

NFL Forecaster 4.1w Contents

[What's New?](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Installing, Uninstalling and Help](#)

[Overview](#)

[Running NFL Forecaster](#)

[Quitting](#)

[Why Register NFL Forecaster?](#)

[Registration Form](#)

[Warranty, License, Support](#)

[What Is Shareware?](#)

[What Is ASP?](#)

[New Users: Trying Out Forecaster](#)

[Catching Up](#)

[Interpreting Forecasts](#)

[Correcting Mistakes](#)

[Playoff Games](#)

[Cancelled and Postponed Games](#)

[Annual Update Disk](#)

[Backups](#)

[Reconstructing main-dta.nfl](#)

[File Formats](#)

[NFL Average Points per Game](#)

[Error Messages](#)

[Command Reference](#)

NFL Forecaster Command Reference

File

Open

Save As

Print

Spreads

Team Rankings

Division Rankings

Category Rankings

All 4 above

Archive scores/spreads

Quick

View

Spreads

Team Rankings

Division Rankings

Category Rankings

Save Views Layout

Restore Views Layout

Average Points

Copy to Clipboard

Archive scores/spreads

Sorting

Options

Fonts

Names

Rows and Cols

Column Separators

Highlighting Rows

Toolbar and Status Line

Print

Print Warning

Frame Reports

Reports Titles

Spreads Initials

Path

Seasonal

Schedule

View Schedule

Print Schedule

Create New Schedule

Zero main-dta.nfl

Save Options

Slow

Enter Scores

Forecast Spreads

Window

Introduction

To predict the winners of football games, you must rank the opposing teams; some teams must be better than others. A number of elements may be taken into account, including yards gained passing and rushing, average yards per down, quarterback ranking, and home field advantage. **However, only two things really matter: (1) a team's win/loss record which in turn depends upon (2) the number of points scored by and against that team.** A winning team must win games and to do this it must score more points than its opponent.

Using only scores, NFL Forecaster assigns each NFL team an offense and defense ranking and a total ranking (offense and defense combined). Based on these rankings Forecaster predicts winners of games and the point spreads. **It only takes 10 minutes a week to enter this week's scores and obtain next week's forecasts.**

Over the past 12 seasons, Forecaster has correctly predicted winners 62.5% of the time and spreads 58.7% of the time. For the last five years Forecaster has correctly predicted winners 63.2% of the time and spreads 59.7% of the time. And for the 1991-92 season Forecaster hit 70.2% for winners and 67.7% for spreads. Although these do not equal the percentages of some sports handicappers, it should be noted that Forecaster predicted winners and spreads for 90% of the games (only 278 of 2,690 games were too close to call), not just Monday night games or "5-star specials." NFL Forecaster usually picks more winners than the handicappers and regularly predicts more spreads correctly than the Las Vegas odds-makers.

Forecaster picks winners and predicts point spreads; it does not try to "beat the spread." For example, let us assume that the odds-makers have predicted that San Diego will beat the Raiders by two points. If you pick San Diego and they win by two (23-21), you lose; the odds-makers win because San Diego (and, therefore, you) did not beat the spread. However, if Forecaster predicts San Diego will beat the Raiders by two points and they do, then Forecaster "wins"; it correctly predicted the point spread (two or more points).

Forecaster uses only scores to rank teams and it ranks them objectively. Therefore, it cannot take into account that the Raiders are very good on Monday night or that a quarterback broke his arm during practice, but you can. Forecaster is like a personal odds-maker; it doesn't bet, but it will tell you who will **probably** win, by how much, and why (it shows the rankings it has assigned to each team).

NFL Forecaster is RECREATIONAL SOFTWARE: any interest and pleasure associated with the program is derived from using the program and NOT from any results which might accrue from using its forecasts. It is NOT intended to be used as an aid to placing bets and NO claim is made that it will make you a winner, although the accuracy of its forecasts is greater than from chance predictions (more accurate than flipping a coin).

NFL Forecaster was written using Borland Pascal 7.0. Borland Pascal® is a registered trademark of Borland International. Windows™ is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. MS-DOS® is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. True Type® is a registered trademark of Apple Computer, Inc. "Data" is considered a collective noun taking a singular verb.

See also

[Overview](#)

[Interpreting Forecasts](#)

Overview

Each week you enter the scores for the games played and Forecaster calculates new rankings for each team. Then you indicate the teams that will be playing in the next week's games and Forecaster predicts the winners and spreads. The new rankings must be saved to the main-dta.nfl file so that the rankings can be used the next week. This is done automatically if you use the Quick function. Main-dta.nfl is reused each week; last week's rankings are read into the computer's memory and used to compute new rankings which are then written back to main-dta.nfl. (See "Trying Out Forecaster" about "playing around" with Forecaster before the season begins.)

Every week's rankings should also be saved to weekly archive files which are not updated each week. This is done automatically if you use the Quick function. The archive files contain the rankings of a given week, the scores of that week (except the first week of the season) and the forecasts for the following week (except the last week of the season). These files may be used to find a ranking, score, or forecast of any past week. They can also be used to reconstruct main-dta.nfl if it becomes corrupt.

You can obtain spread forecasts and enter scores using NFL Forecaster's Slow function. However, it's easier to use the Quick function which takes you step-by-step through the process of entering scores, forecasting spreads, saving data and printing reports. You choose the week that you want predictions for and Forecaster reads the NFL schedule from a disk file, displays the teams which have played each other and requests that you enter the scores. It then calculates the forecasts for the next week, saves the new rankings, scores and spreads to disk, prints the reports you choose and displays the rankings in the view windows of your choice.

Forecaster has several other functions and is highly configurable: you can open six different view windows; print five different reports; print or view the NFL schedule; use any font of any size for viewing or printing rankings; sort the rankings eight different ways; use team or city names; add row highlighting and column separators; add frames and titles to the printed reports; and much more.

At the beginning of each season you need to alter two files. In main-dta.nfl, the number of points a team has scored, its win, loss and tie record and other data must be set to zero for the new season. Also, schedule.nfl must be updated with the new schedule. Forecaster provides functions for both of these tasks. Also, you can purchase an annual update disk which contains main-dta.nfl, schedule.nfl and the latest version of NFL Forecaster.

Quitting NFL Forecaster

You quit Forecaster by choosing Quit from the File menu or by pressing Alt-F4. If you have loaded a file (either from the File menu or via Quick), entered scores and thus changed the rankings and not saved the new rankings to disk, Forecaster will warn you that you are about to quit without saving the new rankings.

At this point you can choose to save the data before quitting and Forecaster will open a Save As dialog box for you. You can also choose to quit without saving the data (sometimes you may want to enter some scores to see how the rankings would have changed if team x had won instead of lost and do not want to save the new rankings). Also, you can choose to cancel in which case you are simply returned to Forecaster.

Annual Update Disk

Since NFL Forecaster uses game scores, current rankings and accumulated and average points for and points against to compute new rankings and to calculate point spreads, it is necessary at the beginning of each season to modify main-dta.nfl so that these and the number of wins, losses and ties and the win/loss percentage of each team are set to zero. Also, in order to use the Quick function, a new schedule file must be created.

NFL Forecaster provides functions for zeroing main-dta.nfl and for creating a new schedule (schedule.nfl) at the beginning of each season. Many users prefer to purchase an annual update disk instead of using these functions. The update disk contains a zeroed main-dta.nfl file, a new schedule.nfl file, an updated on-line help file and the **latest version** of NFL Forecaster. All **registered** owners of Forecaster are notified when the update disks become available (usually around July 1). The cost is \$7.40 (including shipping and handling). When you register Forecaster, you receive a coupon worth 25% off the price of your first annual update disk. Annual update disks must be ordered directly from 100% Cotton Software.

What's New?

Version 4.1w is identical to version 4.0w except:

1. The schedule file is for the 1996-1997 season.
2. A new names.nfl file is included (the Cleveland Browns are now the Baltimore Ravens).
3. The on-line help file sections "Interpreting Forecasts" and "NFL Average Points per Game" have been updated to include statistics from the 1995-1996 season.

See also

[Why Register NFL Forecaster?](#)

Why Register NFL Forecaster?

You can register Forecaster by mail, phone, fax or email using a check, money order, credit card or CompuServe account.

NFL Forecaster is a copyrighted shareware product; it is not freeware or public domain. You can try it before you buy it and you are encouraged to give copies to others. If you use it after 30 days, you must register it.

When you register NFL Forecaster, you will receive:

1. the latest version of the program (with main-dta.nfl current as of shipping day) which does not have any request-for-registration dialog boxes;
2. unlimited, life-time, free (not toll-free) telephone, email and mail support;
3. complete set of archive files: 10 years of scores, spreads & rankings;
4. 25% discount coupon: toward purchase of annual update disk;
5. \$2.00 coupon: toward registration of any other Cotton Software product (see the file products.txt);
6. Shareware Collection CD certificate: 4,500 programs for \$9.95 + S&H (while available);
7. and, of course, the appreciation of programmers who strive to produce inexpensive, quality, useful and entertaining software.
8. Teachers are over-worked and underpaid. Therefore, any teacher who registers directly to Cotton Software using his or her school letterhead will receive a \$3.00 rebate check.

Mail: Send a check or money order for \$20.00 (US dollars) to:

100% Cotton Software,
RR 1 Box 1622
Hop Bottom, PA 18824

Orders from outside of the United States, Canada and Mexico should add \$3.00 for S&H. There is a [registration form](#) at the end of this help file.

Credit card orders (MC, Visa, Amex, Discover) may be made through Public (software) Library:

phone: 800-242-4775 or 713-524-6394
fax: 713-524-6398
CIS Email: 71355,470

mail: Public (software) Library, PO Box 35705, Houston, TX 77235-5705

Your order will be processed more quickly and efficiently if you refer to **item #11343**. Be sure to tell the operator that you want the **registered** version of NFL Forecaster for Windows.

The above PsL numbers are for **orders only**. Any questions about the status of the shipment of the order, refunds, registration options, product details, technical support, volume discounts, dealer pricing, site licenses, etc. must be directed to 100% Cotton Software (717-289-4019) or to George Tylutki at CompuServe 103051,603. To insure that you get the latest version, PsL will notify us the day of your order and we will ship the product directly to you (often the same day).

CompuServe Account: You can charge Forecaster's registration fee to your CompuServe account. First, GO SWREG. Select "Register Software." Enter "11285" (the registration number for NFL Forecaster for Windows). Select "Register." Enter your name, address, etc. Select "Send." CompuServe will notify us and we will ship the product directly to you (often the same day).

See also

[Warranty, License, Support](#)
[What Is Shareware?](#)

Warranty, License, Support

User Groups, Computer Clubs, Disk Vendors and Distributors, Subscription Services, Disk-of-the-Month Clubs, BBS SYSOPS, and other distributors should refer to VENDINFO.DIZ for complete information relating to them.

Warranty The author believes that NFL Forecaster is able to do what its documentation says it can do. Every good-faith effort has been made to remove "bugs" from this program and to make the user aware of its limitations. However, it is mathematically impossible to prove a computer program correct. Therefore, users of NFL Forecaster must accept this disclaimer of warranty: NFL FORECASTER IS SUPPLIED AS IS. TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW, THE AUTHOR DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND OF FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE. NEITHER THE AUTHOR NOR ANYONE ELSE WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE CREATION, PRODUCTION, OR DELIVERY OF THIS SOFTWARE SHALL BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGES, INCLUDING ANY LOSS OF PROFIT, DATA OR OTHER SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES OR SIMILAR CLAIMS ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF THIS PROGRAM.

License Terms Applicable To All Use And Distribution NFL Forecaster and all associated software and documentation (the package) are copyrighted products. The NFL Forecaster package is comprised of all files contained within the FCAST41W.ZIP compressed archive file. All rights not expressly granted here are reserved to the author. The use or distribution of this package is expressly prohibited, except as authorized by the terms of this agreement. The NFL Forecaster package may not be copied, rented, leased, sold, modified, decompiled, disassembled, or otherwise reverse engineered except as provided in this agreement.

