



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
280 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017
(212) 450-2000 * FAX (212) 681-7573
WWW.NFLMedia.com

Joe Browne, Executive Vice President-Communications
Greg Aiello, Senior Vice President-Public Relations

AFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

FOR USE AS DESIRED
AFC-N-17 12/18/07

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
CONTACT: CORRY RUSH (212/450-2066)

PATRIOTS & CHARGERS LEAD AFC WITH EIGHT PLAYERS APIECE ON ALL-STAR SQUAD; 18 FIRST-TIME SELECTIONS ON AFC ROSTER

The AFC East Division-winning New England Patriots and AFC West titlist San Diego Chargers will lead the American Football Conference's 2008 Pro Bowl squad with a conference-high eight players each when the AFC takes on the National Football Conference All-Stars, the NFL announced today.

The Pro Bowl will be played on Sunday, February 10, in Honolulu, Hawaii (FOX, 4:30 PM ET).

New England's eight All-Stars equal a franchise high set by the 1985 Patriots. The AFC roster includes 18 first-time All-Stars, including Cincinnati's wide receiver **T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH**, who leads the NFL with 101 receptions.

Among a group of talented AFC quarterbacks, four-time All-Star **TOM BRADY** of New England, who leads the NFL in passing yards (4,235), touchdowns (45) and passer rating (119.7), will be the starting signal-caller in his fourth Pro Bowl. Brady is one of seven Patriots that will start for this year's AFC Squad. Joining Brady to aid the AFC passing attack will be Indianapolis quarterback **PEYTON MANNING**, who will make his eighth Pro Bowl appearance, and first-time selection **BEN ROETHLISBERGER** of Pittsburgh, who ranks third in the NFL with 29 touchdown passes.

San Diego's duo of running back **LA DAINIAN TOMLINSON** and fullback **LORENZO NEAL** have been named starters for a second year in a row. Earning his fifth Pro Bowl honor, Tomlinson ranks second in the NFL with 1,311 rushing yards this season and has passed the 1,200-yard rushing mark for the seventh consecutive year. Neal, in his 15th NFL season, has been selected to his fourth Pro Bowl and third as a Charger.

Adding to the AFC's explosive backfield will be Pittsburgh's **WILLIE PARKER** and **JOSEPH ADDAI** of Indianapolis. This is the second consecutive Pro Bowl trip for Parker, who leads the NFL with 1,317 rushing yards. In his second NFL season, Addai ranks second in the AFC with 11 rushing touchdowns and will make his first Pro Bowl voyage to Hawaii.

Four receivers are named to each All-Star squad. Chosen for the AFC's 2008 team are New England's **RANDY MOSS**, the NFL's receiving yardage (1,343) and touchdown (19) leader, who will start. Moss records his first Pro Bowl appearance since 2004 and sixth overall. Lined up across from Moss will be **REGGIE WAYNE** of Indianapolis, who will make his second All-Star game in consecutive seasons. Two first-time selections from clubs in Ohio will round out the AFC All-Star receiving foursome - Cleveland wide receiver **BRAYLON EDWARDS**, whose 13 touchdown receptions rank second in the AFC, and Houshmandzadeh of Cincinnati.

Representing the AFC at tight end will be nine-time all-star **TONY GONZALEZ** of the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Diego's **ANTONIO GATES**, who will play in his fourth consecutive Pro Bowl and start for the second year in a row.

Pittsburgh's 10-year veteran guard **ALAN FANECA** will make his seventh consecutive Pro Bowl trip and will be joined at the other starting guard position by first-time All-Star **LOGAN MANKINS** of New England, who has helped pave the way for the league's top-ranked offense. San Diego's **KRIS DIELMAN**, a former undrafted free agent who has been a mainstay for the Chargers offensive line this year, will make his All-Star debut.

AFC starting center **JEFF SATURDAY** will book his trip to Hawaii for his third consecutive Pro Bowl. First-time AFC All-Star **DAN KOPPEN** of New England will back up Saturday.

Assigned to keep the pocket clean against a talented group of NFC edge rushers are a group of AFC All-Star tackles -- New England's two-time Pro Bowler **MATT LIGHT** and first-time Pro Bowl selection **JASON PETERS** of Buffalo. **JONATHAN OGDEN** of Baltimore will play in his 11th consecutive Pro Bowl in his 12th NFL season.

Lining up in the middle for the AFC defensive front are starting interior linemen **ALBERT HAYNESWORTH** of Tennessee and New England's **VINCE WILFORK**. Both linemen will make their first appearances in the All-Star game. Accompanying Wilfork

and Haynesworth will be San Diego's **JAMAL WILLIAMS**, who has secured his third consecutive Pro Bowl berth.

Ranked second in the AFC with 11.5 sacks, Kansas City defensive end **JARED ALLEN** will make his Pro Bowl debut as a starter and will be joined by Tennessee defensive end **KYLE VANDEN BOSCH**, who will play in his second Pro Bowl in three seasons with the Titans and his first as a starter. Miami's **JASON TAYLOR** will cap off this trio with the sixth Pro Bowl of his career.

Two first-time All-Stars -- **MIKE VRABEL** of New England and Pittsburgh's **JAMES HARRISON** -- will start at outside linebacker for the AFC. Vrabel has tied his career-high with 9.5 sacks and Harrison leads the league's top-ranked defense with 8.5 sacks. Joining Vrabel and Harrison at outside linebacker is **SHAWNE MERRIMAN** of San Diego, who tops NFL linebackers with 11.5 sacks and will make his third consecutive All-Star game appearance.

