

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. Based on these rankings Forecaster predicts winners of games and the point spreads. **It only takes 10 minutes each week to enter the week's scores and obtain the next week's forecasts.**

Over the past 13 seasons, Forecaster has correctly predicted winners 63% of the time and spreads 58% of the time. (For the 1991-92 season Forecaster hit 70% for winners and 66% 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 305 of 2,930 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).

The unregistered version of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 (and NFL Calendar for Windows 95) are fully-functional except that the two seasonal tasks (create a new schedule and zero the main data file) will not save data to disk. You can create a new schedule (to see how the function works) but you cannot save it to disk. It's only fair that you cannot use the unregistered versions of the programs for more than one NFL season without registering them.


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 Delphi 3.0. Windows 95™ 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.

Overview

Each week you enter the scores of the games played and Forecaster calculates new rankings for each team. Using the new rankings, Forecaster then predicts the winners and spreads of the next week's games. The new rankings must be saved to the main data file (main-dta.nfl) so that the rankings can be used the next week. This is done automatically by Forecaster. 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 when you first receive it.)

Every week's rankings are also automatically saved to weekly archive files which are not updated each week. 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 Super Bowl). These files may be used to find a ranking, score, or forecast of any past week. They can also be used to reconstruct the main data file if it becomes corrupt.

Each week you press the Weekly Tasks button  (or choose Tasks|Weekly from the main menu), and Forecaster 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. For example,

Week before season begins:

You choose Tasks|Weekly "Week 1 Spreads."

Forecaster loads the current rankings (main-dta.nfl).

Forecaster uses the rankings to generate forecasts.

Forecaster saves the rankings and forecasts to disk (main-dta.nfl).

Forecaster prints the rankings and forecasts.

Forecaster displays the rankings and forecasts.

After 1st week's games are played:

You choose Tasks|Weekly "Week 1 scores ... Week 2 Spreads."

Forecaster loads the current rankings (main-dta.nfl).

You enter scores.

Forecaster uses the scores to create new rankings.

Forecaster saves the new rankings to disk (main-dta.nfl).

Forecaster uses the new rankings to generate forecasts.

Forecaster saves the rankings, scores and forecasts to disk (week-01.97).

Forecaster prints the rankings and forecasts.

Forecaster displays the rankings and forecasts.

After 2nd week's games are played:

You choose Tasks|Weekly "Week 2 scores ... Week 3 Spreads."

Forecaster loads the current rankings (main-dta.nfl).

You enter scores.

Forecaster uses the scores to create new rankings.

Forecaster saves the new rankings to disk (main-dta.nfl).

Forecaster uses the new rankings to generate forecasts.

Forecaster saves the rankings, scores and forecasts to disk (week-02.97).

Forecaster prints the rankings and forecasts.

Forecaster displays the rankings and forecasts.

And so on through the season.

Forecaster has several other functions and is highly configurable: you can open six different view windows; print six different reports; print or view the entire NFL schedule or an individual team's schedule; obtain forecasts for non-scheduled games; 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 horizontal and vertical lines to the screen display and printed reports; add frames and titles to the printed reports; and much more.

At the beginning of each season two files must be updated. In the main data file (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, the schedule file (schedule.nfl) must be updated with the new schedule. The registered version of NFL Forecaster provides functions for both of these tasks. Although, you can purchase an annual update disk which contains main-dta.nfl, schedule.nfl and an updated on-line help file from 100% Cotton Software, you do not have to.

NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 includes NFL Calendar for Windows 95 at no additional charge.

Quitting NFL Forecaster

You quit Forecaster by choosing Exit from the File menu or by pressing Alt-X. If you have 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 or 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.

You should always make backup copies of the main data file and the weekly archive file and place them on another disk (floppy) or subdirectory. A complete and accurate main data file (main-dta.nfl) is essential for Forecaster to work properly. Should the file become corrupt or be accidentally deleted, you would not want to have to re-enter several week's scores (especially late in the season) to bring the file back up to date.

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 the main data file (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, a new schedule file must be created.

The registered version of 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, and an updated on-line help file. 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.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_reg')}

What's New?

NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 is a completely rewritten version of NFL Forecaster for Windows. It contains many new features and is much easier to use. Some of the new features and changes are:

NFL Calendar is included at no extra cost.

A new function, Revert, enables you to recover from errors by reverting the main data file back to its state when you started Forecaster.

There are two spreads reports -- plain and grid.

ALL scores and forecasts are obtained via the Tasks|Weekly menu item which is equivalent to the old Quick menu item (there are no longer Slow Forecasts and Slow Spreads menu items). Post-season games are much easier to handle.

The Category rankings display includes the rankings as well as the team names.

The printed category report contains the same information as the displayed category rankings (it used to be a partial print out).

The Category rankings display now includes an Informal Forecasts function -- generate forecasts for ANY two teams.

Category Rankings highlights teams you select across the display for easy comparison.

You can print the entire schedule in three different formats and print an individual team's schedule.

Additional error-trapping and editing capabilities make creating a new schedule much easier.

The columns in the view windows are now resizable and moveable.

Your preferences are automatically saved when you exit Forecaster.

The view windows automatically open when you load the current rankings or an archive file.

The File|Save As menu now contains a sub-menu for saving data to a main data file or an archive file.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_reg')}

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 software. 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 for Windows 95, you will receive:

1. the latest version of the program:
 - a. the main data file is current as of the day it's shipped;
 - b. it does not have any request-for-registration dialog boxes;
 - c. the two seasonal tasks (create new schedule and zero main data file) will save the data to disk;
2. the latest version of NFL Calendar for Windows 95:
 - a. it does not have any request-for-registration dialog boxes;
 - b. the create new schedule function will save the new schedule to disk;
3. a complete set of archive files: 10 years of scores, spreads & rankings;
4. a 25% discount coupon: toward purchase of your first annual update disk;
5. a \$2.00 coupon: toward registration of any other Cotton Software product (see the file products.txt);
6. unlimited, life-time, free (not toll-free) telephone, email and mail support;
7. and, of course, the appreciation of programmers who strive to produce high-quality, inexpensive, useful and entertaining software.
8. Teachers are over-worked and under-appreciated. Any teacher who registers directly to Cotton Software using his or her school letterhead will receive a \$3.00 rebate.

ORDERING DIRECTLY FROM COTTON SOFTWARE:

Send a check or money order for \$25.00 (US dollars) to:

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

Orders from countries other than the United States, Canada and Mexico must add \$3.00 for shipping and handling. There is a [registration form](#) at the end of this help file.

CREDIT CARD ORDERS ONLY

You can order with MC, Visa, Amex, or Discover from Public (software) Library in the following ways:

FAX: To 713-524-6398: ask for NFL Forecaster for Windows 95, version 5.0, product #11343 and please type or block print very plainly.

Email: To PsL at "11343@pslweb.com"

Mail credit card orders to PsL at P.O.Box 35705, Houston, TX 77235-5705.

Phone: PsL's operators are available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST, Monday-Friday at 800-242-4775 Ext. 11343 or at 713-524-6394 Ext.11343

The phone extension number above (**11343**) is PsL's order number for NFL Forecaster; it uniquely identifies NFL Forecaster. Be sure to use it when ordering; the order will be processed more quickly and efficiently. Be sure to tell the operator that you want the **registered** version of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95.

CompuServe Account: You can charge Forecaster's registration fee to your CompuServe account:
GO SWREG.
Select "Register Software."
Enter "15730" (the registration number for NFL Forecaster for Windows 95).
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).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_reg')}

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 for Windows 95 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 FOR WINDOWS 95 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.

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Certain files of the NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 package are updated every year to keep the package current with changes 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 5.0 of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 was released July 1997.

Support Registered owners of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 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 (Internet: tylutki@compuserve.com) or send a letter to the above address.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_reg')}

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.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_reg')}

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 an email message to ombudsman@compuserve.com.

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 (the 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 the forecasts. For example, if we ship on Tuesday and you get it on Thursday, you will use File|Open Archive Data File and File|Print to print the forecasts and then the following Tuesday morning use Tasks|Weekly to enter scores and obtain forecasts for the next week.

If games are played between the time we ship and you receive Forecaster (for example, we ship on Friday and you get it the following Tuesday), you will probably not bother printing the forecasts, but just use Tasks|Weekly 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 Archive Data File to load each weekly archive file and File|Print 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 for Windows 95 after the season has begun, you will need to "catch up" -- bring the main data file 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 for Windows 95.
2. Run Forecaster.
3. Choose Tasks|Weekly from the main menu.
4. In the list box choose "Week 1 scores ... 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 the main data file (main-dta.nfl) will contain the latest rankings. You can then use Tasks|Weekly each week to update the rankings and obtain forecasts. If you want a complete printed record of the predictions, you should choose "Week 1 spreads" the first time you come to step 4; Forecaster will skip to step 6.

Don't forget to make backup copies of the main data and weekly archive files.

Playoff Games and Super Bowl

See below "Generating Forecasts" regarding obtaining additional non-scheduled forecasts for regular-season games.

For the playoff games and the Super Bowl, use Tasks|Weekly just as you do for non-playoff games. However, Forecaster cannot know which teams play in the post-season games, so it cannot prompt you for the scores, nor can it automatically generate forecasts. For post-season games you must "manually" select the teams that play in each game before entering the scores. You must also "manually" select which teams play in the next week's games. Otherwise, the process is identical to that Forecaster follows for regular season games (prompting you to save the data, print the reports, etc.).

In the past there have been four Wild Card and 4 Divisional games, but this could change. So, you can enter scores and obtain forecasts for up to 15 Wild Card and Divisional playoff games. Only two games are allowed for the AFC/NFC Championship games and only one for the Super Bowl. If, in the future, another week of playoff games is inserted in the schedule, use "Other scores ... Other spreads" to enter the scores and obtain the forecasts for that week.

When prompted to enter names for the archive files, type something descriptive -- for example, Wild Card.97, Divisional.97, Championship.97, Super Bowl.97.

Weekly Task: Enter Wild Card Scores

AFC East	AFC Central	AFC West	NFC East	NFC Central	NFC West
Buffalo	Cincinnati	Denver	Arizona	Chicago	Atlanta
Indianapolis	Baltimore	San Diego	Dallas	Tampa Bay	St. Louis
-----	-----	Kansas City	-----	Detroit	New Orleans
NY Jets	-----	-----	NY Giants	-----	San Francisco
New England	Jacksonville	Seattle	Washington	Minnesota	Carolina

Team 1		Team 2	
Baltimore		Cincinnati	
21		21	
21		21	
22		22	
23		23	
24		24	
25		25	
26		26	
27		27	

Miami	24	Houston	21
Green Bay	14	Philadelphia	9
Pittsburgh	9	Oakland	3

Enter Game Score All Games Entered

Entering Scores The Enter Scores dialog box displays the teams by conference and division in six columns. A score of twenty-one will be highlighted in the combo box where you enter the scores. Acceptable scores range from 0 to 98. Use the mouse or keyboard to choose teams and enter 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.

Choose two teams and enter two scores and press the button labeled "Enter Game Score." Forecaster will place the team names and scores in a grid on the right side of the dialog box and remove the team names from the top of the dialog box (no team can play twice in the same week). When you have entered all of the scores, press the "All Games Entered" button. Forecaster will give you an opportunity to edit the scores (you cannot edit the teams you have chosen). When you are satisfied that they are

correct, press the "Done" button. If you realize that you have forgotten to enter the scores for a game, press the "Not Done" button and resume entering scores. You can press the "Cancel" button at any time to throw away the scores you have already entered.

If you make a mistake entering a score, do NOT press the "Cancel" button immediately; continue until all of the game scores have been entered. Forecaster will give you an opportunity to correct the mistake.

If you make a mistake choosing a team and do not realize it until after you have pressed the "Enter Game Scores" button, then press the "Cancel" button and start over. (You can edit the scores, but not the team names.)

If you make a mistake entering a score or choosing a team and do not realize it until you have pressed the "Done" button, see [Correcting Mistakes](#).



Generating Forecasts The Choose Teams dialog box displays the teams by conference and division in six columns. This dialog is identical to the one used to obtain additional non-scheduled forecasts for regular-season games

Choose two teams and press the button labeled "Forecast Game." Forecaster will place the team names and the spread in a grid on the right side of the dialog box. When you have chosen the teams for all of the games for the week, press the "Done" button. You are not given an opportunity to edit your choices for forecasts, so choose the teams carefully and be sure to choose all the teams that will play that week. You can press the "Cancel" button at any time to throw the choices you have already made (the rankings have already been updated, however).

As you choose teams for playoff-game forecasts, Forecaster does not blank out the names as it does when you choose teams for entering scores. You can choose a team more than once, for example, your favorite team against the other playoff teams. This is similar to obtaining one or two additional non-schedule games during the regular season. You can also archive this same result by just choosing only the teams that are playing in the playoffs and then obtaining [Informal Forecasts](#) from the Category Rankings display. However, don't use Informal Forecasts to obtain forecasts until after you have entered the scores for last week's games. If you just run Forecaster, load the current data file and generate Informal Forecasts, they're based on last week's rankings (they haven't been updated with new scores).

Don't forget to make [backup copies](#) of the main data and weekly archive files.

New Users: Trying Out Forecaster

Be sure to read the note below.

Forecaster computes rankings for the teams based upon their game scores. The rankings are stored in the main data file (main-dta.nfl) and the rankings change each week as you enter new scores for the teams. Thus, the contents of the main data file change whenever you enter scores and save them to disk (this is done automatically). The rankings are used to compute the forecasts. Therefore, the rankings contained in the main data file must be accurate in order to obtain accurate forecasts. See also [Overview](#).

Since you will be "playing around" (entering scores, printing reports, etc.), the rankings contained in the main data file will change and will not be the accurate rankings required to get accurate forecasts when you start using NFL Forecaster "for real."