License Terms Applicable To Trial Use For Evaluation You are granted a limited license to use this program for evaluation purposes for a period of 30 days. If you find NFL Forecaster useful and continue to use it after 30 days, you must make a registration payment to 100% Cotton Software. See [Why Register NFL Forecaster?](#) for registration fee, benefits, addresses and phone numbers.

License Terms Applicable To Use Of Registered Version The registration fee will license one copy of NFL Forecaster for use on any one computer at any one time. You must treat this software just like a book. That is, this software may be used by any number of people and may be freely moved from one computer location to another, so long as there is no possibility of it being used at one location while it's being used at another (just as a book cannot be read by two persons at the same time at two different locations). If more than one copy of NFL Forecaster is used on more than one computer at the same time, each copy of NFL Forecaster must be individually registered or a special license must be obtained. Low-cost site, multiple-copy, and school licenses are available. Write or call for more information.

Limited Distribution License Permission is granted to individuals charging no fees, and to BBSs, User Groups, Mail-Order Disk Vendors, CD-ROM publishers, and BBS File-Distribution Networks regardless of fees, to distribute the NFL Forecaster package provided they distribute a complete and unaltered copy of the NFL Forecaster package and they make no claim of ownership of the package.

Distribution by other channels, and distribution of modified versions, are also allowed, but only under the terms of the VENDINFO data record incorporated in VENDINFO.DIZ. Any distribution satisfying all the distribution requirements expressed in that data record is hereby authorized. Permission to distribute the NFL Forecaster package may not be transferred, assigned, sold or franchised. Each vendor wishing to distribute the NFL Forecaster package must independently satisfy the terms of this limited distribution license. The author may revoke any permissions granted here at any time by notifying you in writing.

Certain file of the NFL Forecaster package are updated every year to keep the package current with changed in the National Football League (for example, the schedule). If you have a version that is over twelve (12) months old, contact the author to ensure that you have the latest version. Version 4.1w of NFL Forecaster for Windows was released 15 May 1996.

Support Registered owners of NFL Forecaster will receive free support for the lifetime of the product. You can call (not toll-free) 717-289-4019, send email to CompuServe 103051,603 or send a letter to the above address.

See also

[Why Register NFL Forecaster?](#)

[What Is Shareware?](#)

[Registration Form](#)

What Is Shareware?

Shareware is a distribution method, not a type of software. Shareware distribution gives you a chance to try software before buying it. If you try a Shareware program and continue using it, you are expected to register. Individual programs differ on details: some request registration while others require it and some specify a maximum trial period. The benefits of registration range from the basic right to continue using the software to an updated program with printed manual.

Copyright laws apply to both Shareware and commercial software, and the copyright holder retains all rights, with a few specific exceptions as stated below. Shareware authors are accomplished programmers, just like commercial authors, and their programs are of comparable quality. The main difference is in the method of distribution. The shareware author specifically grants the right to copy and distribute the software, either to all or sundry or to a specific group. For example, some authors require written permission before a commercial disk vendor may copy their Shareware.

You should find software that suits your needs and pocketbook, whether it's commercial or Shareware. The Shareware system makes fitting your needs easier, because you can try before you buy. And because the overhead is low, prices are low also. **Shareware has the ultimate money-back guarantee: if you don't use the product, you don't pay for it.** But if you do use it, you **must** pay for it.

See also

[What is ASP?](#)

[Why Register NFL Forecaster?](#)

[Registration Form](#)

What Is ASP?

This program was produced by a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP), an industry association founded in 1987 to which authors and vendors of Shareware programs belong. As a user of Shareware, you benefit from ASP activities. ASP promotes broad distribution of Shareware so that ASP Shareware programs can continue to be reasonably priced and easily obtained. ASP sets and maintains programming, marketing and support standards that members must follow; thus, you can be sure that ASP Shareware programs are of high quality, marketing is honest and support meets minimum standards. For example, the evaluation copy of an ASP Shareware program may not be limited (crippled) in any way; members must respond to every registration; members must provide technical support for their products for at least 90 days from the date of registration. Should an ASP member move or obtain a new telephone number, you can locate him or her through the ASP Executive Director, 545 Grover Road, Muskegon, MI 49442-9427 USA, CompuServe 72050,1433, FAX 616-788-2765, Voice 616-788-5131.

ASP wants to make sure that the shareware principle works for you. If you are unable to resolve a shareware-related problem with an ASP member by contacting the member directly, ASP may be able to help. The ASP Ombudsman can help you resolve a dispute or problem with an ASP member, but does not provide technical support for members' products. Please write to the ASP Ombudsman at 545 Grover Road, Muskegon, MI 49442-9427 USA, FAX 616-788-2765 or send a CompuServe message via CompuServe Mail to ASP Ombudsman 70007,3536.

See also

[What Is Shareware?](#)

[Why Register NFL Forecaster?](#)

[Registration Form](#)

Catching Up

Registered Version

When you register NFL Forecaster after the NFL season has begun, an enclosed letter will inform you when main-dta.nfl was last updated (a Tuesday morning after the Monday night game). If you receive the package before the next games are played, you will need to do nothing except print out the forecasts. For example, if we ship on Tuesday and you get it on Thursday, you will use File\Open and File\Print\Archive File to print out the forecasts and then the following Tuesday morning use Quick to enter scores and obtain forecasts for the next week.

If games are played between the time we ship and you receive (for example, we ship on Friday and you get it the following Tuesday), you will probably not bother printing out the forecasts, but just use Quick to enter scores and obtain forecasts for the next week.

In either case, if you want a complete printed record of the forecasts for the season up to when you received Forecaster, you should use File\Open to load each weekly archive file and File\Print\Archive File to print each archive file (which contains the rankings, scores and forecasts for each week).

Unregistered Version

If you obtained an unregistered copy of NFL Forecaster after the season has begun, you will need to "catch up" -- bring the main data file ([main-dta.nfl](#)) up to date. You will need a copy of the NFL game scores from the beginning of the season to the present. Main-dta.nfl contains the rankings for the teams as of the end of the previous season before any playoff games (points for, points against, win, loss, and tie have been zeroed). The rankings are based on the scores you enter and the forecasts are based on the rankings, so the rankings must be correct.

1. First, make a backup copy of your disks and install NFL Forecaster.
2. Run Forecaster.
3. Choose Quick from the main menu.
4. In the list box choose "Enter week 1 scores & forecast week 2 spreads."
5. Enter the scores. Forecaster will update the rankings and calculate the spreads for week 2.
6. Press the "No" button when Forecaster asks if you would like to forecast spreads for some non-scheduled games.
7. Press the "Yes" button when Forecaster asks if it should save the updated rankings to disk.
8. Press the "Yes" or "No" button when Forecaster asks if it should print the reports.
9. Press the "Yes" or "No" button when Forecaster asks if it should open the view windows.
10. Repeat steps 3 to 9 until you have entered the scores for the last week that NFL games were played.
Of course, at step 4 you must choose the appropriate weeks.

When you are done, you will have one or more [weekly archive files](#) and main-dta.nfl will contain the latest rankings and statistics. You can then use Quick each week to update the rankings and obtain spread forecasts. If you want a complete printed record of the predictions, you should choose "Forecast week 1 spreads" the first time you come to step 4; Forecaster will skip to step 6.

Playoff Games

For the playoff games and the Super Bowl, you must use Slow/Enter Scores and Slow/Forecast Spreads because Quick cannot use the schedule file to request scores from you and forecast spreads (the playoff teams are unknown when the schedule is constructed).

For each playoff game and the Super Bowl,

1. use File/Open to load main-dta.nfl;
2. use Slow/Enter Scores to enter each of the scores;
3. use Slow/Forecast Spreads to obtain forecasts for the next round of playoff games;
4. use File/Save As to save main-dta.nfl (press the "Yes" button when Forecaster asks if it should replace the current file);
5. use File/Save As to save an archive file (name it something like playoff1.96);
6. use File/Print to print the reports;
7. and use View to view the rankings.

New Users: Trying Out Forecaster

Before you begin "playing around" with Forecaster, you must make a back-up copy of the file "main-dta.nfl".

Forecaster computes rankings for the teams based upon their game scores. The rankings are stored in "main-dta.nfl" and the rankings change each week as you enter new scores for the teams. Thus, "main-dta.nfl" changes whenever you enter scores and save them to disk (this is done automatically when you use the Quick function). The rankings are used to compute the forecasts. Therefore, the rankings contained in "main-dta.nfl" must be accurate in order to obtain accurate forecasts.

After you have "played around" with Forecaster -- entering scores, printing reports, obtaining forecasts, and so on -- to see how it works, "main-dta.nfl" will contain inaccurate rankings: they will be based on the scores you have entered and will not be the actual rankings of the teams prior to the beginning of the season.

So, after you have "played around," you should copy the back-up copy of "main-dta.nfl" to your Forecaster directory. Then you will be ready to begin the season with accurate rankings.

Sometimes new users enter scores twice, believing that the first scores "didn't take." After you enter scores, the new rankings are not displayed automatically, although, if you are using the Quick function, it will ask if the view windows should be opened. If you enter scores using the Slow function, you must save the new rankings to disk using File\Save As and open a view window using View\Team Rankings.

Cancelled and Postponed Games

There may be times when a strike, severe weather or other event interrupts the regular NFL schedule and you are unable to use the Quick function to enter scores and obtain forecasts. For example, in 1992 a hurricane caused the Miami-New England game to be postponed for several weeks. You could not use Quick to enter the scores for the first week because there was no score for the Miami-New England game. And, during the week when the postponed game was played, Quick would not forecast spreads for the Miami-New England game because it was not on the schedule. So, it was necessary to load the data (Open), enter the scores, obtain forecasts and save the data (Save As) yourself.

As an example, let's assume that the Rams were scheduled to play the Jets during the 4th week of the season, but the game is postponed until week 9.

Weeks 1 & 2: use the Quick function to enter scores and obtain forecasts.

Week 3: use the Quick function to enter week 3 scores and obtain forecasts for week 4. Simply ignore the week 4 forecast for the Rams-Jets game.

Week 4: you will have to enter scores and obtain forecasts manually.

1. Use File\Open to load main-dta.nfl.
2. Use Slow\Enter scores to enter the week 4 scores (there will be no score for the postponed Rams-Jets game).
3. Use Slow\Forecast spreads to obtain forecasts for week 5.
4. Use File\Save As to save the rankings to main-dta.nfl. Press the "Yes" button when asked if the existing main-dta.nfl should be replaced.
5. Use File\Save As to save the rankings, scores and spreads to the archive file week-04.96.
6. Print the reports.

Weeks 5, 6, 7: use the Quick function to enter scores and obtain forecasts.

Week 8: you will have to enter scores and obtain forecasts manually.

1. Use File\Open to load main-dta.nfl.
2. Use Slow\Enter scores to enter the week 8 scores
3. Use Slow\Forecast spreads to obtain forecasts for week 9 (obtain a forecast for the postponed Rams-Jets game).
4. Use File\Save As to save the rankings to main-dta.nfl. Press the "Yes" button when asked if the existing main-dta.nfl should be replaced.
5. Use File\Save As to save the rankings, scores and spreads to the archive file week-08.96.
6. Print the reports.

Week 9: you will have to enter scores and obtain forecasts manually.

1. Use File\Open to load main-dta.nfl.
2. Use Slow\Enter scores to enter the week 9 scores (there will be a score for the postponed Rams-Jets game).
3. Use Slow\Forecast spreads to obtain forecasts for week 10.
4. Use File\Save As to save the rankings to main-dta.nfl. Press the "Yes" button when asked if the existing main-dta.nfl should be replaced.
5. Use File\Save As to save the rankings, scores and spreads to the archive file week-09.96.
6. Print the reports.

Week 10 and following weeks: use the Quick function to enter scores and obtain forecasts

If one or more entire weeks are cancelled, you follow the steps outlined above, but you need to skip over the week(s). For example, let's assume that weeks 6, 7, and 8 are cancelled. You would have used the Quick function to enter the scores for week 5 and obtain forecasts for week 6. The week 6 forecasts are meaningless, but main-dta.nfl is up-to-date as of week 5. Just prior to week 9:

1. Use File\Open to load main-dta.nfl.
2. Use Slow\Forecast spreads to obtain forecasts for week 9. They will be based on the rankings in main-dta.nfl which are up-to-date.
3. Use File\Save As to save the rankings (which haven't changed) and spreads to the archive file week-08.96 (in case you want to look at the forecasts some time in the future).
4. Print the reports.

