

## NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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## COMMUNICATIONS

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## NFL SEASON ENTERS SECOND QUARTER AFTER THRILLING WEEK

The NFL heads into the second quarter of the regular season after a thrilling Week 4 which saw nine games decided by seven points or fewer. Nine games were decided in the final two minutes or overtime, including seven in the final minute or OT. And four games featured the winning points scored on the final play of the game.

Along with close games, the standings are also tight. Entering Week 5, 24 of the league's 32 teams (75 percent) have a .500 or better record.

The Kansas City Chiefs (4-0) are the league's only remaining unbeaten team. Since 1990, when the current 12-team playoff format was adopted, 64 of the previous 79 teams (81 percent) to start 4-0 have made the playoffs. However, nothing is a given as the two teams to start 4-0 in 2016 – Denver and Minnesota – both missed the postseason.

All 32 teams know there's room for improvement. And, while not every club has gotten off to a great start, there's plenty of season left.

Since 1990, 121 teams (37.3 percent of the 324 playoff clubs) have advanced to the postseason after starting the season 2-2 or worse. There were four such teams – Detroit (1-3), Miami (1-3), Kansas City (2-2) and the New York Giants (2-2) – last season, including the Chiefs who won the AFC West.

As the NFL enters October, there are six teams with a winning record that did not make the postseason in 2016 – Buffalo (3-1), Carolina (3-1), Denver (3-1), the Los Angeles Rams (3-1), Philadelphia (3-1) and Tampa Bay (2-1). Since the 12-team playoff format began in 1990, at least four teams have qualified for the playoffs in every season that were not in the postseason the year before.

That's all part of the unpredictability of the NFL. So entering Week 5, while it certainly helps to be near the top of the standings, don't count anyone out.

Week 5 begins on Thursday night with the New England Patriots visiting the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (8:25 PM ET, CBS/NFL Network/Amazon Prime). The week concludes with a pair of primetime matches as the Houston Texans host the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday night (8:30 PM ET, NBC) and the Minnesota Vikings visit the Chicago Bears in an NFC North divisional showdown on Monday night (8:30 PM ET, ESPN). Some of the key games in Week 5:

### **NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (2-2) at TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS (2-1) (Thursday, CBS/NFLN/Amazon Prime, 8:25 PM ET)**

- New England quarterback **TOM BRADY** leads the NFL with 1,399 passing yards, ties for the league lead with 10 passing touchdowns and ranks second in the NFL with a 116.6 passer rating. Brady, who has not thrown an interception this season, is the first player in league history to pass for at least 1,000 yards with 10 touchdowns and no interceptions through his team's first four games in two different seasons (2015).
- The Patriots have won six of the eight meetings all-time between the franchises, including the past three contests. This will be New England's first game in Tampa since November 16, 1997 when the Buccaneers played at Houlihan's Stadium.
- Tampa Bay quarterback **JAMEIS WINSTON** passed for 332 yards and three touchdowns with a 113 passer rating in the Buccaneers' 25-23 win over the New York Giants last week. Kicker **NICK FOLK** converted the game-winning 34-yard field goal as time expired.
- Last week against the Giants, tight ends **CAMERON BRATE** (14 yards) and **O.J. HOWARD** (58 yards) each had a touchdown reception. Brate has 10 touchdowns since the start of the 2016 season – the most by a tight end during that span – while Howard, who was Tampa Bay's first-round selection in the 2017 NFL Draft (No. 19 overall), scored his first career TD.

### CAROLINA PANTHERS (3-1) at DETROIT LIONS (3-1) (Sunday, FOX, 1:00 PM ET)

- Carolina quarterback **CAM NEWTON** passed for 316 yards with three touchdowns and rushed for another score as the Panthers defeated New England 33-30 in Week 4. Kicker **GRAHAM GANO** converted the game-winning 48-yard field goal as time expired to give the Panthers a road victory.
- With his rushing TD, Newton became the first quarterback in NFL history to reach 50 career rushing touchdowns. The performance also marked the sixth time he has had at least three passing touchdowns and a rushing touchdown in the same game, tied with Pro Football Hall of Famer **STEVE YOUNG**, **DREW BREES**, **JACK KEMP**, **TOBIN ROTE** and **BILLY WADE** for the most in NFL history.
- The Lions got a strong performance out of their defense and defeated Minnesota 14-7 last week to improve to 3-1. Detroit limited the Vikings to 284 total net yards and recovered three fumbles in the win. Defensive end **ANTHONY ZETTEL** recorded two sacks and a fumble recovery against Minnesota while linebacker **TAHIR WHITEHEAD** recovered two fumbles while leading the team with five tackles.
- Detroit running back **AMEER ABDULLAH** rushed for 94 yards and a touchdown in the team's Week 4 win. He added three catches for 15 yards to finish the day with 109 scrimmage yards.