So, before you begin, be sure you have a "clean," back-up copy of the file main-dta.nfl (one that hasn't been used yet). The Forecaster [distribution package](#) contains such a copy. You probably won't need this file, but it's best to be prepared for problems. If you no longer have the original distribution package, you can use Windows Explorer or your favorite utility to make a copy of main-dta.nfl in a subdirectory other than the Forecaster subdirectory.

After you have worked with Forecaster for a while -- entering scores, printing reports, obtaining forecasts, saving data to disk, and so on -- to see how it works, main-dta.nfl will contain inaccurate rankings: they will be based on the (fake) scores you have entered and will not be the actual rankings of the teams prior to the beginning of the season.

So, BEFORE you quit Forecaster, choose File|[Revert](#). Revert restores main-dta.nfl to its state when you started Forecaster. (Revert is also useful when you make [mistakes](#) entering scores.) You can use Revert at any time to restore main-dta.nfl. You can verify that Revert "works" by choosing File|Open Current Rankings File immediately after choosing File|Revert. The rankings displayed (in the [Team Rankings](#) view window, for example) should be identical to those when you first ran Forecaster.

If for some reason Revert is unable to restore main-dta.nfl (unlikely unless a hard, disk error occurs) or if you forget to use Revert before quitting Forecaster, you should copy the back-up copy you made of main-dta.nfl to your Forecaster directory. Then you will be ready to begin the season with accurate rankings.

NOTE:

Sometimes new users enter scores twice, believing that the first scores "didn't take." Let's say that you enter some fake scores after choosing Tasks|Weekly and "Week 1 scores ... Week 2 spreads". After you enter the scores, the new rankings and spreads are displayed automatically. The rankings are saved in main-dta.nfl and the rankings, scores and forecasts are saved in the weekly archive file week-01.97. Tomorrow you realize that you didn't print the spreads. So you run Forecaster, choose File|Open Current Rankings File and notice that the spreads are not displayed as they were yesterday.

This does not mean that the scores "didn't take." To see/print the spreads choose File|[Open Archive Data File](#) and select the file week-01.97. The rankings, scores and spreads will be displayed. The current rankings file contains the current rankings only; a weekly archive file contains the rankings, spreads and forecasts for a particular week. The spreads are displayed automatically only after you have entered scores and generated forecasts using Tasks|Weekly.

Use Tasks|Weekly to enter scores, obtain forecasts and view/print the new rankings and spreads.

Use File|[Open Current Rankings File](#) to view/print the current rankings.

Use File|Open Archive Data File to view/print the rankings, scores and forecasts for any particular week.

In other words, after you quit Forecaster after entering scores and obtaining forecasts, the forecasts are contained in a weekly archive file; open it to see/print the scores or forecasts for a given week (even the current week).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_problems')}

Cancelled and Postponed Games

There may be times when a strike, severe weather or other event interrupts the regular NFL schedule. For example, in 1992 a hurricane caused the Miami-New England game to be postponed for several weeks. You could not use Tasks|Weekly "Week 1 scores ... Week 2 spreads" because there was no score for the Miami-New England game. And, during the week when the postponed game was played, Forecaster would not forecast spreads for the Miami-New England game because it was not in the schedule. In this case you had to use Tasks|Weekly "Other scores ... Other spreads" for both weeks. This choice allows you to "manually" pick the teams to enter scores for and to generate forecasts for. After you have entered the scores and Forecaster has generated new rankings and forecasts, it will save the rankings to main-dta.nfl (as it always does) and prompt you for a name for the weekly archive file (since it doesn't know which week the scores and spreads are for). Enter the same name that Forecaster would have generated; in the above example, you would have entered "week-01.92". The next week and thereafter until the postponed game is played, you enter scores as you normally do, choosing the appropriate week from the list box. Then (using the example above) in week 7 when the postponed game is played, you again choose "Other scores ... Other spreads" and manually choose the teams that play that week and enter the scores. For the rest of the season you continue to choose the appropriate week from the list box.

If one or more entire weeks are cancelled, the process is a bit more complicated but not difficult. For example, let's assume that weeks 6, 7, and 8 of the 1997-98 season are cancelled. You would have already used Tasks|Weekly "Week 5 scores ... Week 6 spreads". The week 6 forecasts would be meaningless (because the games were cancelled), and main-dta.nfl would be up-to-date as of week 5. Just prior to week 9:

1. Use File|Open Archive Data File and choose week-04.97.
2. Use File|Save As|Main Data File to save the rankings in week-04.97 to main-dta.nfl.
3. Use Tasks|Weekly "Other scores ... Other spreads" to re-enter the scores for week 5 and to obtain forecasts for week 9 (choosing the teams "manually").

"Other scores ... Other spreads" requires that you "manually" enter scores and pick teams for forecasts. That's why you have to re-enter week 5's scores. By loading week-04.97 and saving it as main-dta.nfl, you make the main data file up-to-date as of week 4. Then you re-enter week 5's scores (which updates the rankings) and obtain forecasts for week 9 ("manually" picking the teams). After step 3 the main data file is up-to-date for week 10. So, the next week you would use Tasks|Weekly "Week 9 scores ... Week 10 spreads" (and so on for the remainder of the season).

You could, if you wanted, use "Other scores ... Other spreads" to enter scores and obtain forecasts for every week of the season. However, you would have to "manually" pick all the teams for scores and forecasts. Tasks|Weekly automates this process by using the schedule file to prompt you for the appropriate game scores and to automatically generate forecasts. There is no reason to use "Other scores ... Other spreads" except in the case of postponed or cancelled games (1 postponed game in the last 13 years).

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).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_problems')}

Correcting Mistakes

The most common mistakes are **entering the wrong score for a team** and **selecting a wrong team during the playoffs** 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 incorrect rankings which will result in inaccurate forecasts.

If you realize that you have made an error before you quit Forecaster, it's easy to take care of the problem. Select File|Rever^t. After displaying a warning, Forecaster will restore the main data file (main-dta.nfl) to its state when Forecaster started (before you entered any scores). Then select Tasks|Wee^{kly} and re-enter the scores.

If, however, you don't realize that you have made a mistake until after you have quit Forecaster, the process is a little more complicated. The general procedure is to load the most-recent, correct weekly archive file and save it as main-dta.nfl and then re-enter the scores correctly.

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

1. Quit and restart NFL Forecaster.
2. Use File|Open Ar^{chive} Data File to load week-10.97 (which contains the rankings after week 10's scores were entered), the most-recent, correct weekly archive file.
3. Use File|Save As|Main Data File 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 choose Tasks|Weekly "Week 11 scores ... Week 12 spreads."

You must 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-10.97 and save it as main-dta.nfl (as in the preceding paragraph). Then you will have use Tasks|Weekly to re-enter 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 scores nor generate the forecasts automatically. Use the same process as described above to correct the problem. You may have to go back only one week and load a file named something like Wild Card.97, or, depending upon when you made the mistake, you may have to go back to week-17.97 or even week-16.97.

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 to do so.

If **main-dta.nfl** has become **corrupt** or been **deleted**, see [Reconstructing main-dta.nfl](#).

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 +0.971. 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 +0.823. 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 -0.895.

Correlations based on 13 Seasons (1984-85 to 1996-97)

Team	Column A		Column B		Column C		Column D	
	Win Loss Tie %		Average Total Ranking		Average Points+ Per Game		Average Points- Per Game	
San Francisco	.756	1	131.7	1	26.8	1	16.2	1
Chicago	.614	2	108.6	3	20.6	10	17.5	3
Denver	.611	3	108.4	4	22.1	4	19.3	8
Carolina	.594	4	113.5	2	20.5	11	17.0	2
Miami	.594	4	107.9	5	23.6	2	20.9	15
NY Giants	.575	5	105.4	7	19.7	16	17.9	4
Washington	.560	6	107.1	6	22.3	3	19.9	13
Kansas City	.551	7	105.1	8	20.2	14	19.0	5
Dallas	.551	7	104.6	10	20.9	9	19.2	7
Pittsburgh	.546	8	104.0	12	20.4	12	19.1	6
Philadelphia	.546	8	104.4	11	20.3	13	19.3	8
Oakland	.546	8	101.1	16	20.1	15	19.4	9
Buffalo	.541	9	101.7	15	21.0	8	19.8	12
Minnesota	.527	10	104.9	9	21.7	5	20.0	14
New Orleans	.512	11	102.3	14	20.1	15	19.5	10
Green Bay	.486	12	103.4	13	20.5	11	19.8	12
Seattle	.483	13	99.0	19	19.6	17	19.7	11
Houston	.483	13	100.8	17	21.1	7	21.0	16
Baltimore	.471	14	99.6	18	19.6	17	19.4	9
San Diego	.464	15	98.5	20	20.3	13	21.0	16
New England	.454	16	94.6	22	18.8	21	20.9	15
St. Louis	.454	16	92.9	23	20.1	15	22.2	20
Detroit	.428	17	92.8	24	19.5	18	21.9	19
Cincinnati	.420	18	95.7	21	21.3	6	23.1	22
Indianapolis	.411	19	89.6	26	17.0	23	21.4	17
Jacksonville	.406	20	91.4	25	18.8	21	23.1	22
NY Jets	.399	21	89.4	27	19.0	19	21.7	18
Arizona	.379	22	84.1	28	18.0	22	22.6	21
Atlanta	.350	23	83.3	29	18.9	20	24.1	24
Tampa Bay	.300	24	78.4	30	16.5	24	23.6	23

Over the past 13 seasons, Forecaster has correctly predicted winners 63% of the time and spreads 58% of the time. (For the 1991-92 season Forecaster hit 70% for winners and 66% 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 305 of 2,930 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.

Year-By-Year Accuracy for 13 Seasons (1984-85 to 1996-97)

Games Wins Spreads

Season	Games Predicted	Predicted Even	Correctly Predicted	Correctly Predicted
1984-85	206	18	69%	64%
1985-86	204	20	64%	61%
1986-87	193	31	64%	57%
1987-88	198	12	58%	53%
1988-89	199	25	58%	53%
1989-90	205	19	59%	57%
1990-91	205	19	63%	58%
1991-92	198	26	70%	66%
1992-93	198	26	63%	60%
1993-94	194	30	63%	58%
1994-95	201	23	60%	54%
1995-96	211	29	60%	56%
1996-97	213	27	63%	57%
Averages	90%	10%	63%	58%

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 before the season begins 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 1 or 2 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 13 Seasons (1984-85 to 1996-97)

If Forecaster predicted a spread of	it correctly predicted the winner	it correctly predicted the spread
1	55%	55%
2	58%	55%
3, 4	65%	60%
5	73%	62%
6, 7, 8	75%	57%
9.0 and above	88%	56%
All spreads/games	63%	58%

There are, of course, seasonal fluctuations. For example, for the 1990-91 season Forecaster predicted winners in the 6, 7, 8 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 .4%.

Other Information That May Help You Pick Winners

The following information covers the 13 seasons from 1984-85 to 1996-97.

Offenses (points by) for 13 years

	total pts	avg pts per game
San Francisco	5540	26.8
Miami	4877	23.6
Washington	4607	22.3

Defenses (points against) for 13 years:

	total pts	avg pts per game
San Francisco	3357	16.2
Chicago	3619	17.5
NY Giants	3710	17.9

Denver	4575	22.1	Kansas City	3925	19.0
Minnesota	4482	21.7	Pittsburgh	3955	19.1
Cincinnati	4405	21.3	Dallas	3979	19.2
Houston	4362	21.1	Denver	3999	19.3
Buffalo	4350	21.0	Philadelphia	4005	19.3
Dallas	4329	20.9	Oakland	4011	19.4
Chicago	4274	20.6	Baltimore	4025	19.4
Green Bay	4240	20.5	New Orleans	4041	19.5
Pittsburgh	4217	20.4	Seattle	4086	19.7
San Diego	4204	20.3	Green Bay	4102	19.8
Philadelphia	4195	20.3	Buffalo	4105	19.8
Kansas City	4175	20.2	Washington	4109	19.9
Oakland	4167	20.1	Minnesota	4137	20.0
New Orleans	4158	20.1	New England	4319	20.9
St. Louis	4156	20.1	Miami	4324	20.9
NY Giants	4077	19.7	San Diego	4342	21.0
Seattle	4053	19.6	Houston	4353	21.0
Baltimore	4053	19.6	Indianapolis	4438	21.4
Detroit	4046	19.5	NY Jets	4497	21.7
NY Jets	3923	19.0	Detroit	4539	21.9
Atlanta	3911	18.9	St. Louis	4602	22.2
New England	3901	18.8	Arizona	4680	22.6
Arizona	3726	18.0	Cincinnati	4773	23.1
Indianapolis	3524	17.0	Tampa Bay	4882	23.6
Tampa Bay	3412	16.5	Atlanta	4999	24.1
Carolina	656	20.5	Carolina	543	17.0
Jacksonville	600	18.8	Jacksonville	739	23.1

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

25 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
St. Louis	59	Atlanta	16	week 11	96-97
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

38 games in which the combined score was 75 points or greater. The top 10:

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
84	New England	46	Baltimore	38	week 6	96-97
83	Kansas City	42	San Diego	41	week 7	86-87

22 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
151.2	Green Bay	week 19	96-97
149.2	Chicago	week 16	85-86
148.9	Green Bay	week 9	96-97
148.6	Chicago	week 15	85-86
147.9	Miami	week 10	84-85
147.9	Green Bay	week 10	96-97
147.9	Chicago	week 10	85-86
147.8	Washington	week 12	91-92

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
456	Green Bay	96-97	28.5	Green Bay	96-97

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
210	Green Bay	96-97	13.1	Green Bay	96-97
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
218	Carolina	96-97	13.6	Carolina	96-97

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
461	Atlanta	96-97	28.9	Cleveland	90-91
454	NY Jets	96-97	28.8	Atlanta	96-97
454	Buffalo	84-85	28.4	NY Jets	96-97
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
441	Baltimore	96-97	27.9	New England	90-91

The most points scored by a team:

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

There were 121 shutouts.

