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The NFL season is winding down; December is here, bye weeks are over, the Arizona Cardinals are light years away from their perfect 4-0 start and the Kansas City Chiefs are polishing up a brand new locker for their number one draft pick.

Now is a time of jubilation for runaway division leaders (Houston and Atlanta fans rejoice!) and awful anxiety for pretty much everyone else. But it’s not over until the final whistle is blown on Dec. 30, and with that I want to take a look at where certain teams stand going into this final month.

Let’s start off with the NFC North. Bears, Packers. We’ve seen this show before. Oh, and the Vikings are hanging in there too. Out of all the divisions in the league, this is one of the most unpredictable.

The Bears are now dead last in overall passing yards ever since I wisely suggested they might be Super Bowl contenders a couple weeks ago. Their offense is a circus without Jay Cutler. And while they’re not exactly Super Bowl-worthy with him, the Bears still find ways to win games.

As for the defense, they looked normal again last Sunday against the Vikings after taking that vacation against ’Niners. The unit is the Bears one dominant force and they continue to use it to their advantage.

Barring any setbacks to Cutler and, to a lesser extent, Matt Forte, the Bears will withstand the Packers and make it to the playoffs. As for the Super Bowl, keep dreaming.

In the west, the Denver Broncos have all but runaway with the division crown as long as Peyton

Manning and Co. decide to continue playing. My guess is they will. They’re the hottest team in the league right now, currently riding a six-game win streak, and I can easily see them going deep into the playoffs.

In the east, the New England Patriots share a similar story. They have a star quarterback that’s clicking, weak division opponents and are also riding a five- game win streak. They will win their division, however, pending the playoff seeding, I don’t expect the Patriots to go too far — a wild card and/or divisional round win, but nothing more.

It’s difficult and still too early to predict who will be winning it all this year. The Houston Texans and Atlanta Falcons both sit at an impressive 10-1 but have looked shaky these past few weeks. The Baltimore Ravens are 9-2, but their defense has been a little lackluster ever since they lost Ray Lewis to injury. None of these teams intrigue me, but it’s hard to bet against them at this point.

Nonetheless, if the season were to end today, I would predict a ’Niners-Broncos matchup in the Super Bowl. The ’Niners would win with either Alex Smith or Colin Kaepernick at the helm, and the spirit of great ’Niners quarterbacks winning Super Bowls would live on.

But the NFL is fickle and anything can change in the upcoming weeks. If the first 12 weeks are any indication of what’s to come, it will be a finale you won’t want to miss.