

The Super Bowl is the annual league championship game of the National Football League (NFL) of the United States. It has served as the final game of every NFL season since 1966, replacing the NFL Championship Game. Since 2022, the game has been played on the second Sunday in February. Prior Super Bowls were played on Sundays in early to mid-January from 1967 to 1978, late January from 1979 to 2003,[a] and the first Sunday of February from 2004 to 2021. Winning teams are awarded the Vince Lombardi Trophy, named after the eponymous coach who won the first two Super Bowls. Because the NFL restricts use of its "Super Bowl" trademark, it is frequently referred to as the "big game" or other generic terms by non-sponsoring corporations. The day that the game is held, is commonly referred to as "Super Bowl Sunday" or simply "Super Sunday".

The game was created as part of a 1966 merger agreement between the NFL and the competing American Football League (AFL) to have their 'best' teams compete for a championship. It was originally called the AFL–NFL World Championship Game until the "Super Bowl" moniker was adopted in 1969's Super Bowl III. The first four Super Bowls from 1967 to 1970 were played prior to the merger, with the NFL and AFL each winning two. After the merger in 1970, the 10 AFL teams and 3 of the NFL teams formed the American Football Conference (AFC), while the remaining 13 NFL teams formed the National Football Conference (NFC). All games since 1971's Super Bowl V have been played between the best team from each of the two conferences, with the NFC tied with the AFC 29–29 in wins.

Among the NFL's current 32 teams, 20 (11 NFC, nine AFC) have won a Super Bowl and 15 (eight AFC, seven NFC) hold multiple titles. The AFC's Pittsburgh Steelers and New England Patriots have the most Super Bowl titles at six each. The Patriots also have the most Super Bowl appearances at 11.[1] Among NFC franchises, the Dallas Cowboys and San Francisco 49ers are tied for both the most titles at five each and the most appearances at eight each. The Patriots and the Denver Broncos of the AFC hold the record for the most defeats in the Super Bowl at five each. The Baltimore Ravens of the AFC and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the NFC are the only franchises to be undefeated in multiple Super Bowls, having each won two. Among the 12 teams who have not won a Super Bowl, the AFC's Cleveland Browns, Houston Texans, and Jacksonville Jaguars, and the NFC's Detroit Lions are the only four to have not appeared in the game.

The Super Bowl is among the world's most-watched single sporting events and frequently commands the largest audience among all American broadcasts during the year. It is second only to the UEFA Champions League final as the most watched annual club sporting event worldwide,[2] and the seven most-watched broadcasts in American television history are Super Bowls.[3] Commercial airtime during the Super Bowl broadcast is the most expensive of the year because of the high viewership, leading to companies regularly developing their most expensive advertisements for the broadcast and commercial viewership becoming an integral part of the event. The Super Bowl is also the second-largest event for American food consumption, behind Thanksgiving dinner.[4]

Origin

The first Super Bowl at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum

Since the turn of the 20th century, college football teams from across the United States have scheduled "bowl games" against each other. The original "bowl game" was the Rose Bowl Game in Pasadena, California, which was first played in 1902 as the "Tournament East–West football game" as part of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. In 1923, the Tournament East-West football game moved to the new Rose Bowl Stadium; the stadium got its name from the fact that the game played there was part of the Tournament of Roses and that it was shaped like a bowl, much like the Yale Bowl in New Haven, Connecticut. The Tournament of Roses football game thus eventually came to be known as the Rose Bowl Game. Exploiting the Rose Bowl Game's popularity, post-season college football contests were created for Miami (the Orange Bowl), New Orleans (the Sugar Bowl), and El Paso (the Sun Bowl) in 1935, and for Dallas (the Cotton Bowl) in 1937. By the time the first Super Bowl was played, the term "bowl" for any major American football game was well established.[5]

The Packers defeated the Chiefs in the first AFL–NFL Championship Game, Super Bowl I.