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

6 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

6 smallest shutouts were:

NY Jets	3	Washington	0	week 15	93-94
NY Jets	6	New England	0	week 13	93-94
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
New Orleans	6	Rams	0	week 10	86-87

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](#).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_problems')}

Backups

Each week Forecaster automatically saves the rankings to the main data file (main-dta.nfl) which it reuses each week and it saves the rankings, scores and spreads to a weekly archive file. You should also save each week's data to a backup file (on a floppy disk, for example). If your hard disk should "crash" in week 10, you would not want to have to re-enter 10 weeks of scores to get the main data file up to date. Making backups can also facilitate reconstructing the main data file should it "go bad".

Each week you should use File|Save As|Main Data File to make a backup copy of main-dta.nfl to a different disk or at least to a different subdirectory. You should also use File|Save As|Archive Data File to make a back copy of each week's rankings, scores and spreads. The archive filenames should be easy to decipher. The form used by Forecaster is WEEK-??.yy -- for example, WEEK-03.97 or WEEK-11.97. Since Forecaster checks whether a file with the same name already exists on the disk when you use File|Save As, you will have to decide whether to overwrite the backup main-dta.nfl file each week or give it a different name each week (for example, main-dta-97.1, main-dta-97.2, etc.)

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_problems')}

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, the old rankings and new scores are 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.

If you make a back up copy of main-dta.nfl each week (as you should), you only need to delete the corrupted main-dta.nfl file and move the backup copy of main-dta.nfl to the Forecaster subdirectory (and rename it if necessary). Of course, you should then use File|Open Current Rankings File to view the rankings and compare them with the latest printout of the rankings to be sure that your backup copy is up-to-date. If so, then you're all set. If it isn't or if you don't make a backup copy of main-dta.nfl each week, then you'll have to follow the procedures below.

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 1997-98 season have been played. When you attempt to use Tasks|Weekly to "Week 10 scores ... Week 11 spreads," you receive an error message indicating that 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-09.97. Use File|Open Archive Data File to load week-09.97. Use File|Save As|Main Data File 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 Tasks|Weekly to "Week 10 scores ... Week 11 spreads."

Distribution Package

The original distribution package is your original source of NFL Forecaster. It might be a set of disks sent from Cotton Software or a disk vendor or it might be a zip file you downloaded. It contains all of the NFL Forecaster files in their original state (see the topic Installing/Uninstalling Forecaster and the files README.TXT and VENDINFO.DIZ) and can be used to replace files that have become corrupt -- the names or schedule file for example.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_problems')}

Error And Warning Messages

Most messages that Forecaster issues are self-explanatory -- for example, "A team can play in only one game per week" (while creating a new schedule); "ALL of the scores will be discarded if you cancel now!" (while entering scores); "The font size must be reduced to fit the report on the page" (while printing).

Handling the full range of errors that can occur when running a sophisticated program like NFL Forecaster under a complex operating system like Windows 95 requires substantial knowledge and experience. However, many problems are easily solved (or at least the causes are not difficult to understand). Each Forecaster warning and error message is accompanied by a **message number**. The same number may be used for the same error at different places in the program. For example, the message "-22 Error writing archive data file" might be displayed when you attempt to make a backup of the archive data file via Tasks|Save As|Archive Data File or when Forecaster is automatically creating an archive data file after you have entered scores via Tasks|Weekly. Use the error numbers to look up an error in the following list.

-3, -4, -18, -19

If the message indicates that the file is the wrong version, then you are attempting to use a very **old version** of a file (main-dta.nfl or schedule.nfl, for example) that Forecaster can no longer handle. This is unlikely to happen since the distribution package includes a complete set of files and the registered version includes 10 years of weekly archive files. If you must load an old version of a file that NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 cannot handle, you will have to use an older version of NFL Forecaster.

Many kinds of errors can occur when **loading and saving files** to disk (file not found, corrupt file, bad path, disk full, disk not in floppy drive, network errors, etc). Usually you can correct the error (close the floppy drive door, enter a new correct path, etc.) easily. If not, save the data file or new schedule to a different directory or drive or use a different temporary name. Then fix the problem and copy the file back to the Forecaster directory.

-1, -3, -5, -6, -7, -8, -9, -11, -16,-17, -20, -21, -22, -32, -42

If you use Tasks|Weekly each week and thus let Forecaster handle loading and saving data, you should not encounter these errors. If the error indicates that a file is **not valid**, you may have simply made an error in choosing a file from a list (in attempting to load a weekly archive file, for example). However, an invalid-file error may also indicate that the file has become **corrupt**. If the error indicates that Forecaster can't find or open a file, or that there has been an error reading or writing a file, the file is either missing or corrupt or your disk is damaged (a bad sector, for example). You can often correct the problem by replacing the missing or corrupt file. For example, copy the good schedule file (schedule.nfl) from the distribution package to the Forecaster directory or copy your backup main data file (main-dta.nfl) to the Forecaster directory. A file may become corrupt for a number of reasons: a power glitch while saving the file, the proximity of an excessive number of bovine bodies; a physical imperfection of the disk itself; and many more. If the cause of the error was not simply a missing file (you accidentally deleted it at some time), you might want to run Disk Scan to determine whether there is something wrong with your disk.

Other errors can occur when the amount of free **memory** becomes low. This happens less frequently with Windows 95 than with previous versions of Windows. Generally, you fix this problem by freeing up some memory: shut down other programs that are using memory.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Each of these errors are the result of a severe **memory shortage**. It is very unlikely you will ever see any of these messages. The solution is to free up some memory by shutting down one or more other programs. Error 8 may be the result of a severe memory shortage or Forecaster may be unable to find the **NFL Calendar** executable file. NFL Calendar must be in the current directory or in a directory in your PATH list. You may need to move NFL Calendar to a place where Forecaster can find it. See your Windows manual and [Installing/Uninstalling NFL Forecaster](#).

-38, -39, -40, -41, -43, -44, -45, -46

When Forecaster first runs, it makes a backup copy of main-data.nfl (the main data file containing the current rankings) named main-dta.rvt. When Forecaster shuts down, it deletes the file main-dta.rvt. When you choose **File|Revert**, Forecaster takes the data in main-dta.rvt and puts it in main-dta.nfl, thus restoring the main data file to its state when Forecaster was first run. The process is simple and you should never have any problems. However, errors -43, -44, -45 and -46 indicate that at some time since Forecaster was first run, someone "messed with" main-dta.rvt -- deleting it, renaming it, renaming a different file main-dta.rvt and so on. Errors -38, -39, -40, -41 (and also -43, -44, -46) can also indicate some type of disk error -- for example, for some reason invalid data was written to main-dta.rvt when it was created or a disk surface flaw prevents Forecaster from reading or writing to the file. You could try loading main-dta.nfl via File|Open Current Rankings File and loading main-dta.rvt via File|Open Archive Data File to determine which file is causing the problem, but if an error occurs during the reversion process, you should assume that main-dta.nfl and main-dta.rvt are corrupt (no longer useable). The important task now is to restore the main data file (main-dta.nfl); see [Reconstructing main-dta.nfl](#).

-12, -13, -14, -15

These messages indicate that Forecaster is unable to read from or write to Windows Registry which is where Forecaster stores all of the preferences and windows layout settings. You should see these messages only if your **Registry** file has become corrupt (in most cases Forecaster will be able to continue by using built-in default settings). A corrupt Registry is a serious problem; the on-line help for the Windows RegEdit program contains information about restoring the Registry.

Error 9; I/O Error 32: Can't open file This is a system not a Forecaster message. It almost always indicates that the file is already in use (open) by another program. For example, you might be looking at the file using an editor or word processing program (which is holding the file open). Close the file in the other program.

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 as it was in versions prior to 4.0; fluctuations in this value have 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 amount 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, rules 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 13 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
96-97	20.43	20.44

13 yr avg	20.34	20.32

As you can see from the table above, the average fluctuates, and the 13-year average is down 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.

You can view the average number of points scored by each team in each game in the [Team Rankings](#) and [Archive Scores](#) view windows and on the [Team Rankings](#) and [Archive Data](#) reports.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_file')}

File

Generally, Forecaster handles loading and saving data files for you, because you usually use Tasks|Weekly each week. Sometimes, however, you may want or need to load and save yourself.

You **need** to Open Current Rankings File or Open Archive Data File only 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) or when you need reconstruct main-dta.nfl because it has become corrupted.

There may be times when you **want** to load the current rankings or a weekly archive file for information purposes -- to view or print the rankings of a particular team at a particular time or to look back at some scores or spreads. If you want to export the scores or spreads each week to another program (a database program, for example), you should:

1. Enter the scores and save the data using Tasks|Weekly.
2. Use File|Open Archive Data File to load the archive file.
3. Open the Archive Scores and/or Archive Spreads view windows.
4. Use the copy function to copy the data to the Windows clipboard.
5. Paste the data into the other program.

When you load the current data file or an archive data file, all open windows (except schedule) are closed and then all appropriate windows (depending upon the data) are opened in their default sizes and positions. They are opened as large as necessary to show as much of the data as possible in the current font given the size of the main window. After loading the current rankings or archive data, you can immediately press the Restore Layout button to restore the windows layout you have saved.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_file')}

File|Open Current Rankings File

This menu item causes Forecaster to load the data from main-dta.nfl and to open the Team Rankings, Division Rankings and Category Rankings view windows. You can then execute any appropriate function such as printing the rankings or obtaining Informal Forecasts (based on the current rankings). The Spreads view window is not opened because no forecasts have been generated (this happens only via Tasks|Weekly) and the Archive Spreads and Archive Scores windows are not opened because the current rankings file (main-dta.nfl) does not contain spreads or scores.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_file')}

File|Open Archive Data File

Choosing File|Open Archive Data File causes an 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 allows only weekly archive files to be listed; another allows only main-dta.nfl (and other files with the .nfl extension) to appear; the third allows all files to be listed. When you press the "OK" button or double-click on a file name, Forecaster will examine the file to determine whether it is a valid Forecaster data file before loading it. If it is, the file is loaded and Forecaster opens the Team Rankings, Division Rankings, Category Rankings, Archive Scores and Archive Spreads view windows. The Spreads view window is not opened because no forecasts have been generated (this happens only via Tasks|Weekly). You can then execute any appropriate function such as printing archive scores or obtaining Informal Forecasts (based on the rankings of the particular week contained in the archive file).

You never **need** to use Open Archive Data File except when there is a disruption of the NFL schedule or when you need to reconstruct the main data file (main-dta.nfl) because it has been corrupted.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_file')}

File|Save As

Use File|Save As with caution; you can corrupt your data files if you use it incorrectly. Normally, you do not need to use File|Save As except to make backup copies of the main data or archive data currently in the computer's memory. You can save the data to the main data file (main-dta.nfl) or to an archive file.

Choosing either Save As|Main Data File or Save As|Archive Data File causes a save-file dialog box to appear. You can enter a name in the edit box 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 allows only weekly archive files to be listed; another allows only main-dta.nfl (and other files with the .nfl extension) to appear; the third allows all files to be listed. When you press the "OK" button or double-click on a file name, a check is made to determine whether there is a file with the same name already on the disk. If so, Forecaster will ask if it should be replaced.

There are several situations where you might use File|Save As depending upon what data is loaded into memory and why you want to save it.

1. Tasks|Weekly has loaded the current rankings into memory. You have entered scores, the rankings have been updated and Forecaster has saved the new rankings to disk. You use File|Save As|Main Data to make a backup copy of the rankings (main-dta.nfl) to a different location or different name. Do this each week.

2. Tasks|Weekly has loaded the current rankings into memory. You have entered scores, the rankings have been updated and Forecaster has saved the new rankings to disk. You use File|Save As|Archive Data to save the rankings, scores and spreads to a backup weekly archive file to a different location or different name. Do this each week.

3. File|Load Current Rankings File has been used to load the current rankings into memory. You use File|Save As|Main Data to save another copy of the current rankings to a different location or under a different name. Not necessary if you make weekly backups.

4. File|Load Archive Data File has been used to load the rankings, scores and spreads for a specific week into memory. You use File|Save As|Archive Data to save another copy of the rankings, scores and spreads to a different location or under a different name. Not necessary if you make weekly backups.

5. File|Load Archive Data File has been used to load the rankings, scores and spreads for a specific week into memory. You use File|Save As|Main Data to restore the main data file (main-dta.nfl) to the state of some previous week before main-dta.nfl became corrupt. See Reconstructing main-dta.nfl.

6. File|Load Current Rankings has been used to load the current rankings into memory. You use File|Save As|Archive Data File. **This makes no sense.** Since the main data file contains no archive scores or spreads, the resulting archive file will be incomplete.

Forecaster keeps track of which files are loaded and saved. If you cause the rankings to be changed by entering scores, Forecaster will want to save the new rankings to disk. File|Save As does not affect this. Saving the data to another directory or with another name via File|Save As does not indicate to Forecaster that you have saved the data to the appropriate files (main-dta.nfl and/or an archive file); you will still be prompted to save the data when you try to load another file (directly or indirectly) or quit if you have not already let Forecaster do so.

File|Save As|Main Data File


See File|Save As.

File|Save As|Archive Data File

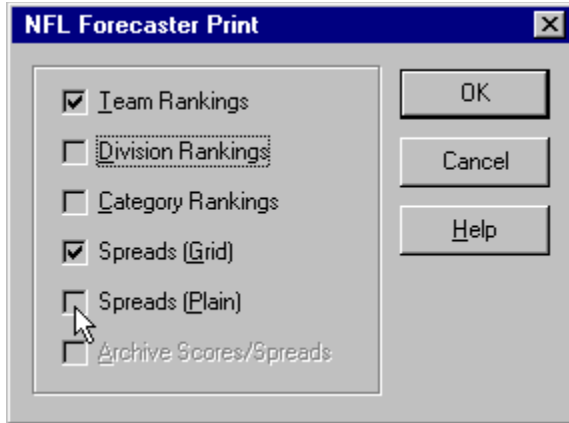
See File|Save As.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}

File|Print

Toolbar button: 

You can print six reports which are very similar to the view windows displays. You can also print several versions of the NFL schedule via the Tasks|Seasonal|Print Schedule menu item.



