

***!streaming-live!* Green Bay Packers vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers Live Free NFC Championship @HQ NFL <Stream> 24th January 2021**



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How to watch Packers vs. Buccaneers: Kickoff time, TV channel, live stream, key matchups in NFC Championship

Welcome to Conference Championship Sunday! Our first matchup is just a few hours away and features two of the all-time greatest quarterbacks, with Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers playing host to Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. There are, of course, other stars all over the field, from Davante Adams and Aaron Jones to Mike Evans and Chris Godwin, and from Jaire Alexander and Za'Darius Smith to Shaq Barrett and Jason Pierre-Paul. There are even incredibly intriguing matchups along the offensive and defensive fronts, as this game also includes some of the best linemen in the league.

This should be a fascinating game, so let's break things down.

How to watch

Date: Sunday, Jan. 24 | Time: 3:05 p.m. ET
Location: Lambeau Field (Green Bay, Wisconsin)
TV: Fox | Stream: fuboTV (Try for free)
Follow: CBS Sports App

When the Buccaneers have the ball

Let's clip a couple sections from last week's Rams-Packers preview, which are just as relevant here:

Green Bay checked in a fairly solid 18th in rush defense DVOA this season, but a more concerning 23rd in Adjusted Line Yards, indicating that the Packers more often than not lost the battle in the trenches...

In their three losses this season, the Packers surrendered 158, 173, and 140 rushing yards, to opponents who averaged 4.5, 5.1, and 3.8 yards per attempt. The Colts staged a second-half comeback by running their way into field goals and tightening up on defense. Tampa's early lead came via a pick-six and another interception returned to the 2-yard line, so it was only Minnesota that really came out and just ran the ball right down Green Bay's throat from the jump. But even the Vikings didn't take the lead for good until the third quarter, and didn't put things away until Dalvin Cook took a screen pass 50 yards to the house.

Can the Bucs jump out to an early lead again this time, if they simply run Leonard Fournette and/or Aaron Jones down the Packers' throats? The Rams tried to do it with Cam Akers, but they fell behind because their defense allowed two touchdowns and a field goal on Green Bay's first three drives of the game. They were able to keep Akers involved the rest of the way, but once you go down by two scores, your whole offensive rhythm is thrown out of whack.

The Bucs tried to run early and often against the Saints last week, and it didn't really work out for them. Only once they shifted to a more pass-centric attack did they start hanging crooked numbers on the scoreboard -- but even that required a great deal of help from the defense, setting them up with short fields. Tom Brady didn't exactly tear things up, throwing for only 199 yards on 33 attempts.

But the Green Bay pass defense is not nearly as solid as that of the Saints. The Packers have Jaire Alexander to potentially shadow Mike Evans and the combination of Za'Darius Smith, Preston Smith, Rashan Gary, and Kenny Clark up front, but there are more places to take advantage of Green Bay's coverage than there are New Orleans'. If Alexander shadows Evans, that puts Kevin King on Antonio Brown on the opposite side, and Chandon Sullivan on Chris Godwin in the slot. Those seem like the most likely matchups. Godwin on Sullivan would be a strong advantage for the Buccaneers, as would Rob Gronkowski and Cameron Brate against any of the linebackers the Bucs can get them matched up on. (It's less of a clear advantage if the Packers use their safeties in coverage.)

Exploiting any of those advantages, though, requires winning the battle along the line. Tampa has one of the best pass-protecting offensive lines in the NFL this season, largely keeping the rush out of Brady's face and allowing him to throw from a clean pocket. If they give him time against this Packers secondary, he will find openings. But if the Smiths and/or Gary start forcing Brady off his spot, and he has to buy time or reset himself after maneuvering in the pocket, that's where the Packers might have the advantage. Tampa can keep the pass rush off balance with play-action passing, but the Packers would probably be just fine with the Bucs deciding to run rather than throw. They've rather get beat by Fournette and Jones than by Brady, one would think.