For four decades after its 1920 inception, the NFL successfully fended off several rival leagues. In 1960, it encountered its most serious competitor when the American Football League (AFL) was formed. The AFL vied with the NFL for players and fans. After the AFL's inaugural season, AFL commissioner Joe Foss sent an invitation to the NFL on January 14, 1961, to schedule a "World Playoff" game between the two leagues' champions, beginning with the upcoming 1961 season.[6] The first World Playoff game, if actually played, would have matched up the AFL champion Houston Oilers against the NFL champion Green Bay Packers. However, it took a half-dozen more seasons for this idea to become a reality.[citation needed]

In the mid-1960s, Lamar Hunt, owner of the AFL's Kansas City Chiefs, first used the term "Super Bowl"[7] to refer to the AFL–NFL championship game in the merger meetings. Hunt later said the name was likely in his head because his children had been playing with a Super Ball toy;[8] a vintage example of the ball is on display at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. In a July 25, 1966, letter to NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle, Hunt wrote, "I have kiddingly called it the 'Super Bowl,' which obviously can be improved upon."

The leagues' owners chose the name "AFL–NFL Championship Game",[9] but in July 1966 the Kansas City Star quoted Hunt in discussing "the Super Bowl—that's my term for the championship game between the two leagues", [10] and the media immediately began using the term.[11] Although the league stated in 1967 that "not many people like it", asking for suggestions and considering alternatives such as "Merger Bowl" and "The Game", the Associated Press reported that "Super Bowl" "grew and grew and grew—until it reached the point that there was Super Week, Super Sunday, Super Teams, Super Players, ad infinitum".[9] "Super Bowl" became official beginning with the third annual game.[12]

Roman numerals are used to identify each Super Bowl, rather than the year in which it is held, since the fifth edition, in January 1971.[13] The sole exception to this naming convention tradition

occurred with Super Bowl 50, which was played on February 7, 2016, following the 2015 regular season. The following year, the nomenclature returned to Roman numerals for Super Bowl LI, following the 2016 regular season.

The Jets were the first AFL team to win a Super Bowl (Super Bowl III), defeating the Colts.

After the NFL's Green Bay Packers won the first two Super Bowls, some team owners feared for the future of the merger. At the time, many doubted the competitiveness of AFL teams compared with their NFL counterparts, though that perception changed when the AFL's New York Jets defeated the heavily favored NFL contender Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III in Miami. One year later, the AFL's Kansas City Chiefs defeated the NFL's Minnesota Vikings 23–7 in Super Bowl IV in New Orleans, which was the final AFL–NFL World Championship Game played before the merger. Beginning with the 1970 season, the NFL realigned into two conferences; the former AFL teams plus three NFL teams (the Baltimore Colts, Pittsburgh Steelers, and Cleveland Browns) would constitute the American Football Conference (AFC), while the remaining NFL clubs would form the National Football Conference (NFC). The champions of the two conferences would play each other in the Super Bowl.

The winning team receives the Vince Lombardi Trophy, named after the former coach of the Green Bay Packers, who won the first two Super Bowl games as well as five NFL championships preceding the merger in 1961, 1962, 1965, 1966 and 1967. Following Lombardi's death in September 1970, the trophy was named after him. The first trophy awarded under the new name was presented to the Baltimore Colts following their win in Super Bowl V in Miami.

Game history

For a full list of Super Bowl games and champions, see List of Super Bowl champions.

The Super Bowl was held in January from its inception in 1966 until 2002, when the week of games following the September 11 attacks were postponed and rescheduled, extending the season by a week and causing Super Bowl XXXVI to be played on February 3. Beginning with Super Bowl XXXVIII in 2004, the Super Bowl was scheduled for the first Sunday in February until the schedule expansion of the 2021 season moved the game to the second Sunday.^[14]

The current NFL schedule begins on the weekend immediately after Labor Day (the first Monday in September). That weekend is the first of an 18-week regular season, followed by three weeks of playoff games and one week for the Pro Bowl. The Super Bowl is contested the week after the Pro Bowl. This schedule has been in effect since an 18th week (and 17th regular season game) were added to the NFL schedule for the 2021 season, with Super Bowl LVI on February 13, 2022, the first to be played under this format.

The Pittsburgh Steelers and New England Patriots are tied with a record six Super Bowl wins. The Dallas Cowboys and San Francisco 49ers have five victories each, while the Packers, Chiefs and New York Giants have four. Fourteen other NFL franchises have won at least one Super Bowl.