When you choose File|Print, a reports dialog box pops up with a check box for Spreads (Plain), Spreads (Grid), Team Rankings, Division Rankings, and Category Rankings. There is also a check box for Archive Scores/Spreads which will be disabled unless you have loaded an archive file. The two Spreads check boxes will be disabled unless you have used Tasks|Weekly to generate forecasts. Check the reports you want to have printed and press the "OK" button.

All printing assumes 8.5 x 11 inch paper; Forecaster's reports are simple and it makes no attempt to determine the size of the paper. You can print the reports using any font, size, effect, and style available on your computer system. If Forecaster determines that the report will not fit on the page using the current font, it will compute the largest font size less than the current font size to use to print the report. (Reports are printed centered horizontally on the page with a top margin of one inch unless the entire report won't fit vertically with a margin of one inch in which case the top margin will be as small as necessary to place the report on the page.) If Options|Preferences|Print|Font Size Warning is checked, 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). Thus, you can use a large font to view the rankings and let Forecaster take care of computing the font size for printed reports.

Each report (except Spreads (Plain), Informal Forecasts and the schedule) 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 the reports (except Archive Scores and Spreads, Informal Forecasts and the schedule); you might want to put your name here. The Spreads (Grid) report contains three columns on the right side for checking-off 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|Preferences|View Windows|Vertical Lines, the Team, Division and Category Rankings reports will have vertical lines separating each column. The Spreads (Grid) report has its own row highlighting and vertical lines which cannot be turned off and the Spreads (Plain) report has no vertical lines or row highlighting.

The names used for each team are determined by what you have selected under Options|Preferences|Windows|Names. At the top right of each report (except Archive Scores and Spreads and Informal Forecasts) is printed the season and current week.

The horizontal lines that appear in the grids of the view windows do not appear in the printed reports; to make the printed report easier to read, turn on Options|Preferences|View Windows|Row Highlighting which does appear on the Team, Division and Category Rankings reports.

Multiple copies of a report will be printed (if you set the number of copies greater than one in the printer dialog) only if your printer is smart enough to print multiple reports. That is, Forecaster doesn't handle multiple copies; Windows and your printer do. If you have an older printer that can't be instructed to print multiple copies, you'll have to do it yourself. This is also true for collating; this is handled by Windows and your printer, not Forecaster.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}

Printing Spreads

In order to print a spreads report you must have used Tasks|Weekly to generate forecasts during the current Forecaster session.

The **Spreads (Grid)** 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 recording 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 the cells of any game 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|Preferences|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 Spreads (Grid) report has its own formatting and is not affected by the vertical lines or row highlighting options. This report may have a frame and title.

The **Spreads (Plain)** report simply lists the two team names (with the winner first) and the spreads down the page. Row highlighting, vertical lines and a frame may not be added to this report. A title may be added.

If you used Tasks|Weekly to enter scores but quit Forecaster without printing the spreads and later want to view or print them, load the archive file for the appropriate week and print the archive spreads. For example, let's say you have entered week three's scores. The file week-03.97 contains the scores for week 3 and the forecasts for week 4. To later print the spreads, load week-03.97 and print the archive spreads.


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{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}
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Printing Team Rankings

The Team Rankings report is very similar to the Team Rankings view window. The field upon which the rankings were sorted before printing is indicated by an asterisk to the left of the field name. If you have entered scores via Tasks|Weekly before printing the team rankings, then the average number of points scored by each team in each game is printed at the bottom of the report.

Vertical lines, row highlighting, a frame and a title may be added to this report.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}

Printing Category Rankings

This report provides the same information as the Category Rankings view window. The report is printed in landscape (rather than portrait) mode in order to fit all of the information on the page.

Vertical lines, row highlighting, a frame and a title may be added to this report.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}

Printing Division Rankings

This report provides the same information as the Division Rankings view window. An asterisk is always placed to the left of the "%" column header to indicate that the Division Rankings are sorted by the teams' win/loss/tie records and another asterisk may appear to the left of another column header to indicate which sort field the rankings in the left column are based on. For example, a team might be listed first in its division, but the "10" in the left Rank column would indicate that the team was 10th overall defensively; the "Def" column header would have an asterisk before it.

Vertical lines, row highlighting, a frame and a title may be added to this report.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}

Printing Archive Scores/Spreads

Although archive scores and spreads are displayed in separate windows, they are printed on a single page. 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 Super Bowl). They are printed on a single page with the name of the archive file as a title. This report never has row highlighting or vertical lines, but it may have a frame. The Archive Scores/Spreads check box is always unchecked when you invoke the print dialog box; you must explicitly check it each time you want to print archive scores and spreads.

If the archive file that you are printing contains scores then, the average number of points scored by each team in each game will be printed at the bottom of the list of scores.

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 (maybe you only print Spreads (Plain)), do the following:

1. Use Tasks|Weekly to enter scores, obtain forecasts, save data, and print the reports.
2. Choose File|Open Archive Data File and load the archive file for the current week (it was just saved by Forecaster).
3. Choose File|Print|Archive Scores/Spreads to print the scores and spreads.

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{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print')}
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File|Print Setup

This command opens a Windows print dialog box which is used to pick a printer, and set page size, orientation, etc.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_problems;see_also_file')}

File|Revert

Each time Forecaster is run, one of the first things it does is to make a special "reversion" copy of the main data file ([main-dta.nfl](#)). At any time during a Forecaster session you can choose File|Revert and restore main-dta.nfl to its start-up state.

For example, let's say that you have entered the scores for week 7. Forecaster has saved the data to disk and printed the reports you requested. Looking at the Team Rankings, you notice that the Steelers' win-loss-tie record is wrong. You use File|[Open Archive Data File](#) to look at week-07.97 (which contains the data for the week you just entered) and see that you switched the scores for the Steelers and Chargers. Choose File|Revert. After a warning, Forecaster will restore the main data file (main-dta.nfl) to its state at the beginning of the session (before you entered any scores). You can use File|[Load Current Rankings File](#) to look at the Team Rankings and verify that Forecaster has restored main-dta.nfl. Now choose Tasks|Weekly "Week 7 scores ... Week 8 spreads" and enter the scores again.

Revert only restores the main-dta.nfl file. It does not change or delete any other files you may have created; in the example above the archive file week-07.97 would still contain inaccurate data. This would not be a problem because the corrupt file week-07.97 would be replaced by a good week-07.97 after you re-entered the scores. However, if you had already made [backup](#) copies of main-dta.nfl and week-07.97, they would still contain inaccurate data. You would use File|Save As to resave them; when asked if you want to replace the files that already exist, you would answer "Yes."

Revert only works if you use it before you quit Forecaster. After you quit, the reversion file is deleted and main-dta.nfl contains any new rankings that might have been generated by entering scores. If you exit Forecaster and then discover that you have entered incorrect scores (and thus have caused inaccurate rankings to be calculated), there are two ways to handle this: see [Correcting Mistakes](#).

When you choose Revert, if you have entered scores but not saved the new rankings to disk, Forecaster will ask if you want to save them (it does this any time you start an action that would replace the data in memory with new data, if the data has not been saved). Since you wouldn't be using Revert unless there were errors, you should answer "No" (don't save the rankings). This situation could happen if during one session you were [catching up](#) and had entered one week's scores (and saved the data to disk), and then, after entering the second week's scores, you realized that you had made an error entering scores for the first week. When Forecaster asks if you want to save the data to disk (the second week's data), answer "No". Then choose File|Revert; Forecaster will ask again if you want to save the rankings (second week). Again, answer "No"; they're inaccurate because the first week's were inaccurate. Then Revert will restore main-dta.nfl to its condition when you first ran Forecaster (its state before you entered the first week's scores). Now use Tasks|Weekly to re-enter both week's scores.

You can choose File|Revert more than once during a session. Each time the main data file will be restored to its state when Forecaster was first run.

Revert is also useful if you are just [playing around](#) with Forecaster.

File|Exit

See [Quitting NFL Forecaster](#).


{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_tasks')}

Tasks

Generally speaking, there are two types of tasks -- weekly and seasonal. Seasonal tasks need to be done once each year: creating a new schedule, printing the schedule and zeroing the main data file. Weekly tasks are done, of course, weekly -- entering scores, obtaining forecasts, printing reports and viewing rankings and spreads.

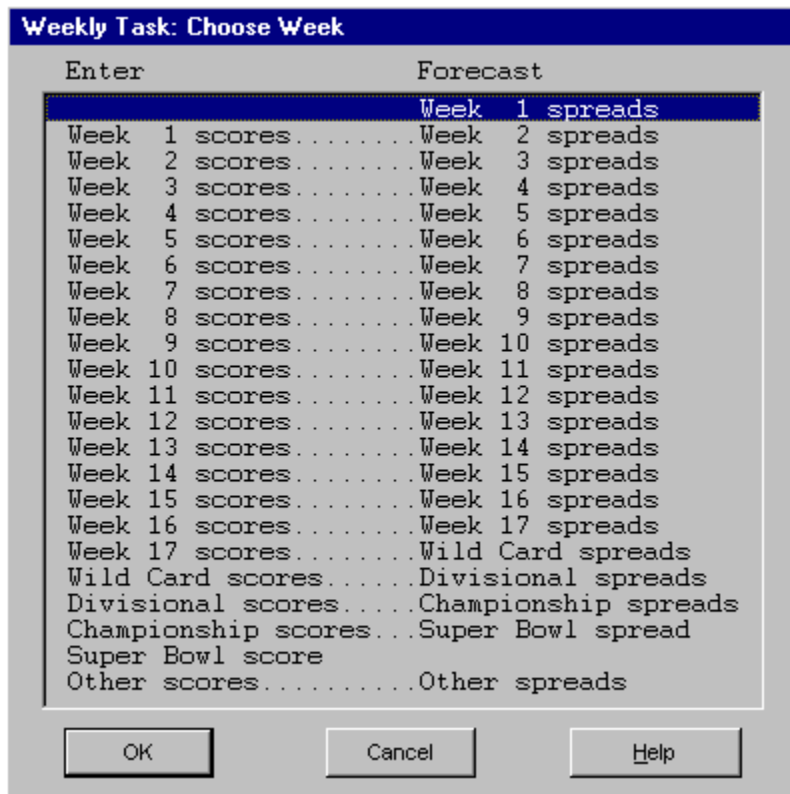
{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_tasks')}

Tasks|Weekly

Toolbar button: 

Tasks|Weekly automates the process of entering scores and obtaining forecasts each week, including the playoffs and Super Bowl. The week before the first game of the NFL season use Tasks|Weekly to Forecast "Week 1 spreads." (The archive file for this week is named week-00.yy.) After the first week's games have been played, but before the second week's games are played, use Tasks|Weekly "Week 1 scores & Week 2 spreads." Do this each week right through the Super Bowl, choosing the appropriate week from the list box. If games are postponed or cancelled, see "Cancelled and Postponed Games".

When you choose the Tasks|Weekly menu item, Forecaster displays a modal dialog box; from the list, pick which week you want to enter scores/obtain forecast for.



Forecaster reads the main data file (main-dta.nfl) which contains the current rankings and the schedule file (schedule.nfl) which contains the current schedule.

Then a dialog box for entering scores is displayed.



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 "2 Games OK" button. Forecaster displays the scores you enter in a grid on the right side of the dialog box. If you make a mistake entering scores, do not immediately press cancel; continue entering scores until all of them have been entered, at which time Forecaster will give you an opportunity to edit the scores. If you make a mistake entering scores, and do not become aware of it until after you press the "Done" button, see "[Correcting Mistakes](#)".

During the regular season Forecaster will know when all of the scores for a week have been entered (since it read the schedule). At that time it will give you an opportunity to review and edit them. When you are satisfied that all of the scores are correct, press the "Done" button. Forecaster immediately updates the rankings based upon the new scores. You can press the "Cancel" button at any time before pressing the "Done" button to throw away any scores entered so far (the rankings are not updated).

After Forecaster updates the rankings, it will ask if it should save the new rankings to disk. If you press the "Yes" button, Forecaster will save the rankings to main-dta.nfl and the rankings, scores and spreads to a weekly archive file. It will name the archive file based upon the year and week (for example, week-04.97). Forecaster keeps track of which files have been loaded and saved. If you enter scores (which changes the rankings) and do not let Forecaster save the new data when it prompts you to do so, it will prompt you to save the data when you (1) attempt to open a new file via the File menu; (2) attempt to enter more scores or obtain forecasts via the Tasks|Weekly menu; or (3) attempt to quit Forecaster. Generally, you should let Forecaster save the rankings, scores and spreads when it prompts you. Of course, if you have just been "fooling around" ([trying out](#) Forecaster) then you might not want to save the data.

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 each week. If you answer yes, a dialog box similar to the "Other scores ... Other spreads" dialog 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 (Plain), Spreads (Grid), Team Rankings, Division Rankings, Category Rankings) and press the "OK" button to print them. Finally, Forecaster will open the [view windows](#) to their default positions and sizes. At this time you can press the [Restore Layout](#) button if you have saved a window layout.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_tasks')}

Tasks|Seasonal

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 the main data file 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 make accurate predictions, the number of wins, losses and ties and the win/loss percentage for each team must also be set to zero. Tasks|Weekly uses the schedule file (schedule.nfl) to prompt you for scores and to calculate point spreads, so a new schedule must also be constructed before the new season begins. NFL Forecaster provides functions for zeroing main-dta.nfl, creating a new schedule, and printing the schedule. Registered users can also purchase an annual update disk which contains updated main-dta.nfl, schedule.nfl and on-line help files.

