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RACE TO PLAYOFFS INTENSIFIES IN NFL'S SECOND HALF

The second half of the NFL season is here and the race to the playoffs is in full swing.

Three teams – the **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** (8-1), **LOS ANGELES RAMS** (8-1) and **NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS** (7-2) – have a record of 7-2 or better entering Week 10 and the **NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** (7-1), which had its bye in Week 6, will reach either 8-1 or 7-2 following this week's action. In the Super Bowl era, 216 teams have begun the season either 8-1 or 7-2 through nine games and 194 of those teams advanced to the postseason (89.8 percent). Sixty-one of the 216 teams reached the Super Bowl in their respective seasons.

As the season moves into the second half, there is plenty of football left to play and nothing has been decided. Since 2000, 45 teams have reached the halfway point of their season with a .500 or below winning percentage and advanced to the playoffs, including at least one in each season. Last year, the **ATLANTA FALCONS** began the season at 4-4 before advancing to the postseason with a 10-6 record.

Four teams are currently riding winning streaks of at least five games – New Orleans (seven consecutive games), Houston (six), New England (six) and the Los Angeles Chargers (five). The Texans, which began the season 0-3, are the second team since 1970 to win six consecutive games immediately following an 0-3 start, joining the 1970 New York Giants.

As the schedule turns to Week 10, history is on the horizon for veteran and young quarterbacks alike. New England quarterback **TOM BRADY** will play in his 300th career game (including the postseason) on Sunday at Tennessee (1:00 PM ET, CBS), joining Pro Football Hall of Famer **BRETT FAVRE** (326) as the only quarterbacks to appear in 300 career games across the regular season and playoffs. Brady, who has thrown 576 touchdown passes through 299 career games (including the postseason), can surpass **PEYTON MANNING** (579) for the most touchdown passes by a quarterback in NFL history.

Brady (505 regular-season touchdown passes) and New Orleans quarterback **DREW BREES** (506), who plays at Cincinnati on Sunday (1:00 PM ET, FOX), enter Week 10 within reach of Favre (508) for second place on the NFL's all-time passing touchdown leaderboard. Only Manning (539) has more career touchdown passes in the regular season.

Kansas City quarterback **PATRICK MAHOMES** has 29 touchdown passes and 3,185 passing yards in 10 career games, both the most by a quarterback in his first 10 games in NFL history. Mahomes, who has passed for at least 300 yards and three touchdowns in each of the Chiefs' past four games, can join Pro Football Hall of Famer **STEVE YOUNG** (1998) as the only players in NFL history with at least 300 passing yards and three touchdown passes in five consecutive games.

Below are highlights of the Week 10 schedule:

Week 10 kicks off on Thursday night as the **CAROLINA PANTHERS** visit the **PITTSBURGH STEELERS** at Heinz Field (8:20 PM ET, FOX/NFL Network/Amazon Prime). Pittsburgh enters Thursday's contest as the winner of four consecutive games, while Carolina has won three straight games. Steelers running back **JAMES CONNER** has rushed for at least 100 yards in each of his past four games and can join Pro Football Hall of Famers **FRANCO HARRIS** (six consecutive games in 1972) and **JEROME BETTIS** (five in 1996) as the only players in franchise history with 100+ rushing yards in five consecutive games. Panthers quarterback **CAM NEWTON** has thrown at least two touchdown passes in seven consecutive games, tied with **STEVE BEUERLEIN** for the longest streak in franchise history, and aims for his fourth game in a row with two touchdown passes, no interceptions and a 100+ passer rating.

The **NEW ORLEANS SAINTS**, winners of seven consecutive games, travel to Paul Brown Stadium to take on the **CINCINNATI BENGALS** on Sunday afternoon (1:00 PM ET, FOX). Saints running back **ALVIN KAMARA**, who has 1,218 rushing yards and 1,253 receiving yards in 24 career games, can join **HERSCHEL WALKER** (1,339 rushing, 1,394 receiving) as the only players in NFL history with at least 1,300 rushing and receiving yards in his first 25 career games. Bengals rookie safety **JESSIE BATES** leads Cincinnati with 60 tackles and is one of two players in the NFL (**KIKO ALONSO**) with at least 60 tackles and three interceptions (three) in 2018.

RUSSELL WILSON and the Seahawks visit **TODD GURLEY** and the Rams at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (4:25 PM ET, CBS). Since Week 5, Wilson ranks second in the NFL with a 126.4 passer rating and third in the league with 11 touchdown passes. Gurley leads the NFL with 16 touchdowns (12 rushing, four receiving) and has scored a touchdown in each of the Rams' nine games in 2018. With a touchdown on Sunday, Gurley can become the fourth player in league annals to score at least one touchdown in each of his team's first 10 games of a season.

NFL WEEK 10 SCHEDULE **THURSDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 11-12**

(All times eastern)

Bye: Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Minnesota

Thursday, November 8

Carolina at Pittsburgh, 8:20 PM (FOX/NFLN/Amazon)

Sunday, November 11

Detroit at Chicago, 1:00 PM

New Orleans at Cincinnati, 1:00 PM

Atlanta at Cleveland, 1:00 PM

Jacksonville at Indianapolis, 1:00 PM

Arizona at Kansas City, 1:00 PM

Buffalo at New York Jets, 1:00 PM

Sunday, November 11 (cont'd)

Washington at Tampa Bay, 1:00 PM

New England at Tennessee, 1:00 PM

Los Angeles Chargers at Oakland, 4:05 PM

Miami at Green Bay, 4:25 PM

Seattle at Los Angeles Rams, 4:25 PM

Dallas at Philadelphia, 8:20 PM (NBC)

Monday, November 12

New York Giants at San Francisco, 8:15 PM (ESPN)