Then the next week you would use the Quick function to enter the scores for week 9 and obtain forecasts

for week 10.

It is important to understand that main-dta.nfl must contain accurate rankings in order for Forecaster to make accurate forecasts. Accurate rankings depend upon main-dta.nfl also containing accurate statistics (the number of points scored by and against each team and each team's win-loss-tie record).

Correcting Mistakes

The most common mistake when using NFL Forecaster is **entering the wrong score** for a team and not realizing it until after the rankings and scores have been saved to disk. Since rankings are based on scores and forecasts are based on rankings, entering an incorrect score will result in an inaccurate forecast. The general procedure to correct this mistake is to load the most recent correct weekly archive file and save it as main-dta.nfl and then reenter the scores correctly.

For example, let's assume it is Tuesday morning after the 11th week of the season. You use the Quick function to "Enter week 11 scores & forecast week 12 spreads." While entering week 11's scores, you make an error but don't realize it until after main-dta.nfl has been saved to disk. To correct the error:

1. Restart NFL Forecaster.
2. Load week-10.96 (which contains the rankings after week 10's scores were entered), the most recent correct weekly archive file.
3. Use File\Save As to save the rankings to main-dta.nfl. Press the "Yes" button when asked if the existing main-dta.nfl should be replaced. At this point main-dta.nfl is accurate as of week 10.
4. Now you can use the Quick function to "Enter week 11 scores & forecast week 12 spreads."

You always have to use the most recent correct weekly archive file. So if you discover in week 15 that you made a mistake while entering week 11's scores, you have to load week-10.96 and save it as main-dta.nfl (as in the preceding paragraph). Then you will have use the Quick function to reenter the scores for weeks 11, 12, 13, and 14.

It's easier to make a **mistake during the playoffs** since Forecaster can't prompt you for the teams' scores or generate the forecasts automatically. If you have saved appropriately-named archive files for each week of the playoffs, you can use the steps above to correct the mistake.

If you make a mistake **while creating a new schedule** and don't discover it until after the schedule has been saved to disk (enter a wrong team or date, omit a game, enter the wrong number of games), there is no way to correct the error, except to create the schedule again or purchase an annual update disk. Since you have to create a new schedule only once each year, take your time and verify that every game and week are correct when Forecaster asks you for confirmation.

If you have corrupted or **deleted main-dta.nfl**, see [Reconstructing main-dta.nfl](#).

See also

[Backups](#)

[New Users: Trying Out Forecaster](#)

Interpreting Forecasts

The correlations between Forecaster's ranking system and the teams' offenses, defenses (determined by points) and win-loss-tie percentages are very strong. The coefficient of correlation between the teams' win-loss-tie percentage (column A) and the average of Forecaster's Total ranking (column B) is +0.973. The coefficient of correlation between the teams' win-loss-tie percentage (column A) and the average number of points scored by the teams per game (column C) is +0.845. The coefficient of correlation between the teams' win-loss-tie percentage (column A) and the average number of points scored against the teams per game (column D) is -0.907.

Correlations based on 12 Seasons (1984-85 to 1995-96)

Team	Column A Win Loss Tie %	Column B Average Total Ranking	Column C Average Points+ Per Game	Column D Average Points- Per Game
San Francisco	.757 1	131.7 1	26.9 1	16.2 1
Chicago	.628 2	109.8 2	20.9 10	17.4 2
Miami	.602 3	108.0 3	23.8 2	20.9 19
Denver	.594 4	107.3 4	21.9 4	19.5 10
NY Giants	.592 5	107.1 5	20.1 16	17.9 3
Washington	.560 6	107.0 6	22.2 3	19.9 13
Raiders	.555 7	100.8 15	20.0 18	19.5 12
Kansas City	.550 8	106.0 7	20.3 13	19.0 5
Dallas	.545 9	104.2 10	20.3 6	19.5 11
New Orleans	.539 10	104.7 9	20.6 11	19.4 7
Philadelphia	.539 11	104.0 11	20.1 17	19.2 6
Pittsburgh	.539 12	103.2 12	20.3 14	19.4 8
Buffalo	.534 13	101.0 14	21.1 7	20.1 15
Minnesota	.524 14	105.5 8	21.9 5	20.0 14
Cleveland	.490 15	101.3 13	19.3 22	18.8 4
Seattle	.487 16	99.7 17	19.6 20	19.4 9
Houston	.482 17	100.3 16	21.0 9	21.1 21
Rams	.461 18	93.6 22	20.2 15	22.0 25
San Diego	.461 19	99.4 19	20.4 12	20.8 18
Green Bay	.458 20	99.4 18	19.8 19	20.4 17
Carolina	.438 21	91.1 25	18.1 26	20.3 16
Detroit	.437 22	93.7 21	19.6 21	21.8 24
New England	.435 23	92.1 23	18.2 25	21.0 20
NY Jets	.427 24	92.0 24	19.1 23	21.2 22
Cincinnati	.414 25	94.8 20	21.1 8	23.1 27
Indianapolis	.398 26	89.1 26	16.8 29	21.5 23
Cardinals	.364 27	84.5 28	17.9 27	22.4 26
Atlanta	.364 28	84.9 27	18.9 24	23.8 28
Tampa Bay	.293 29	77.6 30	16.7 30	24.0 29
Jacksonville	.250 30	77.9 29	17.2 28	25.3 30

Over the past 12 seasons, Forecaster has correctly predicted winners 62.5% of the time and spreads 58.7% of the time. For the last five years Forecaster has correctly predicted winners 63.2% of the time and spreads 59.7% of the time. And for the 1991-92 season Forecaster hit 70.2% for winners and 67.7% for spreads. Although these do not equal the percentages of some sports handicappers, it should be noted that Forecaster predicted winners and spreads for 90% of the games (only 278 of 2,690 games were too close to call), not just Monday night games or "5-star specials."

Year-By-Year Accuracy for 12 Seasons (1984-85 to 1995-96)

Season	Games Predicted	Games Predicted Even	Wins Correctly Predicted	Spreads Correctly Predicted
1984-85	206	18	69%	65%
1985-86	204	20	64%	61%
1986-87	193	31	64%	58%
1987-88	198	12	58%	54%
1988-89	199	25	58%	52%
1989-90	205	19	59%	57%
1990-91	205	19	63%	58%
1991-92	198	26	70%	68%
1992-93	198	26	63%	61%
1993-94	194	30	63%	59%
1994-95	201	23	60%	55%
1995-96	211	29	60%	56%
Averages	90%	10%	63%	59%

As the season progresses, Forecaster tends to become more accurate in its predictions; changes in coaches and players, offensive and defensive systems, and even locations can affect the strengths of teams which are not reflected in the start-of-season rankings (which are carried over from the end of the previous season). In general, the larger the spread Forecaster predicts, the more likely it is to be correct. The same is true for human forecasters. If Tampa Bay plays San Francisco, we (and Forecaster) will probably predict that San Francisco will win by 2 or 3 touchdowns. Our (and Forecaster's) prediction is more likely to be correct than when we predict that one of two closely-ranked teams will win by a field goal.

Forecaster Accuracy for 12 Seasons (1984-85 to 1995-96)

If Forecaster predicted a spread of	it correctly predicted the winner	it correctly predicted the spread
1.0 to 1.9	56%	55%
2.0 to 4.9	64%	61%
5.0 to 5.9	69%	56%
6.0 to 8.9	76%	58%
9.0 and above	87%	60%
all spreads/games	63%	59%

There are, of course, seasonal fluctuations. For example, for the 1986-87 and 1990-91 seasons Forecaster predicted winners in the 6 to 8.9 point range with 92% accuracy but with only 50% accuracy for the 1988-89 season. The 87-88 strike season brings down the overall accuracy about .6%.

Other Information That May Help You Pick Winners

The following information covers the 12 seasons from 1984-85 to 1995-96.

Offenses (points by) for 12 years

	total pts	avg pts per game
San Francisco	5142	26.9
Miami	4538	23.8
Washington	4243	22.2
Denver	4184	21.9

Defenses (points against) for 12 years:

	total pts	avg pts per game
San Francisco	3100	16.2
Chicago	3314	17.4
NY Giants	3413	17.9
Cleveland	3584	18.8

Minnesota	4184	21.9	Kansas City	3625	19.0
Dallas	4043	21.2	Philadelphia	3664	19.2
Cincinnati	4033	21.1	Pittsburgh	3698	19.4
Buffalo	4031	21.1	New Orleans	3702	19.4
Houston	4017	21.0	Seattle	3710	19.4
Chicago	3991	20.9	Raiders	3718	19.5
New Orleans	3929	20.6	Denver	3724	19.5
San Diego	3894	20.4	Dallas	3729	19.5
Kansas City	3878	20.3	Washington	3797	19.9
Pittsburgh	3873	20.3	Minnesota	3822	20.0
Rams	3853	20.2	Buffalo	3839	20.1
NY Giants	3835	20.1	Green Bay	3892	20.4
Philadelphia	3832	20.1	San Diego	3966	20.8
Raiders	3827	20.0	Miami	3999	20.9
Green Bay	3784	19.8	New England	4006	21.0
Detroit	3744	19.6	Houston	4034	21.1
Seattle	3736	19.6	NY Jets	4043	21.2
Cleveland	3682	19.3	Indianapolis	4104	21.5
NY Jets	3644	19.1	Detroit	4171	21.8
Atlanta	3602	18.9	Rams	4193	22.0
New England	3483	18.2	Cardinals	4283	22.4
Cardinals	3426	17.9	Cincinnati	4404	23.1
Indianapolis	3207	16.8	Atlanta	4538	23.8
Tampa Bay	3191	16.7	Tampa Bay	4589	24.0
Carolina	289	18.1	Carolina	325	20.3
Jacksonville	275	17.2	Jacksonville	404	25.3

Only 6 tie games:

Philadelphia vs Detroit	week 10	84-85	23 points
San Francisco vs Atlanta	week 7	86-87	10 points
Philadelphia vs Arizona	week 14	86-87	10 points
Denver vs Green Bay	week 2	87-88	17 points
Kansas City vs NY Jets	week 5	88-89	17 points
Kansas City vs Cleveland	week 11	89-90	10 points

24 games in which one team scored 50 or more points. The top 10:

NY Jets	62	Tampa Bay	28	week 11	85-86
Cincinnati	61	Houston	7	week 15	89-90
Houston	58	Cleveland	14	week 14	90-91
Cincinnati	56	Tampa Bay	23	week 8	89-90
Washington	56	Atlanta	17	week 11	91-93
San Francisco	56	Atlanta	17	week 7	92-93
NY Giants	55	Green Bay	24	week 16	86-87
Indianapolis	55	Denver	23	week 9	88-89
San Francisco	55	Detroit	17	week 16	93-94
San Diego	54	Pittsburgh	44	week 14	85-86

35 games in which the combined score was 75 points or greater. The top 11:

98 San Diego	54	Pittsburgh	44	week 14	85-86
96 NY Jets	51	Miami	45	week 3	86-87
90 NY Jets	62	Tampa Bay	28	week 11	85-86
88 Buffalo	47	Houston	41	week 3	89-90
86 Buffalo	52	Pittsburgh	34	week 2	91-92
85 San Diego	44	Cincinnati	41	week 3	85-86
84 Seattle	49	San Diego	35	week 2	85-86
84 Green Bay	44	Detroit	40	week 13	86-87
83 Kansas City	42	San Diego	41	week 7	86-87

82	Washington	44	Minnesota	38	week 9	86-87
82	Minnesota	44	Dallas	38	week 12	87-88
82	Detroit	44	Minnesota	38	week 13	95-96

21 games in which the spread was 40 or more points. The top 9:

