

Previewing the National Football conference

NFC East

NFC North



DALLAS COWBOYS



PHILADELPHIA EAGLES



NEW YORK GIANTS



WASHINGTON REDSKINS



MINNESOTA VIKINGS



GREEN BAY PACKERS



DETROIT LIONS



CHICAGO BEARS

COACH	Wade Phillips	Andy Reid	Tom Coughlin	Jim Zorn	Brad Childress	Mike McCarthy	Rod Marinelli	Lovie Smith
A YEAR AGO	13-3	8-8	10-6	9-7	8-8	13-3	7-9	7-9
LAST 5 YEARS	47-33	49-31	39-41	35-45	40-40	45-35	26-54	43-37
ADDED	CB Adam Jones, LB Zach Thomas, RB Felix Jones	CB Asante Samuel, DE Chris Clemons, WR DeSean Jackson, RB Lorenzo Booker	S Sammy Knight, QB David Carr, DE Jerome McDougle	WR Billy McMullen, DE Jason Taylor	DE Jared Allen, S Michael Boulware, WR Bernard Berrian	LB Brandon Chillar	S Dwight Smith, CB Leigh Bodden, QB Drew Henson, RB Rudi Johnson	WR Marty Booker, WR Brandon Lloyd
LOST	RB Julius Jones, WR Terry Glenn	DE Jevon Kearse, LB Takeo Spikes, FB Thomas Tapeh, DE Jerome McDougle	S Gibril Wilson, LB Kawika Mitchell, DE Michael Strahan, DE Osi Umenyiora	QB Mark Brunell, WR Reche Caldwell	FB Tony Richardson, S Dwight Smith, QB Brooks Bollinger	QB Brett Favre, TE Bubba Franks, WR Koren Robinson	DT Shaun Rogers, RB Kevin Jones, Asst. coach Mike Martz	WR Bernard Berrian, WR Muhsin Muhammad
BYE WEEK	10	7	4	10	8	8	4	8
MOST DIFFICULT STRETCH	Dec. 7 (at Steelers), Dec. 14 (Giants), Dec. 20 (Ravens). If the opposition can't slow Dallas, maybe all the prime-time games (five already scheduled) can.	Nov. 23 (at Ravens), Nov. 27 (Cardinals), Dec. 7 (at Giants). With the Rams, Bears and 49ers early, you hope they'll have at least four wins before their bye week.	Oct. 26 (at Steelers), Nov. 2 (Cowboys), Nov. 9 (at Eagles). Can see this team at 5-1 or 4-2, but the rest of the schedule won't be as generous.	Nov. 16 (Cowboys), Nov. 23 (at Seahawks), Nov. 30 (Giants). Redskins finish with four of their last six games on the road, including the season finale out in Frisco.	Nov. 9 (Packers), Nov. 16 (at Buccaneers), Nov. 23 (at Jaguars). Vikings gotta like the finish, ending the season at home vs. the Falcons and Giants.	Nov. 9 (at Vikings), Nov. 16 (Bears), Nov. 24 (at Saints). The first half is tough enough, with home games vs. the Vikings, Cowboys and Colts.	Nov. 27 (Titans), Dec. 7 (Vikings), Dec. 14 (at Colts). Lions have a rare three-game homestand, but early bye can't help.	Nov. 16 (at Packers), Nov. 23 (at Rams), Nov. 30 (at Vikings). That three-game road trip is followed by a three-game homestand. Rare indeed.
SCHEDULE STRENGTH	134-122 (T-13th)	133-123 (T-15th)	133-123 (T-15th)	134-122 (T-13th)	141-115 (T-4th)	136-120 (T-11th)	139-117 (T-9th)	136-120 (T-11th)
AIR MILES	20,122 (11th)	16,546 (19th)	14,132 (24th)	16,006 (21st)	16,878 (16th)	16,854 (17th)	11,860 (27th)	10,476 (28th)
KEY 2007 NUMBER	36 TDs and 4,211 passing yards for QB Tony Romo. Chad Hutchinson, where have you gone?	11 INTs, among the league's lowest total. They can't do that again.	53 sacks, best in the NFL. Between retirements and injuries, no way they'll match that.	3 TD catches for WR Santana Moss; he's gotta do better.	164.6 rushing yards per game, best in the NFL. Don't expect that to change.	270.9 passing yards per game, second in the NFL. How do they duplicate that?	32nd ranking in points allowed and total defense. They just couldn't score enough to keep up.	19 INTs between QBs Rex Grossman and Brian Griese.
WHAT'S TO CHEER, WHAT'S TO BOO	You gotta like the coaching stability, the defensive speed (led by DeMarcus Ware) and all their weapons. But, so far in this era, they turn into falling stars in January.	The newcomers — especially Samuel and Jackson — figure to contribute significantly. But you just keep your fingers crossed that medical catastrophe passes the Linc by this year.	They suddenly look vulnerable defensively now that Strahan has retired and a knee injury has sacked Umenyiora. Beyond that, they seem thin at wideout and no one knows yet how much the Super Bowl fattened Eli Manning's confidence.	QB Jason Campbell got a grip, so to speak, last season, and that's a big plus for this franchise. And RB Clinton Portis is back. Still, they're no more than OK defensively and have to go through the growing pains of a new coach (Jim Zorn).	Stealing Allen from the Chiefs and plugging him into the defensive line should add some buzz to the rush and some numbers to the turnover total. And give the ball more to their electric running back, Adrian Peterson, never a bad thing.	Everyone likes their defense, and for good reason, with LBs Nick Barnett and A.J. Hawk. Is RB Ryan Grant for real? This year we'll find out for sure.	This is the defense the Eagles torched for 56 points, and it doesn't look a whole lot better. Detroit will run the ball much more now that Martz has left town. Unfortunately, so did Jones, their best runner.	MLB Brian Urlacher still roams the field and the D-line can get after the QB. But Kyle Orton's rise to the quarterback position stirs little confidence.
PREDICTIONS	12-4	10-6	9-7	6-10	9-7	8-8	6-10	6-10