

HISPANICS MAKING THEIR MARK (*HACIENDO SU MARCA*) ON THE NFL

Tony Romo...Tony Gonzalez...Roberto Garza...Jeff Garcia...Luis Castillo. And now, maybe, wide receiver Anthony Gonzalez, the No. 1 overall draft choice this year of the Super Bowl XLI champion Indianapolis Colts.

Increasingly, Hispanic players are playing a major role in the NFL.

- Colts first round draft pick ANTHONY GONZALEZ caught 87 passes for 1,286 yards and 13 touchdowns while at Ohio State. When he started becoming a standout wide receiver at OSU, his grandmother requested he use his full name Anthony since "there's already a Tony Gonzalez in football." Colts head coach Tony Dungy thinks Anthony will be a valued addition to the team. "He's a guy who really pays attention to details," says Dungy. "That's unique for a young guy. Most young people who come in are really just trying to learn what they're supposed to do and learn their assignments and the basics of them."
- Two Hispanic players were drafted in the fourth round of the 2007 NFL Draft, both of Mexican ancestry. **MANUEL RAMIREZ**, a guard from Texas Tech, was selected by the Detroit Lions. At 6-3, 326 pounds, he is expected to be a solid addition to the Lions' offensive line. Ramirez was a four-year starter in college and excelled at quarterback protection. **DANIEL SEPULVEDA**, a punter from Baylor, was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers and will be up against Mike Barr for the starting job. Seventh-round draft pick **OSCAR LUA** tops off the list of fresh Hispanic talent. The USC linebacker is excited to be going from one dynasty to the next – the New England Patriots. "I'm ready to come in and help continue what the Patriots have already established," says Lua. "I went from the best program in college football to the best franchise in the NFL. I truly feel blessed."
- Last season TONY ROMO and **JEFF GARCIA** became the first Hispanic quarterback duo to face each other in a game when the Philadelphia Eagles defeated the Dallas Cowboys on Christmas Day. A backup for his first three seasons, in 2006, Romo led the Cowboys to a victory on October 29 in his first game as a starter and went on to help clinch a playoff berth for the team. He tied a franchise record for touchdown passes in a game (five), set by several others, most recently Hall of Famer Troy Aikman in 1999, and became the first Cowboys quarterback since Aikman in 1996 to be named to the Pro Bowl and the sixth in club history.
- Veteran Hispanic players, TONY GONZALEZ, Kansas City Chiefs tight end and **LUIS CASTILLO**, San Diego Chargers defensive end spent time connecting with youth this summer. Castillo headed to the Dominican Republic to team up with the Dominican Football League (Liga Dominicana de Futbol Americano) to host a youth football clinic. "I wanted to help the Dominican youth realize that they can reach any goal as long as they fight for it," said Castillo. Gonzalez held the third edition of his Tony Gonzalez Youth Football Camp with a percentage of the proceeds going to the Tony Gonzalez Foundation to assist medically challenged children. "Scoring a touchdown -- the adrenaline rush when 80,000 fans are screaming -- is nothing compared to what I feel when I'm giving back in the community," said Gonzalez. "It's a different feeling – it's in the heart."
- Chicago Bears center **ROBERTO GARZA** has filmed public-service announcements in English and Spanish in conjunction with the American Diabetes Association, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and American Health Insurance Plans (AHIP). Diabetes is prominent in the Latino community so it hits close to home for Garza. "It's a great opportunity for me to use my professional athlete status to try to help out and open people's eyes," said Garza.
- And in college this offseason, Florida International's **MARIO CRISTOBAL** became the first Cuban-American head football coach in major college history and one of the youngest coaches in Division I-A football. Cristobal comes to FIU from the University of Miami, where he coached tight ends in 2004-05 before coaching the offensive line in 2006. The Golden Panthers' season kicks off on Saturday, September 1 when FIU faces Penn State.

A list of some of the 2007 Hispanic NFL players:

<u>Player</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Team</u>
Ken Amato	LS	Tennessee	Tony Gonzalez	TE	Kansas City
Richard Angulo	TE	Jacksonville	Martin Gramatica	K	Dallas
Adam Archuleta	S	Chicago	Alex Guererro	DT	Minnesota
Jason Babin	DE	Houston	Joselio Hanson	CB	Philadelphia
Greg Camarillo	WR	San Diego	Maurizio Lopez	DT	Philadelphia
Luis Castillo	DE	San Diego	J.P. Losman	QB	Buffalo
Eduardo Castaneda	LB	Houston	Oscar Lua	LB	New England
Jorge Cordova	LB	Jacksonville	Glenn Martinez	WR	Denver
Frank Davis	G	Detroit	Ramiro Pruneda	T	Kansas City
Donnie Edwards	LB	Kansas City	Manuel Ramirez	G	Detroit
Antonio Garay	T	Chicago	Tony Romo	QB	Dallas
Jeff Garcia	QB	Tampa Bay	Salomon Solano	DT	Detroit
Roberto Garza	C	Chicago	Daniel Sepulveda	P	Pittsburgh
Anthony Gonzalez	WR	Indianapolis	Juan Wong	WR	NY Jets