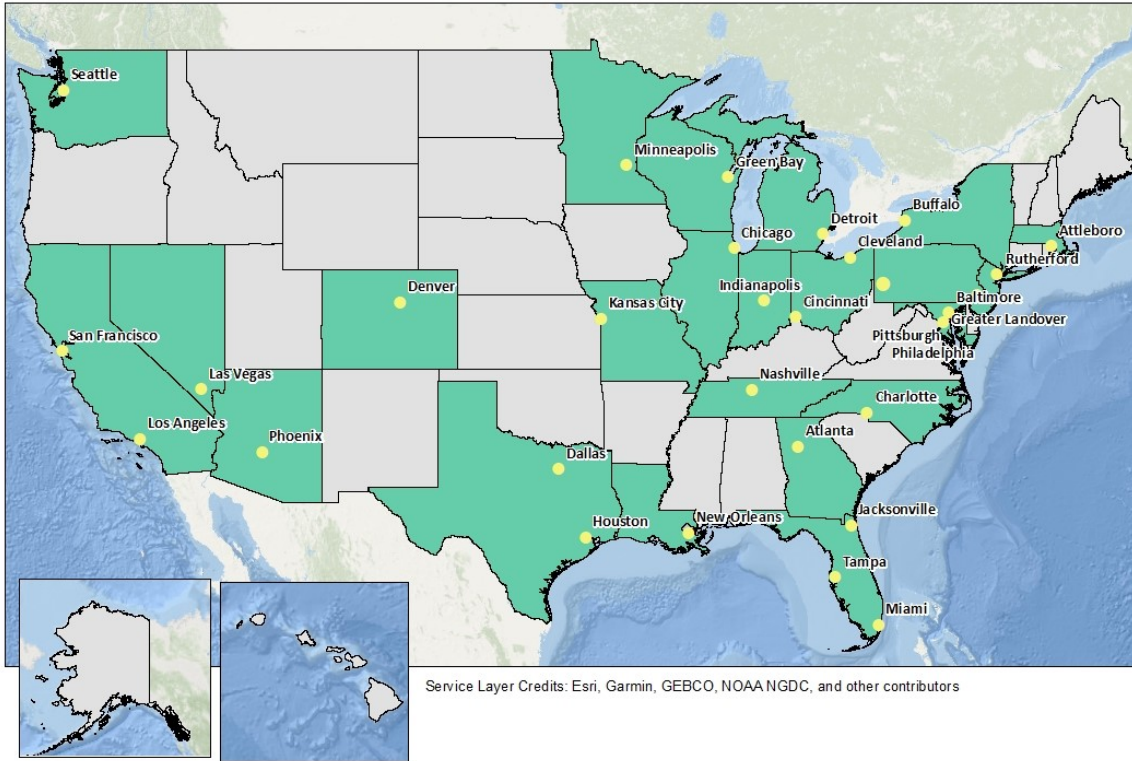




## 2022 National Football League (NFL)

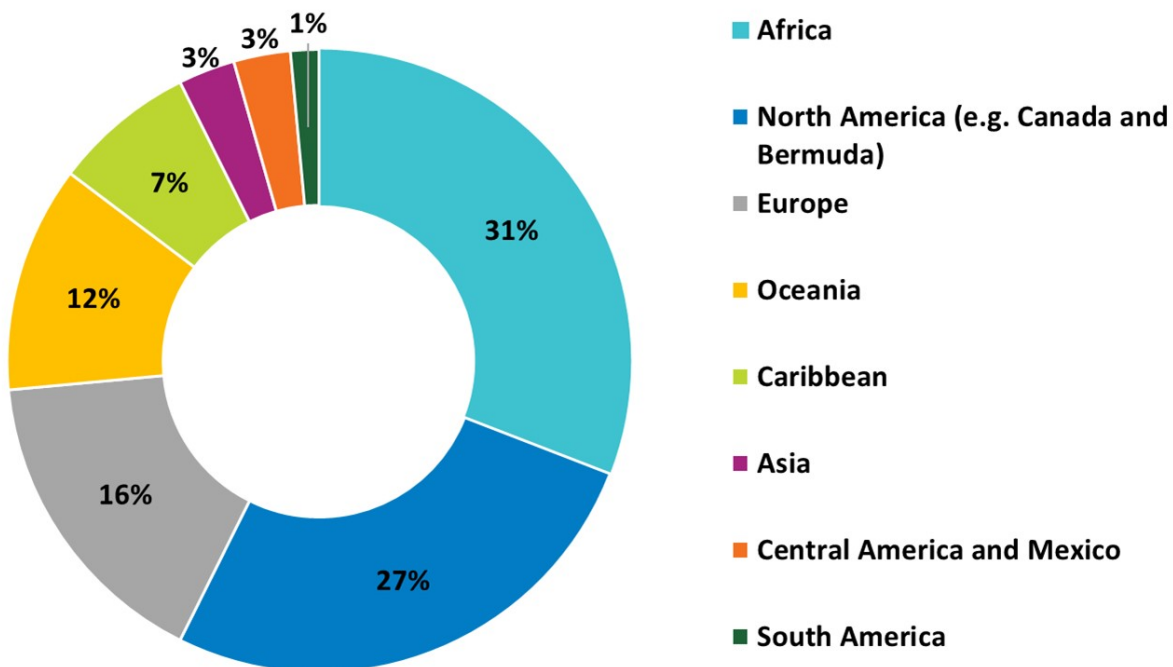
**Figure 1. NFL Team Locations**



### 2022 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- **32:** Number of teams in the NFL
- **2,196:** Number of players in the NFL
- **68:** Approximate number of foreign-born players (3% of the league's population)
- **25:** Number of countries foreign-born players represent

**Figure 2. World Region of Birth among Foreign-born NFL Players**



Nearly **three-fourths (74%)** of foreign-born NFL players who played during the 2022 season were born in **Africa, North America, or Europe.**

## 2022 National Football League (NFL)

**Figure 3. Detailed Country of Birth among Foreign-born NFL Players**



Country		Percent
Africa	Nigeria	17.6%
	Cameroon	2.9%
	South Africa	2.9%
