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Under the furthest round of the playoffs they reached, and then are ranked by regular-season record. For example, any team that reached the divisional round will be given a higher pick than any team that reached the conference championships, but will be given a lower pick than any team that did not make the divisional round. The Super Bowl champion always drafts last, and the losing team from the Super Bowl always drafts next-to-last.[141] All potential drafts must be given three years removed from high school to be eligible for the draft.[142] Underclassmen that have met the criteria to be eligible for the draft must write an application to the NFL by January 15 renouncing their remaining college eligibility.[143] Clubs can trade away picks for future draft picks, but cannot trade the rights to players they have selected in previous drafts.[144]Aside from the seven picks each club gets, compensatory draft picks are given to teams that have lost more compensatory free agents than they have gained. These are spread out from rounds 3 to 7, and a total of 32 are given.[145]Clubs are required to make their selection within a certain period, the exact time depending on which round the pick is made in. If they fail to do so on time, the clubs behind them can begin to select their players in order, but they do not lose the pick outright. This happened in the 2003 draft, when the Minnesota Vikings failed to make their selection on time. The Jacksonville Jaguars and Carolina Panthers were able to make their picks before the Vikings were able to use theirs.[146] Selected players are only allowed to negotiate contracts with the team that picked them, but if they choose not to sign they become eligible for the next year's draft. [147] Under the current collective bargaining contract, all contracts to drafted players must be four-year deals with a club option for a fifth. Contracts themselves are limited to a certain amount of money, depending on the exact draft pick the player was selected with.[148] Players who were draft eligible but not picked in the draft are free to sign with any club.[140]The NFL operates several other drafts in addition to the NFL draft. The league holds a supplemental draft annually. Clubs submit emails to the league stating the player they wish to select and the round they will do so, and the team with the highest bid wins the rights to that player. The exact order is determined by a lottery held before the draft, and a successful bid for a player will result in the team forfeiting the rights to its pick in the equivalent round of the next NFL draft.[149] Players are only eligible for the supplemental draft after being granted a petition for special eligibility.[150] The league holds expansion drafts, the most recent happening in 2002 when the Houston Texans began to play as an expansion team.[151] Other drafts include an allocation draft in 1950 to allocate players from several teams that played in the dissolved All-America Football Conference[152] and a supplemental draft in 1964 to give NFL teams the rights to players who had been eligible for the main draft but had not been drafted because they had signed contracts with the United States Football League or Canadian Football League.[153]Like the other major sports leagues in the United States, the NFL maintains protocol for a disaster draft. In the event of a 'near disaster' (less than 15 players killed or disabled) that caused the club to lose a quarterback, they could draft one from a team with at least three quarterbacks. In the event of a 'disaster' (15 or more players killed or disabled) that results in a club's season being canceled, a restocking draft would be held. Neither of these protocols has ever had to be implemented.[154]Free agents in the National Football League are divided into restricted free agents, who have three accrued seasons and whose current contract has expired, and unrestricted free agents, who have four or more accrued seasons and whose contract has expired. An accrued season is defined as "six or more regular-season games on a club's active/inactive, reserve/injured or reserve/physically unable to perform lists".[155] Restricted free agents are allowed to negotiate with other clubs besides their former club, but the former club has the right to match any offer. If they choose not to, they are compensated with draft picks. Unrestricted free agents are free to sign with any club, and no compensation is owed if they sign with a different club.[155]Clubs are given one franchise tag to offer to any unrestricted free agent. The franchise tag is a one-year deal that pays the player 120% of his previous contract or no less than the average of the five highest-paid players at his position, whichever is greater. There are two types of franchise tags: exclusive tags, which do not allow the player to negotiate with other clubs, and non-exclusive tags, which allow the player to negotiate with other clubs but gives his former club the right to match any offer and two first-round draft picks if they decline to match it.[156]Clubs also have the option to use a transition tag, which is similar to the non-exclusive franchise tag but offers no compensation if the former club refuses to match the offer.[157] Due to that stipulation, the transition tag is rarely used.[156] even with the removal of the "poison pill" strategy offering a contract with stipulations that the former club would be unable to match) that essentially ended the usage of the tag league-wide.[159] Each club is subject to a salary cap, which is set at US\$198.2million for the 2019 season.[160]US\$1.1million more than that of 2018.[160]Members of clubs' practice squads, despite being paid by and working for their respective clubs, are also simultaneously a kind of free agent and are able to sign to any other club's active roster (provided their new club is not their previous club's next opponent within a set number of days) without compensation to their previous club; practice squad players cannot be signed to other clubs' practice squads, however, unless released by their original club first.[161]American football in the United StatesList of NFL champions (1920-1969)List of Super Bowl champions (1966-present)National Football League (1902)National Football League All-Decade TeamsNational Football League CheerleadingNational Football League controversiesNational Football League franchise moves and mergersNational Football League recordsNational Football League 75th Anniversary All-Time TeamNational Football League 100th Anniversary All-Time TeamNFL EuropeNFL FilmsTimeline of the National Football LeagueList of current NFL franchise ownersList of Pro Football Hall of Fame inducteesList of NFL players with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE)International Player Pathway Program (IPPP)
^ All teams are based in the United States, but several preseason and regular season games have been held internationally.
^ a b The New York Jets and New York Giants share MetLife Stadium.[59]
^ a b Due to an agreement with the city of Cleveland as part of the Cleveland Browns relocation controversy, the Browns name, colors, and team history/records were left in Cleveland, while the team, personnel, and staff were allowed to move to Baltimore what was considered a new franchise.[60] As such, the Ravens are considered to have begun play in 1996 while the current Cleveland Browns are considered to have been founded in 1946, joined the NFL in 1950, became inactive from 1996 to 1998, and resumed play in 1999.[58][61]
^ The Jacksonville Jaguars began playing one home game each season at Wembley Stadium in London, England in 2013, and will continue to do so through 2020. In 2020, the Jaguars were originally scheduled to play two home games at Wembley Stadium, but the plans were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[62][63][64]
^ a b The Los Angeles Chargers and Los Angeles Rams share SoFi Stadium.[65]
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