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COMMUNICATIONS

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FALCONS WR JULIO JONES, RAMS DT AARON DONALD & RAMS PR-WR TAVON AUSTIN NAMED NFC PLAYERS OF WEEK 1

Wide receiver **JULIO JONES** of the Atlanta Falcons, defensive tackle **AARON DONALD** of the St. Louis Rams and punt returner-wide receiver **TAVON AUSTIN** of the Rams are the NFC Offensive, Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Week for games played on Kickoff Weekend 2015 (September 10, 13-14), the NFL announced today.

OFFENSE: WR JULIO JONES, ATLANTA FALCONS

- Jones had nine catches for 141 yards and two touchdowns in the Falcons' 26-24 win over Philadelphia. He scored touchdowns of 22 and four yards and recorded a long of 44 yards. His 44-yard reception in the fourth quarter set up **MATT BRYANT**'s game-winning field goal.
- Eight of his nine receptions resulted in a first down or touchdown.
- He has 20 catches for 400 yards (200 yards per game) and three touchdowns in his past two games on *Monday Night Football*.
- The performance marked Jones' 20th career 100-yard receiving game. It was his seventh career game with multiple touchdown receptions.
- In his fifth season from Alabama, this is Jones' first career Player of the Week Award.
- He is the fourth wide receiver in team history to win Offensive Player of the Week, joining **RODDY WHITE** (Week 7, 2010), **ANDRE RISON** (Week 2, 1994) and **ALFRED JACKSON** (Week 14, 1984).
- Jones is the third wide receiver to be named Offensive Player of the Week on Kickoff Weekend. He joins Pro Football Hall of Famer **JERRY RICE** (1994) and **ANQUAN BOLDIN** (2013).

DEFENSE: DT AARON DONALD, ST. LOUIS RAMS

- Donald had nine tackles and two sacks in the Rams' 34-31 overtime win over Seattle. He combined with **MICHAEL BROCKERS** to stop Seahawks Pro Bowl running back **MARSHAWN LYNCH** on fourth-and-one in overtime to seal the victory.
- Both of Donald's sacks – which resulted in a loss of 10 yards – led to Seattle punts. His second sack, which came on third down, forced a Seahawks punt which was returned for a touchdown by **TAVON AUSTIN**.
- He added two tackles for a loss, both times stopping Lynch in the backfield, including the final play of the game.
- Donald was part of a defense that recorded six sacks, the most by any team on Kickoff Weekend.
- In his second year from Pittsburgh, this is Donald's first career Player of the Week Award.
- Donald and **ROBERT QUINN** (2013) are the only Rams to be named Defensive Player of the Week on Kickoff Weekend.

SPECIAL TEAMS: PR-WR TAVON AUSTIN, ST. LOUIS RAMS

- Austin had a 75-yard punt-return touchdown and a 16-yard rushing touchdown in the Rams' win.
- He is the fifth player in the past 20 seasons to have a punt-return touchdown and rushing touchdown in the same game. Austin is the first Rams player to accomplish the feat since 1961 (**DICK BASS**, December 17).
- In his third year, Austin has 11 career touchdowns: four rushing, four receiving and three on punt returns. All three punt-return touchdowns have been at least 75 yards (98, 78 and 75).
- He is the first player in NFL history with a 75+ yard punt-return touchdown in each of his first three seasons.
- The game was the first season opener in NFL history in which both teams scored on a punt-return touchdown (Austin, 75 yards and Seattle's **TYLER LOCKETT**, 57 yards).
- In his third season from West Virginia, this is Austin's third career Player of the Week Award. He has now been honored in each of his first three seasons (Week 10, 2013 and Week 14, 2014).
- Austin's three Special Teams Player of the Week Awards are the most by a returner in franchise history.

2015 NFC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>Special Teams</u>
Wk 1	WR Julio Jones, Atlanta	DT Aaron Donald, St. Louis	PR-WR Tavon Austin, St. Louis

Other nominees for NFC Offensive Player of Week 1 as submitted by NFC clubs:

- Chicago running back **MATT FORTÉ**, who had 166 scrimmage yards (141 rushing, 25 receiving) and a touchdown run against Green Bay.
- San Francisco running back **CARLOS HYDE**, who rushed for 168 yards and two touchdowns in the 49ers' 20-3 win over Minnesota.
- Green Bay wide receiver **JAMES JONES**, who had two touchdown catches in the Packers' 31-23 win at Chicago.
- Arizona quarterback **CARSON PALMER**, who completed 19 of 32 passes (59.4 percent) for 307 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions for a 122.8 passer rating in the Cardinals' 31-19 win over New Orleans.
- Green Bay quarterback **AARON RODGERS**, who completed 18 of 23 passes (78.3 percent) for 189 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions for a 140.5 passer rating.
- Dallas quarterback **TONY ROMO**, who completed 36 of 45 passes (80.0 percent) for 356 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions for a 103.3 passer rating in the Cowboys' 27-26 win over the New York Giants.

Other nominees for NFC Defensive Player of Week 1 as submitted by NFC clubs:

- Carolina linebacker **THOMAS DAVIS**, who tied for the team lead with seven tackles and had one sack and an interception in the Panthers' 20-9 win at Jacksonville.
- Arizona safety **TYRANN MATHIEU**, who led the team with eight tackles and three passes defended.
- Green Bay linebacker **CLAY MATTHEWS**, who had a 42-yard interception and six tackles.
- Carolina cornerback **JOSH NORMAN**, who had a 30-yard interception-return touchdown, a forced fumble, a fumble recovery and five tackles.

Other nominees for NFC Special Teams Player of Week 1 as submitted by NFC clubs:

- Atlanta punter **MATT BOSHER**, who averaged 57.8 yards per punt with a net average of 51.5 yards. He placed three of his four punts inside the 20-yard line.
- Atlanta kicker **MATT BRYANT**, who converted all four field-goal attempts, including the game-winning 47-yarder in the fourth quarter.
- New Orleans kicker **ZACH HOCKER**, who converted all four field-goal attempts against Arizona, including a long of 45 yards.
- Seattle rookie punt returner **TYLER LOCKETT**, who returned a punt 57 yards for a touchdown against St. Louis and totaled 153 total yards (63 punt returns, 56 kickoff returns, 34 receiving).
- Green Bay rookie kick returner **TY MONTGOMERY**, who returned three kickoffs for 106 yards (35.3 average).