

FUTURE NFL GREATS

Their peers think they’re going to be great.

Survey NFL players on who they think will be a “future great” and you’ll get a whole range of choices -- all promising. NFL players choose their “future greats”:

PLAYER	CHOICE FOR FUTURE NFL GREAT
Tampa Bay CB Ronde Barber	Tampa Bay QB Chris Simms
Green Bay LB Nick Barnett	Arizona WR Anquan Boldin
Baltimore CB Gary Baxter	Baltimore SS Ed Reed
St. Louis WR Isaac Bruce	Miami T Wade Smith
Houston QB David Carr	San Diego RB LaDainian Tomlinson: “LaDainian Tomlinson is a good back. He hasn’t gotten the respect I think he deserves. I played against him in college and he’s doing a great job.”
San Diego CB Sammy Davis	New England WR Bethel Johnson
Cleveland QB Jeff Garcia	Cleveland TE Kellen Winslow: “Kellen is a future great because of all his tools and determination.”
Denver SS John Lynch	Denver LB D.J. Williams: “A lot of players have skills, but he has special skills, and he loves the games. He wants to be great and he works hard at it.”
Tennessee CB Samari Rolle	San Diego RB LaDainian Tomlinson
Jacksonville RB Fred Taylor	Jacksonville QB Byron Leftwich: “He’ll be one of those players that you read about when you’re an old man chilling on the beach.”
Chicago CB Charles Tillman	Dallas QB Drew Henson: “He’s got all the ability to be great.”
Minnesota RB Moe Williams	Minnesota RBs Onterio Smith and Michael Bennett: “Onterio has a great work ethic and Mike is already great. Those are the two guys I see coming up.”

“ICING” DOESN’T FREEZE KICKERS

It happens weekly. The field-goal kicker trots out to do his thing, lines up, and the defense calls timeout to “ice” the kicker – make him nervous, pressure him. But does it really work?

Apparently not. Not if you believe the kickers themselves. They say, in fact, that it helps them. The most common response was that “icing” simply gave them more time to prepare, and therefore, kick successfully. Following are comments from six NFL kickers on why they like to be “iced”:

- **KRIS BROWN**, Houston Texans: “Icing actually helps me because I can go through my routine and relax. I have a tougher time when I have to rush out on the field and make a kick without visualizing it first. Kicking is a process and the more time you have to go through the whole process, the better.”
- **JASON ELAM**, Denver Broncos: “I love it when the opposing coach tries to ‘ice’ me, because he doesn’t realize that it just gives me more time to prepare. So much about kicking has to do with picking a good place to spot the ball and making sure the footing is solid, and that timeout just gives me more time to prepare and go into the kick with more confidence.”
- **NATE KAEDING**, San Diego Chargers: “It just kind of gives you a chance to calm down. Sometimes you might just be thrown out there and your heart’s beating real fast and they (icings) just give you a chance to get out there and kind of talk to yourself and calm yourself down. I might go off to the sideline and hit a ball or two into the net. The more I get to think about it the better off I’m going to be.”
- **OLINDO MARE**, Miami Dolphins: “You can get good footing and get a good spot. It gives you more time to determine the wind and set up. I think it’s harder the other way. You can talk to your guys. The linemen get an extra breath or two. I think it’s an advantage.”
- **JOE NEDNEY**, Tennessee Titans: “It gives me more time to prepare myself.”
- **MATT STOVER**, Baltimore Ravens: “Typically before the kick, you don’t have time to go out on the field and to check the conditions. Because of the ‘icing,’ I have more time to assess the situation and to kick the ball right.”

LANDETA’S ADVICE FOR A LONG NFL LIFE

St. Louis Rams punter **SEAN LANDETA** will be playing in his 20th NFL season this year – a milestone not many players reach.

“Every year, the best moment in the 365-day year for an NFL player is the day you make the team,” says Landeta, who joins **JERRY RICE** (20) as one of three active players (**MORTEN ANDERSEN**, 22) with at least 20 years of service.

How does a player get to last 20 years in the rough-and-tumble world of the NFL?

Landeta offers five tips on league longevity:

1. Physically, do the things necessary in order to get yourself in a position to play well enough to be at this level.
2. Stay hungry mentally. Have the desire to practice and work out and love what you do.
3. Practice hard.
4. Keep it simple. Don’t worry about other things.
5. Hope you do it better than the other guy.

Landeta had a chance to talk to **GEORGE BLANDA** a few years ago and asked him about his last training camp.

“Blanda was about 48, played 26 years,” says Landeta. “And he was still talking about how much better he was than the guy they kept! I love that. You’d think he’d say that he played 26 years and it was time, but he wasn’t saying that. I learned something from that; he still had the desire to play.” Players entering 2004 with the most experience:

NOT GETTING OLDER, BUT BETTER

PLAYER	SEASONS
Morten Andersen, Kansas City	23
Sean Landeta, St. Louis	20
Jerry Rice, Oakland	20
Vinny Testaverde, Dallas	18
Chris Chandler, St. Louis	16
John Carney, New Orleans	16
Tim Brown, Oakland	16
Jeff Feagles, NY Giants	16