The Patriots own the record for most Super Bowl appearances with eleven. The Cowboys, Steelers, Broncos and the 49ers are tied for second with eight appearances apiece, reaching that milestone in this respective order. Bill Belichick owns the record for the most Super Bowl wins (eight) and appearances (twelve: nine times as head coach, once as assistant head coach, and twice as defensive coordinator) by an individual. Tom Brady has the most Super Bowl starts (ten) and wins as a player (seven), while Charles Haley has the second-most wins among players with five.

Eight teams have appeared in Super Bowl games without a win. The Minnesota Vikings were the first team to appear four times without a win, while the Buffalo Bills played in a record four consecutive Super Bowls, losing in each. The Patriots and Broncos are tied for the most Super Bowl losses at five.

The Cleveland Browns, Detroit Lions, Houston Texans, and Jacksonville Jaguars are the four teams to have never appeared in a Super Bowl, although the Browns and Lions both won NFL championships before the Super Bowl era. The Jaguars, who began play in 1995, and the Texans, who began play in 2002, are among the youngest franchises in the league.

1960s: Early history and Packers dominance

The Packers won the first two AFL–NFL World Championship Games, later renamed Super Bowls, defeating the Kansas City Chiefs and Oakland Raiders following the 1966 and 1967 seasons, respectively. The Packers were led by quarterback Bart Starr, who was named the Most Valuable Player (MVP) for both games. These two championships, coupled with the Packers' NFL championships in 1961, 1962, and 1965, amount to the most successful stretch in NFL History; five championships in seven years, and the second threepeat in NFL history (1965, 1966, and 1967). The Packers are the only team to threepeat, as they also accomplished the feat in the pre-playoff era (1929, 1930 and 1931). The first playoff game in the NFL was in 1932.

In Super Bowl III, the AFL's New York Jets defeated the 19.5-point favorite Baltimore Colts of the NFL, 16–7. The Jets were led by quarterback Joe Namath, who had famously guaranteed a Jets win before the game, and former Colts head coach Weeb Ewbank, and their victory proved that the AFL was the NFL's competitive equal. This was reinforced the following year when the Chiefs defeated the NFL's Vikings 23–7 in Super Bowl IV.

1970s: Dominant franchises

After the AFL–NFL merger was completed in 1970, three franchises—the Cowboys, Miami Dolphins, and Steelers—would go on to dominate the 1970s, winning a combined eight Super Bowls between them in the decade, with the Steelers winning four of the eight.

The Baltimore Colts, now a member of the AFC, would start the decade by defeating the Cowboys in Super Bowl V, a game which is notable as being the only Super Bowl to date in which a player from the losing team won the Super Bowl MVP (Cowboys' linebacker Chuck Howley). Beginning with this Super Bowl, all Super Bowls have served as the NFL's championship game.

The Steelers defeated the Rams in Super Bowl XIV to win an unprecedented four championships in six years.

The Cowboys, coming back from a loss the previous season, won Super Bowl VI over the Dolphins. However, this would be the Dolphins' final loss for over a year, as the next year, the Dolphins would go 14–0 in the regular season and eventually win all their playoff games, capped off with a 14–7 victory in Super Bowl VII, becoming the first and only team to finish an entire perfect regular and postseason. The Dolphins would repeat as league champions by winning Super Bowl VIII a year later.

In the mid to late 1970s, the Steelers became the first NFL dynasty of the post-merger era by winning four Super Bowls (IX, X, XIII, and XIV) in six years. They were led by head coach Chuck Noll, the play of offensive stars Terry Bradshaw, Franco Harris, Lynn Swann, John Stallworth, and Mike Webster, and their dominant "Steel Curtain" defense, led by "Mean" Joe Greene, L. C. Greenwood, Ernie Holmes, Mel Blount, Jack Ham, and Jack Lambert. Many of the team's key players were selected in the 1974 draft, in which Pittsburgh selected four future Hall of Famers, the most for any team in any sport in a single draft.[15] A fifth player, Donnie Shell, was signed by Pittsburgh after going unselected in the 1974 NFL Draft; he too was later enshrined in the Hall of Fame.[16] The Steelers were the first team to win three and then four Super Bowls and appeared in six AFC Championship Games during the decade, making the playoffs in eight straight seasons. Pittsburgh still remains the only team to win back-to-back Super Bowls twice and four Super Bowls in a six-year period.