54	Cincinnati	61	Houston	7	week 15	89-90
51	Cleveland	51	Pittsburgh	0	week 1	89-90
48	San Francisco	48	St. Louis	0	week 16	87-88
45	Seattle	45	Kansas City	0	week 10	84-85
45	Washington	45	Detroit	0	week 1	91-92
44	San Francisco	51	Minnesota	7	week 15	84-85
44	Chicago	44	Dallas	0	week 11	85-86
44	Houston	58	Cleveland	14	week 14	90-91
44	Detroit	44	Jacksonville	0	week 16	95-96

10 highest Forecaster Total rankings (100 is average):

156.6	Chicago	week 12	85-86
151.7	Chicago	week 11	85-86
149.2	Chicago	week 16	85-86
148.6	Chicago	week 15	85-86
147.9	Miami	week 10	84-85
147.9	Chicago	week 10	85-86
147.8	Washington	week 12	91-92
147.6	Chicago	week 5	87-88
147.4	Miami	week 9	84-85
147.2	Chicago	week 14	85-86

10 lowest Forecaster Total Rankings (100 is average):

45.0	New England	week 17	90-91
45.5	New England	week 16	90-91
47.7	Cleveland	week 1	84-85
48.1	New England	week 15	90-91
49.0	Kansas City	week 7	87-88
49.3	New England	week 14	90-91
49.4	Kansas City	week 8	87-88
50.1	Minnesota	week 1	84-85
51.0	New England	week 13	90-91
51.3	Tampa Bay	week 1	84-85

10 best offenses (most points by) for 1 year:

per year			per game		
513	Miami	84-85	32.1	Miami	84-85
505	San Francisco	94-95	31.6	San Francisco	94-95
485	Washington	91-92	30.6	San Francisco	87-88
475	San Francisco	84-85	30.3	Washington	91-92
473	San Francisco	93-94	29.7	San Francisco	84-85
467	San Diego	85-86	29.6	San Francisco	93-94
459	San Francisco	87-88	29.2	San Diego	85-86
458	Buffalo	91-92	28.6	Buffalo	91-92
457	San Francisco	95-96	28.6	San Francisco	95-96
456	Chicago	85-86	28.5	Chicago	85-86

10 worst offenses (fewest points by) for 1 year:

pre year			per game		
140	Seattle	92-93	8.8	Seattle	92-93
143	Indianapolis	91-92	8.9	Indianapolis	91-92

181	New England	90-91	11.3	New England	90-91
187	Cincinnati	93-94	11.7	Cincinnati	93-94
189	Indianapolis	93-94	11.8	Indianapolis	93-94
196	Arizona	91-92	12.3	Arizona	91-92
199	Tampa Bay	91-92	12.4	Tampa Bay	91-92
200	Buffalo	85-86	12.5	Buffalo	85-86
204	Dallas	89-90	12.8	Dallas	89-90
205	Atlanta	87-88	12.8	New England	92-93
205	New England	92-93			

10 best defenses (fewest points against) for 1 year:

per year			per game		
187	Chicago	86-87	11.7	Chicago	86-87
198	Chicago	85-86	12.4	Chicago	85-86
202	New Orleans	92-93	12.6	New Orleans	92-93
204	Cleveland	94-95	12.8	Cleveland	94-95
205	NY Giants	93-94	12.8	NY Giants	93-94
211	New Orleans	91-92	13.2	New Orleans	91-92
211	NY Giants	90-91	13.2	NY Giants	90-91
215	Chicago	88-89	13.4	Chicago	88-89
224	Washington	91-92	14.0	Washington	91-92
225	Pittsburgh	92-93	14.1	Pittsburgh	92-93

10 worst defenses (most points against) for 1 year:

per year			per game		
484	Minnesota	84-85	30.3	Minnesota	84-85
473	Tampa Bay	86-87	29.6	Tampa Bay	86-87
462	Cleveland	90-91	29.1	Atlanta	87-88
454	Buffalo	84-85	28.9	Cleveland	90-91
452	Atlanta	85-86	28.4	Buffalo	84-85
448	Tampa Bay	85-86	28.3	Atlanta	85-86
446	New England	90-91	28.0	Tampa Bay	85-86
437	Atlanta	89-90	27.9	New England	90-91
437	Cincinnati	85-86	27.3	Atlanta	89-90
437	Houston	84-85	27.3	Cincinnati	85-86
			27.3	Houston	84-85

The most points scored by a team:

NY Jets	62	Tampa Bay	28	week 11	85-86
Cincinnati	61	Houston	7	week 15	89-90

There were 115 shutouts.

8 times	Indianapolis
7 times	Kansas City, Atlanta, NY Jets
6 times	Arizona, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Green Bay, New England
5 times	Dallas, Tampa Bay, San Diego, Detroit
4 times	Houston, Rams, Denver, Seattle, Raiders
3 times	Philadelphia
2 times	Buffalo, Minnesota, Cincinnati, Chicago, NY Giants
1 times	Miami, Washington, Jacksonville
0 times	San Francisco, New Orleans, Carolina

5 largest shutouts were:

Cleveland	51	Pittsburgh	0	week 1	89-90
San Francisco	48	St. Louis	0	week 16	87-88
Washington	45	Detroit	0	week 1	91-92

Seattle	45	Kansas City	0	week 10	84-85
Chicago	44	Dallas	0	week 11	85-86
Detroit	44	Jacksonville	0	week 16	95-96

5 smallest shutouts were:

NY Jets	3	Washington	0	week 15	93-94
NY Jets	6	New England	0	week 13	92-93
Chicago	6	Atlanta	0	week 5	93-94
Indianapolis	6	New England	0	week 14	92-93
Indianapolis	6	NY Jets	0	week 5	87-88

4 times a team has been shut out 2 weeks in a row:

Green Bay	0	Buffalo	28	week 9	88-89
Green Bay	0	Atlanta	20	week 10	88-89
New England	0	Atlanta	34	week 13	92-93
New England	0	Indianapolis	6	week 14	92-93
Seattle	0	Dallas	27	week 6	92-93
Seattle	0	Los Angeles	19	week 7	92-93
Indianapolis	0	San Diego	26	week 9	92-93
Indianapolis	0	Miami	28	week 10	92-93

Forecaster uses only scores to rank teams. Therefore, it cannot take into account the facts that the Cowboys are not as good in dark uniforms, that Washington is very good at home or that a star defensive end is holding out for a better contract, but you can. Combining your knowledge with Forecaster's objective predictions, you have a much better than average chance of predicting winners.

See also

[NFL Average Points Per Game](#)

Backups

You should save each week's data to a backup archive file (on a floppy disk, for example). This can facilitate reconstructing a file should it "go bad." Archive filenames should be easy to decipher. The form used by Forecaster is WEEK-?? .yy -- for example, WEEK-03.96 or WEEK-11.96.

You could simply save a copy of main-dta.nfl to a different disk or directory each week, but the file name would give no indication of how many week's data it contained and you would not have backups for all of the weekly archive files.

Use File/Save As to save a backup file. Use the various list boxes in the dialog box to set the path to a different disk. Use the file name Forecaster offers as the default or enter the name you have invented. When you press the "OK" button, Forecaster checks whether a file with the same name already exists on the disk. If it does, you are given the opportunity to replace it or cancel.

Reconstructing main-dta.nfl

The total, offense and defense rankings, points for, points against and other data are saved in the file main-dta.nfl. Each week this information is read into your computer and after you have entered the latest scores it is used to compute new rankings which are used to forecast spreads. The new rankings and other data are then saved back to main-dta.nfl. NFL Forecaster cannot function without a valid main-dta.nfl file. If main-dta.nfl is deleted or is corrupted, it must be reconstructed.

The weekly archive files contain the rankings for a particular week (as well as the scores for that week and the spreads for the next week). Therefore, in order to reconstruct main-dta.nfl, you only need to load the appropriate weekly archive file and save it as main-dta.nfl. (This is a good reason for making a backup of the weekly archive file on a floppy disk.)

For example, let us assume that it is the Tuesday morning after the games of the 10th week of the 1996-97 season have been played. When you attempt to use Quick to "Enter week 10 scores & forecast week 11 spreads," you receive an error message that says Forecaster cannot read main-dta.nfl. After trying several times it becomes clear that main-dta.nfl is no longer useful, so you need to reconstruct it. The latest weekly archive file on your disk is week-09.96. Use File/Open to load week-09.96. Use File/Save As to save the data as main-dta.nfl. Press the "Yes" button when asked if the existing main-dta.nfl should be replaced. That's all there is to reconstructing main-dta.nfl. Now you can use Quick to "Enter week 10 scores & forecast week 11 spreads."

Error Messages

Many messages that Forecaster issues are self-explanatory, such as "No reports have been selected for printing." The following is a list of other (error) messages with explanations. Most are related to reading from and writing to disk. There are many causes for these errors (including bad disks, corrupted DOS, unstable Windows); therefore, there may other causes for the errors than those listed below.

- 2. Not an NFL Forecaster data file.** An attempt was made to load a file and its internal format is not what Forecaster expects. You have probably tried to load the wrong file or a pre-version 4.0w file.
- 3. Unable to open/read data file.** Forecaster is unable to load a file because it does not exist, it is empty, it is corrupted, its read-only attribute is set, or the DOS path, Options/Path or file name is invalid.
- 4. Can't find main-dta.nfl or schedule.nfl file.** Forecaster is unable to find one of these files in the current directory, in the DOS path, or in the Options/Path. Set DOS path or Options/Path correctly.
- 5. Wrong version of schedule.nfl file.** You have attempted to load an older schedule file (pre-1995-96 version 4.0w schedule).
- 6. Unable to read schedule.nfl file.** The schedule file is the correct version, but is incomplete.
- 7. Cannot find NAMES.NFL; will use default names.**
- 8. Wrong version of NAMES.NFL; will use default names.**
- 9. Error reading NAMES.NFL; will use default names.** Forecaster is unable to find or read the file that contains the team and city names. It will continue to run, using its built-in names list.
- 10. MAIN-DTA.NFL and SCHEDULE.NFL are incompatible.** This message indicates that one of the files is an old 28-team league file (3.0w or earlier) and the other is a current 30-team league file. First, load MAIN-DTA.NFL (use File\Open) and see how many teams it contains (use View\Team Rankings); then view SCHEDULE.NFL (use Options\Seasonal\Schedule\View Schedule). Replace the incorrect file.
- 18. The page is not large enough to print the report.** Forecaster has attempted to reduce the font size until the report will fit on the page and has reached 0 size. The font you have chosen may be invalid (its disk file is corrupt or it does not accurately report its size). Windows (especially 3.0) may not be able to map your font to an appropriate font and size. Try another font.
- 22. Unable to open/write data file.** This may result if a file is locked, if its name is invalid, if the DOS path or Options/Path is invalid and sometimes if the disk is full.
- 23. File Open: Options/Path is invalid.** You have attempted to load a file and the path you have entered via Options/Path is invalid; it may contain invalid characters or point to a non-existent subdirectory or disk.
- 24. File Save As: Options/Path is invalid.** See error 23.
- 27. Error reading/writing data file.** Forecaster is unable to load or save a file because it does not exist, it is empty, it is corrupted, the DOS path, Options/Path or file name is invalid, the file is locked or the disk is full.
- 28. Error renaming/deleting data file.** This error occurs when you are either zeroing main-dta.nfl or creating a new schedule. Forecaster must rename the current files to .old and sometimes delete the .old files. The problem may be a bad disk or an invalid path.
- 30. Schedule file is corrupt.** Schedule.nfl is the correct version, but it contains invalid data.
- 31. Unable to create toolbar or status line.** Prior to this message you will receive another message

which will indicate whether it is the toolbar or status line that can't be created. The program will continue without the toolbar or status line. The most likely cause is insufficient system resources; shut down other applications to free up resources.

Fatal Toolbox error : 9

Fatal Status Line error: 9 Forecaster is unable to create the status line or toolbar and the cause is very serious: Forecaster will not continue. It will shut down, because there are not enough system resources to run the program or forecast.exe has been corrupted. If you continue to receive these messages even when no other programs are running and you have done a clean boot, you must assume that forecast.exe is corrupt. Reinstall Forecaster to put a new, clean copy of the program on your disk.