	5 Other Countries	7.4%
Asia	South Korea	1.5%
	Turkey	1.5%
Europe	Germany	4.4%
	United Kingdom	4.4%
	4 Other Countries	7.3%
Caribbean	Jamaica	4.4%
	2 Other Countries	2.9%
Central America and Mexico	Belize	1.5%
	Panama	1.5%
North America	Canada	26.5%
Oceania	Australia	10.3%
	Tonga	1.5%
South America	Brazil	1.5%

- In 2020, the top five countries of birth among immigrants in the United States include **Mexico** (24%), **India** (6%), **China** (5%), **Philippines** (4%), and **Vietnam** (3%).
- During the 2022 NFL season, more than half (54%) of foreign-born NFL players were born in **Canada, Nigeria, or Australia**.
- In 2020, immigrants from these three countries comprised only **3%** of the foreign-born population in the United States.

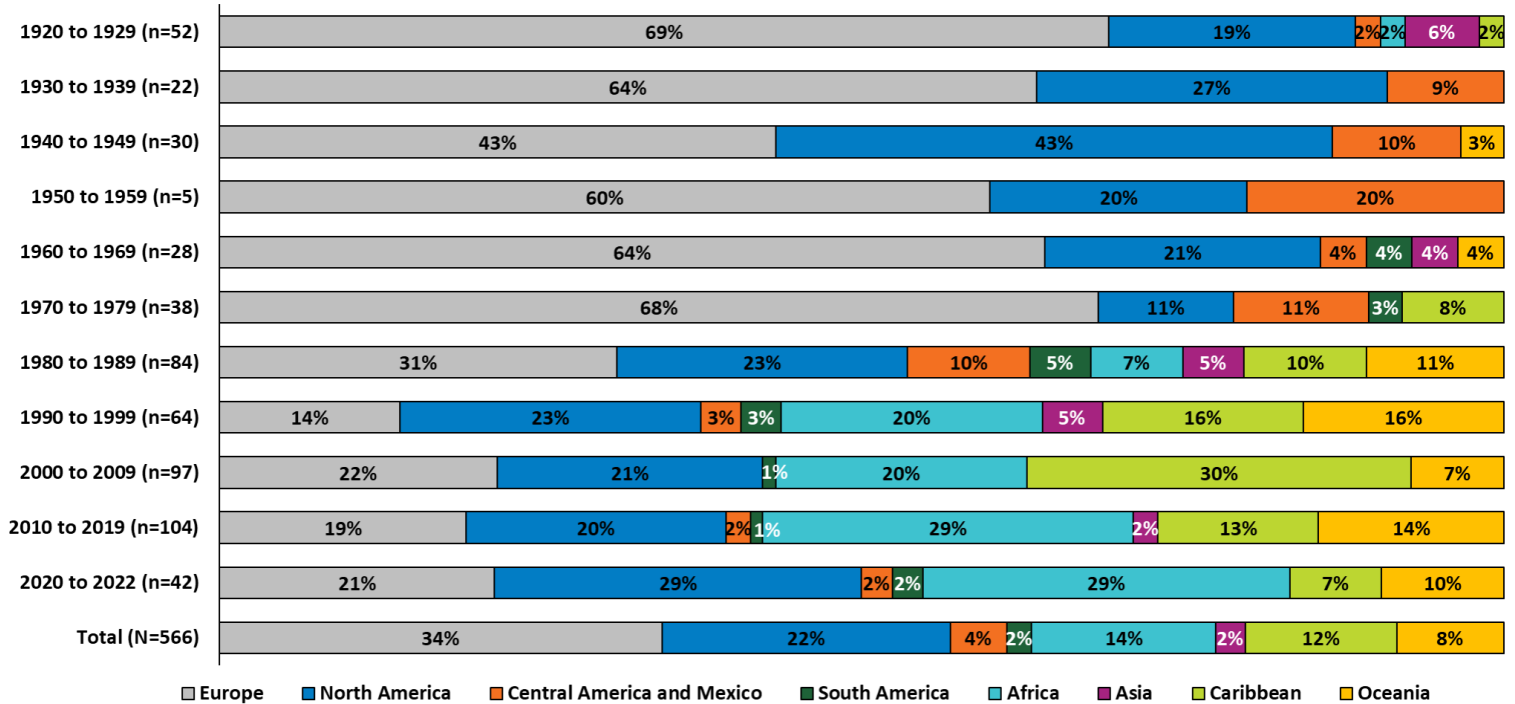
**Figure 4. Year NFL Players Debuted by Birthplace**

