



## MONDAY NIGHT NOTES

FOR USE AS DESIRED  
NFL-145 12/8/05

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,  
CONTACT: MICHAEL SIGNORA (212 450 2076)

### FALCONS AIM TO SOAR ON MONDAY NIGHT AS SAINTS COME MARCHING IN

It's a pair of division rivals with cousins at quarterback that have a knack for high-scoring, nail-biting games. Should be quite a Monday night!

That's the setting as the Atlanta Falcons return to the Georgia Dome this week after two road games to face the New Orleans Saints on ABC's *NFL Monday Night Football*.

The third-place Falcons (7-5) are in the thick of the NFC South playoff race, one game behind Tampa Bay (8-4) and two behind Carolina (9-3). Their final two games of the season are against those teams – the Buccaneers in Week 16 and Panthers in Week 17.

"I have to do a good job, our staff has to do a good job and our players have to do a good job of beating the Saints," says Falcons head coach **JIM MORA**. "We are excited about Monday night and if we get our fans in the Dome excited about our play, I think it will really help us."

One group always excited about the matchup are the people of Newport News, Virginia, hometown of quarterbacks-and-second-cousins **MICHAEL VICK** of the Falcons and **AARON BROOKS** of the Saints. Vick was a three-year starter at Warwick High School while Brooks was voted team MVP in his final two seasons at Homer L. Ferguson High. Vick went on to star at Virginia Tech while Brooks was a two-year starter at Virginia, finishing his career among school leaders in nearly every passing category.

"We have a great rivalry with the Saints and it's even greater because I have my cousin on the other side," says Vick. "We have bragging rights at stake and it's always a fun game."

Adds Brooks, "One thing we know is, they are going to come out with fire. They are great competitors and rivals of ours, and it's always been a good game between these teams."

Brooks and Vick have shown proficiency in both passing and rushing in their careers. This season, the duo constitutes two of the three NFL quarterbacks to have thrown for at least 10 touchdowns and rushed for 250 yards.

A look at those quarterbacks with 10 touchdown passes and 250 rushing yards:

Quarterback	Team	Touchdown Passes	Rushing Yards	Average Yards Per Rush
<b>Aaron Brooks</b>	<b>New Orleans Saints</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>6.3</b>
David Carr	Houston Texans	11	290	5.7
<b>Michael Vick</b>	<b>Atlanta Falcons</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Five of the past seven meetings between the teams have been decided by seven points or less, including a thrilling 34-31 Falcons' win on October 16 when kicker **TODD PETERSON** connected on a 36-yard field goal as time expired.

Both Vick and Brooks have enjoyed success against their Monday night opponent. Vick has a 4-0 record as a starting quarterback against New Orleans while Brooks has been especially proficient versus Atlanta on the road. The seven-year pro has posted a 102.1 passer rating in four career road games against the Falcons.

"I think anytime you play on Monday night, players get excited," says Saints head coach **JIM HASLETT**. "They are playing in front of their peers, their families and everyone else around the country. We have four games left and we are going to do our best to win each one of them."

The Saints' last three losses have each been by seven points or less to a trio of opponents with a combined record of 24-12 (.667)

# MONDAY NIGHT MUSINGS – NEW ORLEANS SAINTS AT ATLANTA FALCONS

## HOMES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- Falcons running back **WARRICK DUNN** knows that actions speak louder than words – especially at this time of year. That is why he has helped 57 single mothers and their children achieve the American dream with his “Homes for the Holidays” program. His latest installment took place last week.

Created by Dunn in 1997 and supported by Prudential Tropical Realty and Aaron’s Sales Lease in Atlanta, “Homes for the Holidays” gives single mothers the opportunity to purchase their first home by providing them with down payment assistance. Included in the purchase is furniture, linens, yard equipment, food, pots and pans, and everything else a first-time home owner would need – right down to toothbrushes.

Last week Dunn assisted five families in purchasing new homes – three in Atlanta and two in Tampa (where he played for the Buccaneers). Traditionally, the program has benefited residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Dunn’s hometown, but complications from Hurricane Katrina forced adjustments this winter. Relief efforts by Dunn in Louisiana will resume this spring.

Dunn began the program in honor of his mother, **BETTY SMOTHERS**, a police officer who was killed in a bank robbery when Dunn was in high school. Smothers, a single mother, was never able to purchase a home.

“This program is simple – it’s about helping others who are earnestly helping themselves and working to provide a better quality of life for their children,” says Dunn.

## A TASTE OF HOME

New Orleans native and third-grade student **PAUL KOHNKE** spent last summer hoping to win the NFL’s “Take a Player to School” contest to which he had applied. But when his name was drawn, Hurricane Katrina had changed everything.

Kohnke’s family had relocated to Houston, Texas and the NFL could not locate Paul. Fortunately, the Kohnke’s discovered the winner’s notification package when checking on their home in New Orleans.

With word of Paul’s location, the NFL, Saints and Houston Texans decided to throw an early Mardi Gras celebration at Paul’s new school, Houston’s Fay School, complete with multi-colored Mardi Gras beads, a thumping Zydeco band and traditional Louisiana cuisine.

Saints defensive ends **TONY BRYANT** and **CHARLES GRANT** escorted Paul and his brother James to school in a limo. During the ride, they chatted about what they missed most about New Orleans.

“This is so cool,” said Paul, when they arrived at the festivities. “I can’t believe it. It reminds me of home.”

While Paul was introducing Bryant and Grant to his classmates, Texans defensive end **TRAVIS JOHNSON** and wide receiver **DONOVAN MORGAN** surprised him by joining the party. Also in attendance were Gumbo, the Saints’ mascot, and Texans mascot Toro.

“You opened your arms to Paul,” Grant told the students. “Helping people builds character and leadership.”

## BE A SAINT

- The entire Saints’ organization was recently nominated by its training staff for the 2005 Ed Block Courage Award. The award, supported by the NFL, its teams and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society, is one of the most prestigious honors an NFL player can receive. It is usually given to one player on each team who best exemplifies the principals of sportsmanship and courage in the face of adversity.

“We felt it was appropriate to nominate everyone, considering everything that the staff, coaches and players have done to keep the team together,” said Saints head athletic trainer **SCOTTIE PATTON**.

“Usually it goes to a single player, and we have several deserving candidates,” continued Patton. “But everyone has had hardships to endure and they have done so admirably. When we thought about who to nominate, we agreed that everyone in the organization should be recognized.”

Recipients from all 32 NFL teams will receive the honor at the 28th annual Ed Block Courage Awards next March in Baltimore. The training staff will select a player to represent the Saints to receive the trophy, which will be displayed at club headquarters.