-2 Can't load header or error lines.

-3 Can't load message or print lines. Forecaster is unable to run if any of the conditions indicated by these messages occur. They indicate that the program file, forecast.exe, has been corrupted. Reinstall Forecaster.

Errors 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, and 29 indicate some sort of system error. The system has become unstable. This may be because Windows has run out of memory or resources. There are a number of other causes. If you receive one of these error messages, you should quit NFL Forecaster, quit Windows and reboot your computer. Do not attempt to save any data you have entered (scores, schedule entries) to disk; since the system is unstable, an attempt to save data to disk might corrupt the entire disk.

NFL Average Points per Game

There is a value that is important to the proper working of NFL Forecaster: the average number of points scored by a team each game. (This value is not as important in version 4.0w (and later) as it was in earlier versions; fluctuations in this value have much less effect on the rankings and forecasts.)

Historically, every NFL team scores 21 points per game on average, although this has been decreasing in recent years. Rankings are based, in part, on the percentage that any given team is better or worse than the offense and defense average (this is an oversimplification, but basically true). That is, a team that scores 30 points per game has a stronger than average offense and a team that holds its opponents to 19 points has a stronger than average defense. However, rule changes can affect this value; a liberalization of the rules governing pass defense could result in fewer passing yards (and points) being gained.

Average Number of Points per Game per Team for the Past 12 Seasons

	All Points/ All Games	Avg of Weekly Avgs
84-85	21.21	20.94
85-86	21.53	21.48
86-87	20.52	20.51
87-88	21.60	21.59
88-89	20.26	20.19
89-90	20.61	20.61
90-91	20.12	20.20
91-92	18.97	18.95
92-93	18.73	18.72
93-94	18.70	18.80
94-95	20.26	20.23
95-96	21.49	21.50
12 yr avg	20.33	20.31

As you can see from the table above, the average fluctuates, and the 12-year average is down from 21.0 to 20.3 (excluding playoff games). However, only in the 3 seasons 91-92 to 93-94 was there a significant deviation from the 21 point average. The NFL is very sensitive about decreases in scoring (fans complain) and changes the rules in order to keep the scoring at its historical average.

File

Generally, Forecaster Quick handles loading and saving data files for you. Sometimes, however, you may want or need to load and save yourself. You **need** to load main-dta.nfl, enter the scores and save main-dta.nfl yourself (1) for the playoff games and (2) when there is a disruption of the NFL schedule as happened in 1992 when a hurricane caused the Miami-New England game to be postponed for several weeks. (3) There may be times when you **want** to load weekly archive files for information purposes -- to view or print the ranking of a particular team at a particular time or look back at some scores or spreads. (4) Finally, if you want to export the scores you enter each week to another program (a database program, for example), you should enter the scores and save the data (probably using Quick), use File/Open to load the archive file, open the Archive Scores/Spreads view window, and use the clipboard function to copy the data to Windows clipboard.

Open

Choosing File/Open causes a Windows common dialog open file dialog box to appear. You can enter the name of a file or choose it from the list box. In the lower left corner is a file-type list box which enables you to filter the files that appear in the filename list box: one filter will allow only weekly archive files to appear; another will allow only main-dta.nfl (and other files with the .nfl extension) to appear; the third will allow all files to appear. When you press the "OK" button or double-click on a file name, Forecaster will examine the file to determine that it is a valid Forecaster data file before loading it. Once the file is loaded you can View or Print the rankings or use Slow to Enter Scores or Forecast Spreads.

If you have loaded the file just to View or Print rankings, you can load another file or quit Forecaster. If you have loaded a file and entered scores, you probably will want to use File/Save As to save the data; entering scores causes the rankings to change and you probably want to save these changes. If you attempt to quit Forecaster after entering scores, it will remind you that you have not saved the new rankings to disk and ask if you want to save the data first.

See also

Quick
Toolbar

Save As

Choosing File/Save As causes a Windows common dialog file save dialog box to appear. Forecaster will offer the name of the file you have loaded as the default name for saving. You can accept that name, enter another name or choose a name from the list box. In the lower left corner is a file-type list box which enables you to filter the files that appear in the filename list box: one filter will allow only weekly archive files to appear; another will allow only main-dta.nfl (and other files with the .nfl extension) to appear; the third will allow all files to appear. When you press the "OK" button or double-click on a file name, Forecaster checks whether there is a file with the same name already on the disk. If so, it will ask you if it should be replaced.

File/Save As can also be used to make backups of each week's rankings. After you have used Quick to enter the scores, obtain forecasts, print the rankings and save the data, you can use File/Save As to save the data to another disk. If you do not regularly back up your entire hard disk, we recommend that you make a weekly back up of the Forecaster data files. Then, if an electronic glitch should cause main-dta.nfl to become corrupt in the 14th week of the NFL season, you will not have to reenter all of the season's scores in order to bring main-dta.nfl up to date.

File/Save As **cannot** be used to make copies of files. When you use Save As to save a file (or when Quick saves an archive file), Forecaster checks to see if scores were entered and/or spreads forecast. If so it includes them in the archive file. If you simply load an archive file from one directory and save it under a different name (maybe in a different directory), the file will contain the rankings, but not the scores or forecasts (since no scores were entered nor spreads forecast). If you want to make backup copies of files, you should make them immediately after entering scores as described in the preceding paragraph or use DOS to copy the file.

File/Save As is meant to be used after using Quick to save a back-up copy of the data and after using Slow/Enter Scores and Slow/Forecast Spreads for the playoffs and non-scheduled games.

See also

[Reconstructing main-dta.nfl](#)

Printing

You can print five reports which are basically the same as what you see in the five View windows. You can also print the NFL schedule from the Options/Seasonal menu.

When you choose File/Print, a reports dialog box pops up with a check box for Spreads, Team Rankings, Division Rankings, Category Rankings and All 4 above. There is also a check box for Archive scores/spreads which will be disabled unless you have loaded an archive file. Check the reports you want to have printed and press the "OK" button. When you save options, a list of the currently checked reports is saved. (The state of the Archive scores/spreads check box is not saved.) Thus, if you would like to print a Team Rankings and Spreads report each week, check these two reports and print the reports. Then choose Options/Save options. Now the print reports dialog box will pop up with Team Rankings and Spreads already checked and you can just press the "OK" button.

You can print the reports and schedule using any font, size, effect, and style available on your computer system. Each report is centered horizontally and vertically on the page based upon the currently selected font and font size. If the report will not fit on the page, Forecaster will warn you that it needs to reduce the font size and ask if you want to continue. Since some reports take up more room on a page, you may get a warning for one report (Category Rankings) and not for another (Spreads). You can turn this warning off.

Each report can be printed with or without a frame -- a box drawn around the report or schedule. You can have Forecaster print a title (up to 15 characters) in the upper left corner of each report (except Archive spreads/scores); you might want to put your name here. The Spreads report contains three columns on the right side for checking-off for each game whether Forecaster predicted the win correctly and the spread correctly and whether you chose the winner correctly. You can have Forecaster title this column for you.

If you have checked Options/Row highlighting and/or Options/Column separators, the Team, Division and Category Rankings reports will have row highlighting and column separators. The Spreads report has its own row highlighting and column separators which cannot be turned off. The names used for each team are determined by what you have selected under Options/Names.

At the top right of each report (except Archive scores/spreads) is printed the season and week (if you are using Quick). While the reports are printing, a "cancel printing" dialog box is displayed. If you press the "Cancel" button, the currently printing report is finished and then printing is canceled.

See also

- [Spreads Report](#)
- [Team Rankings Report](#)
- [Division Rankings Report](#)
- [Category Rankings Report](#)
- [All Reports](#)
- [Archive Scores/Spreads](#)
- [Printing the Schedule](#)
- [Viewing Rankings](#)
- [Toolbar](#)

Printing Spreads

The Spreads report shows the same information as seen in the [View Spreads](#) window as well as additional items. Boxes before each team name are provided so that you can check your choices. Spaces are provided after the team names for noting the scores. The right side contains three columns with a cell for each game -- two for checking off whether Forecaster correctly predicted the winner and the spread (Forecaster will blank out any game cell which is predicted as even) and whether you correctly picked the winner (you may put your initials at the top of this column via [Options/Print/Spreads initials](#)). At the bottom right side, cells are provided for the total number of predictions, of correct choices and of correct percentages for each week for each column and to keep running totals for the season. (Forecaster will automatically calculate the total number of weekly predictions for you.) It is interesting as the season progresses to see how well Forecaster does at predicting winners and spreads and how well you do.

The spread report contains the forecasts calculated up to the time of printing whether this is two or sixteen. If no spreads have been forecast, Forecaster will display an error message and return you to the main menu.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Team Rankings Report](#)

[Division Rankings Report](#)

[Category Rankings Report](#)

[All Reports](#)

[Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Printing Team Rankings

The Team Rankings report is very similar to the [View Team Rankings](#) window. The field upon which the rankings were [sorted](#) before printing is indicated by an asterisk to the left of the field name. The average number of points scored by each team is printed at the bottom of the report. At the end of the season you can use this number from each week's Team Rankings report to calculate the average number of points scored by each team in each game for the season.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Spreads Report](#)

[Division Rankings Report](#)

[Category Rankings Report](#)

[All Reports](#)

[Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

[NFL Average Points per Game](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Printing Category Rankings

This report provides the same information as the [View Category Rankings](#) window, except there are no columns for [Average Points per Game For](#) and [Average Points per Game Against](#) due to lack of space on the printed page.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Spreads Report](#)

[Division Rankings Report](#)

[Team Rankings Report](#)

[All Reports](#)

[Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Printing Division Rankings

This report provides the same information as the [View Division Rankings](#) window.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Spreads Report](#)

[Category Rankings Report](#)

[Team Rankings Report](#)

[All Reports](#)

[Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Printing All Reports

If All 4 above is checked in the Reports dialog box, Team, Category and Division rankings and Spreads reports will be printed, whether other reports are checked or not.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Spreads Report](#)

[Category Rankings Report](#)

[Team Rankings Report](#)

[Division Rankings Report](#)

[Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Printing Archive Scores/Spreads

In order to print archive scores or spreads, you must load a [weekly archive file](#) first. This function prints the scores of the week of the archive file (except the first week, week-00.yy) and the spreads for the following week (except the last week, week-17.yy). They are printed on a single page with the name of the archive file as titles. They never have [highlighted rows](#) or [column separators](#). The Archive Scores/Spreads check box is always unchecked when you invoke the print dialog box; you must explicitly check it each time.

If you print the spreads report each week and fill in the scores, there is no need to print archive scores or spreads. However, if you want a separate, printed copy of the scores each week, do the following. Use [Quick](#) to enter scores, obtain forecasts, save data, and print the reports. Then choose File/Open and load the archive file for the current week (it was just saved by Quick). Then choose File/Print/Archive Scores/Spreads.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Spreads Report](#)

[Division Rankings Report](#)

[Team Rankings Report](#)

[Category Rankings Report](#)

[All Reports](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

[Viewing Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Print Setup

This command opens a Windows [common dialog](#) box which is used to pick a printer, set page size, orientation, etc.

See also

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

[Spreads Report](#)

[Category Rankings Report](#)

[Team Rankings Report](#)

[Division Rankings Report](#)

[Printing the Schedule](#)

Exit

See [Quitting NFL Forecaster](#).

Quick

Rather than loading a data file ([File/Open](#)), individually entering scores for each team ([Slow/Enter Scores](#)), choosing teams for spread forecasts ([Slow/Forecast Spreads](#)), and saving the data back to disk ([File/Save As](#)), you can use the Quick function which does this semiautomatically. You must use the Slow functions to enter scores and predict spreads for the [playoff](#) games.

When you choose Quick from the menu, Forecaster displays a modal dialog box; from the list, pick which weeks you want to enter scores/forecast spreads for. Forecaster reads the disk files [main-dta.nfl](#) (which contains the current rankings) and [schedule.nfl](#) (which contains the current schedule).

