



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WEEK 17 BUFFALO-CINCINNATI GAME WILL NOT BE RESUMED
CLUBS TO CONSIDER NEUTRAL SITE AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

The NFL announced today that the Week 17 Buffalo Bills at Cincinnati Bengals game will not be resumed and has been cancelled.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell informed all clubs of his decision earlier today, after speaking with the Bills, the Bengals and NFL Players Association leadership.

“This has been a very difficult week,” Goodell said. “We continue to focus on the recovery of Damar Hamlin and are encouraged by the improvements in his condition as well as the tremendous outpouring of support and care for Damar and his family from across the country. We are also incredibly appreciative of the amazing work of the medical personnel and commend each and every one of them.”

Among the key factors in arriving at this decision:

- Not playing the Buffalo-Cincinnati game to its conclusion will have no effect on which clubs qualify for the postseason. No club would qualify for the postseason and no club will be eliminated based on the outcome of this game.
- It would require postponing the start of the playoffs for one week, thereby affecting all 14 clubs that qualify for postseason play.
- Making the decision prior to Week 18 is consistent with our competitive principles and enables all clubs to know the playoff possibilities prior to playing the final weekend of regular season games.

Cancelling the game between the Bills and Bengals creates potential competitive inequities in certain playoff scenarios. In an effort to mitigate those inequities, NFL clubs will consider tomorrow in a Special League Meeting a resolution recommended by the Commissioner and approved today by the Competition Committee, consisting of two elements:

1. The AFC Championship Game will be played at a neutral site if the participating teams played an unequal number of games and both could have been the number one seed and hosted the game had all AFC clubs played a full 17-game regular season. Those circumstances involve Buffalo or Cincinnati qualifying for the game as a road team and are listed below:

Scenario 1

Buffalo and Kansas City both win or both tie – a Buffalo vs Kansas City championship game would be at a neutral site.

Scenario 2

Buffalo and Kansas City both lose and Baltimore wins or ties – a Buffalo vs Kansas City championship game would be at a neutral site.

Scenario 3

Buffalo and Kansas City both lose and Cincinnati wins – a Buffalo or Cincinnati vs Kansas City championship game would be at a neutral site.

2. If Baltimore defeats Cincinnati in Week 18 it will have defeated Cincinnati, a divisional opponent, twice but will not be able to host a playoff game because Cincinnati will have a higher winning percentage for a 16-game schedule than Baltimore will for a 17-game schedule.

If Baltimore defeats Cincinnati and if those two clubs are scheduled to play a Wild Card game against one another, the site for that game would be determined by a coin toss. If Cincinnati wins the Week 18 game or if Baltimore and Cincinnati are not scheduled to play one another in the Wild Card round, the game sites would be determined by the regular scheduling procedures.

“As we considered the football schedule, our principles have been to limit disruption across the league and minimize competitive inequities,” Goodell said. “I recognize that there is no perfect solution. The proposal we are asking the ownership to consider, however, addresses the most significant potential equitable issues created by the difficult, but necessary, decision not to play the game under these extraordinary circumstances.”