

2023 Resolution G-1

Whereas, the January 2, 2023, game between the Buffalo Bills and Cincinnati Bengals was suspended following a life-threatening injury to a Bills player, and the game was later postponed; and

Whereas, the game was subsequently cancelled because completing the game would have no effect on which teams qualify for the playoffs and would have required postponing the start of postseason play; and

Whereas, at the time the game was cancelled, multiple AFC clubs had an opportunity to be the number one seed in the American Football Conference, including hosting the AFC Championship Game; and

Whereas, the membership wishes to mitigate a possible competitive inequity that may result from having the host team for the AFC Championship be determined by seeding based on teams playing a different number of regular season games; and

Whereas, the membership wishes to mitigate the additional potential competitive inequity that may result from Baltimore and Cincinnati playing an uneven number of games such that Baltimore cannot win the AFC North Division and host a potential playoff game against Cincinnati; Be it

Resolved, that for the 2022 season only, the AFC Championship Game will be played at a neutral site, to be determined by the Commissioner, if (A) the participating teams played a different number of regular season games; and (B) the lower seeded team in the Championship Game could have been the number one seed in the AFC if a full 17-game regular season had been played by all AFC clubs; and further

Resolved, that unless both participating clubs could have been the number one seed in the AFC and host the Championship Game had they played a full 17-game regular season, the game shall be played at the home stadium of the higher-seeded team; and further

Resolved, that if (a) Baltimore defeats Cincinnati in the game between the two clubs scheduled for Sunday, January 8, 2023; and (b) Baltimore and Cincinnati are scheduled to play against one another in a Wild Card Game the following weekend, the site of the game will be determined by a coin toss supervised by the Commissioner. Unless both conditions are met, the site of any Wild Card Game involving Baltimore and Cincinnati shall be determined per Article XX of the Constitution and Bylaws. Irrespective of where a Wild Card game between Baltimore and Cincinnati is played, all teams will retain their seeding as determined by the regular season winning percentage throughout the playoffs and for other competitive determinations.

Submitted by: Commissioner's Office, with support of the Competition Committee.

Reason: To mitigate certain competitive effects in the AFC playoffs resulting from two clubs playing fewer regular season games.

Effect: To require the AFC Championship Game to be played at a neutral site and to provide for a possible site change in a Wild Card Game between Baltimore and Cincinnati under defined conditions.