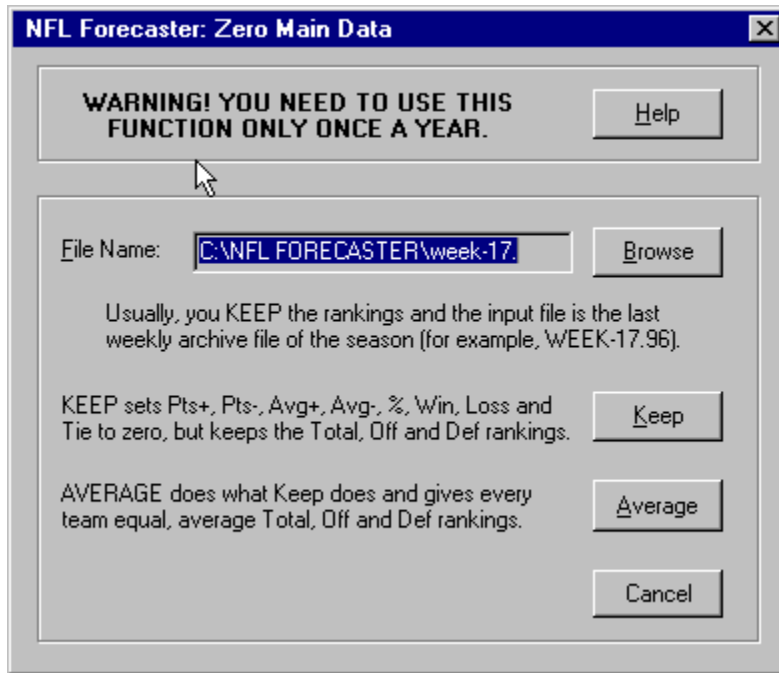
You can view the current schedule via the Window menu.

In the unregistered version of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95, the functions for creating a new schedule and zeroing main-dta.nfl function, but you cannot save the data to disk. You can try both to see how they work, but the new schedule and the new main-dta.nfl file cannot be saved to disk. It's only fair that you cannot use Forecaster for more than one season unless you register it.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_tasks')}

Tasks|Seasonal|Zero Main Data File

If you purchase an [annual update disk](#), you do not have to zero main-dta.nfl.



You need to zero main-dta.nfl only once a year before the new season begins. This function prepares a new main data file (main-dta.nfl) for a new season. It takes the data from one file, 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 are 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 the year are skewed because only some teams play in the playoffs. Thus, most users (and Cotton Software) choose to use the weekly archive file from the last, regular-season week of the previous season as the source file -- for example, week-17.97. In this case it is best to rename main-dta.nfl to Post Bowl.yy (for example, Post Bowl.97) before zeroing main-dta.nfl. Then you will have an archive data file of the rankings after the last week of the season (week-17.97) and another after the Super Bowl (Post Bowl.97). 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 the main data file 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 NFL 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 choose Average, but you might want to see how the rankings would work out IF the season began with parity among the teams.

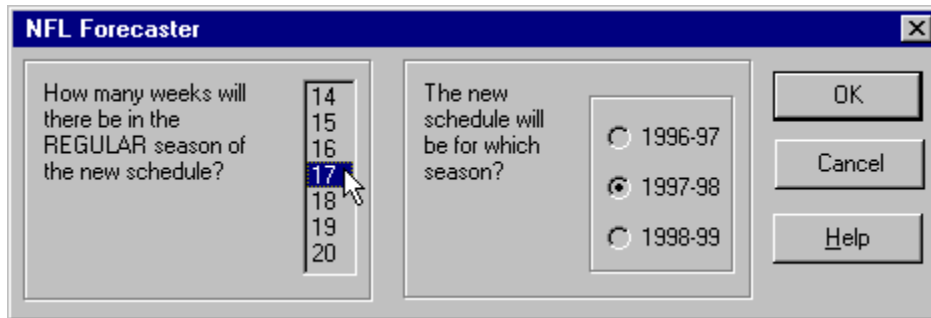
The default button in the dialog box is "Cancel" so you must press the "Keep" or "Average" button, not the "Enter" key.

In the unregistered version of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95, this function does not allow you to save the new data to disk.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_tasks')}

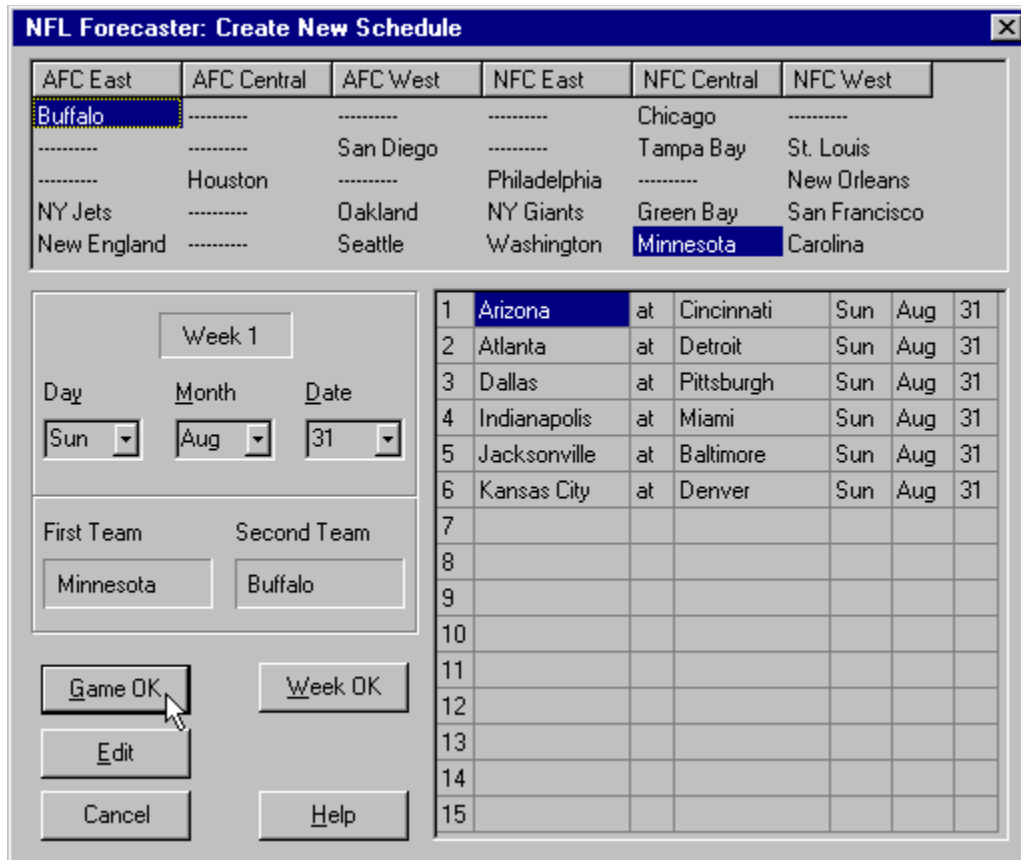
Tasks|Seasonal|Create New Schedule

If you purchase an [annual update disk](#), you do not have to create a new schedule.



When you choose Tasks|Seasonal|Create New Schedule, a dialog box opens 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 value Forecaster is requesting is the number of weeks in the regular season (do not include playoff weeks).

You also need to tell Forecaster **which season** the new schedule will be for. You have three choices: last year, the current year and next year (each year the dates change; Forecaster isn't locked into only 3 years) If it is 1998 when you are creating the schedule, the correct season would be 1998-99; you can't create a schedule for the following year because the NFL doesn't release the schedule until April or May of the schedule year (May 1998 for 1998-99 schedule, for example). And it doesn't make much sense to create a schedule for the previous year. But who knows what will happen? What if the NFL season is moved from Sept-Dec to Nov-Feb? Then you might want to create a schedule in January 1999 (in the middle of the season) for 1998-99 season. If for some reason you want to create a schedule for a season other than the three offered by Forecaster, use Settings|Control Panel to change your computer's date (see your Windows manual) and then run Forecaster and create the schedule. Don't forget to reset the date.



Next, the Create New Schedule dialog box is opened. At the top the teams are listed by division in six columns. Below that are three drop-down edit boxes you use to **set the date of each game**. Most games are played on Sunday but you should remember to change the date for Monday-night games (and special games like Thanksgiving and end-of-the-season Saturday games). Also, be sure to set the date at the beginning of each new week. Forecaster uses the Settings|Control Panel|Regional Settings for month and day names (short names); see your Windows manual.

Choose two teams and press the "**Game OK**" button. Forecaster will list the game in the grid on the right side of the dialog. If you make a mistake, press the "Edit" button and correct the error. Then press the "Edit Done" button (or "Cancel Edit" button). Each time you press the "Edit Done" button, Forecaster performs numerous checks on the information in the grid (see below) and will pop up a warning if something is not correct. Fix the error and press "Edit Done" again, or press "Edit Cancel" and fix the error later. The titles on the buttons change depending upon whether you are entering games or editing.

While **editing**, you can press your mouse's right button to pop-up a menu that enables you to delete, clear, and insert games. Clear deletes the information in a game row (so you can enter new information); delete deletes the information in a game row and deletes the row; insert moves all games down a row and clears the current row so you can enter game information between two other games (if you omit a Sunday game between the Saturday and Monday games, for example). Forecaster can "see" spaces even if you can't. Use delete or clear to remove a game from the schedule; do NOT use the space bar to blank out a game. You can leave empty rows between game rows in the grid if there are less than 15 games. There is no reason to do this; Forecaster will simply redisplay the schedule without the empty rows after verifying it is correct.

Continue entering games until all the games for the week have been entered. Then press the "**Week**

Done" button. Forecaster will give you another chance to edit the games listed in the grid. Press the "Edit" button to make any corrections. If you realize that you have omitted a game, press the "Not Done" button to resume entering games. Forecaster verifies the information you have entered a second time when you press the "Done" button indicating that the week has been edited and verified.

You can press the "Cancel" button at any time. If you do, Forecaster will ask you to confirm that you want to stop. You **cannot save a partial schedule** and resume work on it at a later time. Either you create an entire new schedule or no schedule. Creating a new schedule doesn't take long and the ability to edit the schedule as you go along makes it relatively easy to quickly enter an accurate, new schedule. Be sure you will have 30 to 45 uninterrupted minutes time before you start; you only have to create a new schedule once a year.

When the **new schedule is saved to disk**, schedule.nfl is renamed to schedule.old. If schedule.old exists, it is renamed schedule.bk1. If schedule.bk1 exists, it is renamed schedule.bk2, and so on. It's best to rename schedule.nfl before you choose Tasks|Seasonal|Create New Schedule (for example, to schedule.95) to make it easier to find at some later time.

When you have completed creating the new schedule and it has been saved to disk, NFL Forecaster automatically rereads schedule.nfl (whether you cancel or complete the new schedule).

Forecaster **can't catch every error** you can make, but it catches many.

- It checks that each cell (except the "at" cell) has valid contents.

- It checks that the dates range from 1 to 31.

- It checks the date and month (Nov 31 isn't allowed).

- It doesn't check Feb 28/29 against leap years; since there are no games in February this is not a problem, but keep it in mind. Who knows how the NFL may change the schedule?

- It verifies that the day matches the date (that August 31 is a Sunday for example). It assumes that months June, July, August, September, October, November and December are for the current year and that months January, February, March, April and May are for the following year. Thus, the NFL could move the beginning of the season back to June 1 and extend the season to May 31 without affecting your ability to enter a new schedule or Forecaster's ability to verify the schedule.

- It checks that a team doesn't play itself.

- It checks that a team doesn't play in two games in one week.

- It checks whether a game is in Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec (it's allowed but you'll be warned).

- Although it doesn't care about capitalization ("ny Giants" and "Ny giAnts" are the same to Forecaster), it does insist that teams names, days, and months be spelled correctly (Buccaneers not Bucs and Sun not Sunday). You may find this insistence on a single correct spelling annoying, but this is a concern only when you are editing, since you can create an entire new schedule without typing a single date or name.

- It doesn't care if you put the games in the right order; if you want to put Monday night games first in each week's schedule, you can.

- It doesn't verify that the months are consecutive; some weeks can span the start of a new month (Sunday game in October and Monday-night game in November); if you say that some games for a given week are in October and others are in June, Forecaster will not complain.

- It can't check team order; however, for the schedule to make sense the "away" team should be first (team x at team y).

You can use this function to create new schedules until the NFL expands the league, lengthens the schedule beyond 20 weeks or shortens it to less than 14 weeks.

NFL Forecaster and NFL Calendar are installed in the same directory. Both programs share two files -- schedule.nfl and names.nfl -- and both expect these files to be in the directory in which they are installed. You can create a new schedule using either program and after you create a new schedule both will have access to it. If you have moved one of these programs to a different directory (there is no reason to do this), then after you create a new schedule with one of them, you should copy the new schedule to the other's directory so it can use it also.

In the unregistered version of NFL Forecaster for Windows 95, this function does not allow you to save the new data to disk.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_print;see_also_tasks')}

Tasks|Seasonal|Print Schedule

You can print the entire current schedule (the one contained in the file schedule.nfl) using three different layouts: 15 weeks per page, 6 weeks per page and continuous. You can also print an individual team's schedule by first displaying its schedule.



When the schedule is printed 15 weeks per page, 8-point Small Fonts is used. The entire NFL schedule will fit on two sheets of paper. If you can set your printer to do duplex printing (odd numbered pages on one side of a sheet of paper and even numbered pages on the other side), you can print the entire schedule on a single sheet of paper using the 15-week per page format. If not, print it as 15-weeks per page; then turn the pages over and print it again; you'll have two copies of the complete schedule each on a single sheet of paper.



When the schedule is printed 6 weeks per page, 10-point Arial is used. The entire schedule will fit on 3 sheets of paper.



The continuous format prints each game on a single line down the page for as many pages are necessary to print the complete schedule. This is also the method used for individual team's schedules. You can use any font of any size. Thus, the number of pages required to print the schedule depends upon the font being used. Use the continuous format to print the schedule in a large font.

When printing an individual team's schedule and the entire schedule using the continuous format, NFL Calendar determines whether the schedule will fit horizontally on the page using the current font. If not, it will compute the largest font size less than the current font size to use to print the schedule. It will warn you that it needs to reduce the font size and ask if you want to continue. If you answer yes, it will print the schedule using the smaller font. If you answer no, it will print the schedule using the current font which will almost always mean that part of the schedule will not appear on the page. Thus, you can use a large font to view the schedule or calendar and let NFL Calendar take care of computing the font size for printing.