The Steelers' 1970s dynasty was interrupted only by the Raiders' first Super Bowl win in Super Bowl XI and the Cowboys' second Super Bowl win in Super Bowl XII. Conversely, the Vikings, with their Purple People Eaters defense, were the only other team to appear in multiple Super Bowls (IV, VIII, IX and XI) during the decade but failed to win each one.

1981–1996: The NFC's winning streak

In the 1980s and 1990s, the tables turned for the AFC, as the NFC dominated the Super Bowls of the new decade and most of those in the 1990s. The NFC won 16 of the 20 Super Bowls during these two decades, including 13 straight from Super Bowl XIX to Super Bowl XXXI.

The 49ers against the Dolphins in Super Bowl XIX

The most successful team of the 1980s was the 49ers, which featured the West Coast offense of Hall of Fame head coach Bill Walsh. This offense was led by three-time Super Bowl MVP and Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana, Super Bowl MVP and Hall of Fame wide receiver Jerry Rice, running back Roger Craig, and Hall of Fame defensive safety/cornerback Ronnie Lott. Under their leadership, the 49ers won four Super Bowls in the decade (XVI, XIX, XXIII, and XXIV) and made nine playoff appearances between 1981 and 1990, including eight division championships, becoming the second dynasty of the post-merger NFL. The 1984 San Francisco 49ers were the first team to achieve an 18–1 record, doing so under Walsh. The 1989 San Francisco 49ers, under first-year head coach George Seifert, posted the most lop-sided victory in Super Bowl history, defeating the Denver Broncos by a score of 55–10 in Super Bowl XXIV.

The 1980s also produced the 1985 Chicago Bears, who posted an 18–1 record under head coach Mike Ditka; quarterback Jim McMahon; and Hall of Fame running back Walter Payton. Their team won Super Bowl XX in dominant fashion. The Washington Redskins and New York Giants were also top teams of this period; Washington won Super Bowls XVII, XXII, and XXVI. The Giants claimed Super Bowls XXI and XXV. Both teams won multiple Super Bowls with different starting quarterbacks; Washington won with Joe Theismann (XVII), Doug Williams (XXII) and Mark Rypien (XXVI), and the Giants with Phil Simms (XXI) and Jeff Hostetler (XXV). As in the 1970s, the Raiders were the only AFC team to interrupt the Super Bowl dominance of NFC teams; they won Super Bowls XV and XVIII (the latter as the Los Angeles Raiders).

Conversely, the Cincinnati Bengals (XVI and XXIII), Dolphins (XVII and XIX), and Broncos (XXI, XXII and XXIV) made multiple Super Bowls in the 1980s without winning one.

Following several seasons with poor records in the 1980s, the Cowboys rose back to prominence in the 1990s. During this decade, the Cowboys made post-season appearances every year except for the seasons of 1990 and 1997. From 1992 to 1996, the Cowboys won their division championship each year. In this same period, the Buffalo Bills had made their mark reaching the Super Bowl for a record four consecutive years, only to lose all four (XXV–XXVIII). After Super Bowl championships by division rivals New York (1990) and Washington (1991), the Cowboys won three of the next four Super Bowls (XXVII, XXVIII, and XXX) led by quarterback Troy Aikman, running back Emmitt Smith, and wide receiver Michael Irvin. All three of these players went to the Hall of Fame. The Cowboys' streak was interrupted by the 49ers, who were the first team to win their league-leading fifth title overall with Super Bowl XXIX with a dominant performance featuring the Super Bowl MVP and Hall of Fame quarterback Steve Young (who threw a Super Bowl record 6 touchdown passes), Hall of Fame wide receiver Jerry Rice, and Hall of Fame cornerback Deion Sanders; however, the Cowboys' victory in Super Bowl XXX the next year also gave them five titles overall and they did so with Sanders after he won the Super Bowl the previous year with the 49ers. The NFC's winning streak was continued by the Packers led by Hall of Fame quarterback Brett Favre, won Super Bowl XXXI, their first championship since Super Bowl II in 1967.

The Patriots made their maiden Super Bowl appearances in XX (1985) and XXXI (1996) but lost both times. However, the turn of the century would soon bring hope and glory to the franchise.

