



## COMMUNICATIONS

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# **NFL ENTERS WEEK 8 AS 2018 SEASON APPROACHES MIDPOINT**

As the season approaches the halfway point, the standings remain tight throughout the league as teams close out the month of October. Entering Week 8, there are 18 teams with a .500 or better winning percentage and 14 clubs with a winning record. Since 1990, 297 of the league's 336 playoff teams (88 percent) had a winning record through seven games.

Through the first seven weeks of the season, 25 teams have at least three wins. Five teams – **KANSAS CITY** (6-1), the **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS** (5-2), the **LOS ANGELES RAMS** (7-0), **NEW ENGLAND** (5-2) and **NEW ORLEANS** (5-1) – have at least five wins this season. Since 1990, when the current 12-team playoff format was adopted, 80 percent (205 of 256) of the previous teams to start 5-2 or better advanced to the postseason, including eight of the nine teams to begin the season 5-2 or better in 2017.

A slow start, however, does not mean that hope is gone. There have been 39 teams since 1990 with a .500 or lower record after seven games to advance to the postseason.

The Rams, who are 7-0 for the first time since 1985, lead the league in point differential (+107), rank third averaging 33.6 points per game and fourth in points allowed per game (18.3). Los Angeles running back **TODD GURLEY**, who scored three touchdowns (two rushing, one receiving) in Week 7, leads the NFL with 14 touchdowns this season and is the third different player in NFL history with at least 14 touchdowns in his team's first seven games to start a season, joining Pro Football Hall of Famer **JIM BROWN** (15 in 1958) and **PRIEST HOLMES** (14 in 2002 and 14 in 2004). Defensively, Rams defensive tackle **AARON DONALD** leads the league with eight sacks and is one of three players in the NFL with at least 10 tackles for loss in 2018 (10).

The NFL enters Week 8 following another exciting weekend of action. Through the first seven weeks of the season, 61 games have been decided by one score, the second-most in NFL history through Week 7 (62 games in 2012), including seven such games last week. Thirty-three of those games have been decided by three or fewer points, the second-most in NFL history through Week 7 (39 games in 1999), including five such games last week. At least one game has gone to overtime in each of the first seven weeks of the 2018 season, marking the first time since the regular-season overtime rule was instituted in 1974 that there has been an overtime game in each of a season's first seven weeks.

Below are highlights of the Week 8 schedule:

Week 8 kicks off on Thursday night (8:20 PM ET, FOX/NFL Network/Amazon Prime) as the **MIAMI DOLPHINS** travel to NRG Stadium to take on the **HOUSTON TEXANS** in a battle of 4-3 teams in the AFC. Dolphins running back **FRANK GORE** has 18,087 career scrimmage yards in his 14-year NFL career and needs 104 scrimmage yards to surpass Pro Football Hall of Famer **BARRY SANDERS** (18,190) for the sixth-most in league history. Texans defensive end **J.J. WATT** has seven sacks in his past five games and is one of two NFL players (**VON MILLER**) with at least seven sacks (seven) and four forced fumbles (four) this season.

The 2018 London Series concludes on Sunday morning (9:30 AM ET, NFL Network) as the **PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** meet the **JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS** at Wembley Stadium. The Eagles are making their first appearance in London, while the Jaguars will play in the UK for the sixth consecutive season. Jacksonville quarterback **BLAKE BORTLES** threw four touchdown passes in the Jaguars' last game in London (September 24, 2017 vs. Baltimore) and is one of three NFL quarterbacks since 2014 with at least 15,000 passing yards (16,663) and 1,500 rushing yards (1,628), joining Carolina's **CAM NEWTON** and Seattle's **RUSSELL WILSON**. Eagles quarterback **CARSON WENTZ** completed 30 of 37 passes (81.1 percent) for 310 yards with two touchdowns and zero interceptions for a 119.6 passer rating in Philadelphia's Week 7 loss to Carolina.

The **DENVER BRONCOS** and **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** square off at Arrowhead Stadium in an AFC West battle (1:00 PM ET, CBS). In Week 4, Chiefs quarterback **PATRICK MAHOMES** passed for 304 yards with two touchdowns (one passing, one rushing) and running back **KAREEM HUNT** rushed for 121 yards, including a go-ahead four-yard touchdown with 1:39 remaining in the fourth quarter in Kansas City's 27-23 victory at Denver. Mahomes, who has played eight career games, leads the NFL with 22 touchdown passes and surpassed Pro Football Hall of Famer **KURT WARNER** (21) for the most touchdown passes by a

player in his first eight career games in league history last week. In Denver's Week 7 win at Arizona, Broncos wide receiver **EMMANUEL SANDERS** (102 receiving yards, TD catch and TD pass) became the eighth player in league history with at least 100 receiving yards, a touchdown catch and a touchdown pass in a single game and the second player to accomplish the feat this season (**ODELL BECKHAM, JR.** in Week 5).

On *Sunday Night Football*, a rematch of the 2017 NFC Divisional Playoff game between the **NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** and **MINNESOTA VIKINGS** takes center stage at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis (8:20 PM ET, NBC). In that contest, former Vikings quarterback **CASE KEENUM** connected on a 61-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver **STEFON DIGGS** as time expired in the fourth quarter, giving Minnesota a 29-24 victory and punching a ticket to the NFC Championship Game. Saints quarterback **DREW BREES** leads the NFL with a 77.3 completion percentage (170 completions in 220 attempts) and a 121.6 passer rating, and has 13 touchdown passes without an interception this season. Vikings quarterback **KIRK COUSINS** ranks third in the NFL with 2,162 passing yards and fifth with a 70.0 completion percentage (210 of 300), joining Atlanta's **MATT RYAN** as the only quarterbacks with at least 2,000 passing yards and a 70+ completion percentage this season.

## **NFL WEEK 8 SCHEDULE** **THURSDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 28-29**

(All times eastern)

*Bye: Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles Chargers, Tennessee*

### **Thursday, October 25**

Miami at Houston, 8:20 PM (FOX/NFLN/Amazon)

### **Sunday, October 28**

Philadelphia vs. Jacksonville (London), 9:30 AM (NFLN)  
Baltimore at Carolina, 1:00 PM  
New York Jets at Chicago, 1:00 PM  
Tampa Bay at Cincinnati, 1:00 PM  
Seattle at Detroit, 1:00 PM  
Denver at Kansas City, 1:00 PM

### **Sunday, October 28 (cont'd)**

Washington at New York Giants, 1:00 PM  
Cleveland at Pittsburgh, 1:00 PM  
Indianapolis at Oakland, 4:05 PM  
San Francisco at Arizona, 4:25 PM  
Green Bay at Los Angeles Rams, 4:25 PM  
New Orleans at Minnesota, 8:20 PM (NBC)

### **Monday, October 29**

New England at Buffalo, 8:15 PM (ESPN)