If you want a continuous printout of the entire schedule in a large font, and want to determine if the font is too large for the lines to fit the width of the paper, choose an individual team's schedule and print it (it's

much shorter than the entire schedule and should fit on a single page). If it's too large, reduce the font size and print it again. One or two test prints should be enough. Then print the entire NFL schedule. You can get one week on a page using Arial 24 point (larger than this will cause parts of the schedule to run off the sides of the page). In general, you can use font sizes as large as 20 to 28 points.


The names used for each team depends upon whether you have checked City Names or Team Names on the Options menu.

The options settings for vertical and horizontal lines, row highlighting, title, and frame are ignored by Forecaster when printing the schedule.

Edit

The Edit menu contains two items: Copy and Sort. The Edit menu item is enabled only when one or both of these functions can be executed. If no data is being displayed (rankings, schedule, etc.) then there is nothing to copy to the clipboard. If Team Rankings are not being displayed then there is nothing to sort.

Edit|Copy

Toolbar button: 

This function will copy the contents of the focused (the one on top) view window (rankings, spreads, archive scores/spreads, schedule) to the Windows clipboard. You can then switch to another application and use the Windows Paste function to insert the data into another application. NFL Forecaster has no Paste function; it makes no sense to paste data from another application into Forecaster.

None of Forecaster's formatting (horizontal and vertical grid lines, row highlighting) is copied with the data. Tabs are used to separate the data into columns. When you paste it into another application (such as a word-processing program or editor), the columns may not line up correctly because: of different tab sizes; tabs may expand to a different number of spaces in different programs. Also, 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 automatically aligns correctly.

Forecaster always copies the title of the program and the title of the window from which the data is taken to the clipboard as well.

Edit|Copy copies the contents of the grid's cells to the clipboard; how the data is displayed at the time of copying is irrelevant. That is, it doesn't matter what font you are using, whether a column is so narrow as to obscure some of the data or whether some columns are off the right side of the screen. Nothing special has to be done with the display to copy the grid's contents to the clipboard.

Edit|Sort

Team Rankings are sorted by the current sort field. 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 by highlighting of the appropriate column header. When the data is saved to disk, it is saved in the last sorted order. When you load the main data file or a weekly archive file and then 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 win-loss-tie percentage field, but sorting the Team Rankings also affects the Division Rankings display. Category Rankings are sorted within each category. Spreads are not sorted.

See also Options|Preferences|View Windows|Toolbars|Team Rankings.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Options

The Options menu enables you to choose a font for displaying and printing and to set a number of Preferences to make the program more convenient to use. You can change any of the settings while Forecaster is running.

The settings are automatically saved in the Windows Registry when you exit Forecaster and they are automatically loaded when Forecaster is run. In addition to the font qualities (name, size, color, etc.) and the preferences, a list of the reports you have chosen to print is also 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 (Grid) report each week, check these two reports and print the reports. The next time you choose File|Print, the print reports dialog box will have only these two items checked and you can just press the "OK" button to print.

As all good Win 95 programs should, Forecaster signals errors, warnings and requests for information with the appropriate sound (according to the choices you have made via Settings|Control Panel|Sounds). If you find the sounds annoying, you can turn off/down your speakers or assign "none" to the various settings (asterisk, exclamation, etc.).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: Arial, 10 point, black, regular

Options|Font

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).

Some fonts can't be mapped to an appropriate size by the Windows font mapper (not Forecaster), so it may not be possible to print using a given font. Also, a font may be mapped to a different font to fit the size. Use True Type fonts 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).

When you make a change to the current font (different name, size, etc.), the grids within the view windows are redrawn; the columns are widened or narrowed to accommodate the changed font. However, the view window itself is not resized. (You may be trying to find a font size small enough to display all of the rankings in the window size you have set.) This means that when you make changes to the font (bold to regular, 12- point to 8-point, etc.) that result in less space being needed to display the information, there may be empty space on the right side between the grid's right side and the window's right side.

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. After the report has been printed the original font 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. This also means that you can use whatever size font you like for displaying and Forecaster will take care of reducing the font size if the report will not fit on the page.

You can avoid having Forecaster notify you of a font size reduction and the need to respond to the message by turning off Options|Print|Font Size Warn.

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.

The font dialog lists both screen and printer fonts. You may choose a font that displays well but looks ugly when used to print a report. Rarely is this a problem, but it may be why your report doesn't look good. Generally, TrueType fonts work well with both.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Options|Preferences

Preferences are grouped into three categories:

General

View Windows

Print

Click on the labeled tab to choose a category (or use the Tab, Left and Right Arrow keys).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Options|Preferences|General

The General Preferences affect Forecaster's main window:

Show Toolbar

Show Status Line

Show Fly-by Hints

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|General|Show Toolbar



The main window toolbar is designed to make NFL Forecaster easier to use. It gives quick access to six commonly-used functions (left to right):

Tasks Weekly

Restore the View Windows Layout

Display the Schedule

Show NFL Calendar

Copy to the Clipboard

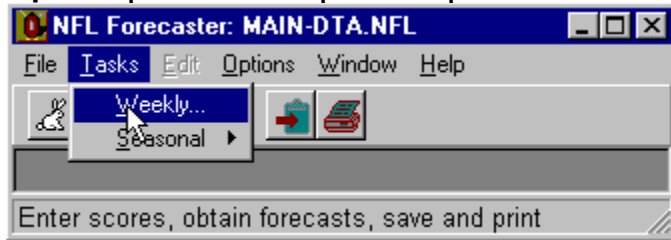
Print

Each button on the toolbar represents a menu item, so if you choose not to display the Toolbar you can still access the functions by using the menu. Not showing the Toolbar leaves more room in the main window for displaying the view windows. 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.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|General|Show Status Line



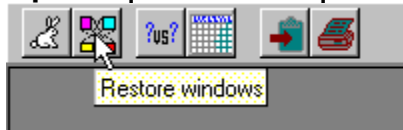
The status line at the bottom of the main window displays information about each menu item and toolbar button. As you highlight each menu item, the status line explains what it does. As you move the mouse cursor over each toolbar button, the status line explains what the button does.

Not showing the Status Line leaves more room in the main window for displaying the view windows.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|General|Show Fly-by Hints



If you have chosen to show fly-by hints, when the mouse cursor is allowed to rest over a toolbar button for about 1 second, a little box that explains the button's function pops up.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Options|Preferences|View Windows

The View Windows options affect the appearance of the view windows in which rankings, spreads and the schedule are displayed. They are organized into 4 categories:

Grids

Toolbars

Names

Tile

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Grids

Within each view window the data (rankings, spreads, schedule) is displayed in a grid (it looks like a spreadsheet). You can choose to show/not show vertical lines and horizontal lines and to highlight certain rows. These Preferences can also affect the look of some printed reports.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Grids|Vertical Lines

When you choose to show vertical lines, each column in the grids in the view windows will be separated from the others by a vertical line. This can make it easier to read the information. When Vertical Lines is turned on, they also appear in the Team, Division and Category Rankings printed reports.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Grids|Horizontal Lines

When you choose to show horizontal lines, each row in the grids in the view windows will be separated from the others by a horizontal line. This can make it easier to read the information. Horizontal lines do not appear in any printed report.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Grids|Row Highlighting

Row highlighting in the Team Ranking and Category Ranking view windows takes the form of drawing every fifth row in the color you set for highlighting menu items using Windows Control Panel. Row highlighting does not affect the display of the spreads, archive scores or archive spreads. 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 (Grid) reports have their own row highlighting which cannot be turned off.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Toolbars

Three of the view windows have their own toolbars which you can choose to show or not show:

Team Rankings

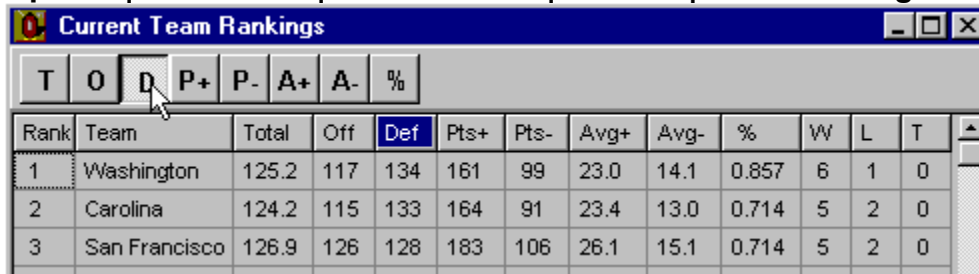
Category Rankings

Schedule

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Toolbars|Team Rankings



The screenshot shows a window titled "Current Team Rankings" with a toolbar containing buttons for sorting: T, O, D, P+, P-, A+, A-, and %. Below the toolbar is a table with the following data:

Rank	Team	Total	Off	Def	Pts+	Pts-	Avg+	Avg-	%	W	L	T
1	Washington	125.2	117	134	161	99	23.0	14.1	0.857	6	1	0
2	Carolina	124.2	115	133	164	91	23.4	13.0	0.714	5	2	0
3	San Francisco	126.9	126	128	183	106	26.1	15.1	0.714	5	2	0

The Team Rankings view window toolbar contains eight buttons you can use to sort the rankings; they function identically to the menu items on the Edit|Sort menu. If you choose not to show the Team Rankings toolbar, additional rows of rankings can be displayed in the grid (depending upon the font and its size).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Toolbars|Category Rankings



Rank	Total	Off	Def	Pts+
1	147.3 Green Bay	167 Green Bay	134 Washington	227 Green Bay
2	126.9 San Francisco	134 Denver	133 Carolina	189 Denver
3	125.5 Denver	126 San Francisco	128 San Francisco	183 San Francisco
4	125.2 Washington	125 Houston	127 Green Bay	179 Oakland
5	124.2 Carolina	124 Oakland	126 Dallas	174 New England

The Category Rankings view window toolbar contains two useful controls: the Names Length spin button and the Informal Forecasts list box.

The Category Rankings window contains a lot of information and it may be difficult to see all of it without scrolling the display left and right. You can adjust how the information is displayed by changing the font name and size, the columns' widths and the columns' positions. It's easier and faster to simply decrease the number of characters of each team's name. The Name Length spin button determines the number of characters of the teams' names that are displayed. (Currently "San Francisco" is the longest name with 13 characters.) When you change the Name Length value, the Category Rankings grid resizes itself. You can change the number of characters of the teams' names only by using the Name Length spin button on the toolbar; there is no menu item for this function.

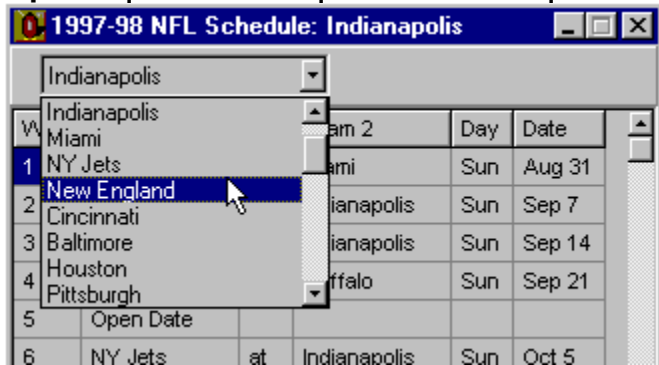
The Informal Forecasts drop-down list box displays any Informal Forecasts you have generated. Although you can generate them even when the toolbar is not being displayed, you cannot view them unless the toolbar is visible.

If you choose not to show the Category Rankings toolbar, additional rows of rankings can be displayed in the grid (depending upon the font and its size).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Toolbars|Schedule



The Schedule view window toolbar contains a drop-down list box you can use to choose to display the complete NFL schedule or an individual team's schedule. The choice you make here determines which type of schedule is displayed and printed. If the entire NFL schedule is being displayed, then when you choose to print the schedule you will have the option of printing it 15 weeks per page, 6 weeks per page or continuous. If you are displaying an individual team's schedule, then only that team's schedule will be printed.

If you choose not to show the Schedule toolbar, additional rows of the schedule can be displayed in the grid (depending upon the font and its size). However, the toolbar must be visible in order to select a schedule to display; there is no corresponding menu item.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Names

Whenever a reference is made to a team, whether on screen or on a printed report, you can have Forecaster use either the teams' name or their geographical name -- for example, Denver or Broncos, Rams or St. Louis. The names are contained in the file names.nfl.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|View Windows|Tile

If you have four or more windows open, the display doesn't look much different whether you tile the windows vertically or horizontally. If you have three or fewer, you can see how the windows stretch across the screen or down the screen.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options;see_also_print')}

Options|Preferences|Print

The Print preferences only affect printing:

[Print Warning](#)

[Frame Reports](#)

[Reports Titles](#)

[Spreads Initials](#)

Two other Options also affect the look of the printed reports:

[Vertical Lines](#)

[Row Highlighting](#)

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options;see_also_print')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|Print|Font Size Warning

You can print the reports using any font, size, effect, and style available on your computer system. This is also true of printing an individual team's schedule and the entire NFL schedule continuously. Each report is positioned on the page based upon the currently selected font and font size. If the report will not fit on the page, Forecaster will warn that it needs to reduce the font size and ask if that's OK. If you answer "Yes," Forecaster will print the report using the reduced font size. If you answer "No," Forecaster will print the report using the current font size, in which case part of the report will run off the edges of the paper. 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, in which case Forecaster will automatically reduce font sizes as necessary to fit a report on a page. Forecaster uses the display font you have selected via Options|Font for printing also. If the font's size is reduced to print a report, it is restored for displaying; that is, printing reports does not affect the screen display.

