



THE OLDEST RUSHING CHAMP DOESN'T FEEL THAT WAY

Last year, **CURTIS MARTIN** of the New York Jets become the oldest running back in history (31) to win a rushing title, topping such notables in the category as Pro Football Hall of Famers **MARION MOTLEY** (30) and **JIM BROWN** (29).

“Watch Curtis Martin run,” says Brown. “That is the way football should be played.”

Martin also joined Pro Football Hall of Fame running back **WALTER PAYTON** as the only players to rush for 1,500 yards in a season at the age of 30 or older to start the year.

“I never imagined I would accomplish things like this in the NFL,” says Martin. “Just to be mentioned in the same breath with guys like Walter Payton is a humbling experience.”

But, hold on – Martin is far from ready for the rocking chair! The All-Star running back has a lot more to accomplish this year.

“He doesn’t break down, he just keeps breaking records,” says Jets head coach **HERMAN EDWARDS**. “At the end of the day, he will be in Canton.”

Martin can break his tie with **BARRY SANDERS** and become the only running back in history to rush for 1,000 yards in each of his first 11 seasons; can tie **EMMITT SMITH** as the only players to rush for 1,000 yards in 11 consecutive seasons; and become the fourth player in history to rush for 15,000 yards.

“Curtis is definitely a pro on and off the field,” says Smith, the NFL’s all-time leading rusher. “He comes to work with his helmet and his hard hat. That’s a lot of yards, a lot of totes. He’s been very fortunate and very blessed, and I have a lot of respect for his game.”

The top five rushers in NFL history:

PLAYER	TEAM(S)	YARDS
Emmitt Smith	Dallas, Arizona	18,097
Walter Payton	Chicago	16,726
Barry Sanders	Detroit	15,269
<b>Curtis Martin</b>	<b>New England, New York Jets</b>	<b>13,366*</b>
Jerome Bettis	LA/St. Louis Rams, Pittsburgh	13,294*

\*Active

Martin has 170 consecutive starts, the longest current streak among running backs.

“He’s a gladiator in a sense that, year after year he’s there,” says Pittsburgh Steelers running back **JEROME BETTIS**. “He’s done some incredible things. He’s a very durable, dependable and reliable running back. And that’s what you want in the NFL. You don’t find too many of them around.”

The running backs with the longest active streak of consecutive starts:

PLAYER	TEAM	YARDS
<b>Curtis Martin</b>	<b>New York Jets</b>	<b>170</b>
Jerald Sowell	New York Jets	32
Shaun Alexander	Seattle	29
Edgerrin James	Indianapolis	26
Tony Richardson	Kansas City	19

"My goal is to become what isn't the norm," says Martin. "I want to feel that at my age, I've learned all the ins and outs that will help me be even better. I know my heart is in it stronger than ever, and I'm gaining a greater love for the game as the years go on."

Following are the oldest rushing champions in NFL history, and the players 30-or-older at a season’s start to rush for 1,500 yards:

PLAYER	TEAM	YARDS	YEAR	AGE
<b>Curtis Martin</b>	<b>New York Jets</b>	<b>1,697</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>31 years, 26 days</b>
Marion Motley	Cleveland Browns	810	1950	30 years, 188 days
Charles White	L.A. Rams	1,378	1987	29 years, 339 days
Jim Brown	Cleveland Browns	1,544	1965	29 years, 305 days
Floyd Little	Denver Broncos	1,133	1971	29 years, 168 days

PLAYER	TEAM	SEASON	AGE	YARDS
<b>Curtis Martin</b>	<b>New York Jets</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1,697</b>
Walter Payton	Chicago	1984	30	1,684
Walter Payton	Chicago	1985	31	1,551