Quick then opens a dialog box for entering scores. A score of twenty-one will be highlighted in the combo box where you enter the scores. Acceptable scores range from 0 to 98. Enter the correct scores and press the "Enter" button. Forecaster will prompt you to confirm that the scores are correct and if you answer yes it will display them in the lower part of the screen.

Since Forecaster has read the schedule, it will know when all of the scores have been entered and immediately update the rankings based upon the new scores. You can press the "Cancel" button at anytime to throw away any scores entered so far.

If you make a mistake entering scores, and do not catch the mistake when Forecaster prompts you to confirm the scores, press the "Cancel" button. Do not save the data. Choose Quick from the menu and start over.

After Forecaster updates the rankings, it will ask if it should save the new rankings to disk. You should answer yes, unless you have some special reason for not saving the rankings. Forecaster will then save [main-dta.nfl](#) and a [weekly archive file](#).

Then Forecaster will calculate the spreads for the next week and ask if you would like to forecast some non-scheduled games. You can forecast a maximum of 17 spreads each week (2 extra for a normal 15-game week). Some users like to calculate the spreads for their favorite team against other teams (arch rivals, strongest, division leader) each week. If you answer yes, a dialog box similar to the Slow/Forecast spreads (see the appropriate section) dialog box will open.

When you have gotten the spreads for as many non-scheduled games as you want/can (or if you choose not to obtain non-scheduled spreads), Forecaster will ask if it should [print the reports](#). If you answer yes, the print reports dialog box will open. Check the reports you want (Spreads, Team Rankings, Category Rankings, Category Rankings, All) and press the "OK" button to print them.

Finally, Forecaster will ask if it should open the view windows. If you answer yes, it will call [View/Restore Layout](#), opening the view windows in the sizes and positions that you last saved via [Views/Save Layout](#).

The week before the first game of the NFL season use Quick to "Forecast week 1 spreads." (The archive file for this week is week-00.yy.) After the first week's games have been played, but before the second week's games are played, use Quick to "Enter week 1 scores & forecast week 2 spreads." Each week until after the last week use Quick to "Enter week x scores & forecast x+1 spreads." After the last game of the season, you need to "Enter week x scores" (since there is no x+1th game to predict spreads for).

For the [playoff games](#) and the Super Bowl, you must use [Slow/Enter Scores](#) and [Slow/Forecast Spreads](#) because Quick cannot use the schedule file to get scores and forecast spreads.

See also

- [Seasonal Options](#)
- [Annual Update Disk](#)
- [Toolbar](#)

Viewing Rankings

The View function enables you to open a view window for team, division and category rankings, and spreads. The average points per game may be displayed in a modal dialog box. Scores and spreads from an archive file can also be viewed. The View menu item is enabled whenever you (or Quick) load a file. More than one view window may be open at the same time and each can be resized and moved (except the average points dialog box).

Depending upon the font you have chosen and its size, scroll bars may appear at the right and bottom of a view window. Use the scroll bars to scroll the window horizontally and vertically. The Home key resets the View window to the upper left corner. The End key resets the View window to the lower left corner. The Page Up and Page Down keys (or clicking on the scroll bar above or below the thumb button) move the contents of the View window up or down one window; for example, if 8 lines are being displayed in a View window and you press the Page Down key, the next 8 lines will be displayed. The Up and Down arrow keys (or clicking on the vertical scroll-bar arrows) scroll the window vertically 1 line. The Right and Left arrow keys (or clicking on the horizontal scroll-bar arrows) scroll the window horizontally about one or two character widths (depending upon the font chosen). Holding down the Control key while pressing the Left or Right arrow key (or clicking on the scroll bar above or below the thumb button) will scroll the window about one-fourth its entire width.

See also

[Closing and Switching View Windows](#)

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Saving Views Layout](#)

[Restoring Views Layout](#)

[Viewing Average Points](#)

[Printing](#)

[Options](#)

Viewing Spreads

The forecasts are listed down the screen with the winning team, the losing team and the point spread listed left to right. If a game is declared to be EVEN (too close to call), the order of the team names is irrelevant; the team on the left has NO advantage over the team on the right. Forecaster does not predict spreads greater than 28 points. Only 17 spread forecasts can be obtained at one session. Since the spreads are based on the rankings, Forecaster will forecast spreads of partial points -- for example, 6.5 or 3.2. Of course, no team can score partial points, but Forecaster gives you precise spreads rather than rounding them to 1, 2, 3, 6, or 7 points. This is especially useful when two teams are about equally strong. It would be misleading to forecast that a game between Dallas and San Francisco is even or that one team will win by a field goal when in fact one is only 1.2 points stronger than the other.

See also

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Saving Views Layout](#)

[Restoring Views Layout](#)

[Viewing Average Points](#)

[Printing Spreads](#)

[Options](#)

[Interpreting Forecasts](#)

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

Viewing Team Rankings

Across the screen are listed: the team's rank (1-30); the team's name; the total ranking; the offense ranking; the defense ranking; the number of points the team has scored (Pts+); the number of points scored against the team (Pts-); the average number of points the team has scored each game (Avg+); the average number of points scored against the team each game (Avg-); the team's win-loss-tie percentage (0.000-1.000); and the number of games won, lost and tied. The team's name is also displayed at the right side to make it easier to read the rankings when the window is scrolled to the left.

The total, offense and defense rankings range from 0 to 200 with 100 being an average total ranking, 101 being an average offense ranking and 99 being an average defense ranking. Roughly, average means that a team consistently scores twenty-one points per game (or whatever the average points per game is; see the relevant section below) and holds the opposition to twenty-one points per game. The higher the ranking, the stronger the team is. An average team will display about 21 in the Avg+ and Avg- categories. A strong offensive team will show Avg+ values greater than 21 and a strong defensive team will show Avg- values less than 21.

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Saving Views Layout](#)

[Restoring Views Layout](#)

[Viewing Average Points](#)

[Printing Team Rankings](#)

[Options](#)

[Sorting Team Rankings](#)

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

Viewing Division Rankings

Rather than being displayed in sorted order (by some category) from 1 to 30, the view Division window displays the teams sorted within their division and conference. They are sorted automatically by win/loss percentage; you cannot sort them by other categories. The same information is displayed across the screen as with the view Team window, except that the rank listed at the left of the screen is the rank of the team according to the last sort category used; a dot is always displayed to the left of the "%" category header and another dot is displayed to the left of the header of the category by which the rankings were last sorted. If you are displaying both the Team Rankings and Division Rankings and sort the Team Rankings, the rankings on the left side of the Division Rankings will change to reflect the new sort and the dot on the category header will move.

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Saving Views Layout](#)

[Restoring Views Layout](#)

[Viewing Average Points](#)

[Printing Division Rankings](#)

[Options](#)

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

Viewing Category Rankings

This function automatically sorts each of the eight categories (total, offense and defense rankings, points for, points against, average points per game for, average points per game against, and win/loss percentage) and lists the teams under the category headings. There is a trade off between Category and Team Rankings displays. Category Rankings is the quickest way to get an overall picture of all of the rankings. You can sort by any of the eight categories with Team Rankings, but you can see the rankings displayed only by one sorted category at a time. Category Rankings shows you all eight sorted categories at one time. However, only the team names are displayed and not the actual rankings.

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Saving Views Layout](#)

[Restoring Views Layout](#)

[Viewing Average Points](#)

[Printing Category Rankings](#)

[Options](#)

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

Restoring and Saving Views Layout

The views layout includes the position and size of each view window (Spreads, Team, Category, Division) that is open. For example, let's say that each week you would like to look at the team and division rankings and the spreads. Open each window and size and position them the way you would like. Then choose View/**Save Views Layout**. The layout will be save to forecast.ini. Now, any time that you choose View/**Restore Views Layout**, the three windows will be opened, positioned and sized as you saved them. Of course, the spreads view window will not open unless spreads have been forecast. The last thing the Quick function will ask you is whether you want to open the view windows. If you answer yes, Quick will call Restore Views Layout.

To clear the layout, choose **Save Views Layout** when no view windows are open; then when you choose **Restore Views Layout**, the four view windows will be opened (if spreads have been forecast) and cascaded.

The views layout is saved from the View menu, not from the Options menu. When you choose Options/Save, the views layout is not saved. This means that you can make changes (for example, turning row highlighting on or off) and save them without having to be sure that all of your view windows are open, positioned and sized correctly. Conversely, you can make changes to the views layout and save it without having to be concerned that all of the other options are set correctly.

The view archive data window is neither saved nor restored.

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Options](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Viewing Average Points per Game

When you choose this menu item, a modal dialog box opens with two pieces of information: the average points per game contained in the loaded file and the average points per game calculated after new scores have been entered (this will be 0 until scores are entered). You might use this if you do not regularly print a Team Rankings report which includes the average points per game each week it is printed.

You can also use this option to obtain the average points per game per week for an entire season, by loading each weekly archive file ([File/Open](#)) and then [View/Average points](#). See [NFL Average Points per Game](#) for information about the importance of this value.

See also

[Printing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

Copy to Clipboard

This function will copy the contents of the view window (Spreads, Team, Category, Division, Archive Scores/Spreads) that has the focus (the one on top) to Windows clipboard. You can then switch to another application and use Windows Paste function to paste the data into the other application. NFL Forecaster has no Paste function; it makes no sense to try to paste data from another application into Forecaster.

The data in the view windows is aligned in columns using tabs. When you paste it into another application (such as a word-processing program or editor), it may not line up correctly because: Forecaster's tabs are set at absolute positions (not a specific number of spaces); tabs may expand to a different number of spaces in different programs; the proportional fonts you can use in Forecaster may disrupt alignment. Usually, all you need do is insert additional tabs to align the columns.

Because Forecaster's view windows are wide, when you paste data into another application, the lines may wrap (if the application has word/line wrap). You can either use a smaller font or decrease the left and right margins.

When Forecaster data is pasted into a spreadsheet (such as Microsoft's Excel), the data will automatically align correctly.

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Toolbar](#)

Viewing Archive Scores/Spreads

Archive scores and spreads can be viewed only after you load an [archive file](#). No scores are displayed for week-00.yy and no spreads are displayed for week-17.yy. Assuming you have loaded week-09.96, the scores displayed are those of the games of the 9th week of the season and the spreads are those computed for the following week (10).

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Viewing Team Rankings](#)

[Viewing Division Rankings](#)

[Viewing Category Rankings](#)

[Viewing Average Points](#)

[Options](#)

[Printing Archive Scores/Spreads](#)

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

Sorting Rankings

Team Rankings are sorted by the current sort field before being displayed. You can change the sort field (total, offense, defense, Pts+, Pts-, percentage, Avg+, Avg-) via the Sort menu which is enabled only while viewing team rankings. Until you close the Team Rankings window, you can resort the rankings on the field of your choice. All fields are sorted in descending order (most to least), except Pts- (total points scored against a team) and Avg- (average number of points scored against a team) which are sorted in ascending order (the fewer points scored against a team the stronger it is). The current sort field is indicated on the menu by a bullet to the left of the sort field name, and in the view window and printed report by an asterisk to the left of the sort field name. When the data is saved to disk (main-dta.nfl or weekly archive file), it is saved in the last sorted order. When you load main-dta.nfl or a weekly archive file and View team rankings, the saved sort order will be used unless you change the sort order before loading the file.

Division Rankings are always sorted within each division by the percentage field, but the rank on the left side of the window or page is the rank according to the last team sort. Thus, if you sort the team rankings by Defense, a team might be displayed as first in its division in Division Rankings, but have a ranking of 10 (Defense). Category Rankings are sorted within each category. Spreads are not sorted.

A dot is displayed to the left of the chosen sort menu item. Like radio buttons (in a dialog box), only one sort field can be chosen at a time. When you choose another sort field, the dot will be removed from the old choice and placed before the new choice.

Options

The Options menu enables you to set up a number of parameters to make the program more convenient to use and to meet the needs of your computer system. You can change any of the configuration settings while Forecaster is running. The settings are saved in the file forecast.ini which is automatically loaded when Forecaster is run.

The options are grouped into several categories: (1) Font, Names, Rows and Cols, Toolbar and Status Line options affect the screen display and printing. (2) Print options affect only printing. (3) Path includes only path. (4) Seasonal includes activities that you need to perform only once-a-year before the season begins.