Forecaster tries to determine if a report will fit horizontally and vertically on a page. It is conservative in its calculations. Given the complex interactions of printers and fonts and Windows 95, it sometimes errs, indicating a report will not fit when it actually will.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options;see_also_print')}

Default Value: True

Options|Preferences|Print|Frame Reports

Each printed report (except Spreads (Plain), Informal Forecasts and the schedule) can be printed with or without a frame -- a box drawn around the report.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options;see_also_print')}

Default Value: v 5.0 1997-98

Options|Preferences|Print|Title of Reports

You can enter up to 15 characters that will appear at the top left of each printed report (except Archive Scores and Spreads, Informal Forecasts and the schedule) -- your name or the date, for example.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_options;see_also_print')}

Default Value: YOU

Options|Preferences|Print|Spreads Initials

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

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{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}
```

Window

The items on this menu help you to manipulate and organize the view windows that can be opened (up to six).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Window|Cascade

Window|Tile

Window|Next

Window|Previous

Cascade causes all open view windows to resize and overlap each other starting at the upper-left corner of Forecaster's main window.

Tile causes all open view windows to be sized and positioned until they all fit side-by-side within Forecaster's main window. Depending upon the Options|Preferences|View Windows|Tile setting the windows will be tiled horizontally or vertically.

Next brings the next open view window to the top. You can also do this by using the short-cut key combinations -- Ctrl + F6 or Ctrl + Tab and Shift + Ctrl+ F6 or Ctrl + Tab -- and by pressing Alt-hyphen to open the system menu (or click on the system menu box at the top left of the window) and choosing "Switch."

Previous brings the previous open view window to the top. You can also do this by using the short-cut key combination above and by pressing Alt+hyphen to open the system menu (or click on the system menu box at the top left of the window) and choosing "Switch."

You can use the Window menu to bring a particular view window to the top by choosing it from the lower part of the menu.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Window|Restore User Layout

Toolbar button:



Restore User Layout causes the various view windows to be opened/closed, sized and positioned as when you saved the layout. If the only windows saved in the layout are inappropriate for the situation when you choose Window|Restore Layout, no windows will be opened. For example, assume that only the archive scores and archive spreads windows were open when you saved the layout. If you load the current rankings (File|Load Current Rankings File) and press the Restore Layout button, no windows will open because there are no archive scores or spreads in the current rankings file to display.

The last thing the Tasks|Weekly function asks is whether you want to open the view windows. If you answer "Yes," all of the appropriate windows are opened (not Archive Scores or Archive Spreads) to their default positions. Simply press the Restore Layout Button to restore the windows to the layout you saved.

When you use File|Open Current Rankings File or File|Open Archive Data File, all open windows (except schedule) are closed and then all appropriate windows (depending upon the data) are opened in their default sizes and positions. You can immediately press the Restore Layout button to restore the windows layout you have saved.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Window|Save Layout

The Windows Layout is a list of all of the open view windows, their sizes, positions and z-order (which window is in front of another) and the font. It also includes the sizes and positions of the columns of the grids in the windows.

The layout is saved from the Windows menu, not from the Options menu. Let's say that each week you would like to look at the Team and Division Rankings and the Spreads (Grid). Open each window and size and position it the way you like and select a font. Then choose Window|Save Layout. The layout will be save to the Windows Registry. Now, any time that you choose Window|Restore User Layout, the three windows will be opened, positioned and sized as you saved them and the information will be displayed using the font you chose. Of course, the Spreads window will not open unless spreads have been forecast.

When you exit Forecaster, the windows layout is not automatically saved as are all of the Options. This means that you can make options changes (for example, 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 layout and save it without having to be concerned that all of the other options are set correctly.

Window|Save Layout saves the display font at the time of saving. When you exit Forecaster all of the Options are automatically saved, including the current font (the windows layout is not automatically saved). Generally, the two fonts will be the same but if you save the windows layout (with the current font) and then change the font and exit Forecaster, there will be two different fonts -- one that will be used when you run Forecaster again and another that will be used when you press the Restore button.

If you save the windows layout while your display is in 800x600 mode (for example) and then restore the layout when the display is in 640x480 mode, the windows will probably be too large and partially obscured. Forecaster saves the absolute (not relative) sizes and positions of the windows.

If no view windows are open, the Window|Save Layout menu item will be disabled.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Window|Restore Default Layout w/ Default Font

If the current rankings are loaded, this menu item causes the Category Rankings, Division Rankings, and Team Rankings view windows to be opened and overlapped starting in the upper-left corner of Forecaster's main window. If forecasts have been generated (after Tasks|Weekly), the Spreads view window is also opened.

If an archive file is loaded, the Category Rankings, Division Rankings, Team Rankings and Archive Scores and Archive Spreads windows are opened.

Any other view windows that are open when you choose Window|Restore Default Layout w/ Default Font (the Schedule, for example) are closed.

When the windows are opened they are sized to a width and height just sufficient to display all of the information in the window's grid (or as wide or tall as Forecaster's main window if all of the information will not fit).

Restore Default Layout w/ Default Font also restores the various grid columns' widths and positions.

The default font is 10 point Arial, plain, black.

This function is useful when you have been moving, resizing and generally playing around with the windows and want to quickly get them back to an orderly state.

This function is called when you use File|Open Current Rankings File and File|Open Archive Data File. All open windows (except the schedule) are closed and then all appropriate windows (depending upon the data) are opened in their default sizes and positions. After loading current or archive data, you can immediately press the Restore Layout to restore the windows layout you have saved.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Window|Restore Default Layout w/ Current Font

This function is identical to Restore Default Layout w/ Default Font except that the current, not the default, font is used.

When you make a change to the current font (different name, size, etc.), the grids within the view windows are redrawn; the columns are widened or narrowed to accommodate the changed font. However, the view window itself is not resized. (You may be trying to find a font size small enough to display all of the rankings in the window size you have set.) This means that when you make changes to the font (bold to regular, 12- point to 8-point, etc.) that result in less space being needed to display the information, there may be empty space between the grid's right side and the window's right side.

Choosing Restore Default Layout w/ Current Font causes the grid columns and the view windows to be resized. After making a change to the current font, choosing this function allows you to see how wide the grid columns and how wide and tall the window itself must be to display the information using the current font.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Window|Team Rankings

Window|Division Rankings

Window|Category Rankings

Window|Spreads

Window|Archive Scores

Window|Archive Spreads

Window|Schedule

Window|NFL Calendar

Each of these menu items opens the particular view window if the window can be opened. A view window cannot be opened if (1) it is inappropriate for the current situation (for example, archive scores can't be displayed if an archive weekly file isn't loaded) or (2) it is already open. If a view window cannot be opened, the menu item will be disabled (grayed out). As view windows are opened, they are added as menu items at the bottom of the Window menu. Thus, for example, if you load the current rankings, the Team Rankings view window will be opened. Window|Team Rankings will be disabled (because the window is already opened) and "Current Team Rankings" will be added to the bottom of the Window menu.

You can bring a view window that is already opened (but obscured) to the top by choosing it from the bottom of the Window menu. You can open an unopened view window that is appropriate to the current situation by selecting one of the menu items above.

You can also bring a partially obscured window to the top by clicking the mouse anywhere within its borders. You can move from window to window using the keyboard or mouse.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

View Windows

Forecaster's main window has a menu, a status line and a toolbar. The name of the file whose contents are in memory is displayed in the main window caption. Within its main window, Forecaster displays view windows -- one for Team Rankings, one for Category Rankings, and so on. None, one or several view windows can be open and each can be resized, repositioned, maximized and minimized. (See your Windows 95 manual for more information.) If an archive file has been loaded, the name of the archive file will be displayed in the caption of each view window.

The **columns** of the grids within the view windows **can be resized** by placing the mouse cursor over the vertical line that separates the columns in the top header row. The cursor will change shape. Press the left mouse button and while holding it down move the mouse right or left to change the size of the column. Release the left button when the column is as wide as you desire. Changing the column widths does not affect the printed reports.

The grid **columns** of the Team Rankings, Category Rankings and Division Rankings view windows **can be moved**. Place the mouse cursor in the top header row of a column. Press the left mouse button and while holding it down move the mouse right or left. Release the left button when the column is in the position you desire. Changing the column positions does not affect the printed reports, although it does affect how the data is copied to the clipboard.

If you press the right mouse button while the mouse cursor is located within the boundaries of a view window, a pop-up menu will appear. It contains items for the most frequently used functions and is context-sensitive (the menu items are appropriate for the particular view window).

Since you can have as many as six view windows open at the same time, choosing an appropriate font and positioning and sizing the view windows is important to making as much information visible as possible. Forecaster tries to make this as easy as possible by allowing you to save and restore the windows layout, to choose a font, to restore the default windows layout with the default or current font, to move and resize grid columns, to add and remove horizontal and vertical grid lines, and to add and remove row highlighting.

You can force the windows to recalculate their sizes and redisplay by making a change to the font. For example, if you change to using city names from team names, the columns may be too narrow. Changing anything about the font (size, style, color, name, etc.) will cause all windows to redisplay with new calculated column sizes. So, change the font from black to red; the windows will redisplay; then change the color back to black.

There can be as many as 6 windows open at once (team, category, division, spreads, archive scores, archive spreads, schedule). If the screen becomes too cluttered, you can press the minimize button on a window's title bar to remove it from the screen. This will cause it to minimize -- shrink to an icon. You can restore it by choosing it from the Windows menu list of available windows.

When you load the current data or an archive data file or choose Tasks|Weekly, all open windows (except the schedule) will be closed and then all appropriate windows (depending upon the data) will be opened to their default (overlapped) sizes and positions. They are opened as large as necessary to show as much of the data as possible in the current font given the size of the main window. You can immediately press the Restore button to rearrange and resize the windows (and even close some windows) to the sizes and locations that you prefer (you must have saved the window layout in the past).

Forecaster opens the appropriate windows in their default positions and sizes so you can see which windows are available. For example, let's say that you like to have the Team, Category and Spreads windows open and laid out in certain positions. Close the other windows and position and size the Team, Category and Spreads windows and choose Window|Save Layout. After entering scores via Tasks|Weekly, all of the windows will open (including Division Rankings) overlapping each other. Press the

Restore Layout button and the Division Rankings window will disappear and the 3 others will be repositioned and resized. Now let's suppose that you open an archive file. If Forecaster did not open all the appropriate windows (including Archive Scores and Archive Spreads), but only opened the windows to the layout you saved, then only the Category and Team Rankings windows would appear (there would be no Spreads window, because you are viewing an archive file). You might wonder where the archive scores and spreads are (especially if you don't look at them very often). You might think that Forecaster wasn't working correctly, that it didn't read the correct file. By opening all appropriate windows to their default positions and sizes and requiring that you only press a single button to restore your layout, Forecaster lets you view the data the way you like and yet insures that you will be aware of all the data that's available.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

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 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.

Team Rankings can be sorted by pressing a button on the toolbar or by choosing an item from the Edit|Sort menu. The toolbar can be made invisible which increases the number of rows of rankings that can be displayed within the window.

If you are viewing Team Rankings after having entered scores (Tasks|Weekly), the average number of points scored by each team in each game will be displayed in the title bar of the Team Rankings window (for example, APPG = 22.6). If you are viewing Team Rankings after having loaded the current data file (File|Open Current Rankings File) or an archive file (File|Open Archive Data File), then nothing will be displayed in the window's title bar.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Viewing Division Rankings

Rather than being displayed in sorted order from 1 to 30, the Division Rankings window displays the teams sorted within their division and conference by win/loss/tie percentage; you cannot sort them by other categories.

The information displayed across the screen is the same as that in the view Team Rankings window, except that the rank listed at the left of the screen is the rank of the team according to the last sort category (Team Rankings) used. The column header of the "%" category header is highlighted (always) as is another column header depending upon the category by which the Team Rankings were last sorted. (Another header will not be highlighted if the rankings were last sorted by win/loss/tie percentage which is already highlighted.) Thus, you see the teams sorted within their divisions by win/loss/tie percentage and at the left the rank of the team by another sort category. The best way to understand this is to display both the Team Rankings and Division Rankings side-by-side and sort the Team Rankings; you'll see the rankings on the left side of the Division Rankings change to reflect the new sort and the column highlight will move. Thus, if you sort the Team Rankings by Defense, a team might be displayed as first in its division in Division Rankings, but show a ranking of 10 (Defense) in the left column.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}


Viewing Category Rankings

The Category Rankings window displays each team's ranking and name in sorted order in 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). In the Team Rankings display you can also view all eight categories, but sorted on only one category at a time.

Category Rankings contains a lot of information. There are three ways you can **adjust the display** in order to see as much as possible:

1. You can reduce the size of the font you are using.
2. You can use the Name Length spin button to reduce the number of characters of each team's name that are displayed. When you do this, the display will automatically adjust itself. Keep reducing the number of characters until all the categories are visible. If the Category Rankings toolbar isn't visible you can't adjust the length of the teams' names; there is no alternative menu item.
