



## YALE'S 25TH NFL STARTER ONE OF LEAGUE'S BEST RECEIVERS

The Ivy League is used to churning out brilliant minds and future leaders (five U.S. presidents graduated with a degree from Yale), not gridiron stars. But San Francisco 49ers tight end **ERIC JOHNSON** is not your ordinary Yale graduate.

The five-year veteran had his best season in the NFL last year, recording 82 catches for 825 yards and 2 touchdowns, and through week six he lead the league in receptions. His 13 catches for 162 yards and a touchdown in a 31-28 win over Arizona on December 12 set the standard for the NFC in catches last season.

One of the greatest receivers in Bulldog history, Johnson aimed to pursue an NFL career as a fast tight end instead of an average receiver. He was chosen in the seventh round by the 49ers as **BILL WALSH'S** last draft pick.

The adjustment Johnson had to make from the Ivies to the pros was difficult, but ultimately one he handled well. "When you first get [to the NFL], of course you're intimidated," Johnson says. "I definitely didn't think I'd be playing pro football when I went to Yale."

Johnson is one of 25 Yale graduates to start in the NFL, a list that includes former defensive back and Chicago Bears' head coach **DICK JAURON**:

### YALE STARTERS IN THE NFL

Name	Graduated	NFL Years	Name	Graduated	NFL Years
G Fritz Barzilauskas	1947	1951	DB Don Martin	1971	1973, 1975-76
B Bruce Caldwell	1928	1928	RB Chuck Mercein	1965	1965-1970
RB Rich Diana	1982	1982-83	DB Than Merrill	2001	2001
QB Brian Dowling	1969	1972-77	T Century Milstead	1926	1925, 1927-28
G Greg Dubinetz	1975	1979	RB John Nitti	1981	1981-83
QB Joe Dufek	1983	1983-85	T John Prchlik	1947	1949-1953
DB Gary Fencik	1976	1976-1987	DB Eugene Profit	1986	1986-89
OL Adam Hernandez	1998	1998	C Mike Pyle	1961	1961-69
RB Chris Hetherington	1996	1996-2003	LB Jeff Rohrer	1982	1982-88
RB Calvin Hill	1969	1969-1981	T Bill Schuler	1947	1947-48
DB Ken Hill	1980	1980-89	TE John Spagnola	1979	1979-1989)
DB / Head Coach Dick Jauron	1973	1973-1981;1999-2005	E Paul Walker	1946	1948
<b>TE Eric Johnson</b>	2001	<b>2001-present</b>			



## NOT BLOCKED – AGAIN!

In 212 career games, though 1,045 punts, Pittsburgh's **CHRIS GARDOCKI** has never had a punt blocked. That is an NFL record for most unblocked punts. The nearest punter is 886 punts away from matching Gardocki's remarkable feat. The top active punters in most punts without a block:

PUNTER	PUNTS
<b>Chris Gardocki, Pittsburgh</b>	<b>1,045</b>
Dirk Johnson, Philadelphia	159
Andy Lee, San Francisco	96
Rodney Williams, New Orleans	91
Derrick Frost, Cleveland	85

Gardocki knows how important his position can be and says that he is always concentrating on the game situation and his team's field position so that he is prepared to make a difference when he steps on the field.

"When you go out there you don't think, you just react," he says. "I just go out there and kick the ball. The less I think about, the less room for error."

As he enters his 15th NFL season Gardocki will work to keep his block count at zero.

Chris Gardocki's tips for avoiding blocked punts:

- Know the opposition's punt block/return formation and when and where teams are going to rush.
- Cleanly catch the ball from the long snapper.
- Maintain a sixth sense to feel opposing players near you and know when to speed up your release.
- Have a consistent drop with a quick hand-to-foot transfer.
- Step and get momentum for power; put it out there as quickly as you can.
- Don't see or hear anything, just feel what is going on and concentrate on the ball.