### SEATTLE SEAHAWKS (2-2) at LOS ANGELES RAMS (3-1) (Sunday, CBS, 4:05 PM ET)

- The Seahawks scored two rushing touchdowns, two passing touchdowns and two defensive touchdowns as Seattle defeated Indianapolis 46-18 on Sunday night. Quarterback **RUSSELL WILSON** led the attack with two passing touchdowns and a rushing TD while running back **J.D. MC KISSIC** added both a rushing and receiving touchdown – the first two TDs of his career.
- Defensively, linebacker **BOBBY WAGNER** had six tackles, a half-sack and a 21-yard fumble-return touchdown and cornerback **JUSTIN COLEMAN** returned an interception 28 yards for his first career TD.
- The Rams, who lead the NFL in scoring (35.5 points per game), improved to 3-1 with last week's 35-30 victory at Dallas. Los Angeles has scored 142 points under head coach **SEAN MC VAY**, which is the fourth-highest total by a team in its first four games of a season with a first-year head coach.
- Rams running back **TODD GURLEY** had 215 scrimmage yards (121 rushing, 94 receiving) and a touchdown catch against the Cowboys. Gurley, who has 596 scrimmage yards and seven touchdowns, joined Pro Football Hall of Famers **JIM BROWN** (1958, 1963) and **EMMITT SMITH** (1995) as the only players in NFL history to have at least 575 scrimmage yards and seven touchdowns in his team's first four games of a season.

### GREEN BAY PACKERS (3-1) at DALLAS COWBOYS (2-2) (Sunday, FOX, 4:25 PM ET)

- This is a rematch of last season's NFC Divisional Playoff (January 15, 2017) which Green Bay won 34-31. Packers kicker **MASON CROSBY** converted field goals of 56 and 51 yards in the final 1:33, including the game-winner as time expired.
- Green Bay quarterback **AARON RODGERS** threw four touchdown passes – including two to wide receiver **JORDY NELSON** – in the Packers' 35-14 win over Chicago on Thursday night. It marked the 16th time since becoming the starter in 2008 that Rodgers threw for at least four touchdowns without an interception, tied with **DREW BREES** for the most such games in the NFL during that span.
- Cowboys defensive end **DEMARCUS LAWRENCE** leads the NFL with 7.5 sacks and has recorded at least one sack in all four games played this season. He was named the NFC Defensive Player of the Month in September.

### KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (4-0) at HOUSTON TEXANS (2-2) (Sunday, NBC, 8:30 PM ET)

- The Chiefs remained the league's only unbeaten team with a 29-20 win over Washington on Monday night. Quarterback **ALEX SMITH**, who leads the league with a 124.2 passer rating, had a passing touchdown and a rushing TD in the win.
- Kansas City rookie running back **KAREEM HUNT** had 121 scrimmage yards, including 101 rushing, against the Redskins and became the fourth rookie to record at least 100 scrimmage yards in each of his team's first four games. Hunt joins **BILLY SIMS** (1980), Pro Football Hall of Famer **LA DAINIAN TOMLINSON** (2001) and **ADRIAN PETERSON** (2007) as the only rookies to accomplish the feat. Hunt leads the NFL in rushing yards (502) and scrimmage yards (659) and ranks second in total touchdowns (six).
- Houston rookie quarterback **DESHAUN WATSON** passed for 283 yards with four touchdowns and added a rushing touchdown in the Texans' 57-14 win against Tennessee in Week 4. Watson joined Pro Football Hall of Famer **FRAN TARKENTON** (September 17, 1961) as the only rookies in NFL history to throw for at least 250 yards with four touchdowns and rush for a TD in the same game. Watson is the only rookie quarterback in league annals with at least seven passing touchdowns and two rushing TDs in his team's first four games of a season.
- The Texans' 57 points scored against the Titans are the most in a game by a team with a rookie starting QB since Seattle and **RUSSELL WILSON** scored 58 points against Arizona on December 9, 2012.

**NFL WEEK 5 SCHEDULE**  
**THURSDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, OCTOBER 8-9**

(All times local)

*Byes: Atlanta, Denver, New Orleans, Washington*

**Thursday, October 5**

New England at Tampa Bay, 8:25 PM (CBS/NFLN/Amazon)

**Sunday, October 8**

Buffalo at Cincinnati, 1:00 PM

New York Jets at Cleveland, 1:00 PM

Carolina at Detroit, 1:00 PM

San Francisco at Indianapolis, 1:00 PM

Tennessee at Miami, 1:00 PM

Los Angeles Chargers at New York Giants, 1:00 PM

**Sunday, October 8 (cont'd)**

Arizona at Philadelphia, 12:00 PM

Jacksonville at Pittsburgh, 1:00 PM

Seattle at Los Angeles Rams, 1:05 PM

Baltimore at Oakland, 1:05 PM

Green Bay at Dallas, 3:25 PM

Kansas City at Houston, 7:30 PM (NBC)

**Monday, October 9**

Minnesota at Chicago, 7:30 PM (ESPN)