Roaming the middle of the AFC defense will be middle linebackers **RAY LEWIS** of Baltimore and **DE MECO RYANS** of Houston. Ryans, the 2006 NFL Defensive Rookie of Year, will start in his first Pro Bowl, while Lewis, a 12-year veteran, will record his eighth appearance in Hawaii.

Interceptions are plentiful for the trio of AFC All-Star cornerbacks. Starter **CHAMP BAILEY** of Denver has earned his eighth consecutive Pro Bowl selection and will be teamed up with two first-time All-Stars. New England's **ASANTE SAMUEL** will start opposite Bailey and **ANTONIO CROMARTIE** of San Diego, who leads the league with 10 interceptions, will make his All-Star debut in his second season.

Indianapolis strong safety **BOB SANDERS** earns his second consecutive AFC All-Star berth and Ravens ball-hawking free safety **ED REED** is a four-time Pro Bowl choice in six NFL seasons. Four-time Pro Bowl selection **TROY POLAMALU** of Pittsburgh will join starting safeties Sanders and Reed.

The AFC special teams unit is comprised of four players, including two first-time Pro Bowl honorees. Cleveland kick returner **JOSHUA CRIBBS** making his first trip to Hawaii, leads the NFL with a 30.9-yard average and is tied for second in the league with two scores. Tennessee kicker **ROB BIRONAS**, who leads the NFL with 31 field goals and set the NFL record for most field goals in a game earlier this season, will make his All-Star debut. San Diego wide receiver **KASSIM OSGOOD**, who will serve as the AFC's special teamer, makes his second consecutive Hawaiian trip. Concluding the special teams group will be Oakland's veteran punter **SHANE LECHLER** (third Pro Bowl). Lechler leads the NFL with a 49.0 average and has placed 21 of his 63 punts inside the opponents' 20-yard line.

The 42-man AFC squad is comprised of 21 offensive and 17 defensive players plus four specialists. A 43rd "need" player will be chosen by the AFC head coach and must be a cornerback, defensive end, linebacker or long snapper.

The NFL is the only professional sports league that combines voting by fans, coaches and players in determining its All-Star teams. The consensus vote of each group counts one-third towards the total. Each team submits two ballots – those of the coach and the players with no one permitted to vote for a player on his own team. This year, nearly 84 million fan votes (a record 83.7 million) were cast on NFL.com, in stadiums and via Sprint service.

The American Conference defeated the National Conference 31-28 last season in the Pro Bowl. The AFC leads the all-time series 19-18. The 2008 AFC coaching staff will be from the AFC Championship Game runner-up team.

Under terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, each player on the winning Pro Bowl team receives \$40,000, while each player on the losing squad earns \$20,000.

2008 AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE ALL-STARS

AFC-NFC PRO BOWL, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2008, ALOHA STADIUM, HONOLULU, HAWAII

(Starters listed in ***Bold/Italics***)

(* First-time Pro Bowl selection)

OFFENSE

WIDE RECEIVERS		TIGHT ENDS
* Braylon Edwards, Cleveland		<i>Antonio Gates, San Diego</i>
* T.J. Houshmandzadeh, Cincinnati		Tony Gonzalez, Kansas City
<i>Randy Moss, New England</i>		
<i>Reggie Wayne, Indianapolis</i>		QUARTERBACKS
		<i>Tom Brady, New England</i>
TACKLES		Peyton Manning, Indianapolis
<i>Matt Light, New England</i>		* Ben Roethlisberger, Pittsburgh
Jonathan Ogden, Baltimore		
* <i>Jason Peters, Buffalo</i>		RUNNING BACKS
		* Joseph Addai, Indianapolis
GUARDS		Willie Parker, Pittsburgh
*Kris Dielman, San Diego		<i>LaDainian Tomlinson, San Diego</i>
<i>Alan Faneca, Pittsburgh</i>		
* <i>Logan Mankins, New England</i>		FULLBACK
		<i>Lorenzo Neal, San Diego</i>
CENTERS		
* Dan Koppen, New England		
<i>Jeff Saturday, Indianapolis</i>		

DEFENSE

ENDS		INSIDE/MIDDLE LINEBACKERS
* <i>Jared Allen, Kansas City</i>		Ray Lewis, Baltimore
Jason Taylor, Miami		* <i>De Meco Ryans, Houston</i>
<i>Kyle Vanden Bosch, Tennessee</i>		
		CORNERBACKS
INTERIOR LINEMAN		<i>Champ Bailey, Denver</i>
* <i>Albert Haynesworth, Tennessee</i>		* Antonio Cromartie, San Diego
* <i>Vince Wilfork, New England</i>		* <i>Asante Samuel, New England</i>
Jamal Williams, San Diego		
		FREE SAFETY
OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS		<i>Ed Reed, Baltimore</i>
* <i>James Harrison, Pittsburgh</i>		
Shawne Merriman, San Diego		STRONG SAFTIES
* <i>Mike Vrabel, New England</i>		Troy Polamalu, Pittsburgh
		<i>Bob Sanders, Indianapolis</i>

SPECIALISTS

PUNTER		KICK RETURN SPECIALIST
Shane Lechler, Oakland		* Joshua Cribbs, Cleveland
PLACEKICKER		SPECIAL TEAMER
* Rob Bironas, Tennessee		Kassim Osgood, San Diego

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