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Which Division Will Provide The Best Football Tickets In 2006?

By Jay Nault

Even though we are entrenched in the NFL's "Age of Parity," fans around the league still want to

know what they're getting when they buy their football tickets. As we look at the divisional breakdown, it becomes apparent that certain divisions are deeper than others. That's why we're going to break them down individually by way of "Divisional Power Rankings." These rankings could change throughout the season, but now is a good time to take our first look.

1. NFC East

The NFC East, top-to-bottom, is the toughest division in football right now. Any one of the four teams could realistically qualify for the playoffs, and the final standings could shake out in just about any way and no one would be really surprised.

2. NFC South

The NFC South contains a Super Bowl contender in the Panthers, two solid playoff-level teams in the Buccaneers and Falcons, and perhaps the most improved team in the league, the Saints. This division will be brutal, and the winner will definitely be battle-tested.

3. AFC West

The AFC West is almost as difficult, as the Broncos have Super Bowl aspirations, the Chiefs are expected to at least make the playoffs, the Chargers are talented and the Raiders could be scary if they ever put all their talent together. The rivalries in this division also make every game a battle.

4. AFC North

The AFC North contains the defending champions, and they didn't even win the division last year. The Bengals did, but they have question marks surrounding QB Carson Palmer and off-field distractions. Baltimore is much-improved and the Browns are getting better.

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5. AFC East

The East has the rivalries, but only two good teams in the Patriots and Dolphins. The Jets and Bills, whether they admit it or not, are rebuilding. Regardless, fans of every team are extremely loyal, so football tickets sales will be high for any of these divisional battles.

6. AFC South

The South contains one potential juggernaut in the Colts, one fringe playoff team in Jacksonville, and two teams in the Texans and Titans that are in full rebuild mode. The Colts–Jaguars games will be entertaining, but the Texans and Titans are definitely a notch below as of now.

7. NFC North

The NFC North has one established playoff team in the Bears, one likely playoff team in the Vikings, one team that could be a surprise in the Packers and the Lions, who seem to constantly be rebuilding. The best thing going for this division is the level of intensity present every time any of these two teams meet.

8. NFC West

Yes, the Seahawks got all the way to the Super Bowl last season, but after that there isn't much. The Rams could make a push this year, but they're still a year or two away. The Cardinals could surprise as well, but they've been perennial disappointments, and the 49ers need time to restock their roster with talent, so they're not going anywhere anytime soon. There are intense rivalries in the division, however, and football tickets are always hard to find for a Seahawks – Rams game.

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MLB Tickets In The NL East – It's The Mets And Everyone Else

By Jay Nault

Although there was a swap of positions in the middle of the division standings over the past few

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weeks, MLB tickets are only relevant for the rest of the 2006 season in one or possibly two cities. The Mets are just a game or two away from clinching the division, and we'll examine their postseason prospects. The Phillies also remain somewhat alive, so we'll examine them and the outlook for 2007 for everyone else.

New York Mets

Currently: The Mets have basically won the division on the heels of a tremendous season by Carlos Beltran and decent pitching. Not to take anything away from them, but this is a relatively weak division as well, and the Mets have feasted on their lack of competition. This is a veteran team that knows how to close out a race, and that's exactly what they're doing as of this writing.

Outlook: The Mets are getting Pedro Martinez back just in time, and he along with Tom Glavine need to be strong in the postseason. Beltran also needs to maintain his high level of play, or else the Mets will struggle. As it is, they're as good a bet as anyone to get to the World Series.

Philadelphia Phillies

Currently: It's been a strange season for the Phillies, as they appeared to give up on the season only to surge into contention for the Wild Card spot. They're still barely hanging on in the chase, but they need to turn it on now, as they're running out of games to catch the Padres. The story of the season has been the emergence of Ryan Howard, and baseball fans everywhere want to root for a "clean" player as he puts up historic HR numbers.

Outlook: The Phillies could possibly land in the postseason, but regardless, they need pitching and another bat in their lineup to take the next step.

Florida Marlins

Currently: The Marlins took over third place in the division and moved over the .500 mark as of this writing with a 19–9 month. This is a team that's slowly but surely getting better with another young nucleus that could challenge for big things in the coming season as these players mature. The Marlins have talent behind the plate and on the mound.

Outlook: MLB tickets should be a hot item in South Florida in 2007, as the team looks to only get better as their young team puts another year of valuable experience behind them.

Atlanta Braves

Currently: The Braves' incredible postseason streak is ending this year, but what they've accomplished in recent times should not be overlooked. The 2006 season was ruined by injury and age, and the Braves have struggled to maintain any type of consistency.

Outlook: The Braves always seem to be stocked with young talent, and they'll need that next generation to come of age to contend in 2007, as Andruw and Chipper Jones aren't getting any

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younger.

Washington Nationals

Currently: The Nationals have been a bit of a disappointment this year after reaching the .500 mark in 2005. Their downfall was due to two things: bad pitching and no one besides Alfonso Soriano in the lineup that was a threat to produce runs.

Outlook: The Nationals need another bat in the lineup and more pitching. If they get that done during the offseason, MLB tickets will again be a hot item in Washington, D.C.

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