1997–2009: AFC resurgence and the rise of the Patriots

See also: Brady-Belichick era

Super Bowl XXXII saw quarterback John Elway and running back Terrell Davis lead the Denver Broncos to an upset victory over the defending champion Packers, snapping the NFC's thirteen-year winning streak. The following year, the Broncos defeated the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl XXXIII, Elway's fifth Super Bowl appearance, his second NFL championship, and his final NFL game. The back-to-back victories heralded a change in momentum in which AFC teams would win nine out of 12 Super Bowls. In the years between 1995 and 2018, five teams—the Steelers, Patriots, Broncos, Baltimore Ravens, and Indianapolis Colts—accounted for 22 of the 24 AFC Super Bowl appearances (including the last 16), with those same teams often meeting each other earlier in the playoffs. In contrast, the NFC saw a different representative in the Super Bowl every season from 2001 through 2010.

The Patriots playing against the Eagles in Super Bowl XXXIX

The New England Patriots became the dominant team throughout the early 2000s, winning the championship three out of four years early in the decade. They would become only the second team in the history of the NFL to do so (after the 1990s Dallas Cowboys). In Super Bowl XXXVI, first-year starting quarterback Tom Brady led his team to a 20–17 upset victory over the St. Louis Rams, who two seasons earlier won Super Bowl XXXIV. Brady would go on to win the MVP award for this game. The Patriots also won Super Bowls XXXVIII[17] and XXXIX defeating the Carolina Panthers and the Philadelphia Eagles respectively. This four-year stretch of Patriot dominance was interrupted by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' 48–21 Super Bowl XXXVII victory over the Oakland Raiders.

The Steelers and Colts continued the era of AFC dominance by winning Super Bowls XL and XLI in the 2005 and 2006 seasons, respectively defeating the Seattle Seahawks and Chicago Bears.

In the 2007 season, the Patriots became the fourth team in NFL history to have a perfect unbeaten and untied regular-season record, the second in the Super Bowl era after the 1972 Miami Dolphins, and the first to finish 16–0. They easily marched through the AFC playoffs and were heavy favorites in Super Bowl XLII. However, they lost that game to Eli Manning and the New York Giants 17–14, leaving the Patriots' 2007 record at 18–1.

The following season, the Steelers logged their record sixth Super Bowl title (XLIII) in a 27–23, final-minute victory against the Arizona Cardinals.

The 2009 season saw the New Orleans Saints defeat the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLIV by a score of 31–17 to take home their first Championship. With this victory, the Saints joined the New

York Jets as the only teams to have won in their sole Super Bowl appearance, a distinction the Ravens also enjoyed in winning Super Bowl XXXV after the 2000 season and the Buccaneers in 2002.

2010s: Patriots reign; parity in the NFC

The New England Patriots postgame speech after Super Bowl LI, February 5, 2017

The Philadelphia Eagles are presented with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after winning Super Bowl LII, February 4, 2018

In the AFC, this era was dominated by the Patriots, with the only four other teams to represent the conference being the Steelers, Ravens, Broncos, and Chiefs. The Patriots had tied a record with the 1970s Dallas Cowboys for most Super Bowl appearances in a decade with five appearances (2011, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018). The Patriots also had four Super Bowl appearances in five years. They also had eight consecutive AFC championship appearances spanning 2011–2018.

The Super Bowls of the 2000s and 2010s are notable for the performances (and the pedigrees) of several of the participating quarterbacks, especially on the AFC side in repeated appearances by the same teams and players. In particular, Tom Brady, Ben Roethlisberger, or Peyton Manning appeared as the AFC team's quarterback in all but two of the Super Bowls from 2001 through 2018. Conversely, the only NFC teams to make the Super Bowl multiple times with the same quarterback in this era were the Seahawks, led by quarterback Russell Wilson, and the Giants, led by quarterback Eli Manning.

One of these teams was featured in the culmination of the 2010 season, Super Bowl XLV, which brought the Packers their fourth Super Bowl victory and record thirteenth NFL championship overall with the defeat of the Steelers in February 2011. This became Aaron Rodgers' only Super Bowl victory so far.

The following year, in Super Bowl XLVI, the Patriots made their first appearance of the decade, a position where they would become a mainstay. The Patriots, however, lost to the Eli Manning-led Giants, 21–17, who had beaten the Patriots four years before. This was the Giants' fourth Super Bowl victory.

