

NFL PRACTICE SQUADS TO INCLUDE NFL EUROPE LEAGUE NATIONALS

A touch of Europe is heading west – to the NFC West, that is.

The NFL International Development Practice Squad program debuts in 2004, giving four national players who competed in the NFL Europe League this spring an opportunity to further enhance their football progression by spending the season as members of NFL practice squads.

The NFC West is the destination, chosen by random drawing, for the four players – offensive lineman **ROLANDO CANTU** (Arizona Cardinals - Mexico), offensive lineman **PETER HEYER** (St. Louis Rams - Germany), defensive end **CHRISTIAN MOHR** (Seattle Seahawks - Germany) and defensive back **RICHARD YANCY** (San Francisco 49ers - Germany).

The program provides a significant step forward toward achieving the goal of having national players participating in NFL games in the years to come.

“This is going to be a great opportunity for these players to receive intensive coaching,” said another German-born offensive lineman and former Rams standout, **TOM NÜTTEN**. “The most important thing for them will be to work on their technique. I would expect all four of them to come back to NFL Europe as much improved players.”

A closer look at the four Europe League national players heading to NFC West practice squads:

PLAYER	TEAM	NFLE	COUNTRY	MISC
OL Rolando Cantu	Ariz	Berlin	Mexico	Completed rookie season in NFLEL after winning Mexican college championships with ITESM Monterrey.
OL Peter Heyer	StL	Rhein	Germany	Finished his third season with Rhein and spent the 2003 NFL preseason with New Orleans.
DE Christian Mohr	Sea	Berlin	Germany	Posted seven tackles, one forced fumble and 0.5 sacks in his first season with Berlin.
DB Richard Yancy	SF	Rhein	Germany	Has played in three World Bowls during five-year NFL Europe career. Totaled 28 tackles and one interception for Rhein.



NFL – MORE & MORE – SEEN INTERNATIONALLY; SALUTES MILITARY

The appeal of NFL action continues to extend far beyond the borders of the United States, including to the world’s most populous country, China.

This season, fans there will enjoy Shanghai Media Group’s (SMG) live broadcast of Super Bowl XXXIX on Sunday, February 6 from Jacksonville, Florida, in addition to two NFL shows per week – *Game of the Week* and *NFL Blast*.

In Japan, NHK and Gaora have recently extended agreements to broadcast NFL programming to Japanese fans through the 2006 season, while longtime partner NTV continues as the league’s terrestrial broadcaster in Japan, reaching 44 million homes.

Meanwhile, closer to home, the NFL and the Canadian Football League have extended their partnership through the 2006 season. The agreement focuses on growing the sport in Canada, and to this end, establishes a Football Development Management Council. Both leagues will continue to support grassroots programs, including the Reebok NFL/CFL Flag Football program, the NFL/CFL Practice with Pros youth clinics, and the NFL/CFL High School Coach of the Year program.

Some interesting facts about the NFL on TV around the world:

<u>Countries &amp; Territories</u>	230	<u>Time zones represented</u>	24
<u>Hours of programming</u>	162,189	<u>Languages games broadcast in</u>	24

Members of the United States military will also have a chance to follow their favorite teams from locations around the globe this season, as servicemen and women worldwide will receive NFL programming via American Forces Network. Coverage will include game telecasts as well as pregame and postgame shows. It will reach approximately 800,000 military personnel stationed overseas in 177 countries and territories, and aboard more than 180 U.S. Navy ships at sea.

“Pro football is without a doubt the most watched sport we broadcast,” says **TOM MATTOX**, chief of sports at AFN. “Like stateside fans, our audience looks forward to the games each and every week. You’ll find NFL fans below deck on an aircraft carrier, huddled inside a camouflaged tent, and even atop an ammo can standing just outside a chow hall somewhere in the desert. Wherever in the world they’re stationed, they’re ready for some football.”

The NFL has long been a tremendous supporter of America’s men and women in uniform, dating back to 1965, when Commissioner **PETE ROZELLE** conceived of the idea of sending NFL players to Vietnam on “goodwill tours.” The following year, the NFL became the first sports organization to send a group of players to Vietnam and other parts of the Far East.

The tradition has continued to the present day. This May, Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE** and three NFL All-Stars – running back **WARRICK DUNN** and linebacker **KEITH BROOKING** of the Atlanta Falcons, and Baltimore Ravens tight end **TODD HEAP** – traveled to Germany for a USO-sponsored tour of U.S. military bases.

Then in June, a similar NFL-USO tour of Kuwait and Qatar was undertaken by All-Star guard **MARCO RIVERA** of the Green Bay Packers and former NFL lineman **BRIAN BALDINGER**, now a FOX analyst.

“It was great to be able to spend time with the troops,” said Heap. “They are true heroes and it was an amazing experience being around them.”