3. You can use the mouse to reduce the width of individual columns. When you place the mouse cursor over the line that separates columns in the top header row, it will turn into a splitter cursor shape instead of an arrow. Press the left mouse button and while holding it down move the mouse to widen or narrow the column. However, any change in options (different font or font size, switching to city names from team names, etc.) will cause the columns to resize. You can also use the mouse to move columns. Click on the header of a column with the left mouse button and hold the button down as you move the column to a new position. The column widths and positions are saved when you save the window layout so you don't have to readjust everything each time you run Forecaster.

Comparing Teams When you click on a team name with the mouse or press the space bar when a name is highlighted, the team is selected and highlighted across the grid in every category. By choosing two teams this way, it is easy to compare the rankings of each team in every category. Selecting teams with the mouse or space bar rotates the names: click a team = team 1; click another team = team 2; click another team = team 1 again. To see the same team playing various other teams, click on it and then another team; then click on it again and a second other team, and so on.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Current Category Rankings". At the top, there is a "Name Length" spin button set to 13 and an "Informal Forecasts" dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is open, showing a list of forecasts: "Pittsburgh vs Miami EVEN", "Green Bay over Carolina by 3", "Washington over Minnesota by 3", "Pittsburgh vs Miami EVEN", and "Green Bay over Dallas by 3". The main table below has columns for Rank, Total, and several team names. The table is sorted by Total ranking, with Green Bay at the top (147.3) and Detroit at the bottom (112.8). The "Washington over Minnesota by 3" forecast is highlighted in blue.

Rank	Total	Green Bay	167	Green Bay	Pts-
1	147.3	Green Bay	167	Green Bay	91 Carolina
2	126.9	San Francisco	134	Denver	92 Green
3	125.5	Denver	126	San Francisco	128 San Francisco
4	125.2	Washington	125	Houston	127 Green Bay
5	124.2	Carolina	124	Oakland	179 Oakland
6	114.6	Kansas City	119	Detroit	174 Houston
7	114.5	Houston	119	New England	174 New England
8	113.9	Dallas	117	Washington	106 San Fr
9	112.9	Pittsburgh	115	Carolina	107 Dallas
10	112.9	Miami	115	Philadelphia	108 Kansa
11	112.8	Detroit	114	San Diego	114 Indiani

Informal Forecasts Pressing the Enter key when two teams are highlighted (or double clicking the mouse on one of the team names) will generate an Informal Forecast. These forecasts are not restricted by the NFL schedule; any team can play any other team. Each Informal Forecast is placed in a drop-down list box on the tool bar. When you place the mouse cursor over the Informal Forecasts list box and

press the right mouse button, a pop-up menu will appear. (Pressing Alt + I also pops up the menu). With this menu you can delete an informal forecast, delete all, copy all to the clipboard and print them.

When you select two teams for an Informal Forecast, you are in effect asking Forecaster, "Based on the rankings in memory, of these two teams which would win if they played each other and by how much?" This is useful for comparing the relative strength of teams (for example, how large would the predicted point spread be if the #1 team played the #10 team).

Informal Forecasts are only accurate if you have updated the rankings by entering the scores each week via Tasks|Weekly. Since Tasks|Weekly automatically generates forecasts for the next week's scheduled games (and helps you generate them for playoff games), you never HAVE to generate Informal Forecasts. And if you do generate Informal Forecasts, you must do so after you have entered the scores (so the rankings are up to date). Keep in mind also that Informal Forecasts are based on the rankings loaded into memory. If you load a weekly archive file, the Informal Forecasts will be based on the rankings in that file. It might be fun to see who could have beaten team x and made it into the playoffs, for example, but Informal Forecasts based on an archive file are essentially useless.

If the Category Rankings toolbar isn't visible, you can still generate Informal Forecasts (by double-clicking or pressing the space bar) but you can't view, copy or print them until you make the toolbar visible.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

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 (but see [Informal Forecasts](#)). This means that you can obtain forecasts for 15 regularly-scheduled games and 2 additional forecasts (your favorite team against the top two teams in the league for example).

The spreads are displayed to the nearest whole number; earlier versions of Forecaster displayed them to one decimal place (6.2 instead of 6).

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Viewing Archive Scores/Spreads


Archive scores and spreads can be viewed only after you load an archive file. No scores are displayed for the week prior to the beginning of the season when you obtain the forecasts for the first regularly scheduled games (week-00.yy). No spreads are displayed for the week containing the Super Bowl score. Assuming you have loaded week-09.97, 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).

If the archive data file contains scores, then the average number of points scored by each team in each game that week will be displayed in the title bar of the Archive Scores window (for example, APPG = 22.6).

Archive scores and archive spreads are displayed in separate windows but they are printed on the same page.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Viewing the Schedule


Toolbar button: 

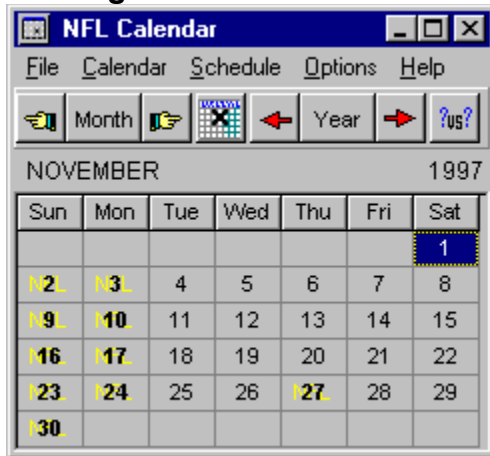
If Options|Preferences|View Windows|Toolbars|Schedule is checked, you can choose to display the entire schedule or an individual team's schedule by selecting the appropriate item in the drop-down list box on the toolbar.

The schedule window doesn't automatically resize itself to shorter (or taller) when you switch between displaying the entire schedule and an individual team's schedule. Forecaster assumes you have positioned and sized the window the way you want it. Therefore, if you switch from displaying the entire schedule to displaying an individual team's schedule, there may be blank space between the bottom of the grid and the bottom of the window.

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_window')}

Viewing NFL Calendar

Toolbar button: 



Pressing the View Calendar button or choosing Calendar from the Windows menu will cause NFL Calendar to be started if it is not running. If it is running and it has been minimized or its main window is hidden, it will be made visible. If NFL Calendar is running and not visible, you can also make it visible by press its button on the Windows 95 task bar. If you start NFL Calendar from within NFL Forecaster, it remains running after you exit Forecaster.

NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 includes NFL Calendar for Windows 95 at no additional charge. NFL Calendar is a stand-alone program which can also be run from within NFL Forecaster. NFL Calendar is a desktop calendar which also displays and prints the NFL schedule, either the entire schedule or an individual team's schedule. You can access the schedule directly or double-click (or press the enter key) on any date that has **"NFL" beneath the number** (indicating that is an NFL game day) and immediately see the games scheduled for that day. The registered version of NFL Calendar allows you to create a new schedule for a new NFL season.

For complete information about NFL Calendar, press the Calendar button to start NFL Calendar and then choose Help|Contents from NFL Calendar's menu.

Help

Many on-line help topics have a "See Also..." button in the upper-left corner of the window. Press this button to see a list of related topics. Choose one from the list and press the "Display" button to read the related topic.

Pressing F1 at almost any time when NFL Forecaster is running will invoke context-sensitive help. That is, the help file will be opened to a topic appropriate to the given situation.

Whenever a dialog box with a help button is opened, pressing the help button will open the help file to a topic relevant to the purpose of the dialog box.

Fly-by hints are displayed whenever the mouse cursor is allowed to rest over a toolbar button for about 1 second if Options|Preferences|General|Show Fly-by Hints is checked.

The status line at the bottom of Forecaster's main window will display information about each highlighted menu item and toolbar button (when the mouse cursor passes over it) if Options|Preferences|General|Show Status Line is checked.

Help about selected topics (Catching Up, Error Messages, etc.) can be obtained by choosing a topic from the Help menu.

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

{button See &Also...,AL(`see_also_file')}

Installing/Uninstalling NFL Forecaster for Windows 95

NFL Forecaster's setup program installs files only in the NFL Forecaster directory (the default directory is Program Files\Cotton\NFL), except for a single file, UNINST.EXE, which is placed in the Windows directory. UNINST.EXE is used to uninstall NFL Forecaster and NFL Calendar (see below) and other companies' programs and should not be deleted from your disk. The setup program does not make any changes to your config.sys or autoexec.bat files.

A minimum of four files must always be in the Forecaster directory:

NFL Forecaster.exe -- The executable Forecaster program file.

main-dta.nfl -- If Forecaster can't find main-dta.nfl, you will not be able to use Tasks|Weekly or File|Open Current Rankings File.

schedule.nfl -- If Forecaster can't find schedule.nfl, then you will not be able to view/print the schedule or use Tasks|Weekly.

names.nfl -- If Forecaster can't find names.nfl, it will use some default names.

Several other files are placed in the Forecaster directory:

NFL Forecaster.hlp -- The Forecaster on-line help file. Required for on-line help.

NFL Forecaster.cnt -- The Forecaster on-line help table of contents.

NFL Calendar.exe -- The executable Calendar program file.

NFL Calendar.hlp -- The Calendar on-line help file. Required for Calendar on-line help.

NFLCalendar.cnt -- The calendar on-line table of contents.

week-xx.yy -- One or more weekly archive files.

DEISLx.ISU -- A log file used when uninstalling NFL Forecaster.

ReadMe.txt -- Information file.

file_id.diz -- Identification file.

vendinfo.diz -- Information file.

Products.txt-- Information file.

You can use File|Save As to store backup files anywhere you want, but Forecaster always saves the main data file (main-dta.nfl) and the weekly archive files (week-xx.yy) to the Forecaster directory as part of the Tasks|Weekly process.

Uninstalling NFL Forecaster

NFL Forecaster's uninstall program removes NFL Forecaster and NFL Calendar. It removes all files and Registry entries that were installed by the installation program (except for the uninstallation program itself; see above). It does not (cannot) remove files that were placed in the Forecaster directory after installation. For example, it will not remove archive weekly files created after installation (or backup schedule and other files); you must remove them yourself.

From the Windows 95 task bar choose "Settings."

Then choose "Control Panel."

In Control Panel choose "Add/Remove Programs."

Highlight NFL Forecaster in the list.

Press the Add/Remove button.

NOTE: Two files -- schedule.nfl and names.nfl -- are used by NFL Forecaster and NFL Calendar which is located in the same directory as NFL Forecaster. Both programs share these two files. If **(1)** you obtained NFL Calendar as a separate program and installed it and later obtained NFL Forecaster and installed it (it also installs NFL Calendar) or **(2)** you obtained and installed NFL Forecaster (which also installs NFL Calendar) and later obtained and installed NFL Calendar as a separate program, then the Control Panel will list both NFL Calendar and NFL Forecaster as uninstalleable programs. The uninstall program for NFL Calendar will remove only NFL Calendar. The uninstall program for NFL Forecaster will remove Forecaster and NFL Calendar. If you want to uninstall NFL Calendar but not NFL Forecaster and your situation is either (1) or (2) above (it's highly unlikely that you would have obtained and installed

each program separately, but it is possible), then you should rename schedule.nfl and names.nfl (to something like schedule.tmp and names.tmp) before you uninstall NFL Calendar. After NFL Calendar has been uninstalled, you should rename the schedule file and names file back to schedule.nfl and names.nfl. You must do this because NFL Calendar's uninstall program will remove schedule.nfl and names.nfl; without these two files NFL Forecaster will not function properly.

File Formats

See [main-dta.nfl](#), [weekly archive files](#), [schedule.nfl](#), and [names.nfl](#).

main-dta.nfl

This is the (ASCII) main data file (current rankings file) which is loaded and saved each week, either automatically by Tasks|Weekly or "manually" via File|Open Current Data File and File|Save As|Main Data File. The contents of the file change 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.

This file is maintained by NFL Forecaster and should NEVER be modified "by hand." Doing so may make it impossible to use NFL Forecaster.

A backup of main-dta.nfl should be made each week.

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. 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 post-season). The contents of these files do not change after they are created and there is NO reason to ever want or need to make changes to these files.

An archive data file is created each week by [Tasks|Weekly](#); there should be one 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).

Use [File|Open Archive Data File](#) to [view](#) or [print](#) the rankings, scores, and forecasts of any past week.

Weekly archive files can be used to [reconstruct](#) main-dta.nfl if it should become corrupt. The current version of the weekly archive files is 4.0.

A [Backup](#) copy of each week's archive file should be made each week.

schedule.nfl

This 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, ".97-98". A new schedule.nfl file must be created each season. Never make changes to this file.

Schedule.nfl is necessary for NFL Forecaster to display and print the NFL schedule. This file is also used by NFL Calendar (if you have it installed on your computer). See [Installing/Uninstalling NFL Forecaster](#) for information about installing and removing this file.

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 have the Rams and Cleveland recently. However, the names **must** remain in the same order and **no** lines may be added or deleted from this file.

If Forecaster cannot find this file, it will use a set of default names for both city and team names (based on the team names). Although they are shortened, they are still usable. If you get a message that names.nfl cannot be found or used, Forecaster will continue to run, but you should find out what is causing the problem. At least, put a good copy of names.nfl into the Forecaster directory (copy it from the original [distribution package](#)).

Because NFL Forecaster and NFL Calendar are installed in the same directory, when you modify names.nfl the changes will affect both programs. If you have both programs installed on your computer but they are not located in the same directory and you modify names.nfl, you should make sure a copy of the modified names file is placed in both directories.

This file is also used by NFL Calendar (if you have it installed on your computer). See [Installing/Uninstalling NFL Forecaster](#) for information about installing and removing this file.

If you use the default names to enter scores, obtain forecasts or make a new schedule, the information will display correctly after you restore the names file; the names are stored in these files as numbers.

Entering Scores Above 98

If a team scores more than 98 points, just enter 98. 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 13 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.

Pop-up Menus

Pressing the right mouse button while the cursor is within the boundaries of a view window will cause a pop-up menu to appear. It contains duplicate items for the most frequently used items on the main menu. Right-clicking is often easier and faster than working down through a couple of levels of menu items on the main menu. The pop-up menu is context-sensitive; that is, some of the items will appear only if appropriate for the selected view window (no toolbar item will appear if it is popped up over the Division Rankings window, for example).

When you are creating a new schedule (Tasks|Seasonal|Create New Schedule) and you are editing the games that you have entered, you can right-click the mouse to pop up a menu that enables you to delete, clear and insert a game.

If you right-click when the mouse cursor is over the Category Rankings Informal Forecasts list box, a pop-up menu will appear that enables you to delete, delete all, copy and print the informal forecasts. This pop-up menu can also be invoked by pressing the key combination Alt + I.

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

REGISTRATION FORM 5.0

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

Date: _____

Register NFL Forecaster for Windows 95 (\$25.00 per copy) \$ _____
(includes NFL Calendar at no additional cost)

Register only NFL Calendar (\$15.00 per copy) \$ _____

Orders from countries other than United States,
Canada and Mexico (add \$3.00) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

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

Check Money order

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

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Please provide the following information. I obtained my copy of NFL Forecaster from (shareware distributor, BBS, Internet, users' group, friend, colleague, relative, etc.):

Suggestions/comments: _____

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

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NFL Forecaster Command Reference

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