

All NFL games will air online, but watching won't be easy

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In this Nov. 19, 2015, file photo, Thursday Night Football sportscasters Bill Cowher, left, and Phil Simms broadcast from the set on the field before an NFL football game between the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Tennessee Titans in Jacksonville, Fla. Every NFL football game will be shown live online this 2017-18 season, but that doesn't mean you can watch. (AP Photo/Phelan M. Ebenhack, File)

Every NFL football game will be shown live online this season—but that

doesn't mean you'll be able to watch them.

New this year is the ability to watch with an Amazon Prime or a CBS All-Access subscription. Even so, the sports universe is heavily Balkanized online, meaning your best bet at comprehensive streaming of pro football will involve that old standby—a cable or satellite TV subscription—or cellphone service through Verizon. Otherwise, you'll be limited to a few unrestricted games online, including Thursday's night season opener between the Kansas City Chiefs and the New England Patriots.

Here's a stream-by-stream guide to catching all the online pigskin you can in the U.S.

NETWORK STREAMS

In general, Sunday afternoon games air on CBS and Fox. Sunday night games air on NBC. These games are free if you catch them on TV with an antenna, but to watch any of the networks online, you'll typically need cable or satellite TV. You can also stream CBS games for \$6 a month with CBS All Access, unless your local station hasn't signed on (most have).

You'll be limited to hometown-team games plus a few other contests your local station broadcasts. You'll need a DirecTV Sunday Ticket subscription for the rest.

ESPN, meanwhile, owns Mondays, while the NFL Network cable channel gets most Thursday night games, a few weekend games and one on Christmas afternoon. You can watch online if you're already paying for a TV package that carries these channels.

Ten of the Thursday games and the Christmas game will end up on CBS or NBC as well—but to stream those games without a TV package, you need Amazon Prime for \$99 a year. Amazon is replacing Twitter this year as the online streaming partner.

Want to watch on a phone? You'll likely need to be a Verizon customer, though on the plus side you won't need cable or satellite. Amazon Prime and NFL Network games have no device restrictions (but require subscriptions). For the rest, grab a tablet or a laptop instead, or watch on the big screen with a streaming-TV device like Roku or Apple TV.

On Verizon phones, use the NFL Mobile app or Verizon's go90 service. Amazon Prime games are on Amazon's video app. For the rest, use the network's app; CBS, NBC and NFL Network games are also on NFL Mobile and nfl.com.

ONLINE TV SERVICES

Cable-like streaming TV packages are typically cheaper than traditional cable or satellite, but carry fewer channels. The major ones are AT&T's DirecTV Now, Google's YouTube TV, Hulu with Live TV, Sony's PlayStation Vue and Dish's Sling TV.

All five services have ESPN, NBC and Fox—at least in theory. It's a mixed bag for CBS and the NFL Network. CBS, NBC and Fox are available only in selected markets—typically where the networks themselves own the local stations. Elsewhere, it depends on whether the streaming service has reached a deal yet.

Vue is your best bet. A \$45-a-month "Core" subscription gets you all five NFL networks, as long as your local stations are included. NFL

RedZone, a channel that switches from game to game to show key plays and scoring, costs another \$10 a month. Vue no longer requires a streaming device such as a PlayStation game console; you can watch on a Windows or Mac computer.

You can replicate the package with Sling TV for \$46 a month by getting Sling Orange, Sling Blue and the CBS All Access service separately. RedZone is an additional \$10.

If you can live without NFL Network and RedZone, you can get the rest through YouTube for \$35 and Hulu for \$40. Hulu comes with on-demand movies and TV shows, normally \$8 a month. DirecTV Now gets you NBC, Fox and ESPN for \$35; CBS is coming soon.

A sports-focused streaming service called fuboTV announced Thursday that it's getting the NFL Network. It already has NBC, Fox and CBS in selected markets, but not ESPN. The package is \$35 a month, or \$9 more with RedZone.

To watch, use the streaming service's app. Some services also let you sign in to use the individual [network](#)'s app. Games are blocked on non-Verizon phones except for those on NFL Network.

NFL SUNDAY TICKET

This service from DirecTV gives you Sunday afternoon games you can't get on your local TV station, so it typically excludes hometown teams.

It's intended for DirecTV satellite subscribers who pay an extra fee, though a \$280-per-season online package is available if you live in an apartment building or at a location where DirecTV's satellite signal is

obstructed. Subscribing to DirecTV Now isn't enough to qualify. College students can also subscribe for \$100 for the season.

There are no restrictions on smartphones.

INSTANT REPLAYS

All these restrictions and requirements only apply to live games. Once a [game](#) ends, it's available for streaming through the NFL Game Pass service, which costs \$100 for the season. You can also listen to radio broadcasts live online.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

While all four major broadcast networks will televise some college games, the bulk will be on cable channels. Online policies vary, but a cable or satellite account is typically required. You can also subscribe to an online TV package, though college channels such as SEC Network are sometimes part of higher tiers.

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