Year Debuted	Born in the United States	Foreign-Born	Born in a U.S. Territory
1920 to 1929 (n=1,824)	97.1%	2.9%	
1930 to 1939 (n=1,127)	98.0%	2.0%	
1940 to 1949 (n=1,745)	98.3%	1.7%	
1950 to 1959 (n=1,148)	99.6%	0.4%	
1960 to 1969 (n=2,442)	98.9%	1.1%	
1970 to 1979 (n=2,651)	98.3%	1.4%	0.2%
1980 to 1989 (n=3,998)	97.7%	2.1%	0.2%
1990 to 1999 (n=3,098)	97.5%	2.1%	0.4%
2000 to 2009 (n=3,624)	96.9%	2.7%	0.4%
2010 to 2019 (n=4,167)	97.3%	2.5%	0.2%
2020 to 2022 (n=1,321)	96.6%	3.2%	0.2%
<b>Total (N=27,145)</b>	<b>97.7%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>

- Over time, **2%** of NFL players were born abroad.
- The **top five years** with the greatest number of foreign-born players debuting in the NFL include: 1935 (5%), 2015 (5%), 2005 (4%), 2022 (4%), and 1941 (4%).

## 2022 National Football League (NFL)

**Figure 5. Year Foreign-born NFL Players Debuted by World Region of Birth**



From 1920 to 1979, 86% of foreign-born players who debuted were born in countries in **Europe** and **North America** (e.g. Canada and Bermuda). After 1980, players from these regions comprised only 44% of foreign-born players in the league. With the popularity of the NFL picking up around the world and teams recruiting overseas, there has been a substantial increase in players born in **Africa**, **Oceania**, and the **Caribbean** debuting in the league after 1980.

Analysis in this fact sheet is based on source data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2020 distributed through IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org) as well as source data from the pro football reference database (<https://www.pro-football-reference.com/>).

Please note that the terms “immigrant” and “foreign born” are used interchangeably throughout this fact sheet. Foreign born refers to individuals who are not a U.S. citizen at birth or who were born outside the U.S., Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories and whose parents are not U.S. citizens. The foreign born may include naturalized U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, temporary residents, refugees and asylees, and others. Additionally, native born includes those who are U.S. citizens at birth, those born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories, and those born abroad to a parent who is a U.S. citizen.

## 2022 National Football League (NFL)



## Institute for Immigration Research

### **The Immigrants, Athletes, and Inclusion Initiative**

This initiative aims to study immigration and inclusion in sports through original, data-driven research on the contributions of immigrants in professional and collegiate sports. We examine inclusion in two ways: 1) the degree to which immigrant athletes are represented in sports; and 2) how highlighting the stories and contributions of immigrant athletes can lead to greater understanding and inclusion of immigrants generally.

### **The Institute for Immigration Research (IIR)**

The IIR's mission is to produce valid, reliable, and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States and to disseminate this information through peer-reviewed academic journals, as well as in print and digital formats that make this research easily accessible to policy-makers, the media, the business community, and the general public. The Institute for Immigration Research is a joint venture between George Mason University and the Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA.

[www.iir.gmu.edu](http://www.iir.gmu.edu)

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