In Super Bowl XLVII, the NFC's 49ers were defeated by the Ravens 34–31. The game had been dubbed as the 'Harbaugh Bowl' in the weeks leading up to the game, due to the fact that the coaches of the two teams, John Harbaugh and Jim Harbaugh, are brothers. During the third quarter, the Ravens had a commanding 28–6 lead. However, there was a blackout in New Orleans, where the game was being played. The game was delayed for 34 minutes, and after play resumed, San Francisco stormed back with 17 straight points, but still lost.

Super Bowl XLVIII, played at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium in February 2014, was the first Super Bowl held outdoors in a cold-weather environment. The Seahawks won their first NFL title with a 43–8 defeat of the Broncos, in a highly touted matchup that pitted Seattle's top-ranked defense against a Peyton Manning-led Denver offense that had broken the NFL's single-season scoring record.

In Super Bowl XLIX, the Patriots beat the defending Super Bowl champions, the Seahawks, by a score of 28–24. Down by 10, the Patriots mounted a late fourth quarter comeback to win the game with Tom Brady scoring two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. In a key play in the final seconds of the game, then-rookie free agent Malcolm Butler would intercept a pass by Russell Wilson at the one-yard line, allowing the Patriots to run out the clock and end the game. Tom Brady was awarded his third Super Bowl MVP, tying Joe Montana for the most Super Bowl MVP awards.

In Super Bowl 50, the first Super Bowl to be branded with Arabic numerals, the Broncos, led by the league's top-ranked defense, defeated the Panthers, who had the league's top-ranked offense, in what became the final game of quarterback Peyton Manning's career. Von Miller dominated, totaling 2.5 sacks and forcing two Cam Newton fumbles; both fumbles leading to Broncos touchdowns.

In Super Bowl LI, the first Super Bowl to end in overtime, the Atlanta Falcons led 28–3 late in the third quarter; however, they squandered the lead as the Patriots would tie the game 28–28 on back to back touchdowns and two-point conversions. The Falcons lost to the Patriots 34–28 in overtime. This 25-point deficit would be the largest comeback win for any team in a Super Bowl, breaking the previous of 10-point deficit to come back and win. The Patriots never held the lead until the game-winning touchdown in overtime. Tom Brady was awarded his record fourth Super Bowl MVP and 5th win as a Super Bowl Champion, throwing a then-record 466 yards for 43 completions.

In Super Bowl LII, the Philadelphia Eagles defeated the defending champion Patriots, 41–33, ending a 57-year championship drought for the franchise. Nick Foles won the Super Bowl MVP. The Patriots totaled 613 yards in defeat, with Tom Brady breaking his previous Super Bowl record of 466 passing yards with an all-time playoff record of 505 passing yards in the high-scoring game; while the Eagles would gain 538 yards in the victory. The combined total of 1,151 yards of offense for both teams broke an NFL record (for any game) that had stood for nearly seven decades. The Patriots' 33 points were the highest losing score in Super Bowl history, a record held until 2023, when the Eagles lost Super Bowl LVII to the Kansas City Chiefs by a score of 38–35. It was the Eagles' third Super Bowl appearance and their first win in franchise history. With the Eagles' victory, the NFC East became the first division to have each team win at least one Super Bowl.

While Super Bowl LII produced the second highest-scoring Super Bowl, the following year's Super Bowl LIII became the lowest-scoring Super Bowl. The Patriots defeated the Los Angeles Rams, 13–3. In so doing, they became the team with the lowest point total by a winning team in Super Bowl history. Tom Brady would receive a record sixth Super Bowl championship, the most of any player in NFL history, surpassing his tie with Charles Haley for five wins. Brady would also become the oldest

player to ever win a Super Bowl at age 41, while Bill Belichick would be the oldest coach to ever win a Super Bowl at age 66. Wide receiver Julian Edelman was named Super Bowl MVP.

2020s: Beginning of Chiefs' dominance

In Super Bowl LIV, the Chiefs defeated the 49ers in a comeback, 31–20, for their first Super Bowl title in 50 years. This victory marked the first time since 1991 that the NFC did not have more Super Bowl victories than the AFC. Notable was the absence of the Patriots, who after making it to the Super Bowl the last three years and winning two of them, had lost in the Wild Card round of the playoffs, being bested by the Tennessee Titans 20–13. That game represented Tom Brady's final game as a New England Patriot.