Fonts

Via the Options/Font menu (which opens a dialog box) you can choose a font (depending upon which fonts you have installed), a font size, a font style (regular, italic and bold), a font color and effects (strikeout and underline). Some fonts are simply not usable; they do not contain numbers (dingbats, for example, does not contain letters or numbers). You can change the font settings at any time (even if a view window is not open). The first time you run Forecaster, a 10-point proportional font is used.

Some fonts, especially under Windows 3.0, can't be mapped to an appropriate size by the font mapper, so it may not be possible to print using a given font. Also, especially under Windows 3.0, your font may be mapped to a different font to fit the size. Use True Type fonts under Windows 3.1 or later whenever possible.

The current Font settings are used for displaying rankings in the view windows. Since you can scroll the view windows horizontally and vertically, any size font can be used. You may want to use a large point size if your screen is small, if your vision is impaired or if you want to isolate a team or category (you can also resize the view window to do this).

The current Font settings are also used to print the reports and schedule. Forecaster determines whether the entire report will fit on the page (centered horizontally and vertically, with or without a frame) if the current font size is used. If not, it will notify you that it will need to reduce the font size (for example, from 24 point to 12 point) and ask if you still want to print the report. You can answer no and cancel printing or yes and continue. After the report has been printed the original point size is restored (because that is the size you are using to display rankings on screen). So, if you print again, Forecaster will again advise you that the font size must be reduced. You can avoid having Forecaster notify you of a font size reduction and the need to respond to the message by setting Options/Print/Warn when font size is reduced to false.

Some printer drivers (especially for older dot-matrix printers) do not accurately report to Forecaster the size of the page. Usually this results in a wider margin on the right than on the left. You can compensate for this by reducing the font size.

You can change the color of the text in a view window via Options/Font. The background color of the text in the view windows is always the background color you set using Windows Control Panel. No colors are set for printing; the default colors of your printer (usually black and white) are used.

Names

Whenever a reference is made to a team, whether on screen or on a printed report, you can have Forecaster use either the team's name or its geographical name -- Denver or Broncos, Rams or St. Louis. A dot is displayed to the left of the chosen item. Like radio buttons (in a dialog box), only one item can be chosen at a time. When you choose "Use city names," the dot will be removed from "Use team names" and placed before "Use city names."

Rows & Columns

The Rows & Cols option affects how the rankings are displayed in the view windows and how they are printed. However, when printing the Spreads report, Forecaster pays no attention to the Rows & Cols settings.

See also

Column Separators

Row Highlighting

Separate Columns With Lines

Column separators are vertical lines drawn between the various categories of the displayed and printed rankings. Spreads reports have their own column separators which cannot be turned off.

Highlight Rows

Row highlighting in the Spreads, Team Ranking and Category Ranking view windows takes the form of drawing every fifth row in the color you choose for highlighting menu items via Windows Control Panel (every fourth row for old 28-team rankings). In the Division Rankings view window, each division title is highlighted.

Row highlighting on the Team Rankings and Category Rankings reports takes the form of a line drawn beneath every fifth row (every fourth row for old 28-team rankings). A line is drawn beneath the division titles on the Division Rankings report. Spreads reports have their own row highlighting which cannot be turned off.

Toolbar and Status Line

The toolbar and status line are designed to make using NFL Forecaster easier to use. The [toolbar](#) gives quick access to seven functions and the [status line](#) displays help information for using the menu and toolbar.

Redraw Status Line First This option affects the look of the toolbar and status line, not their functionality. When this item is checked, the status line is displayed (drawn) before the toolbar; when it is unchecked, the opposite occurs. When the status line is drawn first, it will appear above the toolbar if they are both placed at the top of the window. If the toolbar is at the left or right, the status line will span the full width of the main window at the top or bottom.

When the status line is not drawn first, it will appear beneath the toolbar if they are both placed at the top of the window. If the toolbar is at the left or right, the toolbar will span the full height of the main window and the status line will occupy the remaining space between the toolbar and the right or left edge of the window.

See also

[Toolbar](#)

[Status Line](#)

Toolbar

Each button on the toolbar represents a menu item. From left to right they are: Quick (the rabbit), view the schedule (?vs?), restore windows layout (four exploding windows), open a file (disk and arrow), print (a printer), copy to the clipboard (clipboard and arrow), and the table of contents of Forecaster's on-line help (big question mark).

When the toolbar is turned on or off or moved to the top, left or right, the sizes and positions of the view windows are adjusted accordingly. Some buttons are dimmed to indicate that they are disabled when the functions they invoke are not available. For example, the print button is dimmed until you load a file.

See also

Toolbar and Status Line

Status Line

The status line displays information about each menu item and toolbar button. As you highlight each menu item, the status line explains what the menu item does and why it is disabled (if it is). As you move the mouse cursor over each toolbar button, the status line explains what the button does and why it is disabled (if it is). The status line displays information for all menu items, including the main window system menu (the large horizontal bar in the upper-left corner of the main window) and the view windows system menus (smaller horizontal bars in the upper-left corner of each view window).

When the status line is turned on or off or moved to the top or bottom, the sizes and positions of the view windows are adjusted accordingly. The status line may take the form of a bar or a box. They function identically; there is no reason to choose one over the other except your personal preference.

See also

[Toolbar and Status Line](#)

Print Options

The Print options only affect printing.

See also

[Print Warning](#)

[Frame Reports](#)

[Reports Titles](#)

[Spreads Initials](#)

Warn When Font Size Is Reduced

You can print the reports using any font, size, effect, and style available on your computer system. Each report is centered horizontally and vertically on the page based upon the currently selected font and font size. If the report will not fit on the page, Forecaster will warn you that it needs to reduce the font size and ask if you want to continue. Since some reports take up more room on a page, you may get a warning for one report (Category Rankings) and not for another (Spreads). You can turn this warning off.

Frame Reports

Each report can be printed with or without a frame -- a box drawn around the report.

Title of Reports

You can enter up to 15 characters that will appear at the top left of each printed report -- your name or the date, for example.

Spreads Initials

You can enter three characters (usually your initials or first name) that will appear at the top of the third column on the Spreads report. In this column you check off whether you picked the correct winners.

Path

Most users should not have to use this option.

Forecaster first looks in the current directory when it needs to load files -- for example, `main-dta.nfl` and `schedule.nfl`. If it can't find them, it looks in the various directories you have included in your DOS Path statement (in your `autoexec.bat` file). If you set Options/Path, Forecaster will use that path first when it looks for files; then it will look in the current directory and then in the DOS Path. It will also use the Options/Path to set the initial directory for File/Open and File/Save As. In general, you do not have to set Options/Path.

If you want to keep the Forecaster data files (schedule.nfl, main-dta.nfl, weekly archive files) in a separate directory (a different one for each year, for example), you should move them to that directory and set Options/Path or your DOS Path statement to that directory; then Forecaster will be able to find them. If you do not have enough environment space (see your DOS manual about setting a Path statement and how much environment space is available), you should use Options/Path.

If you have set Options/Path and want to clear it, just delete all of the characters in the input box and press return; Forecaster will ignore a blank Options/Path.

Forecast.ini must be in your `\windows` directory and the files bwcc.dll and commdlg.dll must be in your `\windows\system` directory.

Seasonal Options

Forecaster uses game scores, current rankings and accumulated points for and points against to compute new rankings and to calculate point spreads. Thus, at the beginning of each season [main-dta.nfl](#) must be modified so that points for and against and average points for and average points against are set to zero. For the program to be useful, the number of wins, losses and ties and the win/loss percentage for each team must also be set to zero. Forecaster's [Quick](#) function uses [schedule.nfl](#) to prompt you for scores and to calculate point spreads, so a new schedule must be constructed before the new season begins. NFL Forecaster provides functions for **zeroing main-dta.nfl**, **creating a new schedule**, and **displaying or printing the schedule**. You can also purchase an [annual update disk](#) which contains main-dta.nfl, schedule.nfl and the latest version of NFL Forecaster.

See also

[Schedule Options](#)

[Zero main-dta.nfl](#)

Schedule Options

There are three seasonal schedule functions; one for viewing the current schedule; one for printing the current schedule; and one for creating a new schedule.

See also

[View Schedule](#)

[Print Schedule](#)

[Create New Schedule](#)

View Schedule

When you choose this menu item, a modal dialog box opens and the current schedule ([schedule.nfl](#)) is displayed in a list box. Use the keyboard or mouse to scroll through it.

See also

[Print Schedule](#)

[Create New Schedule](#)

Print Schedule

The current schedule ([schedule.nfl](#)) is printed three weeks to a page. As with the printed reports, the schedule will be centered on the pages based upon the current [font](#) and you will be notified if the font size must be reduced to fit the schedule on the page (if you have checked [Options/Warn](#) when font size is reduced). The printed schedule may be [framed](#). [Options/Print/Title](#), and [Options/Rows and cols](#) are ignored when the schedule is being printed. If you press the "Cancel" button while the schedule is being printed, the current page is completed and then printing is canceled.

See also

[View Schedule](#)

[Create New Schedule](#)

Create New Schedule

If you purchase an annual update disk, you do not have to create a new schedule yourself.

This function first opens a dialog box with a list box from which you choose the number of weeks in the new season. It seems that the NFL has settled on a season of 17 weeks, but it could be lengthened or shortened so the values in the list box range from 14 to 20. The vaule Forecaster is requesting is the number of weeks in the **regular** season (do not include playoff and Super Bowl weeks).

The function then opens a dialog box similar to the one used by Slow/Forecast Spreads. You use it to indicate which two teams play in every game of the new season. After you choose two teams, press the "Game OK" button. You will be asked to confirm that the choices are correct. You also will be asked to confirm that the choices are correct after each week's schedule has been entered. You cannot selectively make corrections; that is, you cannot go back and fix game three of week seven or game eleven of week twelve. You must make corrections immediately or a week at a time. If a week has 15 games, Forecaster will know when an entire week's games have been entered. If a week has less than 15 games, press the "Week OK" button.

If you press the "Cancel" button, Forecaster will ask you to confirm that you want to stop. Although this function makes creating a new schedule.nfl file quite easy, there is still a substantial amount of work involved. You cannot save a partial schedule and resume work at a later time; thus, the choice to cancel should not be taken lightly.

When you create a new schedule, schedule.nfl is renamed to schedule.old. If schedule.old exists, it is overwritten. To save each year's schedule, rename it before you choose Options/Seasonal/Schedule/Create new schedule (for example, schedule.95).

See also

[View Schedule](#)

[Print Schedule](#)

Zeroing main-dta.nfl

You need to zero main-dta.nfl only once a year before the new season begins. If you purchase an annual update disk, you do not have to zero main-dta.nfl.

This function prepares a new main-dta.nfl file for a new season. It takes the data from one file (usually main-dta.nfl), modifies it and saves it as main-dta.nfl. The number of points scored by a team and scored against a team, the average number of points scored by a team and scored against a team, the number of wins, losses and ties, and the win/loss percentage must be set to zero, since at the beginning of a new season no team has scored any points or won any games.

You will be asked for the name of the source file you want to use to create the updated main-dta.nfl. Since Forecaster is used through the playoffs and Super Bowl, the rankings contained in main-dta.nfl at the end of a season are a bit distorted because only some teams play in the playoffs. Thus, most users choose to use the weekly archive file from the last week of the previous season as the source file. In this case it is best to rename main-dta.nfl to postbowl.yy (for example, postbowl.95) before using main-dta.nfl update. Then you will have an archive data file of the rankings after the last week of the season and another of the rankings after the Super Bowl. If you use main-dta.nfl as the source file, it is renamed to main-dta.old and the new data is saved as main-dta.nfl.

You have two choices when updating main-dta.nfl for the new season: you can **Keep** (carry over) the total, offense and defense rankings or you can give each team an equal and **Average** total, offense and defense ranking.

Keep sets the points for, points against, win, loss, tie, and win/loss percentage categories to zero. The total, offense and defense rankings are carried over (kept). Usually you will want to **keep** the old rankings because despite the draft and other activities intended to produce parity, the NFL teams do not start each season as equals.

