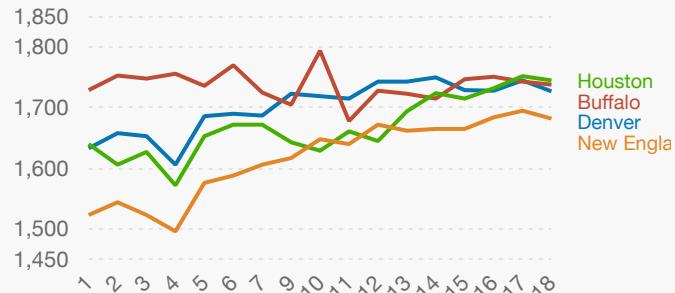
## AFC DIVISIONAL ROUND

**60%** Denver    **40%** Buffalo    **52%** New England    **48%** Houston

### Model Spreads

GAME	SPREAD	EQUITY AT STAKE
DEN vs BUF	DEN -3.4	28.1%
NE vs HOU	NE -0.6	21.5%

### AFC ELO Trajectory



### AFC Analysis

**Denver vs Buffalo: Most Equity at Stake** 28.1% combined title probability rides on this game. Denver has home field; Buffalo has higher ELO (1737 vs 1726). Both beat KC this year.

**NE vs Houston: Coin Flip** 51.7% vs 48.3%—closest game of the weekend. Houston has 63 more ELO points but NE has home field and 14-3 record. Houston is 5-0 in last 5 including a KC win.

**Head-to-Head:** Neither pair played in regular season.

## AFC Form Guide: Last 5 Games

TEAM	LAST 5	WK 14	WK 15	WK 16	WK 17	WK 18	PTS +/-
Houston	5-0	W KC +10	W ARI +20	W LV +2	W LAC +4	W IND +8	+44
Denver	4-1	W LV +7	W GB +8	L JAX -14	W KC +7	W LAC +16	+24
Buffalo	4-1	W CIN +5	W NE +4	W CLE +3	L PHI -1	W NYJ +27	+38
New England	4-1	BYE	L BUF -4	W BAL +4	W NYJ +32	W MIA +28	+60

## CHAMPIONSHIP PATHS

NFC Championship Probability



AFC Championship Probability



**Conditional Title Probabilities: If They Win This Weekend...**

TEAM	NFCCG/AFCCG OPPONENT	HOW OFTEN	WIN RATE	THEN TITLE%
Seattle	vs LA Rams	55%	61.6%	<b>36.3%</b>
Seattle	vs Chicago	45%	70.7%	<b>36.3%</b>
Denver	vs New England	52%	66.6%	<b>31.9%</b>
Denver	vs Houston	48%	57.3%	<b>31.9%</b>
LA Rams	vs Seattle	69%	38.4%	<b>23.8%</b>
LA Rams	vs SF	31%	56.1%	<b>23.8%</b>
Houston	vs Denver	60%	42.7%	<b>25.1%</b>
Houston	vs Buffalo	40%	54.7%	<b>25.1%</b>

**The 1-seeds control their destiny.** Seattle is favored in either NFCCG matchup (61.6% vs LAR, 70.7% vs CHI). Denver is favored in either AFCCG (66.6% vs NE, 57.3% vs HOU). Win this weekend, and the path to the Super Bowl opens wide.

## BOTTOM LINE

**Seattle is the team to beat.** Highest ELO (1790), biggest improvement (+212), widest championship path (36.3% if they win Saturday).

**NE vs HOU is the swing game.** A true coin flip (51.7% vs 48.3%) that determines whether Denver faces a weaker or stronger AFCCG opponent.

**Don't trust the seeds.** Both 2-seeds (Bears, Patriots) are underdogs despite home field. The model sees what the committee missed.