In Super Bowl LV, which took place in Tampa, Florida, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the defending champion Chiefs, 31–9.[18] No player on the Buccaneers who scored points (Rob Gronkowski, Antonio Brown, Leonard Fournette and Ryan Succop) was on the Buccaneers' roster the previous season. This marked a record seventh Super Bowl victory for Tom Brady, also more than any individual NFL franchise, and who would also break his own record for the oldest quarterback to win a championship at 43 years old. Tampa Bay head coach Bruce Arians would also break Bill Belichick's record for the oldest head coach to win a championship at 68. Super Bowl LV also marked the first time in the history of the modern league that a host city's professional football franchise got to play in a Super Bowl that was hosted in their home stadium.

A year later in Inglewood, California, the Los Angeles Rams defeated the Cincinnati Bengals 23–20 to win Super Bowl LVI, becoming the second team to win the Super Bowl in its home stadium.[19]

On February 12, 2023, at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, the Chiefs overcame a 10-point deficit at halftime to defeat the Philadelphia Eagles 38–35, winning Super Bowl LVII on a last-minute field goal.[20]

On February 11, 2024, the Chiefs won Super Bowl LVIII at Allegiant Stadium on an overtime touchdown. The first Super Bowl in Las Vegas, this was a rematch of Super Bowl LIV between the 49ers and the Chiefs. The second Super Bowl to go into overtime, the Chiefs came back from another 10-point deficit to win their fourth appearance in five years and secure back-to-back championships for the first time since the 2004 New England Patriots.[21]

Television coverage and ratings

Main article: Super Bowl television ratings

See also: List of most watched television broadcasts in the United States

The Super Bowl XXXV broadcasting compound, full of satellite trucks

The Super Bowl is one of the most-watched annual sporting events in the world, with viewership overwhelmingly domestic.[2] The only other annual event that gathers more viewers is the UEFA Champions League final.[2] For many years, the Super Bowl has possessed a large US and global television viewership, and it is often the most-watched United States originating television program of the year.[22] The game tends to have a high Nielsen television rating, which is usually around a 40 rating and 60 shares. This means that, on average, more than 100 million people from the United States alone are tuned into the Super Bowl at any given moment.

In press releases preceding the game, the NFL has claimed that the Super Bowl has a potential worldwide audience of around one billion people in over 200 countries.[23] However, this figure refers to the number of people able to watch the game, not the number of people who will actually be watching. Regardless, the statements have been frequently misinterpreted in the media as referring to the latter figure, leading to a misperception about the game's actual global audience.[24][25] The New York-based media research firm Initiative measured the global audience for the Super Bowl XXXIX at 93 million people, with 98 percent of that figure being viewers in North America, which meant roughly two million people outside North America watched the Super Bowl that year.[24]

Super Bowl LVIII holds the record for average number of US viewers, with 123.7 million, making the game the most-viewed television broadcast of any kind in American history. The halftime show set a record with 129.2 million viewers tuning in.[26]

The highest-rated game according to Nielsen was Super Bowl XVI in 1982, which was watched in 49.1% of households (73 shares), or 40,020,000 households at the time. Ratings for that game, a San Francisco victory over Cincinnati, may have been aided by a large blizzard that had affected much of the northeastern United States on game day, leaving residents to stay at home more than usual.[citation needed] Super Bowl XVI still ranks fourth on Nielsen's list of top-rated programs of all time, with three other Super Bowls (XVII, XX, and XLIX) in the top ten.

Famous Super Bowl commercials include the 1984 introduction of Apple's Macintosh computer, the Budweiser "Bud Bowl" campaign, and the dot-com ads aired during Super Bowl XXXIV. As the television ratings of the Super Bowl have steadily increased over the years, commercial prices have also increased, with advertisers paying as much as \$7 million for a thirty-second spot during Super Bowl LVI in 2022.[27] A segment of the audience tunes into the Super Bowl solely to view commercials.[28] In 2010, Nielsen reported that 51 percent of Super Bowl viewers tune in for the commercials.[29]

Since 1991, the Super Bowl has begun between 6:19 and 6:40 PM EST so that most of the game is played during the primetime hours on the East Coast.