

IT’S AN ELECTION YEAR!

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH says he would like to rejoin the New England Patriots next year at the White House to celebrate yet another Super Bowl victory.

“Congratulations for getting back here to the Rose Garden,” the President told the Pats in May during a visit to the White House. “My hope, of course, is that I’m back here again to see you next year.”

NFL players know what’s going on off the field in politics. Who are the most popular U.S. presidents among players?

PLAYER	FAVORITE PRESIDENT	REASON
Bills QB Drew Bledsoe	Ronald Reagan	“It was always comforting to watch him on TV. You always felt like everything was going to be all right.”
Bucs LB Derrick Brooks	George Washington	“Because the job was easier for the first president.”
Giants RB Ron Dayne	Ronald Reagan	None given
Jaguars DE Hugh Douglas	Bill Clinton	None given
Raiders DT Warren Sapp	Grover Cleveland	“He’s on the \$1,000 bill.”
Rams S Aeneas Williams	John F. Kennedy	“He was young and charismatic. He made you think maybe you could be president as well.”

Are politicians as interested in football as football players are in politics? You bet! Five U.S. presidents played college football.

PRESIDENT	COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	POSITION	INTERESTING NOTES
Dwight Eisenhower	West Point	Halfback	Forced to drop from the roster after knee injuries.
Gerald Ford	Michigan	Center	Won team MVP award in 1934.
John F. Kennedy	Choate/Harvard	Wide Receiver	--
Richard Nixon	Whittier College	Running Back	--
Ronald Reagan	Eureka College	Guard	Supported himself with football scholarship.

- **GERALD FORD** was also an assistant line coach at Yale University from 1935-41. His ability in the sport even gained him professional contract offers from the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers.
- **WOODROW WILSON** was head coach of the Wesleyan College football team from 1888-1890 and never experienced a losing season.
- While a student at Stanford University, **HERBERT HOOVER** was employed to oversee the collection of stadium receipts for the football games. On one occasion, the halftime guest speaker was President **BENJAMIN HARRISON**. He entered the event without paying, whereupon Hoover confronted him and demanded the 25¢ admission. The stunned, but amused, Harrison complied.



ALL-STARS LEWIS & RICHARDSON JUST TWO OF NFL OFFSEASON GRADS

THIS SPRING, 18 NFL players earned their degrees, as players throughout the league continued the offseason NFL tradition of furthering their educations. Many of the players who earned those degrees did so through the Continuing Education Program of the NFL Player Development Department, which is headed by the NFL’s Vice President of Player & Employee Development, Pro Football Hall of Famer **MIKE HAYNES**.

Baltimore Ravens linebacker **RAY LEWIS**, who played in the 2004 Pro Bowl, this spring fulfilled a promise made to his mother **SUNSERIA**.

“This is an idea that you start with as a child, and no one can take it from you,” says Lewis, who earned his degree in business administration from the University of Maryland. “It was always important to me, and I told my mom I was going to go back and get my degree. This is special for her and me.”

Kansas City running back **TONY RICHARDSON** received his master’s degree in business administration this offseason from Webster University.

“People talk about what is important in life,” says Richardson. “Going to the Pro Bowl last year was great. Going to the Super Bowl would even be better. But getting my master’s degree is probably the biggest accomplishment in my life.”

Richardson is the first NFL player to utilize all phases of NFL Player Development to earn his bachelor’s degree (in education from Auburn in 2000), complete several professional internship programs, and receive his master’s.

Graduation Day was extra special as U.S. Army Sergeant Major **BEN RICHARDSON** watched his son march at a graduation for the first time. Richardson’s father was stationed in Germany during his son’s high school graduation. “I know he’s proud of what I’ve done as a football player,” says Tony. “But I think he’s more proud of what I did on graduation day.”

NFL Player Development was created in 1991 by NFL Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE** to assist players and their families in their lives off the field. In the past five offseasons, more than 200 players have earned their degrees through the program, with at least 250 enrolling in courses each year. Following are the NFL veterans who earned college degrees this offseason:

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