Average sets the points for, points against, win, loss, tie, and win/loss percentage categories to zero. The total, offense and defense rankings of every team are set to an average value (total = 100; offense = 101; defense = 99). Because the rankings are all equal, all of the games for the first week of the season will be declared Even. Most users do not use this function, but you might want to see how the rankings would work out IF the season began with parity among the NFL teams.

The default button in the dialog box is "Cancel" so you must press the "Keep" or "Average" button, not the "Enter" key.

Save Options

When you choose Options/Save, the current values for all of the options are saved to forecast.ini. The options saved and their values when you first run Forecaster are:

- the path to the data files (none);
- whether you want to use team or city names (city);
- whether you want column separators (no);
- whether you want row highlighting (yes);
- the current font name (Courier);
- the current font size (10);
- the current font weight (normal);
- whether italics, underline or strikeout are in effect (none);
- the text color (black);
- whether the font-size-reduction warning is in effect (yes);
- whether reports should be framed (yes);
- which reports should be printed (all);
- the reports title (96-97 v. 4.1w);
- spreads report initials (YOU).
- toolbar position (top)
- status line style and position (box at the bottom)
- whether to redraw the status line first (yes).

Options are not automatically saved when you quit Forecaster; therefore, you can experiment without changing the settings in forecast.ini which aren't changed until you select Save from the Options menu. Also contained in forecast.ini are Views Layout, and the reports that you have checked in the Print/Reports dialog box.

Slow

Slow enables you to manually pick the teams to forecast spreads for and to manually enter scores. Generally, you should not have to use Slow. **There are only two occasions when you have to use Slow.**

First, you must use Slow/Forecast Spreads and Slow/Enter Scores for playoff games because Quick uses the schedule.nfl file to prompt you for scores and forecast spreads and the playoff teams are unknown at the beginning of the season when the schedule file is created.

Second, it is necessary to enter scores and forecast spreads via Slow when there is a disruption of the NFL schedule as happened in 92-93 when a hurricane caused the Miami-New England game to be postponed for several weeks. In that case, you could not use Quick to enter the scores for the first week because there was no score for the Miami-New England game. Further, during the week when the postponed game was played, Quick would not forecast spreads for the Miami-New England game because it was not on the schedule. If you have to use Slow because there is a disruption of the NFL schedule, be sure to save the data to disk since the new rankings will be the result of actual games. Save both main-dta.nfl and a weekly archive file (Quick normally does this for you).

Except in these two cases, you should not use Slow. If you do use it to "play around" and enter scores, be sure not to save data to disk (the rankings will not reflect the scores of actual games). It is crucial that you obtain forecasts for next week's games only AFTER you have entered last week's scores (and, therefore, have updated the rankings). Otherwise, the forecasts will be based on last week's rankings. This is not a problem if you use Quick, but you must remember to do this in the proper order if you use Slow: Enter the scores and then Forecast the spreads.

See also

[Enter Scores](#)

[Forecast Spreads](#)

Enter Scores

In order to use Slow to Enter scores, you must first load a file -- either [main-dta.nfl](#) or a [weekly archive file](#) -- because new rankings are based upon current rankings (which are contained in a disk file).

The Enter Scores dialog box displays the teams by conference and division in six columns. Using the mouse or keyboard, choose the 2 teams that played in last week's games and enter the appropriate scores. You can choose teams and enter scores in any order: pick team, enter score, pick team, enter score; or pick team, pick team, enter score, enter score; or enter score, pick team, enter score, pick team; etc.

A score of twenty-one will be highlighted in the combo box where you enter the scores. Acceptable scores range from 0 to 98. When the teams and scores are correct, press the "Enter" button. Forecaster will prompt you to confirm that the teams and scores are correct and if you answer yes it will display them in the lower part of the screen. If you answer no, you can reenter the teams and/or scores.

When you have entered all scores for all of the games, press the "Done" button. Forecaster will immediately update the rankings based upon the new scores.

You can press the "Cancel" button at anytime to cancel Slow/Enter Scores and throw away any scores entered so far.

Forecaster will not allow you to choose a team to play itself. After you confirm that the teams and scores are correct for each game, Forecaster will remove the team names from the list box. This prevents you from accidentally entering a team twice. When the scores for fourteen games have been entered (the maximum number), Forecaster will automatically close the dialog box.

If you make a mistake entering scores, and do not catch the mistake when Forecaster prompts you to confirm the scores, press the "Cancel" button. Do not save the data. Then reload the file and reenter the scores. See also [Correcting Mistakes](#).

See also

[Open File](#)

[Save As](#)

[Viewing Rankings](#)

[Printing Rankings](#)

[Playoffs](#)

Forecast Spreads

In order to forecast spreads, you must first load a file -- either [main-dta.nfl](#) or a [weekly archive file](#) -- because spreads are based upon current rankings (which are contained in a disk file).

The Forecast Spreads dialog box displays the teams by conference and division in six columns. Using the mouse or keyboard, choose the teams that will play in the up-coming games. Then press the "Forecast" button and Forecaster will display the winner of the game and the winning point spread at the lower part of the screen.

When you have obtained forecasts for all of the games of the next week, press the "Done" button.

You can press the "Cancel" button at any time to cancel Slow/Forecast Spreads and throw away any spreads you have obtained so far.

Forecaster will not allow you to choose a team to play itself; it will, however, allow you to choose the same team more than once. Thus, you can test your favorite team against other teams in hypothetical games. When 17 forecasts have been computed (the maximum number), Forecaster will automatically close the dialog box.

See also

[Viewing Spreads](#)

[Printing Spreads](#)

[Playoffs](#)

Window

As you open View windows, the title of each is added to the bottom of the Window menu.

Cascade causes all open View windows to resize and overlap each other.

Tile causes all open View windows to be resized and moved until they all fit side-by-side on the screen.

Close all closes all open View windows.

Close a particular View window by pressing Alt-hyphen to open the system menu (or click on the system menu box at the top left of the window) and then choosing "Close."

You can use the Window menu to **switch** to a particular View window by choosing it from the menu. You can **switch** from one View window to another in order by pressing Ctrl-F6 or Ctrl-Tab. You can also **switch** View windows by pressing Alt-hyphen to open the system menu (or click on the system menu box at the top left of the window) and then choosing "Switch."

Installation and Help

Help Press F1 whenever a menu item is highlighted for help regarding that menu item. Press F1 (or the toolbar question mark button) whenever a menu is **not** highlighted to invoke the table of contents of Forecaster's on-line help. Choose the "Help" button whenever it is displayed in a dialog box for help regarding the current activity.

Whenever a menu item is highlighted and whenever the mouse cursor is over a toolbar button, information relevant to that menu item or button is displayed on the status line. If the menu item or toolbar button is grayed (disabled), the status line also explains why.

In order to obtain on-line help while running Forecaster, the file forecast.hlp must be in the same directory as forecast.exe.

Minimum Requirements

Installation/Uninstall

See VENDINFO.DIZ, README.1ST and SETUP.HLP

Running NFL Forecaster

You run NFL Forecaster by double-clicking on its icon, by highlighting the icon and pressing the Enter key or by using the Program Manager's File/Run menu. A title and registration reminder dialog box is displayed while NFL Forecaster loads and initializes. When the main menu is displayed, you can press the "OK" button to continue (the button is inactive until then). The title dialog box of the registered version of Forecaster does not contain a registration reminder and will close itself automatically when Forecaster has loaded.

File Formats

main-dta.nfl
weekly archive files
schedule.nfl
forecast.ini
bwcc.dll
commdlg.dll
names.nfl

Entering Scores Above 98

If a team scores more than 98 points, just enter 98 (whether you are using [Slow/Enter Scores](#) or [Quick](#)). This is so far above the average of 21 points per game that the increase in the team's offensive ranking (and the decrease in the opponent's defensive ranking) will be so substantial that the difference between 98 and, say, 103 will be negligible. If a team ever scores more than 98 points (in the last 12 years the highest score was 62 points and the record is 99), we will provide an update to NFL Forecaster at no charge to any registered user who writes or calls.

Main-dta.nfl

This is the (ASCII) data file which is loaded and saved each week, either automatically by [Quick](#) or manually via [File/Open](#) and [File/Save As](#). The contents of the file changes as the season progresses. It contains the version number (currently 4.0), the characters "MD", and the number of teams in the file. These are followed by information for each of the 30 NFL teams: total ranking; offense ranking; defense ranking; win/loss/tie percentage; accumulated points scored by the team and against the team; number of wins, losses and ties; a sort tag indicating the team's ranking as last sorted; a single character sort key indicating by which category the teams were last sorted; and the average number of points scored by each team per game for the last week is included. Main-dta.nfl must be "zeroed" each season. Version 4.0 of main-dta.nfl is not compatible with previous versions.

See also

[Weekly Archive Files](#)

[Reconstructing main-dta.nfl](#)

Weekly archive files

The archive files contain the same information as main-dta.nfl, except for the characters "AD" indicating the file is an archive data file. This two-character header is maintained for compatibility with earlier versions of NFL Forecaster. In addition, the archive files contain the scores of a given week (except the first week of the season) and the forecasts for the following week (except the last week of the season). These files may be used to find a ranking, score, or forecast of any past week. They can also be used to reconstruct main-dta.nfl if it should become corrupt. Version 4.0 of the weekly archive files is not compatible with previous versions.

The contents of these files do not change. There should be one archive file for each week of the season. They are normally titled WEEK-xx.yy (where xx = week and yy = year). Week-00.yy is the archive file for the first week of the season (when you obtain forecasts, but do not enter scores). Archive files are saved automatically by Quick.

Forecast.ini

This (ASCII) file is a standard Windows .ini file. There is no need to modify any item in this file; NFL Forecaster handles reading and writing this file.

Schedule.nfl

The file contains the version number (currently 4.0), the number of teams in the file, and the number of games in the schedule. The following lines contain numbers representing the participants and dates of each game of the season. The last line indicates the NFL season of the file -- for example, ".96-97". A new schedule.nfl file must be created each season. Version 4.0 of schedule.nfl is not compatible with previous versions.

See also

[Seasonal/Create New Schedule](#)

[Annual Update Disk](#)

[Playoff Games](#)

bwcc.dll

This dynamic link library file contains information needed for displaying the various dialog boxes and must be in your \windows\system directory. It is installed if your system does not have a copy or if your copy is older than the version shipped with Forecaster. Your older version is renamed bwcc.old.

commdlg.dll

This dynamic link library file contains information needed for displaying the files and fonts dialog boxes and must be in your \windows\system directory. Commdlg.dll is installed when you install Windows 3.1 or later. It is shipped with NFL Forecaster for users of Windows 3.0. and is installed only if your version is older than the one shipped with Forecaster. Your older version is renamed commdlg.old.

names.nfl

This file contains the team and city names for the old 28-team league and for the current 30-team league. Using any editor or word-processing program that can load and save a plain ASCII text file, you can modify the names in this file. You would want to do this when a team moves from one city to another as the Rams did this year. However, the names **must** remain in the same order, a name **cannot** exceed 13 characters and **no** lines may be added or deleted from this file.

To print this form, choose Print Topic from the File menu above.

REGISTRATION FORM 4.1w

Date: _____

For credit card, phone, fax, and CompuServe email orders (and the benefits of registering), see the section "Why Register NFL Forecaster?".

Register NFL Forecaster for Windows (\$20.00 per copy) \$ _____
Register NFL Forecaster for DOS (\$20.00 per copy) \$ _____
Orders from outside the USA, Canada and Mexico (add \$3.00) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Check Money order

Total includes shipping, handling and taxes where applicable.
International orders US Dollars please.

Disk Size: 5 1/4" 1.2MB 3 1/2" 1.44MB

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

Country _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Please provide the following information. I obtained my copy of NFL Forecaster from:

Shareware distributor _____
Electronic bulletin board _____
Users' group _____
Friend, colleague, relative, other _____

Suggestions/comments: _____

Send to: 100% Cotton Software, RR 1 Box 1622, Hop Bottom, PA 18824, USA